

# Cabinet Report

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## **Publication Version - Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites**

### **Recommendation**

Cabinet:

- a) To consider the views recommended by Scrutiny Committee (20 September 2017) and, subject to any agreed changes;

Recommend to Council:

- b) that the Publication Version - Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, associated documents (Sustainability Appraisal Report, Consultation Statement) and supporting technical evidence and topic papers be made available for a six-week publicity period under Regulations 19 and 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012,
- c) following the six-week publicity period, to authorise the Head of Planning in consultation with Cabinet Member for Planning to submit the Publication Version Local Plan 2031 Part 2 and all associated documents, together with a Consultation Statement of the Publication responses to the Secretary of State for independent examination under regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and
- d) to authorise the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make minor changes and corrections to the Local Plan Part 2 and supporting documents, including minor editorial, typographical and grammatical errors, up to and following plan submission and during examination.

## Purpose of Report

1. To present to Cabinet an overview of the main changes to the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 following Regulation 18 consultation and to brief Cabinet on the recommendations for Council.
2. Council will be asked to agree the Publication Version Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites for publication for the purposes of formal Publication (Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012), and thereafter for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination, together with all supporting technical evidence, topic papers and summaries of publication responses received (Regulation 22), subject to further corrections, authorised by Head of Planning, including of minor editorial, typographical and grammatical errors.
3. Local Plan 2031: Part 2 will be published for a six-week publicity period between 11 October 2017 to 22 November 2017.

## Strategic Objectives

4. The Local Plan is central to the achievement of the following strategic objectives in the 2016-2020 Corporate Plan:
  - a strong local economy
  - housing for people who need it
5. The extensive public consultation carried out on the emerging local plan in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement is part of how the Council meets the following Corporate Objectives:
  - positive and constructive work with community groups
  - communities involved in decisions about development and other things affecting their local area.

## Introduction

### *Structure of this Report and its Appendices*

6. The report sections are:
  - Recommendations
  - Purpose of report
  - Strategic objectives
  - Introduction and background
  - Current stage and next steps
  - Recent public consultation feedback
  - Summary of the local plan document and main changes to previous versions
  - How the local plan meets National Planning Policy Framework requirements
  - Local plan options
  - Financial and legal implications and risks
  - Concluding recommendations
7. The appendices included within this report are as follows:
  - Appendix 1: a list of Local Plan evidence base studies
  - Appendix 2: a list of topic papers that more fully summarise the work undertaken
  - Appendix 3: draft Local Plan 2031: Part 2 in 'committee version' formatting
  - Appendix 4: draft Consultation Statement of the Preferred Options Consultation responses
  - Appendix 5: draft Sustainability Appraisal Report, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment

8. The full Local Plan document in 'committee version' formatting is appended at **Appendix 3**. The draft Plan has been reviewed by our planning barrister and changes incorporated. Any further minor changes, including editorial, typographical and grammatical amendments will continue to be made to the document prior to publication with sign-off from Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member. Changes will include the decision made by Council (27 September).
9. The Local Plan has been informed by the findings and conclusions of an extensive range of technical evidence studies listed at **Appendix 1**. These studies will be subject to final minor changes, including editorial, typographical and grammatical amendments prior to publication in October 2017.
10. A series of Topic Papers listed at **Appendix 2** are being produced to more fully summarise how the technical evidence, consultation feedback and Sustainability Appraisal have informed the preparation of the plan. These topic papers will be published alongside the Publication Version Plan Local Plan 2031 Part 2 in October 2017.

## **Background**

11. The VOWH Local Plan 2031: Part 1 was adopted in December 2016 and sets a strategic policy framework for the district for the plan period up to 2031. The Part 1 plan fully meets the objectively assessed need for housing for the Vale of White Horse District and makes provision for 'at least' 20,560 homes, around 23,000 jobs and supporting infrastructure and facilities.
12. From inception, the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 has been prepared to address the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale. This was set out as a clear policy commitment by the Council within the adopted Part 1 plan. The Part 1 plan identifies the purposes of the Part 2 plan, as follows:
  - to set out policies and locations for the Vale's proportion of Oxford City's unmet housing need up to 2031, which cannot be met within the City boundaries
  - to set out policies for the part of Didcot Garden Town that lies within the Vale of White Horse District
  - to set out detailed development management policies to complement Local Plan 2031: Part 1, and
  - to allocate additional development sites for housing, as appropriate.
13. The Part 2 plan has been prepared in accordance with national policy, guidance and legislation and complies with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The plan has been informed by detailed evidence studies, for example assessing transport, landscape and flooding impacts and informal consultation with a range of stakeholders, including for example, Oxfordshire County Council, Natural England and Environment Agency.
14. To date there has been one formal public consultation stage that has informed the preparation of Local Plan 2031: Part 2:
  - Preferred Options - March to May 2017

## **Current Stage and Next Steps**

15. The Publication (Regulation 19) stage differs from previous consultations and forms the first step in the process of examining the Local Plan. Any comments made at the Publication stage are considered by the examining inspector rather than the Council. The Council does not need to formally respond to them, although doing so is considered helpful and could assist the examining inspector.
16. The Council cannot make substantive changes to the Local Plan at this stage unless it chooses to withdraw the plan from examination, modify and re-publish, prior to Submission. This could

happen if a significant and/ or unforeseen matter arose through or during the Publication stage. The Council can make minor clarifications or corrections, which it is suggested to be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning.

17. Following publication, the Council will submit the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination, together with the supporting technical evidence and reports. The supporting material will include a Consultation Summary of representations made at Publication stage.
18. The Council intends to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State at the end of February 2018. As set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme, it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be examined in the summer of 2018 with adoption before the end of 2018.
19. Following examination, the Local Plan inspector may recommend changes to the Local Plan, which may be necessary for them to find the plan 'sound' and so capable of adoption. The Council will have an opportunity to consider any such changes, although it is usual to accept recommendations of this nature. A Modifications version of the Local Plan would then be published for consultation, incorporating any recommended changes the Council agrees. Following this stage, the Local Plan could be finalised and adopted.

## Recent Public Consultation and Feedback

20. The Preferred Options Consultation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 closed on Thursday 4 May. This consultation generated 3,698 comments from 573 respondents. A full Consultation Statement, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 4** will be published alongside the Publication Version of the Part 2 plan. The Consultation Statement includes a detailed breakdown of all comments and the Council's response to them. Some of the main issues that arose from the Preferred Options (Regulation 18) consultation can be summarised as follows:
  - Oxford City Council called for more clarification over the amount of affordable housing and greater detail in relation to Vale's approach to addressing the agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford City
  - concerns were raised relating to the deliverability of the Dalton Barracks site, particularly in relation the timing of its release from the MOD; and in respect of the North-West Grove site, due to land availability and the progress to date in bringing forward development at Grove Airfield
  - significant traffic congestion was identified, particularly on the A34, A420 and other local roads with the suggestion that some of the development proposed would add to that congestion
  - air quality and flooding were suggested to be risks on some sites, including the two located in Marcham
  - Oxfordshire County Council objected to the allocation West of Harwell Village on grounds relating to traffic impact and site access, they also objected to development at Marcham on grounds relating to air quality
  - concern was raised that there was a lack of evidence published to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances to justify development at Harwell Campus, located in the AONB
  - there were many calls for more infrastructure to be provided before development takes place to help cater for both current and future needs, for example for education, highways and health care

- concern was raised over the purposes of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, suggesting that its original purpose was to deliver small sites, but it now includes a number of larger strategic sites
- a large number of responses objected to development, particular within Fyfield and Tubney Parish, adjacent to Kingston Bagpuize within Southmoor

21. In relation to the role of the Part 2 plan, the Planning Inspector presiding over the Part 1 plan Examination recommended a change to the Part 1 plan setting out the purposes of Local Plan Part 2. This included provision that the Part 2 plan may allocate 'additional' sites and so provided flexibility for the type and size of sites to be allocated within the Part 2 plan.

## Summary of the Local Plan Document and Main Changes to Previous Versions

22. This section provides an overview of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 and briefly summaries the main changes made following consultation responses to the Preferred Options document.
23. The Local Plan Part 2 ensures the objectively assessed need for housing for the Vale of White Horse District (20,560 homes; met by the Part 1 plan) and from neighbouring authorities (2,200 homes) is fully met, subject to the plan making process. It also seeks to deliver an additional 1,400 homes within the South East Vale Sub-Area. The Part 2 allocations are fully consistent with the Spatial Strategy set out in the Part 1 plan and support the housing requirements identified for each part of the three Sub-Areas, also set out in the Part 1 plan.
24. The Publication Version Part 2 plan updates the windfall allowance now taking account of past delivery of small sites (0 to 9 dwellings) for the preceding six years. The Sub-Area Housing Requirement figures (see below) are updated to reflect the residual necessary to ensure the agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale is fully met as the Part 1 plan made provision for more than the objectively assessed need. The Part 1 plan previously made provision for a 70 dwellings per year windfall allowance. However, actual delivery over the past six years has been for up to 150 dwellings per year and the Part 2 plan has therefore taken account of the increase in windfall delivery accordingly.
25. It is clear from Table 1 that the proposed housing supply seeks to fully meet the housing requirement for the Vale of White Horse up to 2031 of 22,760, which is made up of the Objectively Assessed Need for the district (20,560 dwellings) and quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale (2,200 dwellings). The proposed housing supply figures for each Sub-Area are also set out later in this report.

**Table 1: Proposed housing supply for Publication Version Local Plan 2031: Part 2**

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		22,760
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2017)		4,680
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	3,061
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	12,495
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	3,420
	Windfalls	1,100

## **Unmet Housing need for Oxford City**

26. The Council has worked with the other Oxfordshire Authorities to identify how the working assumption for the unmet housing need for Oxfordshire should be apportioned between those authorities neighbouring the city of Oxford. This process was administered by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
27. A 'Memorandum of Co-operation' between the local authorities in the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area was signed by Leaders on 26 September 2016. It identified an agreed working assumption apportionment for the quantum of Oxford's unmet housing need to be met within the Vale of White Horse of 2,200 dwellings for the plan period up to 2031. Through preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, including the iterative testing of the plan through Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the Council is satisfied that 2,200 dwellings is an appropriate level of unmet housing need to be met in the Vale, subject to the plan making process.
28. The Part 1 plan makes a clear policy commitment to address this agreed working assumption quantum of unmet need (Core Policy 2).
29. The Part 1 plan allocates a number of sites close to Abingdon-on-Thames (North and North West Abingdon-on-Thames, South of Kennington (within Radley parish) and North West Radley) that equate to 1,510 dwellings<sup>1</sup>. Whilst these sites are allocated with the primary intention of meeting Vale's own housing need, they are well located to provide for Oxford City's unmet need, and housing on these sites would be just as much available to those people falling into the category of Oxford's need as to those of the Vale.
30. Furthermore, the Planning Inspector's Report of the Examination into the Part 1 plan states:  
  
**"In reality, it would be all but impossible to determine if a potential occupier of this housing (Part 1 allocations) represents a Vale or Oxford housing need"**<sup>2</sup>.
31. Whilst the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closest to and has the most frequent and reliable public transport linkages to Oxford, it is also the case that housing allocated within the South East Vale Sub-Area, for example at Valley Park, is also accessible to Oxford via the fast and frequent rail service available from Didcot to Oxford.
32. The Preferred Options version of the Part 2 plan apportioned the working assumption agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford City to be addressed within the Vale between the Abingdon-on-Thames on Oxford Fringe Sub-Area (80 % of unmet need, some 1,760 dwellings) and the South East Vale Sub-Area (20 % of unmet need, some 440 dwellings). It was proposed that unmet need would be addressed through a combination of 'strategic' sites allocated within the Part 1 plan, and 'additional' sites allocated within the Part 2 plan.
33. The Publication Version of the Part 2 plan amends this and as far as possible, seeks to ensure that all of the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale (2,200 dwellings) is planned for within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. This is partly to respond to consultation responses from Oxford City Council and partly to provide additional clarity upon how Oxford's unmet need will be provided for within the Vale. This includes providing clarity on the Council's commitment to work positively with Oxford City Council to plan for Affordable Housing, albeit recognising that the allocation of Affordable Housing sits outside planning policy, and is a matter for the Council's respective housing policies.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocation for North Abingdon-on-Thames was for around 800 dwellings, however a Planning Application for 950 dwellings was approved at committee on 26 July 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 - Inspector's Report (2016), Paragraph 25; available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

34. The Part 2 plan, both allocates the agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford to be met within the Vale to the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, and sets out that 'at least' 2,200 homes are provided for on sites that are demonstrably close to and accessible to Oxford (Table 2).

**Table 2: Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 Allocations that are close to and accessible to Oxford.**

Site	Allocation
North Abingdon-on-Thames (LPP1 allocation)	950*
North West Abingdon-on-Thames (LPP1 allocation)	200
North West Radley (LPP1 allocation)	240
South of Kennington (Radley Parish; LPP1 allocation)	270
Dalton Barracks (LPP2 allocation)	1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,860</b>

\*The LPP1 allocation for North Abingdon-on-Thames was for around 800 dwellings, however a Planning Application for 950 dwellings was approved at committee on 26 July 2017.

35. The sites proposed for allocation within the Preferred Options Version of the Part 2 plan within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area were as follows:

Dalton Barracks:	1,200 dwellings
East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor:	600 dwellings
North East Marcham	400 dwellings
East Marcham	120 dwellings
North of East Hanney	80 dwellings
East of East Hanney	50 dwellings

36. The Publication Version of the Part 2 plan now suggests the removal of the proposed development at North-East Marcham in response to an objection raised by Oxfordshire County Council. This is due to the proximity to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) located within Marcham and potential detrimental impact from development. In addition, the East of Marcham site is proposed to be reduced to 90 dwellings to ensure land is available to be safeguarded for longer-term provision of a South Marcham bypass. It is considered that the reduction in proposed development at Marcham, which is significant (520 dwellings reduced to 90 dwellings) along with the expectation that the majority of additional traffic will travel towards Oxford, Abingdon-on-Thames and Science Vale (i.e. away from Marcham centre) will minimise any impact on the AQMA. All other proposed sites within this Sub-Area are retained for inclusion within the Part 2 plan.

Dalton Barracks:	1,200 dwellings
East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor:	600 dwellings
East Marcham	90 dwellings
North of East Hanney	80 dwellings
East of East Hanney	50 dwellings

37. Dalton Barracks is currently in use by the MOD and its release has been announced as part of the Governments wider commitment to deliver 55,000 homes on MOD sites across the Country. The site is a large and predominantly brownfield (previously developed) site close to Oxford. It wasn't considered by the Council through the preparation of the Part 1 plan, nor by the Oxfordshire Growth Board's process assessing how unmet need could be apportioned, as it wasn't considered to be available for development during these processes. It is considered that development could come forward on the site from 2022 and even before the Army Regiments located at Dalton Barracks are fully re-located.

38. The recent confirmation from the MOD of availability of this site for development within the plan period is considered to be a 'major change in circumstances' to justify its consideration for development and potential release from the Green Belt. The Council commissioned a Green Belt study of all potential development sites within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area and have considered the potential impact of development on the Green Belt purposes, as set out in national policy, to inform the plan preparation and the recommended site proposals.
39. The Council considers that 'exceptional circumstance' exist to justify the release of the Dalton Barracks site from the Oxford Green Belt as set out in accompanying evidence and explained in the Local Plan<sup>3</sup>. A Green Belt Study has been undertaken to inform this plan, which assessed potential development sites within the Green Belt, and complement the Green Belt Review already prepared to inform the Part 1 plan and the Green Belt Study prepared to inform the work undertaken by the Oxford Growth Board. The release of the site will lead to only limited impact on the function of the Green Belt and is substantially brownfield (previously developed) land.
40. Changes are proposed to the Publication Version plan to exclude Whitecross and land between the proposed development at Dalton Barracks and Whitecross from the area proposed for removal from the Green Belt. This ensures the separation between Dalton Barracks and Shippon and Abingdon-on-Thames is maintained, as well as the separation between Dalton Barracks and Whitecross and Dalton Barracks and Wootton. The proposed development within the airfield is extended, but still ensures that development would lead to only limited impact on the Green Belt and still makes provision for a minimum of an 80 hectare Country Park.
41. Development at Dalton Barracks provides an opportunity for highly sustainable development of a new community providing for a range of services and facilities including new schools, a local centre and opportunities for local employment. There are also significant opportunities for excellent public transport, cycling and walking connectivity between the site and Oxford and Abingdon-on-Thames. This includes the provision of a direct connection to the proposed transport interchange at Lodge Hill that will incorporate a Premium Bus route to the centre of Oxford and Rapid Transit (Line 3) to employment locations to the east of Oxford<sup>4</sup>. The plan is updated to reflect the commitment to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Dalton Barracks. Preparation of an SPD will ensure the masterplanning and planning for infrastructure for the site are planned for comprehensively and facilitate partnership working with key stakeholders including the community.
42. The Council have followed a comprehensive approach to site selection that is based on the approach followed to inform the preparation of the Part 1 plan and is consistent with national policy and guidance. Over 400 sites have been assessed, with a refined list of sites being subject to detailed testing and informed by comprehensive evidence. The Council's approach to site selection is set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper that will be published alongside the Publication Version Local Plan 2031: Part 2.
43. Table 3 sets out the proposed housing supply for the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. The Sub-Area requirement has been amended to reflect the residual needed to ensure that 2,200 dwellings are added to this area to ensure the agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford to be agreed within the Vale is met, in full, within this Sub-Area. Furthermore, at least 2,200 dwellings are allocated on sites that are demonstrably close to and accessible to Oxford (Table 1). Finally, the windfall allowance has been updated to reflect past delivery of the past six years of small sites (0 to 9 dwellings).

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<sup>3</sup> Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) Green Belt Study - Dalton Barracks (2017), available at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2016) Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031-Volume 8-Oxford Transport Strategy, available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/ltp4-area-strategies>



**Table 3: Proposed housing supply for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area**

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		7,512 <sup>a</sup>
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2017)		2,051
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	1,401
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	1,790
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	2,020
	Windfalls	308 <sup>b</sup>
Total remaining to be identified (at October 2017)		0

***Didcot Garden Town***

44. Didcot was identified as a Garden Town by Government in December 2015 and includes areas that lie within the Vale of White Horse District. The Garden Town initiative will help to shape growth already identified through the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 within the Vale and that being identified within the emerging Local Plan 2033 for South Oxfordshire DC.
45. The Part 2 plan sets out new policy to support the Didcot Garden Town initiative by embedding the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan principles into policy and ensure they are used to inform development proposals coming forward. Further policy detail concerning the Garden Town will be set out in a future planning document.
46. The Publication Version Part 2 plan makes minor amendments to the Garden Town principles following consultation response from prescribed duty-to-cooperate bodies including Natural England. These changes will be incorporated into the next iteration of the Garden Town process and will be consistently applied to South Oxfordshire's emerging Local Plan 2033.

***Development Management Policies***

47. The development management policies provide more detailed guidance to assist day-to-day decision making on planning applications. They have been prepared following a review of extant Local Plan 2011 Saved Policies, which they replace, and an assessment of whether any additional detail is required to support the implementation of the Part 1 plan. The Part 2 policies are structured into the four thematic areas as set out in the Part 1 plan of:
- Building healthy and sustainable communities
  - Supporting economic prosperity
  - Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and
  - Protecting the environment and responding to climate change.
48. The Publication Version of the Part 2 plan makes a range of modifications to policies following Preferred Options consultation for matters of clarity. These include:
- a policy is added that seeks to encourage the provision of Self and Custom Build housing to reflect local interest and demand from the Self-Build and Custom Build register
  - refining the retail policy to closely align with the evidence and by developing separate sub-policies to provide further clarity
  - refining the the Community Employment Plan Policy to reflect continued engagement with Oxfordshire LEP and South Oxfordshire District Council, and
  - refine the Space Standards policy to reflect the evidence supporting the Council's Housing Delivery Strategy.

## **Additional Site Allocations**

49. In addition to planning for the level of unmet housing need for Oxford, to be addressed within the Vale, the Council is also allocating additional housing to support the Council's objective to support the Science Vale area. Additional housing allocations also replace sites that were originally proposed for allocation in the Part 1 plan, but not included within the adopted document.
50. 1,400 additional homes are allocated within the South East Vale Sub-Area that:
- help to achieve and maintain a sustainable balance of housing and employment within the Science Vale area by ensuring that housing is located close to the provision of new jobs and accessible by sustainable modes of travel
  - help to deliver the Science Vale Strategic Infrastructure package through developer contributions by assisting further in the achievement of sustainable development within the Science Vale area
  - support the Oxfordshire LEP priority for accelerating housing delivery within the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine' growth corridor, and
  - deliver bespoke housing types and tenures tailored specifically to meet the identified need of the Campus and thus support housing supply within this Sub-Area.

51. Additional sites were proposed within the Preferred Options Part 2 plan within the South East Vale Sub-Area as follows:

Harwell Campus:	1,000 dwellings
West of Harwell Village:	100 dwellings
North West Grove:	300 dwellings

52. The Publication Version Part 2 plan removes proposed development West of Harwell Village following consideration of an objection raised by Oxfordshire County Council concerning poor access to the site. The proposed development at North West Grove is increased to 400, although this site is not expected to deliver housing until towards the end of the plan period. It is allocated to facilitate masterplanning, and planning for infrastructure, for this area of Grove along with the northern parts of the Saved Local Plan 2011 Grove Airfield allocation and Part 1 plan allocation at Monks Farm.

53. The proposed site allocations set out within the Publication Version Part 2 plan are:

Harwell Campus:	1,000 dwellings
North West Grove:	400 dwellings

54. Development at Harwell Campus provides an opportunity to support the delivery of a highly sustainable 'innovation village' that meets the needs of the Campus and helps to unlock its unique potential as a world-class centre for innovation and research. The plan sets out the 'exceptional circumstances' to justify residential development at Harwell Campus within the existing site boundary being located in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
55. The proposals for housing at Harwell Campus are substantially different to those proposed for inclusion within the Part 1 plan. Most notably, the Part 2 proposal falls within land where the principle for development is already established as the land is already allocated for development by Core Policy 6 and Saved Policy E7. The proposals are supported by Harwell Campus and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) and the Council has been working in partnership to prepare evidence to both demonstrate the specific need for the housing on site and to demonstrate that there would be no harm to the North Wessex Downs AONB. In fact, it is likely that housing development on the northern part of the site would result in reduced impact on the AONB than employment development, and be capable of being more fully mitigated.

56. Up to date evidence to demonstrate the need for housing at Harwell Campus was published by Harwell Campus as part of their response to the Preferred Options consultation. The Council also commissioned its own study, working in partnership with the Campus, to set out this case in more detail and this is published alongside the Publication Version Local Plan.
57. The quantum of housing identified for allocation within the Part 2 plan, as set out within the Part 1 plan, i.e. for 1,000 dwellings, is now subsumed by the additional allocations, set out in the Part 2 plan that address unmet housing need for Oxford, and those that complement the Spatial Strategy and support infrastructure delivery, and by the updated completions and commitments set out within the Part 2 plan.
58. Tables 4 and 5 set out the proposed housing supply for the South East Vale and Western Vale Sub-Areas respectively. The requirements have been updated to allow the residual housing supply to be added to the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area to ensure the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford, to be addressed within the Vale, is fully met within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. This has led to the Sub-Area housing requirements being updated to ensure they meet the Vale's revised housing requirement in full, and continue to follow the same distribution as set out in the Part 1 plan.
59. The windfall allowances for each Sub-Area have also been updated to reflect past delivery of small sites (0 to 9 dwellings) over the past six years as discussed above. With the exception of windfall development, no further allocations are required to ensure the Vale's revised housing requirement is fully met. Furthermore, there are no additional sites proposed for allocation within the Western Vale Sub-Area.

**Table 4: Proposed housing supply for South East Vale Sub-Area**

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		12,150 <sup>b</sup>
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2016)		1,536
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	1,887
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	9,055 <sup>c</sup>
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	1,400
	Windfalls	484 <sup>d</sup>
Total remaining to be identified (at March 2017)		0

**Table 5: Proposed housing supply for Western Vale Sub-Area**

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		3,098 <sup>a</sup>
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2017)		1,085
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	773
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	1,650
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	0
	Windfalls	308 <sup>b</sup>
Total remaining to be identified (at March 2017)		0

## **Other Policies**

60. The Part 2 plan also updates selected Core Policies, where new information has become available since preparing the Local Plan 2031: Part 1, for example Oxfordshire County Council has requested inclusion of new or updated areas of land safeguarding to support the delivery of strategic highway schemes that form part of the existing or ongoing Local Transport Plan and updating the area safeguarded for the potential Upper Thames Water Storage Reservoir following new information from Thames Water.

## **How the Local Plan Meets National Planning Policy Framework Requirements**

61. This section of the report sets out how the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2 has been prepared in compliance with national policy. Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that a local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers to be in a form suitable for adoption, sound and fit for examination. The requirements for a sound plan are that it is: a) positively prepared; b) justified; c) effective; and d) consistent with national policy. The Council considers the draft Publication local plan meets these requirements, as set out in turn below.

### **a) a positively prepared plan**

62. The NPPF states that:

**“The plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development”<sup>5</sup>.**

63. In preparing the Local Plan, Vale of White Horse District Council has worked, and continues to work, in partnership with its neighbouring authorities under the Duty-to-Cooperate and has also undertaken an on-going process of Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that the Local Plan 2031 delivers sustainable development.

64. The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 identifies development site allocations and policies to fully meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements for the Vale of White Horse District. It is underpinned and informed by two key core policies:

- **Core Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**
- **Core Policy 2: Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire**

65. The Duty-to-Cooperate set out in the Localism Act is both a legal duty and test of effective plan-making. It requires cooperation on issues of common concern in order to develop sound local plans.

66. Within Oxfordshire, co-operative working is managed through the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The Board comprises the leaders of all Oxfordshire councils, along with key stakeholders and representatives from business and is supported by an executive committee and officer working groups. Vale of White Horse District Council also works directly with authorities within and outside the county area where it is necessary to plan effectively on matters of strategic and sub-regional significance or cross border interests that are not Oxfordshire-wide.

67. Local Plan 2031: Part 1 describes the process undertaken by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (referred to as the joint Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation) to specify how the identified

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<sup>5</sup> CLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, Paragraph 182

unmet housing need for Oxford City should be apportioned between the neighbouring Oxfordshire authorities.

68. **Core Policy 2** of the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 confirms how the Vale of White Horse will address the quantum of Oxford's unmet housing need, to be provided for within the Vale, through the preparation of Local Plan 2031: Part 2 and includes a clear policy commitment to this effect. The Policy ensures unmet need is addressed in a timely manner, with a robust approach to plan making and prepared in accordance with national policy and legislation
69. The Part 1 plan makes it clear that the preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 will be closely informed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board process, which identified an agreed apportionment for the quantum of Oxford's unmet housing need to be met within the Vale of White Horse as 2,200 dwellings, for the period up to 2031.
70. Local Plan 2031: Part 1 states that:

**“Whilst the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is in preparation, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560. However, if the Part 2 plan is not adopted within two years of the adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, then from the time until the adoption of the Part 2 plan, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560 plus the agreed quantum of Oxford’s unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse district”<sup>6</sup>.**

71. On this basis, the Vale of White Horse housing requirement, on adoption of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2, or from two years after adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, whichever is sooner, will be at least **22,760 dwellings**, subject to the plan making process.

#### **b) a justified plan**

72. The NPPF states that:

**“The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence”.**

73. Local Plan 2031: Part 1 sets out a Spatial Strategy for the distribution of growth across the district. The Part 1 and Part 2 plans were informed by: a detailed understanding of the issues facing the district; a detailed range of evidence (including, for example, an assessment of flood risk, transport impacts and landscape); and by taking into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and where appropriate the housing white paper<sup>7</sup> to develop locally distinctive policies.
74. The Part 1 and Part 2 plans have also been informed by other plans and strategies, including: the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP)<sup>8</sup>; the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)<sup>9</sup>; and other strategies and programmes of the District Council, town and parish councils, neighbouring authorities and other organisations. The Local Plan 2031 (Parts 1 and 2) will help to facilitate the delivery of many of the aspirations and objectives set out in these other plans and strategies.
75. A series of reasonable alternatives were developed and considered to inform the Publication Version of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2. The reasonable alternatives are referred to in the

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<sup>6</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (2016); Paragraph 1.27, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

<sup>7</sup> The Local Plan 2031 Part 2 has been reviewed in light of the Housing White Paper to ensure conformity with national policy and guidance.

<sup>8</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2016) Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031, available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/connecting-oxfordshire>

<sup>9</sup> Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan*; available at: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/strategic-economic-plan>

Supporting Topic Papers<sup>10</sup>. The alternatives have also been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which is described further below.

### **c) an effective plan**

76. The NPPF states that:

**“The Plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities”.**

77. To ensure the Local Plan 2031 forms a realistic, deliverable and viable plan, there has been close cooperation with landowners and developers to confirm that the additional development sites being allocated in the Part 2 plan are both genuinely available and deliverable within the plan period. A Local Plan Viability Study has been published alongside this Publication Version of the Local Plan Part 2<sup>11</sup>.

78. The Council has worked closely with organisations such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Highways England, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council who are responsible for providing or managing key services, including water resources, education and transport.

79. The Part 1 plan sets out examples of the Council’s commitment to working with our partners to ensure proper sustainable planning can be achieved across administrative boundaries<sup>12</sup>. This work is ongoing and examples include:

- the ‘Memorandum of Co-operation’ between local authorities in the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area was signed on 26 September 2016 and remains extant. Under this memorandum the authorities have agreed the apportionment of the working assumption unmet need figure of 15,000 homes. In addition, bi-lateral discussions have taken place between the Vale and Oxford City Council to discuss how the quantum of Oxford’s unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale can be planned for
- working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure we plan effectively for job growth and housing needs along with supporting infrastructure across the Science Vale, including Didcot Garden Town (see Chapter 2 for more details)
- a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to agree an approach to delivering strategic highway infrastructure across the Science Vale area, including those that span the district boundaries
- working in partnership with other Oxfordshire authorities to plan for strategic infrastructure delivery across Oxfordshire as a whole, including consideration for cross border planning (beyond Oxfordshire) and beyond the plan period (i.e. after 2031)<sup>13</sup>
- working jointly with Swindon Borough Council and Oxfordshire County Council, the A420 Corridor Study has been published which facilitates cross border working and planning for growth along this important corridor, including the New Eastern Villages, and
- supporting work of Thames Water and the Environment Agency to plan for future water supply and flood alleviation<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> A series of topic papers and technical studies are available from the Council website at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

<sup>11</sup> Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Viability Update (2017), available at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

<sup>12</sup> Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper (2017), available at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

<sup>13</sup> Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy: Stage 1 Report (2017), available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

80. The approach to preparing the Local Plan 2031 is considered to be fully consistent with the Localism Act 2011. The Council has worked collaboratively with local communities, stakeholders and neighbouring authorities and are consulting widely to ensure, as far as possible, that the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 reflects the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives set out in the Part 1 plan. Where communities are already working to develop a neighbourhood plan, or a neighbourhood plan is in place, these plans have helped to inform the preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2.

#### **d) a plan that is consistent with National Policy**

81. The NPPF states that:

**“The plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the framework”.**

82. The preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 has involved the testing of reasonable alternatives through Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Both reports have been published alongside this document<sup>15</sup>.

### **Local Plan options considered and not recommended**

83. The Council has followed a comprehensive approach to plan preparation and the plan has been informed by technical evidence, formal and informal consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

84. An example of how alternatives have been considered include the approach followed for selecting sites, which has been very comprehensive, and included the consideration of more than 400 sites. This approach will be set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper<sup>16</sup>

85. The SA process is iterative and has been prepared alongside plan preparation. The SA considers a series of alternatives, including for example those set out in Box 6.11 in the appended SA Report. These include for example, considering higher and lower growth options within the Abingdon-on-Thames and South East Vale Sub-Areas and is informed by the emerging evidence being prepared alongside plan preparation.

86. As an example, a lower growth option within the Abingdon-on-Thames Sub Area is considered unreasonable given the need for the Vale to provide for the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale.

### **Financial Implications**

87. The next stage of the Local Plan process, including the Examination can be funded from within existing planning policy budget.

88. The development proposed in this Local Plan could generate additional New Homes Bonus subject to the lifespan and continuation of the scheme, increase Council Tax receipts and make

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<sup>14</sup> The Environment Agency is exploring proposals to reduce flood risk in Oxfordshire through its Flood Alleviation Scheme. Further information is available in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Thames Water also is exploring options to meet the future water supply needs of the region, and this could include the need for a major new reservoir between the villages of Drayton, East Hanney and Steventon. Further information is available in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

<sup>15</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) (2017) and Interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (2017); both documents are available to view and access at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

<sup>16</sup> Site Selection Topic Paper (2017), available at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2)

a positive impact on the local economy by providing employment during the construction phase and life of the development. The development proposals may also increase costs to the Council, for example those associated with refuse collection or running leisure services.

89. A Community Infrastructure Levy charge will generate receipts for infrastructure funding from eligible development.

## Legal Implications

90. It is a legal requirement for local planning authorities to produce a local plan and keep it up to date. Once adopted the local plan will replace the remaining saved policies<sup>17</sup> of the Local Plan 2011 as the basis for development management decision-making in the district, alongside the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

91. The duty-to-cooperate on cross boundary matters relevant to plan-making is a legal test that must be passed before a plan can proceed to examination.

## Risks

92. There is a policy commitment set out in the Part 1 plan that sets out when the agreed quantum of unmet housing for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale will form part of the Vale's housing requirement:

**“Whilst the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is in preparation the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560. However, if the Part 2 plan is not adopted within two years of the adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, then from the time until the adoption of the Part 2 plan, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560 plus the agreed quantum of Oxford’s unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse District”<sup>18</sup>.**

93. Once the Local Plan Part 2 is submitted to the Secretary of State, the examination timetable is out of the hands of the Council. If the Part 2 plan is not adopted by the end of 2018, there is a risk that the increased housing requirement would make it more difficult for the Council to maintain an up-to-date five-year housing supply and that in the circumstances where it did not have a supply, the presumption in favour of development would apply, and could lead to development in less suitable or sustainable locations than those set out in this plan.

## Concluding recommendations

94. Cabinet is requested to recommend to Full Council that the Publication Version Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, together with supporting technical evidence and papers, be published for a period of six weeks under Regulations 19 and 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and thereafter submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Formal recommendations are set out at the beginning of this report.

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<sup>17</sup> The Saved Local Plan 2011 policy relating to development at Grove Airfield (H5) will continue to be saved.

<sup>18</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (2016). Paragraph 1.27



## **Appendix 1: list of local plan evidence base studies:**

1. Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (HRA)
2. Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)
3. Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) Study
4. Sustainable Transport Study
5. Landscape Assessment of Proposed Sites
6. Landscape Character Assessment of District
7. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
8. Water Cycle Study
9. Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment
10. Leisure Strategy
11. Green Infrastructure Strategy
12. Infrastructure Delivery Plan
13. Green Belt Assessment of Proposed Sites
14. Exceptional Circumstances for development within Green Belt at Dalton Barracks
15. Exceptional Circumstances for development within AONB at Harwell Campus
16. Equality Impacts Assessment (EqIA)

## **Appendix 2: list of topic papers:**

1. Sites Selection Topic Paper
2. Duty-to-Cooperate Topic Paper
3. Housing Policies Topic Paper
4. Employment Policies Topic Paper
5. Transport Policies Topic Paper
6. Environmental policies Topic Paper
7. Approach to addressing Oxford Unmet Need Topic Paper

## **Appendix 3: draft Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites**

See separate cover

## **Appendix 4: draft Consultation Statement of the Preferred Options Consultation responses**

See separate cover

## **Appendix 5: draft Sustainability Appraisal Report, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment**

See separate cover