



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire District Council

LDF MONITORING REPORT

1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LDF MONITORING REPORT 2012

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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.1 This is the West Oxfordshire LDF monitoring report for 2011/12.

I.2 The report focuses on the following issues:

- LDF progress
- Policy implementation
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Duty to co-operate

LDF Progress

I.3 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan (previously referred to as 'Core Strategy') has been delayed for a number of reasons. The Draft Local Plan was published for consultation in November 2012 and it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be published later in 2013. Work on the site allocations and development management DPD is on hold pending adoption of the Local Plan.

Policy Implementation

I.4 In terms of the impact of Local Plan policies, a number of interesting trends can be identified.

Housing

I.5 The residential build-rate within the District has fallen over the last 4 years. A total of 359 new homes were built in the reporting year and although completions are expected to fall below 300 next year (2012/13) they are expected to increase in subsequent years (*Chart 1* and *Table 6*).

I.6 The number of new-build affordable homes completed during the reporting year (181) is at its highest level since 2007. The total of new-build affordable homes completed since 2006 is almost 760 – well over 20% of all completions since that year (*Table 2*).

I.7 Despite the recent recession, planning applications have continued to come forward and West Oxfordshire's 'stock' of unimplemented residential planning permissions and allocated housing sites enables us to demonstrate a housing land supply of well in excess of 6 years (*Table 5*).

I.8 The NPPF encourages the re-use of previously-developed land and during the reporting year, over 40% of residential completions took place on such land. This figure is expected to rise to 60% in the next year (2012/13)

Economy

I.9 West Oxfordshire retains a relatively diverse local economy with manufacturing retaining an above average presence in the District, against a national picture of decline in this sector.

I.10 Total business turnover from tourism related activities has increased by 2.6% to £255m since last year.

I.11 The proportion of working age people claiming job seekers allowance has increased by 0.1% to 1.4% since the last monitoring period. This remains lower than the regional and national averages.

- I.12 Completions of business related development have decreased greatly since last year. This is due to the completion of significant military-related business floorspace during the previous monitoring period.
- I.13 Loss of employment land continues to be resisted and as such, the main towns retain a flexible supply of land and premises for business development to meet existing demand.
- I.14 Town centre vibrancy and viability remains strong in the District.

Environment

- I.15 There have been no additional sites allocated for their wildlife value during the reporting year although the extent of some of the existing sites has changed slightly.
- I.16 There has been an increase of two species of UK Biodiversity Action Plan species in West Oxfordshire.
- I.17 The population of Water Voles in West Oxfordshire's waterways has continued to recover.
- I.18 There has been a decline in the condition of some SSSIs in the District with over 4% of the total resource now in unfavourable, declining condition.
- I.19 The number of farmland birds recorded in recent surveys has declined for some species including lapwing, yellowhammer and grey partridge although numbers of skylark and linnet have increased.
- I.20 The sustainability of buildings in West Oxfordshire continues to improve with 1,255 renewable energy installations with a capacity of 3,635Kw, recorded in the District in 2011/12.

Neighbourhood Planning

- I.21 There is one Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) underway in the District at Chipping Norton. There are no Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) in place.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- I.22 The Council has agreed in principle to undertake the further work necessary to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) into West Oxfordshire. Work is currently on-going and it is anticipated that a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) will be published for consultation in summer 2013.

Duty to Co-Operate

- I.23 In terms of the duty to co-operate, the Council continues to work constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with other local authorities and relevant bodies both in relation to the Local Plan and the supporting evidence base.

2 ABOUT WEST OXFORDSHIRE

- 2.1 West Oxfordshire covers an area of approximately 71,500 hectares and, with a population density of a little under 1.5 persons per hectare, is one of the most sparsely populated areas in the Country and has the lowest population density of all of the Oxfordshire districts. In addition to the third of the District that falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, another 1,610 hectares forms part of the Oxford Green Belt, both contributing to a special and distinctive landscape character. 3,200 listed buildings, 50 conservation areas, 16 parks and gardens of special historic interest and the world heritage site of Blenheim Palace complement that unique landscape to form one of the country's most significant areas for national and international tourism.
- 2.2 Around 40% of West Oxfordshire's residents live within the two larger towns of Witney (about 27,500) and Carterton (about 15,000). Between them, these two towns cover an area of less than 1,200 hectares, resulting in a population density of less than one person per hectare for the remainder of the District. Although the remaining 62,500 residents living within the remaining 130 towns and villages are connected through a fairly comprehensive network of roads and bridleways, many of these are in a poor state of repair and public transport, vital in such a rural environment, is very limited.
- 2.3 The national road network connects the District to nearby large towns and cities – Oxford to the east, Cheltenham to the west, Swindon to the south and Banbury to the north – and the Cotswold and Cherwell Valley railway lines pass through West Oxfordshire, connecting residents to larger cities, such as London and Birmingham, further afield. A number of rivers, such as the Thames and the Windrush, whilst also offering opportunities for travel to other centres outside of the District, also perform an important tourism role. *Figure 1* shows the locations of West Oxfordshire's main character areas, settlements and transport network.
- 2.4 West Oxfordshire's economy is both robust and diverse, with a total of 49,000 jobs (a job density of 0.75). A large majority of employee jobs (80%) are within the service sector and the business turnover from tourism-related jobs remains an important contribution to the continuing strength of the District's economy. At the same time, West Oxfordshire businesses continue to employ a relatively high proportion of workers within the manufacturing sector (nearly 14% of employee jobs) and play an important role, nationally, in the specialist fields of motorsport and high performance engineering. Whilst the percentage of unemployed working age people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) stands at 3.9% nationally, within West Oxfordshire the figure is just 1.4%.
- 2.5 West Oxfordshire has an ageing population and one in four of the residents is aged 60 or over¹. Between 2001 and 2011, there has been a 31% increase in the number of residents in this age bracket: higher than any other

¹ ONS Census 2011

Oxfordshire district and much higher than the 22% increase for England as a whole. At 80.0 years for men and 83.8 for women, average life expectancy in West Oxfordshire is also better than the England averages of 78.6 and 82.6, respectively². Although the rate of obesity in West Oxfordshire adult residents is slightly lower than the average for England, it is higher than all other Oxfordshire authorities, apart from Cherwell, which is 0.5% higher. However, at 14.4%, obesity in children is lower than the England average (19.0%) and much lower than the worst area in the Country (26.5%). A greater proportion (15.1%) of West Oxfordshire’s adults are physically active than any of the other Oxfordshire districts or England (11.2% average).

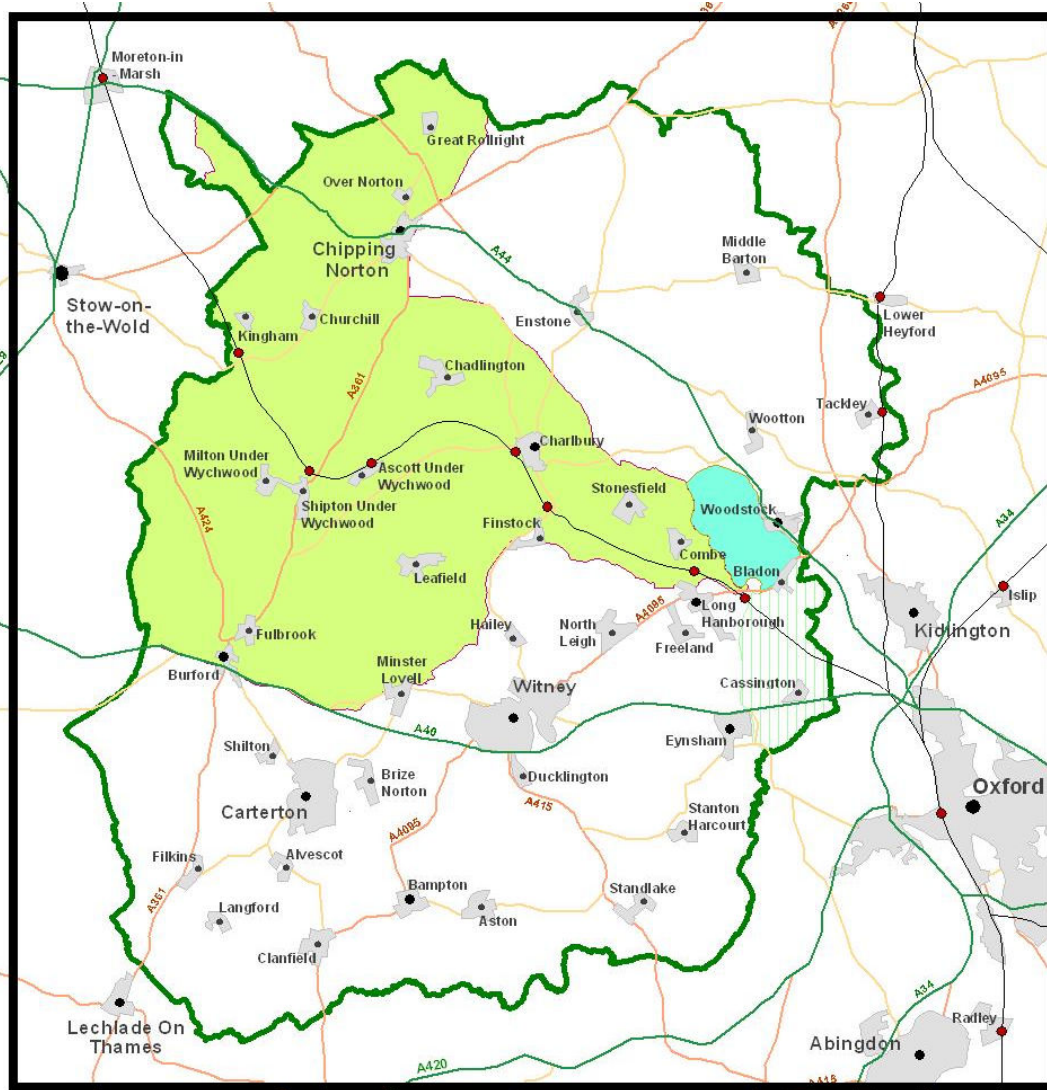


Figure 1
West Oxfordshire

² www.healthprofiles.info

- 2.6 The average price for a home in West Oxfordshire is £293,881, an increase of 1.6% over the last year. Although this is the second lowest of the Oxfordshire districts, it is 23% higher than the UK average. Although a slight improvement over the previous year, the housing 'affordability ratio' in West Oxfordshire (the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings) was still 8.95 in 2012. There are over 46,000 dwellings in West Oxfordshire and a little over 13% of these are affordable homes, managed by registered social providers.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 All local authorities are required, under Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to produce a monitoring report which sets out a range of information in relation to the Local Development Framework (LDF) including the progress of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), a housing trajectory (where policies in the plan include specific housing targets) and the extent to which any relevant development plan policies are being met. It should also report on how the local authority has satisfied the 'duty to co-operate' and set out information on any neighbourhood plans that have been introduced.
- 3.2 Importantly there is a current move towards greater transparency in monitoring reports with regard to how data is collected. In particular, authorities are now encouraged to make new data that has been collected for monitoring purposes accessible to their communities, on-line, as soon as possible after that information becomes available. This data may still be fed into, and form part of, a periodic report at a later date. This monitoring report relates to the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012.
- 3.3 However, as part of our commitment to try to publish data that is as current and as relevant as possible, an update monitoring report will follow, at the beginning of October 2013, and this will cover the period from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. From that point forward it is expected that monitoring reports or updates will be published at least every six months.
- 3.4 It should be noted that there is no longer a requirement for the monitoring report to be submitted to Government and there is no longer an obligation to report on a set of government-imposed indicators. Instead, local authorities are free to include those indicators that they feel best demonstrate the performance of their policies or are of particular interest or relevance in their area.

4 LDF PROGRESS

4.1 The Council has in place a project plan known as a 'Local Development Scheme' or LDS. This sets out which planning documents will be produced and when so that local communities and businesses are able to get involved at the appropriate time.

4.2 The previous LDS is now out of date and will soon be updated. It identifies two main development plan documents under preparation: the Core Strategy (now referred to as Local Plan) and a Site Allocations and Development Management document.

Local Plan (previously referred to as 'Core Strategy')

4.3 The Local Plan is the most important document within the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF) setting out the overall strategy for the District in the period 2011 – 2029.

4.4 In the previous monitoring report (2010/11) it was anticipated that the Local Plan would be published in March 2012, submitted to Government in May 2012, examined by the Planning Inspectorate in August/September 2012 and adopted by January 2013.

4.5 Unfortunately it has not been possible to achieve these milestones for a number of reasons. In March 2012, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (part of the MOD) informed the Council of a reduction in their service housing requirements at Carterton.

4.6 In light of this material change in circumstances it was decided that further consultation on the local plan would be needed before it could be formally published and submitted to Government.

4.7 However, before this could happen, in June 2012, the proposed Cogges Link Road (CLR) scheme at Witney was effectively shelved due to a decision not to allow the compulsory purchase order that was needed for the scheme to go ahead.

4.8 The Draft Local Plan was subsequently published for consultation in November 2012. Around 2,000 comments were received and these are currently being analysed.

4.9 It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be published later in 2013. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) will be updated accordingly and made available on the Council's website.

Site Allocations and Development Management

4.10 The current LDS also includes reference to a second development plan document – a Site Allocations and Development Management DPD which would sit alongside the Local Plan and deal with smaller site allocations (e.g. housing) and development management policies (policies used to help guide day to day planning decisions).

4.11 Initial consultation on the document took place in March 2008 and July 2008. However, all preparatory work has now ceased whilst staff resources are devoted to the completion of the new Local Plan.

- 4.12 A formal decision whether to progress the site allocations document will be made in due course together with a proposed timetable for completion. Further information will be set out in the next monitoring report and updated Local Development Scheme (LDS).

5 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSING

Provision and delivery over the plan period

- 5.1 In this section we provide information on the amount, type and location of new housing built in the District as well as how much is forecast to come forward.

Number of new homes built

- 5.2 In the 'reporting year' a total of 359 new dwellings were built. Including these, a total of 3,420 new homes have been built since 2006.
- 5.3 Notably, over half of the housing built since 2006 (1,753 homes) has been provided on large allocated and redevelopment sites as listed in *Table 1* below.

Site	No. of homes	Completed since 1 st April 2006
Bridge Street Mills, Witney	226	212
Early's of Witney	217	151
Madley Park, Witney	1,149	324
Local Plan Proposal 13: Marriotts Walk	143	143
Dark Lane	161	161
Shilton Park, Carterton	1,505	629
Parker Knoll, Chipping Norton	133	133
	3,534	1,753

Table 1: Development on larger sites between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2012

- 5.4 As these larger sites have been completed, the build rate within the District has gradually fallen from a peak of 865 homes in 2007/8 (the highest build-rate for over 20 years) to 359 homes completed during the reporting year. This is illustrated on *Chart 1*.

Where were these new homes built?

- 5.5 Both the adopted and emerging Local Plans seek to steer the majority of new development towards the more sustainable service centres. In line with this strategy, during the reporting year, over two thirds (244) of all additional dwellings were completed within these service centres, with over half of these being developed on Local Plan allocated sites in Woodstock and Eynsham. Looking forward, around three quarters of the new homes with extant (unimplemented) planning permission will be completed in the District's service centres.
- 5.6 Between 2001 and 2012 over 60% of all housing completions (3,736 of 6,191) in West Oxfordshire, have taken place on sites allocated through the development plan process. However, many of the adopted Local Plan allocations have now been completed, or are nearing completion, and during the reporting year nearly three quarters of the 359 homes completed were

on previously unidentified sites. Since 2001, 40% of all new dwellings have been completed on previously unidentified sites – an average of over 220 homes each year.

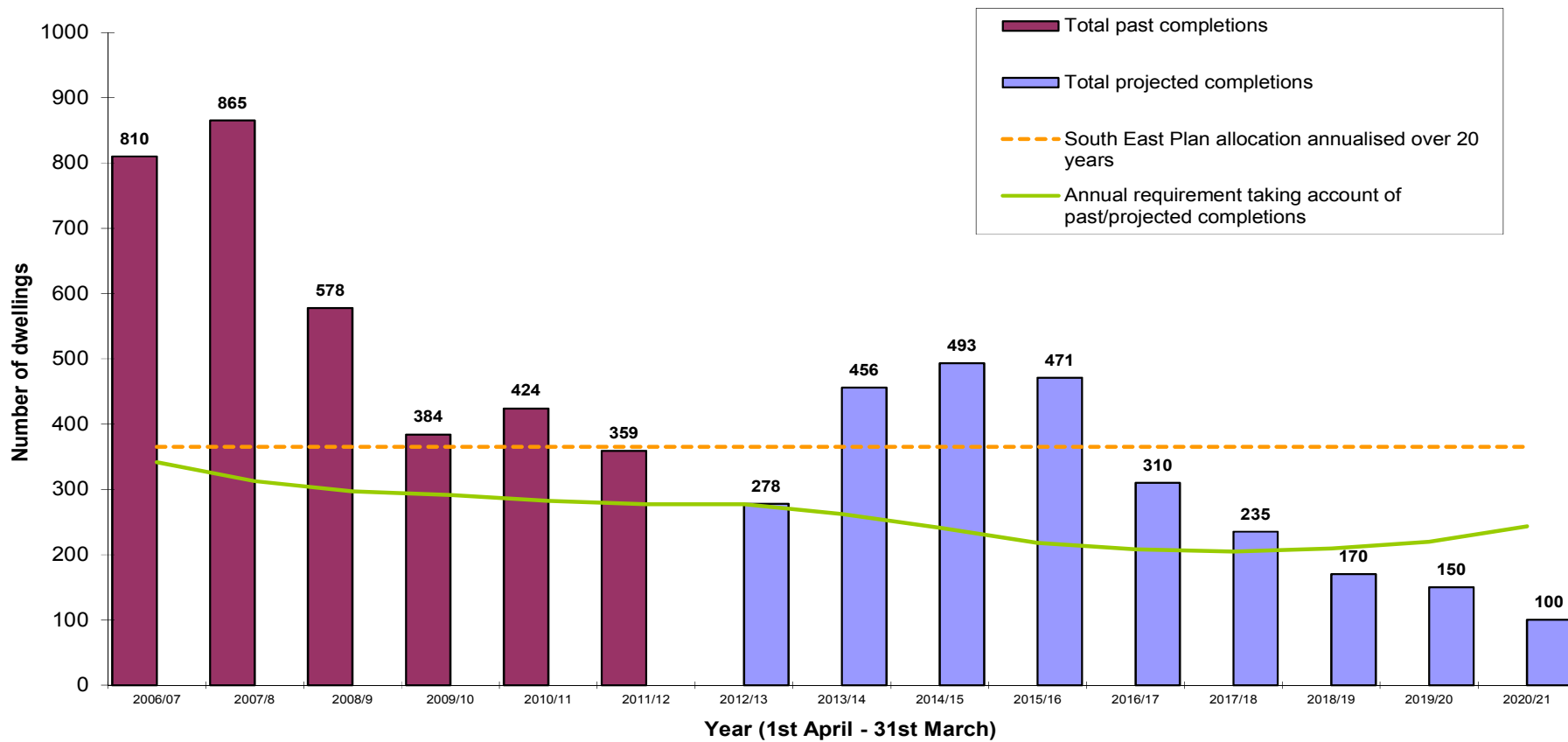
- 5.7 Looking forwards, over 71% of all homes with unimplemented planning permission (at 1st April 2012) are to be built on previously unidentified sites. Although certain sources such as redundant barns and business premises are likely to reduce over time, it is expected that delivery from such ‘windfall’ sites will continue.

Proportion of ‘brownfield’ and ‘greenfield’ development

- 5.8 The NPPF encourages the re-use of previously developed land and suggests that planning authorities may choose to set ‘locally appropriate’ targets. The adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 includes a target of 40-45% of new residential development on previously-developed land. Although there are no specific targets in the Draft Local Plan (2012) its policies strongly encourage the re-use of existing buildings and previously-developed land.
- 5.9 During the reporting year, 149 of the 359 new homes built, were on previously-developed land (41.5%). This percentage is expected to increase to around 60% in the year 2012/13. However, the Draft Local Plan identifies several Greenfield sites and if these come forward, they are likely to increase the proportion of homes built on greenfield land. Nevertheless, there are still opportunities to re-use land including Buttercross Works in Witney and the REEMA sites in Carterton.
- 5.10 Since 1st April 2001, 46% of all new homes built in the District have been completed on previously-developed land - a very high percentage given the rural character of the area. This is illustrated on Chart 2.

Chart 1 – Projected housing completions for the SE Plan period (2006-2026). **NB** This trajectory includes only identified sites – i.e. completed sites, those with planning permission and those allocated within the adopted west Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

South East Plan housing trajectory for West Oxfordshire
(excludes any allowance for windfall development)



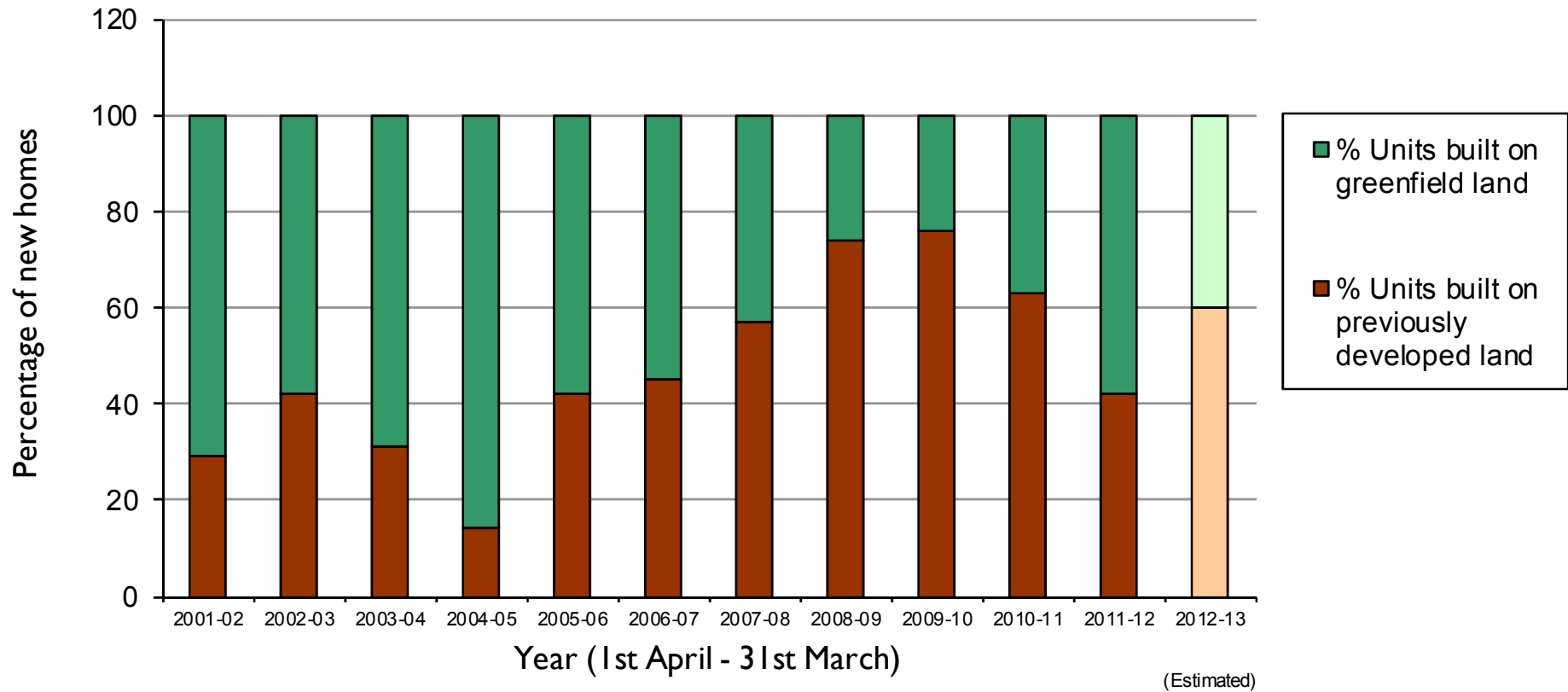


Chart 2 - Proportion of new homes completed on previously developed and greenfield land in West Oxfordshire

Type and Mix of New homes

- 5.11 The NPPF expects local authorities to plan for a mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups within the community. As well as families and single people this will include the requirements of older residents, 'people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes'.
- 5.12 Information on the future housing needs of West Oxfordshire is contained in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the District Council's various Housing Needs Assessments, the latest of which is available on our website at:
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/publications/8628-496.pdf>
- 5.13 Key issues for West Oxfordshire include the delivery of affordable housing, the growth of smaller households and meeting the needs of older residents.
- 5.14 In terms of affordability, despite the fact that the average West Oxfordshire property price has fallen over the last 4 years, to the current £293,880, this is still higher than the national average property price and the 2011 HNA update shows that over 80% of concealed households earn less than the entry level £28,200 income required to purchase a one bed flat in the District's cheapest market area. It is worth noting that although the level of house sales in the District had fallen by 25% between the first quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2011, it had fallen by over 30% in England and Wales, over the same period.
- 5.15 Through adopted Local Plan policies H11 and H12, 759 new-build affordable homes have been built within the District over the last six years, an average of 127 each year (see *Table 2*). The Council's affordable housing target, which had been set as a minimum of 110 dwellings for the year 2010/11, has been revised to enable the provision of at least 150 new affordable homes between April 2012 and April 2014.
- 5.16 Although the Council aims to complete at least 30% of new affordable homes in the more rural areas of the District, between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2011, the majority were provided within the three larger settlements of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, as part of significant development on allocated sites, or through the redevelopment of large commercial premises.
- 5.17 As a result about 23% of all new affordable units were completed elsewhere within West Oxfordshire, during this period. However, in the reporting year, all but 12 of the new affordable homes were delivered outside of the three main towns, bringing the overall percentage of new, rural, affordable homes to 40% over the six years. Over a third of the new affordable units covered by extant planning permissions will be provided in these more rural areas. The location of affordable housing delivery since 2006 is shown in *Table 2*.

West Oxfordshire LDF Monitoring Report 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012

Site	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Totals
Cheatle Crescent, Burford					13		13
Shilton Park, NE Carterton		38	38	17	40		133
Queens Road, Carterton		9					9
Quarry Road, Chadlington*						12	12
Parker Knoll, Chipping Norton	40	13					53
Rock Hill, Chipping Norton	13						13
Furlong Row, Clanfield	3						3
Mill Lane, Clanfield*			6				6
Queens Crescent, Clanfield	5						5
Stonesfield Road, Combe*						8	8
Ducklington Mill, Ducklington			8				8
Crossways, Enstone					4		4
Filandic, Enstone		2					2
Manor Close, Enstone						5	5
Merton Close, Eynsham*					40		40
Eynsham East						50	50
Swan Lane, Hanborough*						24	24
The Elms, Langford*						8	8
Fairspear Road, Leafield*	10						10
Ansell Way, Milton-u-Wychwood						10	10
Choicehill, Over Norton*			6				6
Akeman Street, Ramsden*				5			5
Malthouse Farm, Standlake					2		2
Oxford Downs CC, Standlake		2					2
16 Blackditch, Stanton Harcourt*						16	16
The Ridings, Stonesfield*						8	8
Early's of Witney	10	1					11
Dark Lane, Witney		15	33				48
MadleyPark, North East Witney	14	47	3				64
Tower Hill Works, Witney	18	6					24
Bridge Street Mill, Witney		53					53
Marriotts Walk, Witney					20		20
Valance Crescent, Witney					11		11
Wadards Meadow, Witney					4		4
Springfield School, Witney						12	12
Banbury Road, Woodstock*					16		16
Marlborough School, Woodstock					13	15	28
Hensington Farm, Woodstock						5	5
Marriott Close, Wootton*						8	8
TOTALS	113	186	94	22	163	181	759

*Sites developed under the Local Plan's Rural Exception Policy

Table 2 - Locations of new-build affordable housing completed 2006/07 – 2011/12

5.18 167 of the new build affordable homes were provided on Rural Exception Sites (RES) which cater for specific local housing needs on sites that would not normally be released for residential development. *Table 3* shows housing delivery on RES sites since 1992.

Parish	Number of dwellings	Year(s) completed
Ascott-under-Wychwood	6	1997
Bampton	31	1992
Charlbury	44	1994, 2003
Clanfield	6	2008
Enstone	8	1992
Fulbrook	12	1992
Hailey	12	1999
Kingham	13	1998, 2002
Langford	16	1994, 2011
Leafield	10	2006
Over Norton	6	2008
Ramsden	5	2009
Shipton-under-Wychwood	10	1995
Stonesfield	16	2005, 2011
Tackley	16	1994, 1997
Woodstock	31	1992, 2010
Wootton	15	2000, 2011
Eynsham	40	2010
Chadlington	12	2011
Combe	8	2011
Long Hanborough	24	2011
Stanton Harcourt	16	2011
	357	

Table 3 – Rural Exception Sites completed by parish since 1992

5.19 The Council seeks to achieve an overall tenure mix within new affordable housing developments of 2 social rent homes for every intermediate one. During the reporting year, just over 130 of the new build affordable properties were provided for social rent and since 2006 about 65% of new affordable homes have been social rent. A large majority of the affordable homes with extant planning permission at 1st April 2012 (where the tenure is known) are for social rent (nearly 90%).

5.20 In terms of household sizes, the 2011 Census shows an overall decrease in the average number of persons in each household within West Oxfordshire. In 2001 there were, on average, 2.44 persons per household and by 2011 this

average had dropped to 2.37. This level of occupancy is expected to fall further to 2.26, in 2029.

5.21 Despite this continuing drop in the occupancy rate, the proportion of smaller properties (1 and 2 beds) built in the reporting year has dropped for the second year running. Only around 200 one and two bed properties were completed, 80 less than in the previous year, whilst nearly 160 larger three and four bed homes were built, about 20 more than last year.

5.22 *Chart 3* shows the percentage split of bedroom numbers in dwellings built since 2006. Although the proportion of smaller properties completed has fallen since last year, both the number and the proportion of one and two bed homes permitted in 2011/12 are higher than in 2010/11.

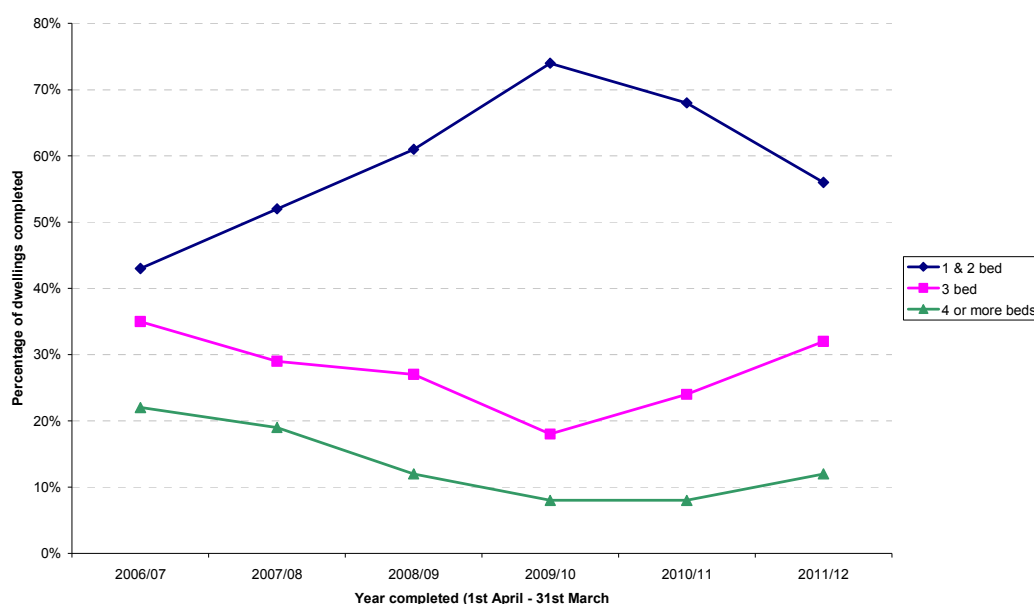


Chart 3 - Number of bedrooms in completed dwellings

5.23 Where bedroom numbers are known, 58% of homes permitted in the reporting year will be smaller one or two bed properties (just over 270 homes). This compares with a proportion of 50% (and only 160 properties) in the previous year (see *Table 4*).

DETAILED PLANNING PERMISSIONS GRANTED BY YEAR			
<u>Year</u>	<u>1 & 2 bed</u>	<u>3 bed</u>	<u>4 or more beds</u>
2006/07	58%	31%	11%
2007/08	57%	31%	12%
2008/09	61%	22%	17%
2009/10	57%	29%	14%
2010/11	50%	32%	18%
2011/12	58%	30%	12%

Table 4 - Annual residential permissions by bedroom numbers

Future delivery of new homes

- 5.24 In terms of the future supply of new homes there are two 'targets' to have regard to; the South East Plan (2009) and the Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2012). The South East Plan target is 7,300 from 2006 – 2026 (365 per year) and taking account of the number of homes built from 2006 – 2011 (3,420) the remaining requirement is 3,880 in the period up to 2026 (277 per year).
- 5.25 The Draft Local Plan target is at least 5,500 new homes from 2011 – 2029 (306 per year). Taking into account the 359 homes built in the reporting year, this leaves 5,141 new homes in the period to 2029 (302 per year).
- 5.26 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to demonstrate that they have a five year supply of deliverable housing sites plus an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition. In other words if the annual target is 300 homes per year, the local authority must be able to demonstrate that there are at least 1,500 new homes in the pipeline (i.e. $300 \times 5 = 1,500$) plus 5% to ensure choice and competition.
- 5.27 *Tables 5a* and *5b* illustrate the five year housing land supply for West Oxfordshire based on the South East Plan and the Draft Local Plan respectively. In accordance with Government guidance, the figures shown cover a 5-year period from 1st April 2013.
- 5.28 It should be noted that for robustness, the calculation of 5-year supply does not include any 'windfall' allowance or the Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) identified in the Draft Local Plan (2012) other than the West Witney/North Curbridge SDA which now has a resolution to grant outline planning permission subject to completion of a Section 106 legal agreement.
- 5.29 The National Indicator 159 is a measure of the supply of ready-to-develop housing sites. A figure of 100% represents a 5-year supply and to achieve this percentage, or higher, is considered good performance against the indicator. The percentages in *Tables 5a* and *5b* are 136% and 124% based on the South East Plan and Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan respectively. In effect, this demonstrates that there is a 6.8 and 6.2 year supply of deliverable housing sites depending on which housing target is used.
- 5.30 Further information on the future supply of housing within the District is shown in *Table 6*. This identifies the amount of housing expected to come forward within each of the Draft Local Plan Sub-Areas including sites with planning permission (including rural exception sites) and allocated sites from the adopted Local Plan. This is also illustrated on *Chart 1*.
- 5.31 Other than West Witney/North Curbridge, it does not include the Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) identified in the Draft Local Plan (2012) as these have yet to be agreed through the development plan process. Similarly, it excludes sites identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and makes no allowance for windfall sites (other than those that have already secured planning permission).

	SOURCE	HOMES	NOTES
A	Total SE Plan provision 2006-2026	7,300	
B	Homes completed 1/4/06–31/3/12	3,420	
C	Housing completions expected 1/4/12 – 31/3/13	308	
D	Remaining provision required	3,572	A – B - C
E	Plan period years remaining (1/4/13-31/3/26)	13	
F	Annualised requirement 1/4/13-31/3/17	275	D ÷ E
G	Requirement for next 5 years (2013 to 2017)	1,375	F x 5
H	Deliverable homes on allocated sites with planning permission from 1/4/2013	794	The North Curbridge Strategic Development Area will include 1,000 new homes. However only the 600 that it is expected to be provided between 1/4/13 and 31/3/18 have been included.
I	Deliverable homes on exception sites with planning permission from 1/4/2013	58	
J	Deliverable homes on sites with planning permission which were previously unidentified/ unallocated	739	Those sites which have not yet started are discounted by 10.5% to allow for possible lapses ³
K	Deliverable homes on sites allocated in the Local Plan but without planning permission	280	
	Total deliverable dwellings	1,871	H + I + J + K

Table 5a - Summary of supply of deliverable sites (SEP)

The formula for calculating the proportion of dwellings that are deliverable (NI 159) is:-

$$\frac{\text{The number of dwellings that can be built on deliverable housing sites}}{\text{The housing supply requirement}} \times 100$$

i.e. $1,871 \div 1,375 \times 100 = \underline{136\%}$

³ Since 2001, about 10.5% of dwellings permitted on small previously unidentified sites have lapsed.

	SOURCE	HOMES	NOTES
A	Draft Local Plan Requirement 2011 – 2029	5,500	
B	Homes completed 1/4/11–31/3/12	359	
C	Housing completions expected 1/4/12 – 31/3/13	308	
D	Remaining provision required	4,833	A - B - C
E	Plan period years remaining (1/4/13-31/3/29)	16	
F	Annualised requirement 1/4/13-31/3/17	302	D ÷ E
G	Requirement for next 5 years (2013 to 2017)	1,510	F x 5
H	Deliverable homes on allocated sites with planning permission from 1/4/2013	794	The North Curbridge Strategic Development Area will include 1,000 new homes. However only the 600 that it is expected to be provided between 1/4/13 and 31/3/18 have been included.
I	Deliverable homes on exception sites with planning permission from 1/4/2013	58	
J	Deliverable homes on sites with planning permission which were previously unidentified/ unallocated	739	Those sites which have not yet started are discounted by 10.5% to allow for possible lapses ³
K	Deliverable homes on sites allocated in the Local Plan but without planning permission	280	
	Total deliverable dwellings	1,871	H + I + J + K

Table 5b - Summary of supply of deliverable sites (West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan)

The formula for calculating the proportion of dwellings that are deliverable (NI 159) is:-

$$\frac{\text{The number of dwellings that can be built on deliverable housing sites}}{\text{The housing supply requirement}} \times 100$$

i.e. $1,871 \div 1,510 \times 100 = \underline{124\%}$

West Oxfordshire LDF Monitoring Report 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012

All sites with development of 10 or more units and not completed before 1 st April 2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Total
BURFORD-CHARLBURY – With permission											
Adj to Frethern Close, Burford (RES) – 11/0772/P/FP		15									15
Adj Little Lees, Charlbury (RES) – 11/1771/P/FP	7	8									15
r/o Shipton Road, Milton-u-Wychwood – 10/0950/P/FP			44								44
Estimate of completions on non-allocated small (less than 10 units) sites with permission	27	48	19	7	10						111
Sub-total	34	71	63	7	10						185
CARTERTON – With permission											
63 Burford Road, Carterton – 11/1765/P/FP				12							12
Car Park, Black Bourton Road – 12/1217/P/FP				10							10
Milestone Road, Carterton – 12/1019/P/FP		25	50	18							93
Milestone Road, Carterton – 12/1020/P/FP				30	40	35					105
Allocated											
Lincresta & Hawthorns, Shilton Road, Carterton – 10/0672/P	63										63
Swinbrook Road – LP Proposal 15			30	50	50	50	20				200
Estimate of completions on non-allocated small (less than 10 units) sites with permission	17	21	22	9							69
Sub-total	80	46	102	129	90	85	20				552
CHIPPING NORTON – With permission											
The Mill, Station Road, Chipping Norton – 07/0127/P/FP				24							24
Land at Cox's Lane, Enstone – 12/0494/P/FP		32									32
Allocated											
Local Plan Proposal 1			30	50							80
Estimate of completions on non-allocated small (less than 10 units) sites with permission	29	36	39	9	3						116
Sub-total	29	68	69	83	3						252
EYNHAM-WOODSTOCK – With permission											
Land at Spareacre Lane, Eynsham – 11/1291/P/OP			12								12
Youngs Garage, 10 Oxford Street, Woodstock – 11/0153/P/FP	26	7									33
Sansoms Court, Shipton Road, Woodstock – 12/0760/P/FP	13										13
Land adj Riely Close, Long Hanborough – 11/0936/P/FP			15								15
Eynsham East (remaining commitment) – 08/1341/P/FP	17	10									27
Estimate of completions on non-allocated small (less than 10 units) sites with permission	37	67	29	12	3						148
Sub-total	93	84	56	12	3						248
WITNEY – With permission											
1a Crawley Road, Witney – 07/1355/P/FP			14								14
New Leys Farm, Curbridge Road, Witney – 07/1970/P/FP	13										13
Beech House, Ducklington Lane, Witney – 10/1805/P/OP			13								13
102b Woodstock Road, Witney – 11/0048/P/FP		21									21
Moorland Centre, 24 Dark Lane, Witney – 11/1531/P/OP				11							11
Buttercross Works, Witney – 11/1198/P/FP		30	50	55	49						184
10 Newland, Witney – 12/1123/P/FP				11							11
North Curbridge SDA, West Witney – 12/0084/P/OP		50	100	150	150	150	150	150	100		1000
Estimate of completions on non-allocated small (less than 10 units) sites with permission	29	86	26	13	5						159
Sub-total	42	187	203	240	204	150	150	150	100		1426
TOTAL	278	456	493	471	310	235	170	150	100		2663
Units on previously developed land	166	262	196	154	55						833
Units on greenfield land	112	194	297	317	255	235	170	150	100		1830
Percentage on previously developed land	60%	57%	40%	33%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%		
Percentage on greenfield land	40%	43%	60%	67%	82%	100%	100%	100%	100%		

Previously developed	Greenfield
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Table 6 – Estimated year of completion of residential units on identified sites in West Oxfordshire

Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

5.32 In January 2012, West Oxfordshire, along with Cherwell and South Northamptonshire District Councils, commissioned a study to assess the housing needs of gypsies and travellers across the three authority areas (<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/9394-5030.pdf>). Although the study suggested that, generally, respondents were satisfied with existing permanent sites, and only a very small percentage felt that overcrowding was an issue, it did identify a lack of transit accommodation.

5.33 Within West Oxfordshire, the study recorded 10 authorised sites across the District, with 83 pitches, and found a gypsy and traveller population of about 630. *Table 7*, below, shows the sites and pitches identified by the study, along with sites for travelling showpeople. Those highlighted have been added since 1st April 2006.

Site name	Ethnicity	Pitches/plots	
The Furlong, Standlake	English Gypsy/Romany	16	
The Ark, Alvescot	English Gypsy/Romany	1	
Ting Tang Lane, Minster Lovell	English Gypsy/Romany	23	8 added since 1/4/2006
The Paddocks, Bampton	Irish Traveller	11	1 added since 1/4/2006
Gilsons Field, Carterton	English Gypsy/Romany	4	
The Beeches, Chadlington	English Gypsy/Romany	32	
Little Acorn, Stanton Harcourt	Romany	1	
Home Farm, Barnard Gate		5	4 added since 1/4/2006
The Heyes, Kingham		1	
Little Willow, Eynsham		1	
Cuckoo Wood Farm, Freeland		6	
Green Acres, Shilton		1	

Table 7 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites in West Oxfordshire

5.34 In assessing the need for future demand, the January 2012 study found a shortfall of 6 pitches over the five-year period from 2012 to 2017 and a

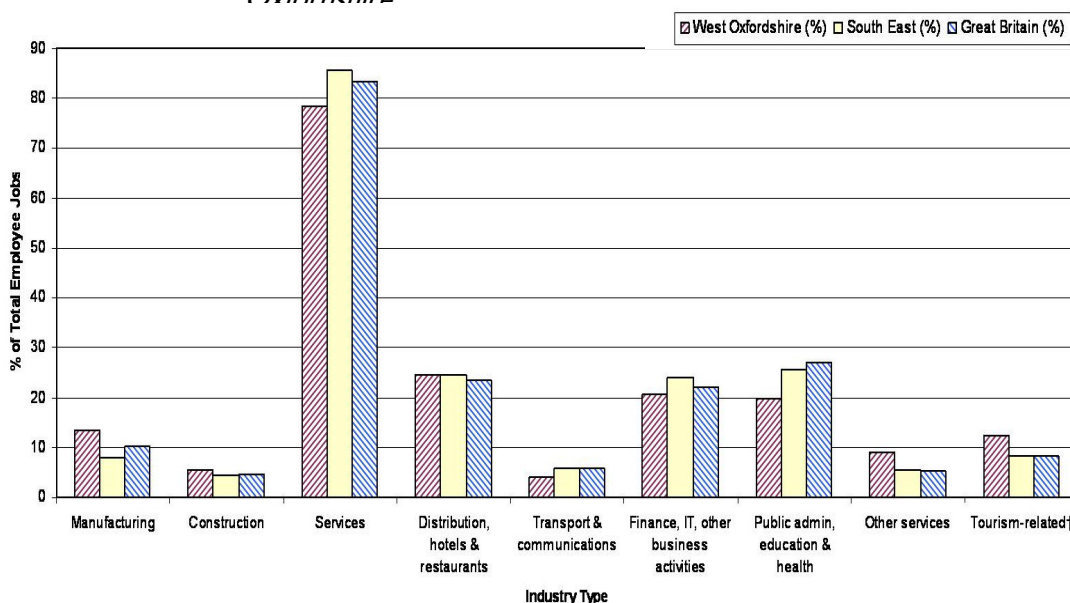
shortfall of 18 pitches over the fifteen year period running to 2027. The study suggests that, along with a review of existing sites to consider possible expansion, a review of unauthorised sites might also be carried out to investigate the circumstances that might enable planning permission to be granted. The emerging West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan echoes this advice by safeguarding and, where appropriate, augmenting existing sites and by providing new sites (either through the development plan process or through submitted planning applications).

EMPLOYMENT

The Local Economy

- 5.35 West Oxfordshire has a relatively strong and healthy local economy with a wide and diverse range of businesses. The Local Plan employment policies seek to support and contribute to this prosperity by ensuring that a wide range of land, sites and premises, together with supporting infrastructure, is available to meet the needs of businesses.
- 5.36 The most recent data indicates that there were 49,000 jobs in total in West Oxfordshire, a jobs density of 0.75⁴. This included 38,900 employee jobs of which the service sector is the largest employer with 78.5% of employee jobs. Manufacturing retains an above average presence in the local economy (13.6% of employee jobs) remaining steady against a national picture of decline in this sector. The District has notable specialisms in motorsport and high performance engineering, medical and optical equipment, technical consultancy and biotechnology.
- 5.37 In the rural area⁵ whilst employment in agriculture has declined it is still an important sector economically and for landscape management. Otherwise in rural areas the types of businesses are similar to those in urban areas, with a high proportion of service based activities⁶. Completions of employment development floor space during the monitoring period totalled 1,772m² with 245m² accounted for in rural areas, the majority of which was in BI uses. Businesses in rural areas tend to be smaller and there is more home-working and self employment. Recent business demography data indicates that the survival rates of enterprises in West Oxfordshire are generally above average⁷.

Chart 4 – Sectors of employment in West Oxfordshire



⁴ Jobs Density (2010) www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁵ Using standard rural-urban definitions the rural area includes all of the District excluding Witney and Carterton

⁶ Understanding Rural Oxfordshire –The Rural economy, Oxfordshire Economic Observatory 2007

⁷ ONS, <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

5.38 Tourism and the visitor economy remains an important sector, with total local business turnover from tourist activity estimated at over £255m in 2010, a marginal rise of 2.6% over 2009⁸. Tourism related jobs continued to grow between 2009 and 2010 and accounted for 12.4% of total jobs, much higher than the rest of the region at 8.2%.

5.39 Indications are that the retail sector is fairing relatively well. The District's town centres are relatively vibrant with low vacancy rates. Further information on town centre development follows in the town centres section.

The local labour market

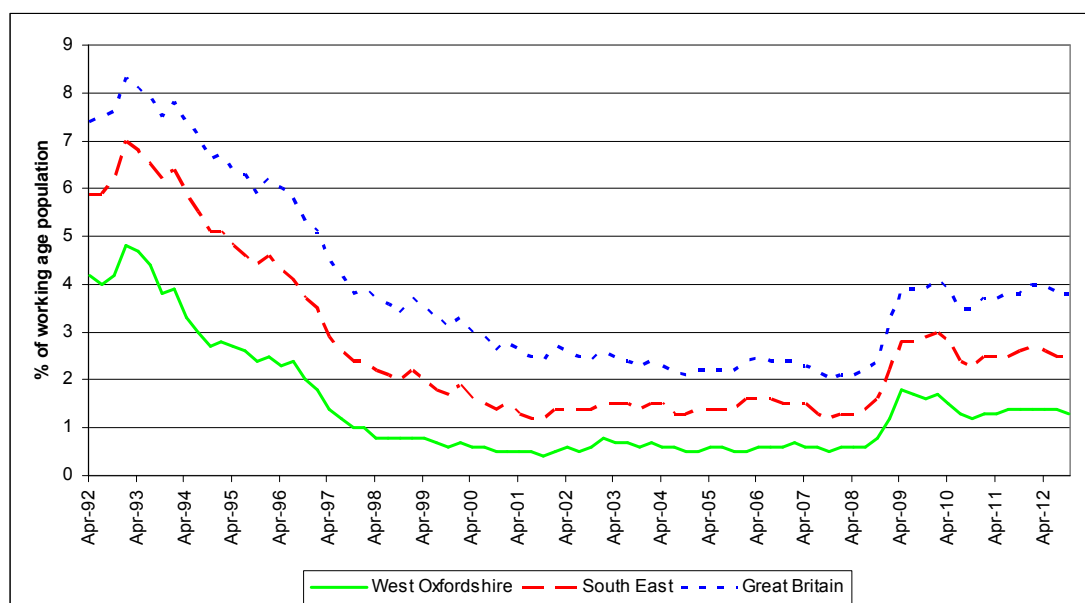


Chart 5 – Unemployment JSA claimants since 1992

5.40 Historically there have been fewer jobs in West Oxfordshire than workers with significant levels of out-commuting to Oxford and other employment centres. The 2001 Census highlighted the fact that 64% of people lived and worked in the District while around 18,000 people commuted out of the District and 10,000 workers commuted in to the District to work.

5.41 Unemployment claimant counts⁹ in April 2012 stood at 1.4%, an increase of 0.1% over April 2011. The rate remains considerably higher than 2008 when the proportion of the working age population claiming JSA fell to 0.6%. It remains lower than the regional and national averages (2.6% and 3.9% respectively). Modelled unemployment rates stand at 3.9% of the economically active working age population which is significantly lower than the south east (5.8%) and Great Britain (7.9%). Economic activity (proportion of working age available for work) at 84.1%¹⁰, and the employment rate (the proportion of the workforce in employment) at 80.4% are above regional and

⁸ Tourism South East Research Services (November 2010) The economic impact of tourism, West Oxfordshire 2010

⁹ Defined as the proportion of working age people claiming Job Seekers Allowance

¹⁰ Defined as proportion of those people of working age (16-64)

national averages. This is an indication that the economy in West Oxfordshire has functioned well during the recent economic downturn.

- 5.42 The median earnings of those working in West Oxfordshire, at £499 per week¹¹, is lower than for those living in the District, at £546 per week – a consequence of commuting to higher paid jobs outside of the District. The house price to earnings ratio (also known as an affordability ratio) in 2011 was 9.89¹² – indicating that lower quartile house prices were almost 10 times higher than lower quartile earnings. The disparity between earnings and house prices has increased since the last monitoring period, indicating that house price increases have outstripped wage increases in the district. High house prices combined with lower wages can make staff recruitment and retention difficult. However, according to the Oxfordshire Employer Skills Survey (2010) 90% of West Oxfordshire employers were satisfied with Oxfordshire as a business base and the labour market was reported as stable. This is despite the fact that 21% of employers in the district report skills gaps compared with 12% in 2008. This may be the result of softer ‘impact skills’ taking on a greater importance than technical skills during the recession.

The local property market

- 5.43 The Local Plan strategy has been to focus employment growth in the main towns to meet the economic needs of the area whilst encouraging small scale employment development in the rural areas. There has been a sharp decline in the amount of employment floorspace completed over the last year in comparison with the previous monitoring period. A total of 1,772 m² of business development was completed over the whole of the district down from 39,029m² the previous year. The completion of new development at RAF Brize Norton during last years monitoring period (24,200m²) accounts for the significant difference in overall employment completions between monitoring phases.
- 5.44 The majority of completions during this period were for BI uses in Carterton with some loss of BI uses recorded throughout the rest of the District. This year marks a return however to recent longer term trends in employment land completions for West Oxfordshire.
- 5.45 A small proportion of employment land has been changed to other uses. Local Plan policy seeks to resist the loss of existing employment sites in urban and rural areas where there is some prospect for their continuing use. This policy helps to maintain a flexible supply of employment sites in the main towns and rural areas. In the current economic climate, when commercial property vacancy rates are higher, there is pressure for the redevelopment of employment sites, mainly to residential use. The retention of existing employment sites is critical to ensuring that the local economy is prepared for the eventual upturn in economic performance.

¹¹ Earnings by workplace (2010) www.nomis.co.uk

¹² Table 576 Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by district. www.communities.gov.uk

	B1a	B1b	B1c	B1 unable to split	Total B1	B2	B8	mixed B	Total (net sq.m)
Main Settlements									
Witney				-230	-230				-230
Larger Settlements									
Carterton				2017	2017				2017
Brize Norton					0				0
Chipping Norton	-260				-260				-260
Eynsham					0				0
Total	-260	0	0	2017	1757			0	1757
Rural Areas				-101	-101	101	245	0	245
Total District	-260	0	0	1686	1426	101	245	0	1772

Table 8 - Net employment floorspace completed (m²) - 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012

Potential supply of employment premises and land

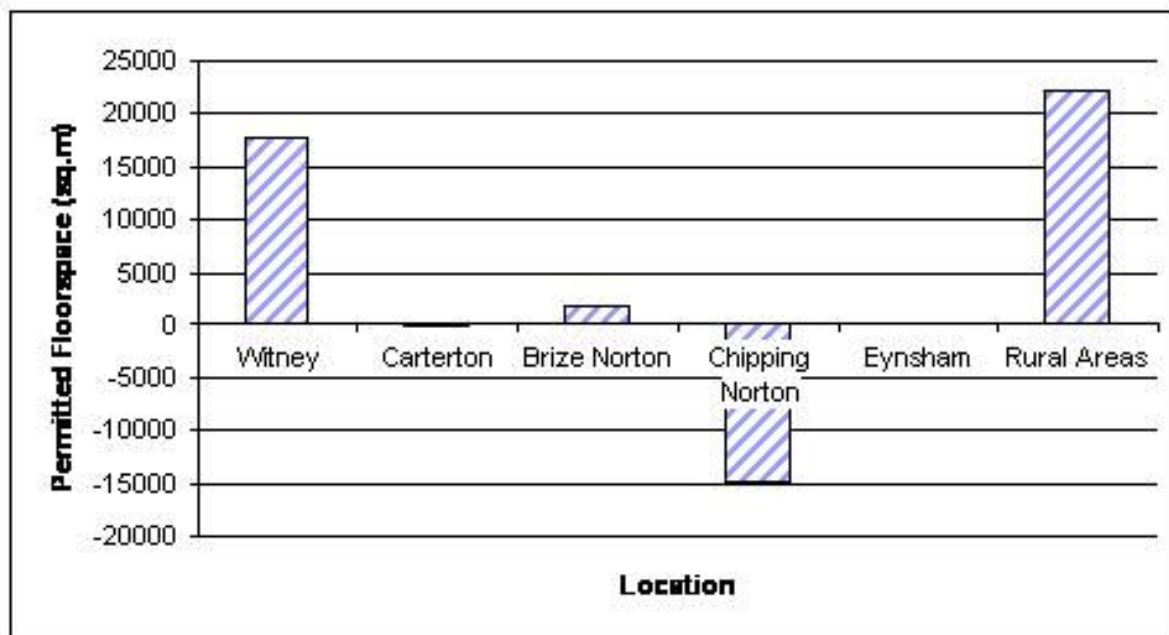


Chart 6: Location of Permitted Employment Floorspace (m²)

5.46 The chart above illustrates where permissions for business development have been granted in the District and where these permissions are still outstanding. It indicates that the majority of business growth is within Witney and the rural areas while some existing business land in Carterton and Chipping Norton has been lost, particularly in Chipping Norton where it appears that approximately 15,000m² of business land has been lost. This can be accounted for by a previous permission for two business units at Chipping Norton Business Park which has now lapsed.

	B1a	B1b	B1c	B1 unable to split	Total B1	B2	B8	mixed B	Total (net sq.m)
Main Settlement									
Witney	-2363	0	382	5366	3385	-940	-11247	26670	17868
Larger Settlements									
Carterton	-172	0	42	290	160	-82	-134	-54	-110
Brize Norton	0	0	1908	0	1908	0	0	0	1908
Chipping Norton	3980	0	0	335	4315	-19005	-199	0	-14889
Eynsham	198	0	0	0	198	199	-348	0	49
Total	4006	0	1950	625	6581	-18888	-681	-54	-13042
Rural Areas									
	1605	693	2974	794	6066	3456	13433	-652	22303
Total District	3248	693	5306	6785	16032	-16372	1505	25964	27129

Table 9: Location and type of permitted employment floorspace (m²) at 1st April 2011

- 5.47 The monitoring data indicates that there is a significant supply of employment floorspace in Witney and the rural areas. The majority of permitted floorspace is for mixed 'B' uses and is indicative of speculative proposals on greenfield sites, allocated in the Local Plan for employment purposes – mainly on land at Windrush Park, Witney.
- 5.48 In addition to schemes with planning permission, land remains allocated in the Local Plan without planning permission and currently there are significant amounts of vacant commercial property. The following paragraphs provide a summary of available employment land for the main towns and the rural area, bringing together the data on planning permissions, remaining local plan allocations, and information from the Council's updated Economy Study

Witney

- 5.49 The majority of the stock of employment premises are industrial and are concentrated in two main areas: Station Lane on the southern edge of Witney and Downs Road/Range Road area to the west of the town. These

areas provide units of a range of sizes and quality as well as development opportunities.

- 5.50 The Downs Road area incorporates some ageing industrial premises associated with the area's long history in manufacturing. Some of these larger manufacturing units have been subdivided and refurbished and most are in good use.
- 5.51 Station Lane is a large employment area immediately to the south of the town adjoining the A40 the majority of which was developed in the 1970s. The estate offers mostly industrial/warehouse premises of varying sizes including several estates of small leasehold premises. Although there are a number of vacant premises in the Station Lane area that are either for sale or to let, the estate remains well occupied.
- 5.52 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 was adopted in June 2006. The following table identifies sites specifically allocated in the adopted Local Plan 2011 for employment uses and provides an update as to their uptake.

Local Plan Employment Allocation	Total Area Allocated in Local Plan 2011	2012 Status
East of Downs Road, East Witney	10ha	7ha of Downs Road East allocation undeveloped although 4ha has developer interest.
West of Downs Road West, Witney	2.3ha	2.3ha remains allocated without permission
North Curbridge Development Area (Proposal 8) reserve site.	-	Planning application submitted for development of the land to the west of Witney including 10ha of employment land.

Table 10: Local Plan employment land allocations update 2012.

Carterton

- 5.53 Carterton's employment land supply remains concentrated into two main areas south and east of the town. Both areas remain good quality employment sites well located to continue to meet employment land needs. In total there remains approximately 5ha of development land although there is approximately a further 2.5ha of land with vacant premises.
- 5.54 Land at Carterton was allocated for employment development through previous Local Plans and as such, benefits from a degree of protection for ongoing employment use in the current plan.
- 5.55 The availability of land on key sites in Carterton is illustrated in Table 11 below.

Local Plan Employment Allocation	Total Area Allocated in Local Plan 2011	2012 Status
West Oxfordshire Business Park	n/a	3.6 ha of land available either with no or lapsed permissions.
Ventura Park	n/a	0.7ha vacant land
South Carterton	n/a	0.5ha lapsed permission.

Table 11: Employment land availability in Carterton.

5.56 The market for premises in Carterton has been noted recently by agents as generally slow and to some extent related to the availability of premises at Witney which is considered a more attractive location. Carterton is typically seen as more of an industrial market although modern small offices at Ventura Park have seen reasonable demand/take up.

5.57 It has been noted that the take up of freehold plots had been successful but the take up of speculative industrial units less so with indications that units built (3000- 5000sqft) did not quite meet market demand which is for smaller units in this location (1500-2500sqft). There were suggestions that the lack of take up at West Oxon Business Park reflects tenure and pricing issues.

Chipping Norton

5.58 Chipping Norton has a range of employment sites offering a variety of types and quality of premises at Cromwell Park, larger industrial units at Station Road to small modern light industrial units at the Worcester Road estate.

5.59 Development opportunities remain at Cromwell Park where one plot is still undeveloped. The former highways depot adjacent to Cromwell Park is yet to be developed but part of this site has outstanding outline permission. Land at London Road adjoining Cromwell Park is allocated for mixed use and approximately 2ha of this site remains with potential for employment uses.

5.60 Permission for development of land adjacent to the former Parker Knoll factory has now lapsed leaving 2ha available for employment uses.

Local Plan Employment Allocation	Total Area Allocated in Local Plan 2011	2012 Status
Former Highways Depot, Banbury Road	0.9 ha	Currently vacant. 0.5ha has permission for B1 development
Land to north of London Road	3.6 ha	0.7 ha currently with permission for health centre and pharmacy.
Land Adjacent to Parker Knoll Factory	N/a	1.9 ha of land cleared and vacant. Recent permission has now expired.

Table 12: Employment land availability in Chipping Norton

- 5.61 The property register indicates a good supply of small serviced starter units in Chipping Norton both within the town centre and elsewhere. There is a much more limited supply of small industrial / warehouse premises to rent in the area.
- 5.62 Local agents have identified a limited market for premises in Chipping Norton with most demand being generated locally

Remainder of West Oxfordshire

- 5.63 Land at Lakeside Industrial Estate, Standlake (1.9ha) is allocated in the Local Plan for industrial or storage/distribution uses but is not currently subject to any planning application. Cotswold Farm in Standlake has been granted permission for conversion to storage use during this monitoring period.
- 5.64 Records indicate that 2.23 ha of business development has been granted permission throughout the rest of the district during this monitoring period. Of this, 1.8 ha can be accounted for by a single permission at Stanton Harcourt Industrial estate.
- 5.65 The property register identifies a limited supply of office space available throughout the district although there is some being marketed at Eynsham and Long Hanborough and a range of smaller units at Bampton, Filkins, Burford, and the Wychwoods.
- 5.66 There is also a relatively limited supply of industrial land being marketed in the rest of the district at locations such as Clanfield, Radford, Aston, Northmoor and Kingham.

Town Centres

- 5.67 National Policy defines 'town centre uses' as – retail, financial and professional services, offices and leisure facilities. Existing national policy places great importance on strengthening town centres whilst providing for consumer choice. A key objective of the Local Plan is to maintain and improve the range and quality of shopping facilities within the town centres, whilst resisting proposals that would damage the vitality and viability of existing centres.
- 5.68 Within West Oxfordshire the main retail centres are Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. These centres are generally vibrant and throughout the economic recession have remained healthy with continued investment.
- 5.69 There is very little out of centre shopping in West Oxfordshire, and this has helped to strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centres. One of the strengths of the centres is the mix of town centre uses with residential accommodation.
- 5.70 There has been a notable increase in floorspace completions for town centre uses during 2011/12 compared to the previous monitoring period. Completions for A1 units increased to 2,188m² due to the completion of work at the Woolgate shopping centre but a decrease in the total floor space at Abingdon and Witney College gives the impression that there has been a decrease in town centre uses in Witney. Although this is true, the work that has been completed at the College has greatly increased the quality of the offer

in the town. The considerable increase in leisure uses can be accounted for by the change of use from agricultural use to playing fields at Witney Rugby Club.

Location	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	CI	DI	D2	BI (a)	Total
Witney	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1703	0	0	-1703
<i>Witney Town Centre</i>	2188	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	2308
Carterton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	0	0
<i>Carterton Town Centre</i>	0	0	0	0	110	0	0	0	0	110
Chipping Norton	0	0	0	0	0	0	260	0	0	260
<i>Chipping Norton Town Centre</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Remaining areas of the District	0	0	0	0	0	0	285	29693	0	29961
Total	2,188	0	120	0	110	0	-1,158	29769	0	31029

Table 13 - Locations of additional floorspace (m²) completed for town centre uses 2010/11

5.71 The above *Table 13* highlights the broad areas in which town centre uses were developed. The largest proportion of town centre uses within a town centre was A1 retail use at the Woolgate shopping centre.

Location	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	CI	DI	D2	BI a	Total
Witney	-90	365	90	0	0	0	329	107	0	801
Carterton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	363	0	363
Chipping Norton	130	0	0	0	0	0	-130	0	130	130
Remainder of District	-75	90	543	0	0	353	0	9081	1131	11123
Whole of District	-35	455	633	0	0	353	199	9551	1261	12417

Table 14 - Locations of additional floorspace (m²) Permissions for town centre uses 2011/12

- 5.72 There are 12,417m² of town centre uses with outstanding planning permissions (at 31st March 2012). Only a small proportion of this falls within defined town centres however, with a large area of recreation land permitted at Chadlington comprising the bulk of the permitted land.

Town Centre Surveys

- 5.73 Surveys of the main town centres have been completed throughout 2011/12 to determine the different types and patterns of uses currently found within the centres. The survey analysis focuses on ground floor level uses, within the town centres as defined in the Local Plan.

Witney

- 5.74 The survey identified 295 properties within the town centre, with the largest proportion of these (60%) occupied by shops (A1 uses). Professional Services (A2) the next most dominant use class occupy 12% of ground floor space. Witney has a thriving town centre and as such experiences low vacancy rates. In 2012, there were 18 vacant units representing 6.1% of the total ground floor space within the town centre. This is an increase compared to the last monitoring period although vacancy rates remain significantly lower than the UK average (12.12%). A new series of units is nearing completion in the former Merlins building and will be occupied within the next monitoring period.

Carterton

- 5.75 There are a total of 60 units in Carterton town centre, of which 37 are classified as shops (28%). Vacancy rates remain steady compared to last year's monitoring report at 2 units.
- 5.76 There has been interest in developing further food retail provision in the area to strengthen the role of the town centre.

Chipping Norton

- 5.77 The 2011 survey identified 102 properties within the town centre. Just under half of these (49%) are retail units (A1) and 12% are professional services (A2). There has been an increase in the number of restaurants and cafes in the town from 5 to 7. There has been virtually no change in provision across use classes between 2007 and 2009 although vacancy rates have increased from 2 to 5 units, possibly as a result of the economic downturn.

ENVIRONMENT

- 5.78 The high quality of both the built and the natural environments, within West Oxfordshire, provides a unique and special character. Although there are several Local Plan policies designed to ensure that development respects and enhances the local environment, many of them, such as those concerning renewable energy, air quality, the water environment and tourism can have significant influence outside of the District.

Water Resources

- 5.79 Water management is a serious issue in West Oxfordshire. The District's main rivers (Thames, Windrush and Evenlode) form extensive floodplains and can pose a significant risk of flooding, such as occurred in the summer of 2007. In contrast, there are parts of West Oxfordshire, with a relatively high water requirement, which have a much more limited supply with which to meet that demand.
- 5.80 In 2009 the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was published <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/6706-3603.pdf>. As well as assessing the longer term impact of climate change on the District's water resources, the document also identifies the main sources of potential flooding, allowing the Council to make informed decisions on planning proposals, within such areas, and to implement recommended mitigation measures.
- 5.81 Since 2007, along with the Environment Agency, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Water, the Council has been carrying out work to try to reduce the flood risk in the parts of the District which are under threat. One element of this partnership working has been the updating of local flood maps. The Council is able to use these, in conjunction with expert advice from the Environment Agency (EA), to assess the suitability and the impact of planning proposals in sensitive or high risk areas.

Biodiversity

- 5.82 The many and varied habitats that contribute to West Oxfordshire's special landscape character sustain an abundance of diverse species of plants and animals. Many of these are relatively hardy and can coexist quite comfortably with the District's human residents. However, some of the habitats are more fragile and national and local policies have been designed to try to offer these areas extra protection. Some of this protection is afforded through the use of particular habitat designations and management plans. An important tool that West Oxfordshire and many other local authorities use, to monitor the success of these policies and plans, is the national network of Local Environmental Records Centres. The Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC) is our local member of this network and, through their work with local recorders and partner organisations, they maintain datasets relating to the boundaries and conditions of designated areas along with the health of various species of flora and fauna. They provide West Oxfordshire with an update report each year and the detail of the most recent report follows.




Changes in areas of biodiversity importance

5.83 Table 15 provides details of the areas of the sites designated for their biodiversity importance. There has been no change in area in some of these sites between the monitoring figures produced in 2011 and this year's report, as changes to them are infrequent.

5.84 The analysis of the changes in area of Local Wildlife and Geological Sites is really a measure of the survey activity of that year (as determined by the subsequent site selection panel decisions); the figures for 2011 contained within table 15 below are the outcomes from the relevant site selection panel meetings (at which point the 2011 surveyed sites designated as LWS or LGS, or de-selected were confirmed).

5.85 There was a minor increase of <1 hectare in the extent of the Local Wildlife Sites resource in West Oxfordshire in 2011, based on decisions made by the site selection panel meeting in December 2011 and March 2012. By and large, these decisions resulted in corrections to the boundaries of the sites. A site in Vale of White Horse – Buckland Marsh – was designated at the recent meetings, and a small area of the site falls within West Oxfordshire.

5.86 There was also an overall increase in the resource in Oxfordshire. The decisions on sites are given in table 15 below, with a colour coding scheme used to highlight changes in the area of local wildlife sites.

	A reduction in the resource
	No significant change in the resource
	An increase in the resource

Site	Code	Parish	Decision	Area (hectares)
Meadows at Besbury lane	22X03	Churchill	Retain	0.00
Buckland Marsh	30A2	Buckland	Accepted	0.14
Home Wood	30S02	Hardwick with Yelford	Retain	-0.28
Pumping Station Meadow	31A06	Minster Lovell	Retain	0.00
Maggots Grove Wood	31F03	Crawley	Retain	-0.73
Park Cottage Hayfield	31M08	Ramsden	Retain	-0.12
Bridgefield Bank & Brake	31Y09	Combe	Retain	-0.13
South Freeland Meadows	41F01	Freeland	Retain	-0.14
Minster Lovell Bank	31F05	Minster Lovell	Retain	0.41
Whiteways Quarry	42C02	Enstone	Retain	-0.06

Table 15 - Net changes in area of Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire

5.87 A change in the boundaries of Minster Lovell Meadows – a site not assessed by the LWS site selection panel - resulted in a net increase of 0.62 hectares.

5.88 The extent and number of Local Geological Sites in West Oxfordshire remained unchanged (as it did in Oxfordshire as a whole) as no meetings of the site selection panel took place in the last 12 months.

5.89 The calculations of % of designated sites within both West Oxfordshire and the County as a whole are based on GIS determinations of geographic areas as follows:

- Area of West Oxfordshire district: 71,235 hectares
- Area of Oxfordshire 259,846 hectares

5.90 Table 16 identifies the areas of sites designated for their environmental value within West Oxfordshire. The colour coding system has been used again:

	A reduction in the resource
	No significant change in the resource
	An increase in the resource

Designated site	Area in hectares (2011)	Oxon Area in hectares (2011)	Area in hectares (2012)	As % of West Oxon	Oxon Area in hectares (2012)	As % of Oxon
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1118.6	4465.17	1118.6	1.57	4465.17	1.7
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	7.0	576.9	7.0	<0.01	576.9	0.2
Local Wildlife Sites	1425.7	5380.4	1426.02	2.0	5445.71	2.1
Sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation (SLINCs)*	n/a	202.5	n/a	n/a	202.5	0.08
Local Nature Reserves	2.8 (2 sites)	50.2	2.8 (2 sites)	<0.01	50.2	0.02
Local Geological Sites	332.36	583.07 (plus 3 unmapped sites)	332.36	0.47	583.07 (plus 3 unmapped sites)	0.22

Table 16. Areas of sites of biodiversity and geological importance

Note: Local Wildlife Sites were previously known as County Wildlife Sites

* The status of SLINCs is the subject of review by Oxford City Council. Those of Local Wildlife Site standard are now counted within the figures for that site designation

Change in number of UKBAP priority species

5.91 This indicator uses records of UK BAP priority species which have been reported in West Oxfordshire during the period 1991 – 2011. Anything prior to this data is thought unlikely to now be present in the district. The changes in the numbers of BAP species in West Oxfordshire are given in Table 17.

5.92 There was an increase of two species on the figure presented in last year’s report. Environment Agency records of the European eel have been received on the River Windrush, whilst Oxford Ornithological Society provided a record of a roseate tern at Brize Norton.

5.93 The county showed a net loss in the number of BAP species in the study period. Four new species were recorded, but 6 have not been recorded since 1991.

	West Oxon (2010)	Oxfordshire (2010)	West Oxon (2011)	Oxfordshire (2011)
Numbers of BAP priority species	133	234	135	232

Table 17 - Change in numbers of UKBAP Species

Changes in area of UKBAP priority habitat

5.94 Table 18 provides details of the UK BAP priority habitats which have been identified within West Oxfordshire.

5.95 There have been a number of changes in the amount of certain habitats within the district, primarily associated with recent survey and digital mapping work associated with the Lower Windrush Valley Project area. These changes reflect refinements of our existing knowledge of the habitat resource in the county rather than the creation of new habitat and TVERC ‘capturing’ of that information on digital habitat datasets. The main changes are:

- An additional area of wet woodland has been mapped in the Lower Windrush Valley project area
- A small area of reedbed has been mapped in the southern part of the Lower Windrush Valley
- A number of lakes have been re-categorised as Mesotrophic Lakes in the Lower Windrush Valley (with a corresponding decrease in the Eutrophic Standing Water resource)
- An area previously mapped as fen at the Dix Pit Silt Lagoon LWS was removed as it is now considered not to be that priority habitat.

i. UKBAP priority habitat type	Area (hectares) 2010-11	County context 2010-11	Area (hectares) 2011-12	County context 2011-12
Arable field margins	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	1561.18*	4750.90*	1561.18	4764.33
Eutrophic standing water	570.30	933.20	366.64	741.01
Hedgerows	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Lowland beech and yew woodland	13.84	777.36	13.88	777.34
Lowland calcareous grassland	180.08	732.71	180.50	732.72
Lowland dry acid grassland	14.41	48.75	13.94	48.26
Lowland Fens	30.64#	142.96#	28.90#	145.65#
Lowland heathland	0.0	2.96	0.0	3.82
Lowland meadows	195.51	1081.27	195.70	1086.71
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	1516.67	4518.41	1527.95	4550.22
Mesotrophic lakes	Not known	Not known	116.87	116.87
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Ponds	2.18	3.79	2.07	4.63
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	7.08	14.09	7.08	14.09
Reedbeds	1.66	25.82	2.23	26.39
Rivers	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Traditional Orchards	53.30	326.21	48.35	321.00
Wet woodland	23.93	137.94	31.98	146.87
Wood pasture and parkland	635.66	1858.82	637.49	1858.81
Total area of BAP priority habitat	4806.44	15355.19	4734.76	15338.72

Table 18 – UKBAP priority habitat resource in West Oxfordshire

Combined figure for Fen and Reedbed resource

*Corrected figures for the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh resource have been added

Distribution and status of water voles

5.96 TVERC has obtained the survey results compiled from site visits in 2011 from the BBOWT water vole project officer.

5.97 Of the 268 stretches of watercourse identified within West Oxfordshire by the BBOWT water vole project officer, 79 of these were surveyed during 2011. Of these, 27 stretches were found to be positive for water vole. Some of the positive watercourses include stretches of the river Glyme between Wootton and Woodstock, and further upstream at Glympton Park; a number of sections of the upper Thames between Radcot and Kelmscott; the Great Brook near Rushey Lock; and stretches of the river Windrush between Crawley and Witney, at Cogges in Witney and between Burford and Swinbrook.

5.98 The recovery of water voles in Oxfordshire and Berkshire can be attributed to different factors in different areas - in some parts a habitat enhancement project has resulted in increased vole activity. On many other watercourses the monitoring and control of mink has been the most important factor in the recovery of water vole populations.

Year	Number of sites surveyed in Oxfordshire	Number of sites surveyed in West Oxfordshire
1998 – 2001 inclusive	136	21
2002	87	38
2003	149	65
2004	170	30
2005	330	22
2006	Not known	Not known
2007	Not known	Not known
2008	206	37
2009	271	39
2010	272	105
2011	282	79

Table 19 Water Vole survey data, 1998 – 2011

Condition of SSSIs

5.99 Natural England undertakes periodic visits to Sites of Special Scientific Interest to determine the ecological condition of the individual units associated with those sites. Natural England's focus is on liaising with landowners and site managers to achieve the aim of all units in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition.

5.100 Not all SSSI units are visited in any one year. The sites which are visited are part of a programme of monitoring surveys throughout the county. The amounts of SSSI units in the various ecological conditions as at March 2012 (i.e. the condition at the end of the monitoring report year of analysis) are as follows:

Condition	No. of units or part units 2011	Sum of hectares 2011	% of West Oxfordshire resource 2011	% of Oxfordshire resource 2011
Favourable	29	361.24	32.29	46.25
Unfavourable declining	1	52.22	4.67	1.34
Unfavourable no change				0.29
Unfavourable recovering	22	705.36	63.04	51.92
No data				0.0

Condition	No. of units or part units 2011	Sum of hectares 2011	% of West Oxfordshire resource 2011	% of Oxfordshire resource 2011
Destroyed				0.19
TOTAL	53	1118.82	100	100

Table 20 SSSI unit ecological condition data, 2011-12

Note: based on 29 whole or partial sites within West Oxfordshire

5.101 There has been a change in the condition of SSSI units in West Oxfordshire district during the 2011-12 study period, with a higher percentage now considered to be in “Unfavourable declining” condition. Unit 4 of Blenheim Park (52 hectares) was visited in January 2012 and was determined to be no longer in “Favourable” condition. Seven other visits were made to West Oxfordshire SSSI units during 2011-12.

Distribution and status of farmland birds

5.102 This indicator uses an established list of 19 species, identifiable as farmland birds, compiled by RSPB. Records associated with these species generated through British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) breeding bird surveys in specific 1km x 1km squares are then used to determine a farmland bird index. TVERC has obtained these records and followed the RSPB methodology to plot the trend in changes in the index over time. To establish a timeframe from which any kind of meaningful trend can be identified, a shifting baseline has been used and changes in bird populations in subsequent years (over a 10 year window) are then relative to that baseline year. This latest assessment of the farmland bird index trend uses a baseline of 2002.

5.103 Chart 7 (below) provides an indication of plotted changes over time in the county.

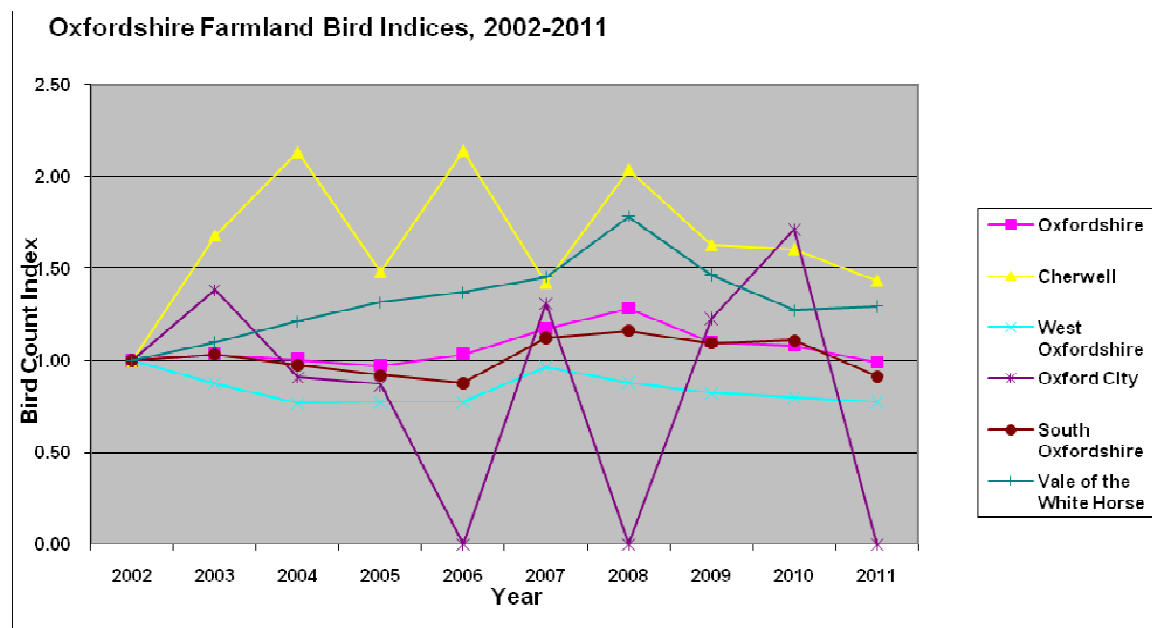


Chart 7: Changes in Oxfordshire farmland bird species index 2002-11

5.104 The analysis of bird surveys in West Oxfordshire shows a fall in the district index compared to 2010 data, and based on a new baseline of data collected in 2002. The same number of squares were surveyed in 2011 (15) as in 2010. The West Oxfordshire index value is also lower than the county-wide figure.

5.105 Of the farmland species, there was a notable fall in numbers of lapwing from recent year counts, as well as yellowhammer and grey partridge. There were, however, increases in numbers of skylark and linnet.

Sustainable Design and Construction

5.106 Although one significant element of sustainable development is its location, another, equally important, factor is the actual design of the building(s), along with the materials and components used and where they are sourced from. There is a wealth of advice available, relating to sustainable construction, and the Council’s website provides access to a number of documents that offer guidance to users, from householders to large developers. The ‘West Oxfordshire Design Guide’ (<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/DesignGuide.cfm>) is supported by more detailed advice in a number of leaflets such as West Oxfordshire’s ‘Sustainable construction interim planning advice’, and various renewable energy generation guides at <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/MicroRenewableEnergy.cfm>

5.107 There have been a large number of properties during the monitoring period that have installed renewable energy generators. Records derived from the Renewable Energy Foundation¹³ indicate that there have been 1,255

¹³ <http://www.ref.org.uk/fits>

installations with a total capacity of 3,635 kw in West Oxfordshire in 2011/12 that have applied for feed in tariffs, to generate income from the energy generated. The vast majority of these installations are domestic photovoltaic systems, although there are some incidences of larger scale, commercial installations in the District. There are also examples of 'Solar Farm' type developments permitted within the District such as that at Milton Road in Shipton-u-Wychwood with a capacity of 900 kw.

- 5.108 In addition to the photovoltaic installations, ground and air source heat pumps continue to prove a popular choice for sustainable energy generation in West Oxfordshire. Planning records show that there 140 permissions for such installations during the monitoring period.

6 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- 6.1 There is one Neighbourhood Development Plan underway at Chipping Norton. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), Chipping Norton Town Council applied for area designation to West Oxfordshire District Council in April 2012.
- 6.2 A Public Notice announced the application of the area designation, the boundary of which follows the Chipping Norton Parish Boundary, giving a consultation period on the area designation for 6 weeks until 28 May 2012. One comment was received from the Cotswold Conservation Board which was in support of the Area Designation.
- 6.3 Chipping Norton Town Council's Area Designation was formally determined by West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet on 12 December 2012. Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) allow certain types of development to come forward without the need for planning permission. No qualifying bodies have initiated the process for introducing any such order within the District.

7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

- 7.1 The Council has agreed in principle to undertake the further work necessary to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) into West Oxfordshire. Work is currently on-going and it is anticipated that a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) will be published for consultation in summer 2013.
- 7.2 Future monitoring reports will include information on the implementation of CIL once it has been formally introduced into the District.

8 DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

- 8.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out a new 'duty to co-operate' which essentially means that local planning authorities and other 'prescribed bodies' must engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to address cross-boundary issues of strategic importance such as housing and transport.
- 8.2 The duty to co-operate is intended to fill the strategic planning gap created by the abolition of regional spatial strategies.
- 8.3 Importantly the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require each local authority to report on any activities undertaken through the duty to co-operate during the period covered by the monitoring report.
- 8.4 West Oxfordshire District Council has actively engaged with a broad range of parties throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and supporting evidence base. The intention is to produce a statement setting out in detail how the Council has fulfilled the duty to co-operate prior to formal publication of the proposed submission draft local plan.
- 8.5 In the interim, in this section of the monitoring report we provide a brief overview of the activities undertaken during the monitoring period (1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012) in accordance with the duty to co-operate. These fall into two broad areas; engagement on the content and structure of the local plan and engagement on the supporting evidence base.

Engagement on the Content and Structure of the Local Plan

- 8.6 The Council has been engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the content and structure of the emerging Local Plan. This has included discussions with the Environment Agency regarding the emerging approach to drainage and flood risk as well as specific issues regarding the proposed strategic sites at Witney and Carterton. Discussions have also taken place with English Heritage in regard to the District's heritage assets and the approach to be taken in the plan.
- 8.7 Extensive discussions have taken place with Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority in relation to the transport related content of the Local Plan both at a general strategic level and with specific regard to the transport implications of the emerging strategic development areas identified in the local plan.
- 8.8 In addition, regular, ongoing discussions have taken place with other Oxfordshire authorities through the Oxfordshire Planning Officers Group and also through the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP).
- 8.9 Meetings and discussions with Cotswold District Council and authorities in Warwickshire have also taken place.

Engagement on the Supporting Evidence Base

- 8.10 The Draft Local Plan is underpinned by an extensive evidence base, the compilation of which has involved ongoing discussions with a range of prescribed bodies in accordance with the duty to co-operate.
- 8.11 A key piece of evidence is the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which identifies the physical, social and environmental infrastructure needed to support future growth in the District in the period up to 2029.
- 8.12 Preparation of the IDP has required input from a number of prescribed bodies including the County Council as highway authority and also in relation to other relevant services such as education and fire and rescue. The advice of the PCT has been sought as well as the involvement of the Environment Agency and a range of other bodies not covered by the duty including utility companies and other infrastructure providers.
- 8.13 In addition to the IDP, the Council has worked closely with Natural England in relation to the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) needed to support the Local Plan and the Environment Agency in relation to a range of different matters including the evidence base underpinning the proposed strategic development areas identified in the draft local plan.
- 8.14 During the monitoring period, joint working also began on a study for Cherwell District, West Oxfordshire District and South Northamptonshire to identify the future accommodation requirements for gypsies and travellers.
- 8.15 The Council will continue to work closely with relevant bodies in taking forward the local plan, other development plan documents and the supporting evidence base.
- 8.16 The proposed submission draft local plan will be supported by a detailed statement of compliance and future monitoring reports will continue to highlight the activities undertaken by West Oxfordshire District Council in accordance with the duty to co-operate.