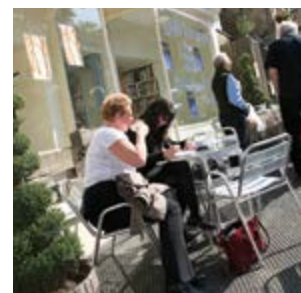
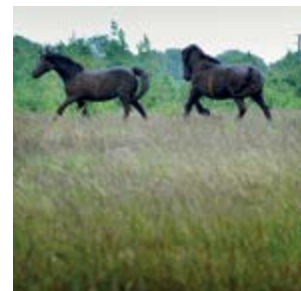




WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

Adopted September 2018



Our core objectives

- 3.3 To guide the vision we have identified a number of core objectives. These are set out below under five key headings:
- Strong market towns and villages
 - Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities
 - Sustainable economic growth
 - Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities; and
 - Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

Strong market towns and villages

- 3.4 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with its population dispersed to a number of market towns, villages and hamlets varying in size. It is vital that the District's distinctive rural characteristics are maintained while meeting the needs of local communities. To achieve this it is important to recognise the need for, and benefits of, new development but to ensure that what comes forward is of an appropriate scale and type, commensurate with the capacity, role and function of the settlement where it is proposed.

- 3.5 Although West Oxfordshire is a relatively affluent area there are pockets of deprivation particularly in rural areas where access to services is often limited. For rural communities to be sustainable they must have access to affordable housing, good employment opportunities and services and facilities.

- CO1 Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.
- CO2 Ensure that new developments are suitably located and well designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
- CO3 Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.

Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities

- 3.6 A key role of the Local Plan is to ensure that future housing needs are met. There also needs to be a greater choice within the local housing market to help achieve a better balance of property types and meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy or rent suitable market housing.
- 3.7 Two key challenges will be to address identified future housing needs and to better meet the needs of certain groups including older people, younger people, families, travelling communities as well as those wishing to self-build.

CO4 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel.

CO5 Plan for the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.

CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

Sustainable economic growth

- 3.8 The West Oxfordshire local economy is reasonably strong and diverse and has proven resilient to recession. However, the District is facing increasing competition from elsewhere including major planned growth associated with the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' running from the Science Vale Enterprise Zone through Oxford City up to Bicester.
- 3.9 There is a need to capitalise on the District's economic strengths and ensure that it is well-placed to benefit from future economic growth within the County and adjoining areas by playing a 'complimentary', rather than necessarily a 'competing' role. We must seek to add value to the West Oxfordshire economy as far as possible.
- 3.10 There is also a need to ensure that the needs of existing businesses and those looking to invest in West Oxfordshire are adequately provided so as to reduce the possibility of such firms locating elsewhere.

CO7 To support sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.

CO8 To enable a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.

Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities

3.11 In a rural area it is important to achieve a sensible balance between delivering services directly to local residents and expecting people to travel. In many rural parts of the District there is little choice other than to travel by private transport. However new development should not lead to more people being isolated from services and facilities which they need on a regular basis. New development must therefore be located in the right places and provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and/or users.

3.12 The objectives outlined below seek to deliver a high quality of life whilst improving opportunities wherever possible or appropriate for travel by means other than the car.

CO9 Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.

CO10 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.

CO11 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.

CO12 Look to maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.

CO13 Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

3.13 West Oxfordshire is fortunate to benefit from a rich natural and historic environment. It is essential that this is protected and enhanced wherever possible. The objectives outlined below seek to protect and enhance the high environmental quality of the District and meet the challenges of climate change by improving the sustainability of new development.

CO14 Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.

CO15 Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO16 Enable improvements in water and air quality.

CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

CO18 Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.

- 4.8 In line with national policy, this Local Plan is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In other words, development that is shown to be sustainable in the West Oxfordshire context will be permitted. Taking account of the various issues outlined above, the remainder of this Local Plan sets out in more detail what will and won't be considered sustainable in West Oxfordshire. Regard should also be had to the NPPF and any 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans that are in place.
- 4.9 As a general principle, when considering development proposals and Neighbourhood Plans, the Council will take a positive approach and will work with applicants and other stakeholders to ensure that where appropriate, proposals are approved and that development which would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District is secured. This approach is reflected in Policy OSI below.

**POLICY OSI:
Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

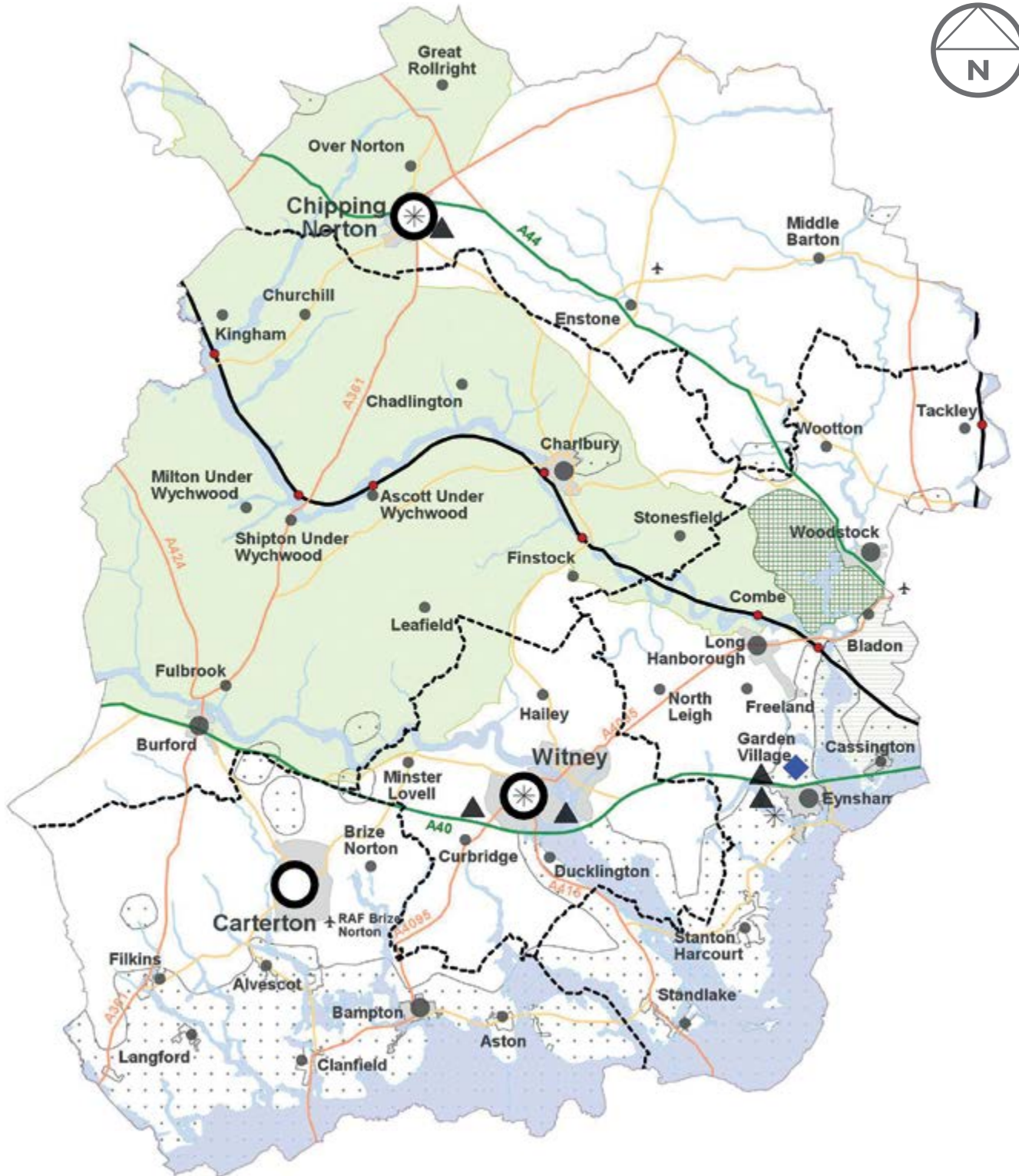
Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise- taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Locating development in the right places

- 4.10 The location of development can influence how people choose to travel, where children go to school, how an area changes physically and socially and where people live and work. Putting development in the right places can also help to reduce development pressures on sensitive locations including the AONB and Green Belt.
- 4.11 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan we have sought views on the overall strategy for accommodating future growth including the most suitable locations for development. Various options have been proposed and tested through consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and our proposed approach is set out below.
- 4.12 For the purposes of this Local Plan the District has been divided into five sub-areas based on landscape characteristics and local catchment areas for key services and facilities. The sub-areas are:
- Witney sub-area
 - Carterton sub-area
 - Chipping Norton sub-area
 - Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area
 - Burford – Charlbury sub-area
- 4.13 The extent of each sub-area is illustrated on Figure 4a.

Figure 4a: West Oxfordshire sub-areas and key diagram



- Main service centres
- Rural service centres
- Villages
- * Strategic Development Areas
- ◆ Strategic location for growth
- - - Sub-area boundary
- Cotswolds AONB
- ▨ Oxford Green Belt
- ▩ World Heritage Site
- ⋯ Mineral consultation area
- Flood risk area
- Railway line
- ✈ Airfield
- ▲ New highway infrastructure

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POLICY OS2: Locating development in the right places

Main service centres, rural service centres and villages

A significant proportion of new homes, jobs and supporting services will be focused within and on the edge of the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. The distribution of development is set out in Policy H1.

Due to the size of the settlement and its proximity and connections to Oxford City, Eynsham will also make a significant contribution towards meeting the identified housing needs of the District and Oxford City with a strategic urban extension to be provided to the west of the village.

A new rural service centre - Oxfordshire Cotwolds Garden Village - will be created to the north of Eynsham to contribute towards Oxford City's needs. This will comprise a self-contained settlement based on 'garden village' principles and will play a complementary role to Eynsham.

Woodstock is suitable for a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre.

Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and Bampton and Long Hanborough have a more restricted range of services and facilities. Consequently, these rural service centres are suitable for a modest level of development to help reinforce their existing roles. Two site allocations are proposed at Long Hanborough.

The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. Further allocations may be made through Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

Small villages, hamlets and open countryside

Development in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. Proposals for residential development will be considered under policy H2.

Proposals for non-residential development that is regarded as appropriate will include:

- Re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses;
- Proposals to support the effectiveness of existing businesses and sustainable tourism;
- Development which will make a positive contribution to farm and country estate diversification; and
- Telecommunications development sited and designed to minimise impact upon the environment.

- 4.47 Future infrastructure requirements will be identified and kept up to date through the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL 'Regulation 123' list¹⁰.

**POLICY OS5:
Supporting Infrastructure**

New development will be required to deliver, or contribute towards the timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development, or through an appropriate financial contribution.

On larger development sites, phasing of development will be required and later phases may be contingent on essential infrastructure being in place.

This will include, where applicable the strategic infrastructure items identified within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL Regulation 123 list as well as non-strategic infrastructure requirements including those associated with individual development proposals.

Such provision will be secured through appropriate mechanisms including the use of planning conditions, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

¹⁰ Sets out which infrastructure items/projects the Council intends to fund through CIL.

- 5.17 Woodstock has a relatively good range of services and facilities, and relatively good accessibility to Oxford. It can accommodate a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace. Three medium scale allocations are proposed on different sides of the town in order to complement the structure and form of the town.
- 5.18 The rural service centres of Bampton and Long Hanborough will be required to make provision for new housing with existing commitments being complemented by two site allocations at Long Hanborough.
- 5.19 The proposed distribution of housing is summarised in Policy H1. It should be noted that the housing figures for each sub-area are based on past completions and anticipated future supply as of 1 April 2017. They are therefore indicative and should not be taken as absolute requirements or targets. It should also be noted that housing land supply will be calculated on a district-wide basis rather than individually for each sub-area.
- 5.20 With the exception of the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, an allowance has been made for future ‘windfall’ sites yet to come forward, excluding ‘garden land’ development in line with the NPPF. Within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, to take account of the more restrictive approach to development that applies to the Cotswolds AONB, no reliance is placed on future windfall development and the amount and distribution of housing identified in Policy H1 is based on past completions and commitments only (as of 1 April 2017) – 774 homes.
- 5.21 This does not mean that new housing cannot come forward in the Burford – Charlbury sub-area. Indeed, the 774 homes figure should not be treated as a ‘cap’ or ‘ceiling’ to development and planning permission may be granted for additional housing within the sub-area where the proposed development is shown to accord with national and local policy including Policies H1, H2, OS2 and EH1 (where relevant) of this Local Plan. Further explanation is set out in Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level.

POLICY H1:

Amount and distribution of housing

Provision will be made for at least 15,950 homes in the period 2011 – 2031.

This will comprise 13,200 homes in the period 2011 - 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 - 2031 to meet Oxford City’s identified housing needs.

In accordance with the overall strategy set out in Policy OS2, the distribution of housing to meet West Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs taking account of past completions and anticipated future supply is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Witney sub-area | 4,702 homes |
| Carterton sub-area | 2,680 homes |
| Chipping Norton sub-area | 2,047 homes |
| Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area | 5,596 homes |
| Burford – Charlbury sub-area | 774 homes |

This is an indicative distribution based on past completions and anticipated future supply and should not be taken as an absolute target for each sub-area or maximum ceiling to limit development. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met.

The indicative distribution for the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area includes 2,750 homes to provide for Oxford’s unmet housing need. This will be delivered through a strategic urban extension to the west of Eynsham and a new Garden Village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham.

Development will be monitored annually to ensure that the overall strategy is being delivered. Sites for new housing will be identified through partnership working with local communities, landowners and self-build groups including the use of parish or neighbourhood plans.

Further allocations may be made through neighbourhood plans in accordance with the overall distribution of housing set out above and in accordance with other relevant plan policies, including in particular the general principles set out in Policy OS2.

- 5.42 Insufficient capacity has been identified through this Local Plan and the supporting assessment of housing land availability to deliver a 5-year supply under the Sedgfield approach and it could only be achieved by releasing a large number of sites that have been assessed by the Council as being unsuitable for new housing. The Council does not consider this to be an appropriate way forward. Addressing the shortfall in a more measured way over the remaining plan period using the Liverpool approach is considered to be entirely justified.
- 5.43 In addition to the application of the Liverpool approach, the calculation of five year housing land supply will be based on a 'staged' housing requirement as set out in Policy H2. This approach applies a lower initial housing requirement of 550 dwellings per year from 2011/12 – 2020/2021, thereafter including an additional 275 homes per year for Oxford's unmet need and gradually increasing up to a total combined annual requirement of 1,125 homes per year.
- 5.44 The staged requirement is necessary in order to enable sufficient time for large strategic sites to start delivering. It should not be seen as a target and over-delivery against these targets, particularly in the early years, will be encouraged.
- 5.45 Oxford's unmet needs are set out separately in the phased requirement table for illustrative purposes only. As Policy H2 makes clear, housing supply and delivery will be assessed against the combined totals which will be derived from annual completions across the District. Thus, whilst it is anticipated that Oxford's unmet needs will be largely accommodated through delivery of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, the housing requirement is not disaggregated so that under or over supply at this location will not be treated separately when calculating the five year housing land supply:-
- 5.46 The Council's overall approach is summarised in Policy H2.

POLICY H2: Delivery of New Homes

Provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031.

This will include 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 to meet Oxford City's housing needs.

The housing requirement will be phased over the plan period in accordance with the following table:

| Year | West Oxon's needs | Oxford City's needs | Combined annual requirement |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2011 - 17 | 550 per annum | | 550 per annum |
| 2017 - 18 | 550 | | 550 |
| 2018 - 19 | 550 | | 550 |
| 2019 - 20 | 550 | | 550 |
| 2020 - 21 | 550 | | 550 |
| 2021 - 22 | 525 | 275 | 800 |
| 2022 - 23 | 525 | 275 | 800 |
| 2023 - 24 | 700 | 275 | 975 |
| 2024 - 25 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2025 - 26 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2026 - 27 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2027 - 28 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2028 - 29 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2029 - 30 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| 2030 - 31 | 850 | 275 | 1125 |
| Totals | 13,200 | 2750 | 15,950 |

The 5 year housing land supply is to be calculated on the basis of the phased requirement set out in this table. The additional requirement of 2,750 dwellings to meet Oxford City's housing needs is set out separately for illustrative purposes but delivery and supply will be assessed against the combined annual requirement.

When assessing the 5-year housing land supply the Council will apply the residual (Liverpool) approach with any under-supply (backlog) of housing to be delivered over the remaining plan period to 2031.

The required level of housing delivery of at least 15,950 homes will be achieved through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, site allocations (strategic and non-strategic sites) windfall development and any additional provision in Neighbourhood Plans.

If, post adoption of the Local Plan, the phased housing requirement is consistently not delivered, or it becomes clear that this is likely to be the case during the remainder of the plan period, then the Council will undertake an early review of the plan. Such a review will consider up to date evidence on housing needs (including unmet needs from neighbouring authorities) and, if necessary, will allocate additional sites for housing.

Proposals for housing will be determined as set out below:

Main service centres, rural service centres and villages

New dwellings will be permitted at the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in the following circumstances:

- On sites that have been allocated for housing development within a Local Plan or relevant neighbourhood plan;
- On previously developed land within or adjoining the built up area provided the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other plan policies and the proposal complies with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and any other relevant policies in this plan;
- On undeveloped land within the built up area provided that the proposal is in accordance with the other policies in the plan and in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.
- On undeveloped land adjoining the built up area where convincing evidence is presented to demonstrate that it is necessary to meet identified housing needs, it is in accordance with the distribution of housing set out in Policy H1 and is in accordance with other policies in the plan in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.

Small villages, hamlets and open countryside

New dwellings will only be permitted in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside where they comply with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and in the following circumstances:

- where there is an essential operational or other specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including the use of existing buildings. Where appropriate, new homes provided (other than replacement dwellings) will be controlled by an occupancy condition linked to the operational need and/or to the 'rural exception site' approach for permanent affordable dwellings;
- where residential development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset;
- residential development of exceptional quality or innovative design;
- new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities;
- accommodation which will remain ancillary to existing dwellings*;
- replacement dwellings on a one for one basis;
- re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting and where it has been demonstrated that the building is not capable of re-use for business, recreational or community uses, tourist accommodation or visitor facilities or where the proposal will address a specific local housing need which would otherwise not be met; and
- on sites that have been allocated for housing development within an adopted (made) neighbourhood plan.

* Proposals for extensions or alterations to an existing dwelling to create a self-contained unit of accommodation may be subject to a condition ensuring the accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling.



7. Transport and movement

Charlbury

Our transport related objectives include:

- CO1 Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised
- CO10 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.
- CO11 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- CO13 Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.
- CO15 Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO16 Enable improvements in water and air quality.
- CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

7.1 Transport is a key issue for West Oxfordshire. Although there are opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport, as a rural area, there is a general reliance on private vehicles with around 80% of commuting journeys being made by car.

7.2 This high level of car use has a number of direct effects including traffic congestion in some locations, which in turn contributes towards poor air quality as well as affecting climate change more generally.

7.3 Indirectly, a high percentage of car use also affects health, with increasing rates of obesity in Oxfordshire partly attributed to declining levels of activity. Active forms of travel such as walking and cycling, including as part of a journey, have an important role to play in reversing this trend.

7.4 In this section of the plan we set out how we will address the transport needs associated with new development whilst seeking to encourage less car use, recognising that as a predominantly rural area, the private car will remain the dominant form of transport in West Oxfordshire, and as such, improvements to the highway network will be needed.

7.5 The following issues are addressed in turn.

- Location, design and mix of new development;
- Improvements to the highway network;
- Public transport including bus and rail;
- Active travel (walking and cycling); and
- Parking provision

Location, design and mix of new development

7.6 Where new development is located, how it is designed and what different uses it includes can all have a direct influence on people's travel choices.

Location

7.7 Whilst we cannot eliminate the need to travel by car, locating development in places where public transport can be easily accessed and walking and cycling is a realistic and safe option can at least help to reduce people's propensity to drive.

7.8 In recognition of this, national policy encourages local authorities to promote patterns of development which facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. More specifically, local plans should ensure that developments which generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

7.9 This has been a key consideration in the development of the overall plan strategy (see Policy OS2) which seeks to focus a significant proportion of future growth at Witney, Carterton Chipping Norton and the Eynsham area, where there are already good opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport and the potential to make further improvements.

7.10 In accordance with the overall strategy, we will as a priority seek to locate new development, particularly major development, in areas that benefit from convenient access to a range of services and facilities and where the need to travel, particularly by private car is minimised.

7.11 Where appropriate, developments will be required to monitor the levels of travel by all modes and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport through the use of a Travel Plan. We will also require developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or with other proposals to include a Transport Assessment (TA).

7.12 It is important however to recognise that West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural District and that it will not be possible to locate all development where convenient access to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities can be achieved. This situation is acknowledged in national policy which recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas and that different policy approaches may be required.

7.13 For example other approaches in more isolated rural locations such as the provision of superfast broadband and the promotion of more flexible, home working can play a positive role in helping to reduce the need to travel including by car.

Design

7.14 In addition to location, the design of new development also has an important role to play in influencing travel patterns. We have outlined above how superfast broadband can promote home working and other examples of how good design can help include:

- accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements;
- providing access to high quality public transport facilities;
- creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and enable access for public transport services;
- incorporating facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and;
- considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

7.15 We will therefore seek design solutions that maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as home working through measures such as superfast broadband.

Mix of uses

7.16 Mixed-use developments can have a number of advantages. As well as contributing to the vitality and viability of an area, developments that incorporate a mix of different uses can also help to reduce the need to travel. For example a mix of housing, employment, retail and leisure is likely to have a number of benefits.

7.17 Those living in the new houses for example may be able to work or choose to shop in the same location and those visiting the development may be able to benefit from a single, linked trip e.g. going shopping and then to the cinema, rather than having to travel to two separate places.

7.18 We will therefore support in principle, the provision of mixed-use developments. Typically this is likely to be on larger development schemes at the main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton although the principle of mixed-use development will be supported in other accessible and sustainable locations.

7.19 In particular it is envisaged that the proposed new garden village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham will be a comprehensive, mixed-use development that includes not only a significant proportion of new homes but also new business space, transport hub, community facilities including education as well as open space and leisure. The provision of this mix of different uses will help to promote a strong degree of 'self-containment' ensuring that residents of the new village are less dependent on travelling to other locations to fulfil their needs. The location of the new business space next to a new transport hub, which will include Park and Ride facilities, will enable it to play a strategic role in enhancing the 'self-containment' of the District as a whole.

POLICY T1:

Sustainable transport

Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.

In addition to this;

- All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment
- To promote increased home working and telecommuting, all new residential and commercial developments will be required to make provision for superfast broadband.
- Mixed-use developments will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant local plan policies.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.

Improvements to the highway network

7.20 As a largely rural district with a high percentage of car use, the highway network plays a key role in West Oxfordshire and notwithstanding the various measures outlined above, as the private car is likely to remain the dominant form of transport over the plan period, we need to consider what improvements to the highway network are needed.

- 7.21 The main routes within the District include the A40 Cheltenham to Oxford, the A44 through Woodstock and Chipping Norton, the A361 Swindon to Banbury and the A4260 from Banbury through the eastern part of the District.
- 7.22 The provision of a good, reliable highway network has a number of benefits including the provision of convenient access to jobs, services and facilities and the potential to unlock and support economic growth.
- 7.23 Under this Local Plan the importance of the highway network will continue to be recognised with necessary improvements being identified and safeguarded as appropriate. This will include 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' highway schemes needed to support the level and distribution of growth set out in the plan. These will need to be considered alongside the provision of other essential supporting infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development. Many of these schemes are already included in Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP).

A40

- 7.24 The A40 is the main east-west transport route with congestion on the section between Witney and Oxford being amongst the most severe transport problems in Oxfordshire and acting as a potential constraint to economic and housing growth. The County Council is committed to a long-term strategy to improve access between West Oxfordshire and Oxford (and other destinations beyond Oxford). The major cause of the congestion is the limited capacity at the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts (outside the District) which Oxfordshire County Council are currently improving, however the overall capacity of the road itself and the capacity of the traffic lights and junctions at Eynsham and Cassington (inside the District) are also contributory factors.
- 7.25 Importantly the problems on the A40 lead to the displacement of traffic onto other routes as drivers seek an alternative. This increases the number of cars using the A4095 through Long Hanborough and Bladon (to the detriment of those communities) and in turn, vehicle numbers on the A44 Woodstock Road into Oxford. Displacement of traffic onto the B4044 is also a problem. Further development in the District will put additional pressure on these highly trafficked routes.
- 7.26 The problems with the A40 are long established and in light of this, Oxfordshire County Council has secured significant funding to undertake the A40 Oxford Science Transit Phase 2 project – a central element of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal which will bring together local, national and private funding to focus on four key priority areas identified in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan²⁵ including improved connectivity.
- 7.27 Under the first two rounds of the Local Growth Fund, the Oxfordshire LEP has secured a total of £118.4m funding from central Government with £9.2m of new funding for 2015/16 and £53.7m for 2016/17 to 2021. Additionally, £35m has been secured to deliver measures to expand the integrated public transport system along the Oxfordshire knowledge spine to deliver major enhancements to the A40 between Oxford and Witney. This project will deliver the preliminary stage of the longer term A40 strategy.

²⁵ www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk

- 7.28 Oxfordshire County Council prepared a baseline study looking at current conditions on the A40 in 2015 and since then have begun to consider a package of measures to help alleviate congestion on the A40. To tackle congestion in the short to medium term, the County Council is seeking to deliver a new park and ride site of 1,000 spaces to the north of the A40 near Eynsham together with the provision of a new eastbound bus lane along the A40. The scheme will deliver a series of improvements to the A40 between Cuckoo Lane at Eynsham and Duke's Cut canal bridge near Wolvercote seeking to reduce congestion and Oxford-bound car trips. Scheme designs are currently being worked up and will be consulted on in late 2016. The proposed A40-A44 link road will provide a new strategic linkage from the A40 corridor to the A34 and M40.
- 7.29 Oxfordshire County Council is also in the process of looking at longer-term solutions to the A40 itself and held a consultation in autumn 2015 called 'Investing in the A40'. Views were sought on a number of concepts for a long term strategy for tackling the existing and future congestion issues on the A40 corridor – in particular between Witney and Oxford. The options included an A40 bus lane (west-bound) a guided busway, additional dualling of the A40, a Witney to Oxford train service and a Witney to Oxford tram.
- 7.30 The results of the consultation and recommendations for taking the project forward were considered in May 2016 and it was agreed that the west bound bus lane would be taken forward together with additional dualling of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham. The anticipated cost of these improvements is £55m and there is no current funding available.
- 7.31 In light of the potential 'funding gap', where appropriate, we will seek contributions from new development towards solutions to the A40 and also the A44 congestion problems on the approaches to Oxford.

Witney

- 7.32 At Witney, traffic congestion has long been a serious concern with an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) having been designated at Bridge Street. Other areas suffering from congestion include the Ducklington Lane junction with Station Lane and Thorney Leys and Witan Way although improvements were made to the former in 2014 to help improve traffic flow.
- 7.33 Witney's congestion problems are in large part due to there being only one crossing point across the River Windrush at Bridge Street which acts as a bottleneck to traffic travelling east – west across the town. A previous scheme known as the Cogges Link Road (CLR) which would have provided a second river crossing was abandoned following a failed compulsory purchase order.
- 7.34 As the District's main town and a key focus for growth under this local plan, it is essential that future development at Witney is supported by appropriate and timely investment in new and enhanced highway infrastructure. We have identified a number of 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' highway improvement schemes needed to support the Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to the improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction which have already been completed, the following strategic highway schemes have been identified as being necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney:
- **Downs Road junction** – the provision of a new 'all movements' junction onto the A40 at Downs' Road to the west of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney (north Curbridge).

- **Shores Green Slip Roads:** the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT1 and will be accompanied by proposed improvements to Bridge Street.
 - **West End Link:** the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2.
 - **Northern Distributor Road:** the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road via New Yatt Road. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2.
- 7.36 LTP4 envisages that these schemes will come forward sequentially with the Ducklington Lane improvements happening first (now completed) followed by the A40/Downs Road junction followed by the Shores Green Slip Road scheme and associated improvements at Bridge Street. Whilst not specified in LTP4, the inference is that the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road would follow on from these other strategic highway improvements. Whilst these schemes cannot be expected to eliminate traffic congestion in Witney, they will help to mitigate the impacts of the developments that are proposed to deliver them and as a combined package of measures, will have a number of wider benefits that justify them being safeguarded and taken forward through the Local Plan.
- 7.37 The Downs Road junction will have a number of demonstrable benefits not least the fact that the large number of businesses located on the western side of Witney will be able to access the A40 directly instead of using Deer Park Road and Thorney Leys. New residents of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney will also be able to conveniently access the town centre via the A40 should they wish to.
- 7.38 The Shores Green Slip Roads scheme will allow those living in the east and north east areas of Witney to access the town centre from the south by using the A40 instead of travelling along Oxford Hill and Bridge Street. Similarly, a proportion of drivers wishing to access the A4095 will be able to do so via Jubilee Way rather than via Bridge Street and Woodstock Road.
- 7.39 The West End Link and northern distributor road are needed to enable the proposed development of land to the north of Witney. Without these measures in place the development would be likely to have an unacceptable transport impact. Transport modelling also suggests these new links will have a number of wider benefits to Witney.
- 7.40 These four strategic highway schemes will therefore be safeguarded through this local plan and delivered through the development schemes identified. A number of potential 'non-strategic' improvements are also likely to be needed in and around the central area of Witney to help facilitate the movement of vehicles including buses through the town.
- 7.41 The Council's IDP identifies a number of potential improvements and the District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to bring these and other schemes forward as necessary.

Carterton

7.42 At Carterton, although the road network is not congested, there is no 'A' road access to the town from the A40 or the A361 and it remains an aspiration of the District and County Councils to deliver improved access to the town and RAF Brize Norton from the strategic road network. LTP4 identifies improved access to the A40 as a key objective. This is seen as critically important to unlocking the town's economic potential and helping to provide a better balance of housing and job opportunities in order to reduce levels of out-commuting. It will also facilitate the movement of vehicles to and from RAF Brize Norton.

7.43 The County Council have undertaken a number of studies to help inform the most appropriate way forward and have prioritised the B4477 Brize Norton Road for upgrading to A-road standard which will also include the provision of a premium cycle route together with associated complementary measures. It is estimated that this will cost in the region of £3.9m and will be delivered through a combination of funding including developer contributions. The proposals are required due to cumulative growth. The addition of west facing slip roads to the A40 has been identified as a key part of this project in LTP4 to help serve operations at RAF Brize Norton future employment growth and is likely to cost in the region of £7.2m. Strategic highway infrastructure projects for Carterton are therefore:

- **B4477 Brize Norton upgrade** - upgrading of the B4477 Brize Norton Road to A-road standard including the provision of a premium cycle route and associated complementary measures. Funding will be sought from developments as appropriate.
- **A40 West Facing Slip Roads** - the promotion of west facing slip roads at the junction of the A40/B4477 Minster Lovell junction to serve operations at RAF Brize Norton, and future employment growth. Funding will be sought from developments as appropriate.

7.44 It has been previously suggested that a new link road could also be provided from the B4477 Brize Norton Road to the Witney Road which would take a proportion of vehicular trips away from the northern part of Brize Norton village. The County Council has concluded that in light of the priority being given to the B4477 upgrade to A-road standard, at the present time this link is not needed as it would encourage trips along the Witney Road instead.

7.45 Elsewhere in Carterton, the committed development of 250 homes to the north west of Carterton will deliver a new link road from Shilton Road to Elmhurst Way. It is anticipated that this development will be complete within 5-years.

Chipping Norton

7.46 Chipping Norton sits astride the crossing of the A44 and A361, with the heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area passing through the Town Centre. As a result, an Air Quality Management Area has been designated on Horsefair and Banbury Road, which could act as a constraint to new development if unresolved. An Action Plan was approved in 2008 containing a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements. We will continue to work with the County Council to deliver these objectives (see Section 9).

7.47 In recognition of the need to reduce the movement of vehicles in general and HGVs in particular through Chipping Norton, a key component of the East Chipping Norton (Tank Farm) Strategic Development Area (SDA) is the proposed delivery of an eastern link road which it is envisaged will connect the Burford Road/Charlbury Road to London Road and onto the Banbury Road to the north. As this link road is essential to the delivery of the SDA, the indicative route will be safeguarded through this Local Plan.

7.48 Recent transport evidence commissioned by the County Council suggests that the provision of an eastern link road for Chipping Norton would not only help to mitigate the traffic impact of the additional housing at Tank Farm but would also have benefits for through traffic compared to a smaller development effectively served by a cul de sac arrangement. Furthermore, coupled with appropriate HGV restrictions on key sections it might be possible to reduce the volume of HGVs running along the High Street thereby having a potential air quality benefit for this part of the AQMA (although displacement of traffic elsewhere will require further consideration). The provision of this strategic road link is therefore a prerequisite of the proposed SDA which has been increased in size from the original draft proposal (see Section 9). Other complementary measures to mitigate the impact of development on the Town Centre and surrounding area will also be sought such as new and improved signage, junction improvements, traffic and speed management and air quality measures. Strategic highway infrastructure projects for Chipping Norton are therefore:

- **Eastern Link Road:** provision of a new eastern link road for the Town connecting the A44 Banbury Road with the B4026/A361 via the A44 London Road and associated complementary measures. To be delivered as part of the proposed East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy CN1.

Eynsham

- 7.49 Proposed strategic growth to the west and north of Eynsham (see Section 9) has the potential to deliver not only a large number of new homes to meet identified needs but also provides the opportunity to deliver a number of strategic highway improvements. Whilst the proposals are at a relatively early stage it is anticipated that land to the west of Eynsham, in being brought forward as a comprehensive, strategic urban extension to the village has the potential to deliver a new western spine road connecting the A40 to the B4449 to the south of Eynsham. Subject to appropriate design and traffic management/signage this could potentially help to reduce the amount of unnecessary ‘through-traffic’ in Eynsham.
- 7.50 To the north of Eynsham, the scale of the proposed new garden village settlement is such that it offers the potential to deliver a number of strategic highway improvements. This will include the provision of a new 1,000 space park and ride site being delivered as part of the Science Transit project (see ‘Public Transport’).
- 7.51 As the garden village proposal is at a very early stage, other potential strategic improvements have not yet been determined in detail but are likely to include a new road connection with the A40, potentially linking with the proposed western spine road and thereby allowing easy access to the B4449 to the south.
- 7.52 A new main road is also likely to be provided through the garden village site connecting the A40 with Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road to the east thereby allowing greater journey choice and facilitating easier access to Hanborough Railway Station. The proposed development also provides the opportunity to create an iconic ‘feature bridge’ across the A40 connecting the new village with Eynsham to the south. This will allow existing and new residents and employees convenient access between the two areas and into open countryside beyond.

7.53 Essential strategic highway improvements will be identified in more detail through the proposed Area Action Plan (AAP) process (See Section 9). This will include consideration of improvements in the wider area including for example the Swinford Toll Bridge to reduce congestion at peak times; possible measures, such as automation, will require partnership working with the bridge owner. Strategic highway projects for Eynsham are therefore:

- **Western Spine Road:** provision of a new western spine road connecting the A40 and the B4449. To be delivered as part of the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy EW2.
- **Park and Ride:** provision of a 1,000 space park and ride site on land north of the A40 supported by the provision of bus priority measures.
- **Other potential improvements:** to be identified in more detail through the AAP process including a potential northern link road connecting the A40 with Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road, A40 crossing/bridge and potential highway improvements in the wider area.

Other areas

7.54 Elsewhere, the District is largely served by a rural road network which in some instances has limited capacity for a significant increase in traffic. Particular constraints are the narrow highways through the centre of settlements, the limited number of river crossings and the capacity of the bridges at these crossings, many of which are single vehicle width with traffic light controls.

7.55 This is especially so over the River Thames on the southern boundary of the District, where the road crossings are mainly historic bridges of single vehicle width. One of these, on the A415 at Newbridge, is a Scheduled Monument, is deteriorating and is the subject of a weight restriction order. The bridge provides a vitally important transport link to the southern parts of Oxfordshire and any future operational problems would have a significant impact. There is also congestion at the crossing of the River Windrush at Burford as well as the aforementioned problems along the A4095 around Long Hanborough and Bladon.

7.56 We will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to identify and deliver highway improvements that are needed to mitigate and support the level and distribution of growth planned for these rural sub-areas through the Local Plan.

7.57 Where appropriate and necessary, the District Council will seek provision towards enhanced highway infrastructure from new developments, either directly or through an appropriate financial contribution.

7.58 In general terms, as technologies develop, the role alternative fuels will play in both public transport and private vehicles such as hybrid, electric, and other types of low emission vehicles, is likely to increase nationally. Such changes in how transport is fuelled, is likely to have positive effects on the environment. Locally, these may be witnessed within the air quality management areas in Chipping Norton and Witney.

POLICY T2: Highway Improvement Schemes

All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network.

Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic, shall be supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and a Travel Plan.

Where necessary to mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.

The following strategic highway infrastructure schemes are proposed to be safeguarded and delivered as part of the committed and allocated urban extensions identified in this Local Plan:

- Downs Road junction, Witney
- Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney
- West End Link Road, Witney
- Northern Distributor Road, Witney
- Eastern Link Road, Chipping Norton
- Western Spine Road, Eynsham

The Council will identify and safeguard necessary strategic highway improvements associated with the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village through the Area Action Plan (AAP) process.

The Council will continue to support the provision of A-road access to Carterton via the B4477 together with the provision of west facing slip roads at the junction of the A40 and B4477. Contributions will be sought from new development as appropriate.

The Council will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to securing improvements to the A40 between Witney and Oxford. This will include the provision of an eastbound bus lane in conjunction with the proposed park and ride at Eynsham to help address congestion in the short to medium term, together with longer term improvements including the provision of a westbound bus lane from Oxford to Eynsham and dualling of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham.

Contributions will be sought from new development and other potential sources of funding as appropriate.

In addition, the Council will work in partnership with the County Council to deliver other 'non-strategic' highway improvements necessary to support the quantum and distribution of growth identified in the Local Plan with contributions to be sought from new development as appropriate.

Public transport

- 7.59 Improvements to public transport including bus and rail services have a key role to play in encouraging fewer car journeys. If bus and rail can be convenient, frequent, reliable and reasonably priced, people are more likely to make a conscious effort to leave their car at home and catch a bus or train instead.
- 7.60 Whilst the Local Plan has no influence over the price of public transport it can influence how convenient it is to use, how frequently it runs and to some extent how reliable it is.

Bus services

- 7.61 Parts of West Oxfordshire are well-served by bus services including premium routes between Carterton, Witney, Eynsham and Oxford and between Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Oxford. However, journey times can be unreliable because of congestion within Witney, at Eynsham and approaching Oxford.
- 7.62 Providing high quality, frequent bus services as well as good waiting facilities and up to date service information is critical to encouraging greater passenger use by making public transport an attractive travel choice.
- 7.63 Discussions have been held with Oxfordshire County Council and the main bus operators through the preparation of the Local Plan and IDP and a number of potential enhancements to bus services and facilities within West Oxfordshire have been identified. These include improvements to bus stops to install real time information and improved waiting and boarding facilities, improved bus journey times and increased frequencies of services.

7.64 As highlighted above, the County Council have identified a need for a remote park and ride at Eynsham. It is anticipated that the park and ride site will be delivered in conjunction with the improvements that are proposed to the A40 as part of the Oxfordshire science transit project, part of which is focused on tackling the current traffic problems between Eynsham and the Wolvercote roundabout on the edge of Oxford. The new park and ride site will have 1,000 parking spaces and will form an integral part of the proposed garden village north of the A40 near Eynsham providing fast and frequent bus services into Oxford.

7.65 These and other potential public transport improvement schemes are identified in the IDP. We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the bus operators to secure new and improved bus services and facilities in West Oxfordshire. In particular, we will ensure that where necessary, new development is supported by improvements to bus services and facilities either provided directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution. The need to enhance bus service provision wherever possible is particularly acute in light of the decision to cut a number of bus service subsidies in July 2016.

Rail services

7.66 West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served by passenger rail services although not at the main towns. There are two mainline railways shown on the Key Diagram, the Cotswolds and Malvern line and the Oxford/Birmingham line, the former having benefited from the redoubling of 20 miles of track between Charlbury and Evesham, which included new platforms at Charlbury and Ascott under Wychwood.

- 7.67 There is one passenger station on the Oxford/Birmingham line at Tackley and seven on the Cotswolds and Malvern line including Hanborough, Combe, Finstock, Charlbury, Ascott under Wychwood, Shipton under Wychwood and Kingham. The largest stations used by most passengers and served by the greatest number of train services are Charlbury, Kingham, Hanborough and Tackley. Car parking capacity is an important consideration for a number of stations.
- 7.68 Passenger growth on the Cotswold line has been significant with exceptional growth at Hanborough (up 239%) and at the busiest station on the line at Charlbury (up 30%)²⁶. LTP4 highlights the fact that there is significant demand and yet further passenger growth is being suppressed by train capacity and poor access to some rural stations. There is potential for further growth with the introduction of an hourly service in December 2018. New trains will bring increased capacity with additional seating and will also achieve faster journey times, with some services from Hanborough reaching London Paddington in 63 minutes.
- 7.69 LTP4 identifies a strategic aspiration to develop Hanborough Station as a transport hub to help reduce congestion on the A40 as part of an overall package of public transport measures. To fulfil its potential, the station will require a larger car park, footbridge and new platform so any trains extended from Oxford can terminate and turnaround. To fully realise the potential of the railway, further redoubling will be required at the eastern and western ends of the line, between Wolvercote Junction and Hanborough, and from west of Evesham towards Pershore. This would allow up to three trains per hour to Hanborough and/or Charlbury and two trains per hour between London and Worcester, with a journey time under two hours.
- 7.70 In light of the proposed improvements to Hanborough Station a key element of the proposed garden village to the north of Eynsham will be the provision of improved connectivity between the new settlement and the station particularly by bus and cycle. This is addressed in more detail in Section 9.
- 7.71 Notably, none of the three main towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) are directly served by rail although there are bus links to Kingham station from Chipping Norton and to Long Hanborough from Witney.
- 7.72 In addition to the improvements outlined above, Oxfordshire County Council's LTP4 identifies a number of other potential improvements to rail services within West Oxfordshire. The District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council and rail providers to further investigate the potential delivery of the various schemes and aspirations that have been identified.
- 7.73 It is important not to consider rail and bus services separately because in some instances it may be possible to deliver an integrated approach with seamless transition from one journey which may be by train onto the next which may be by bus. Making it easier to access public transport by bike or on foot is also important.
- Community transport
- 7.74 Community transport schemes are vital for people who do not have access to a car and are unable to use public transport, walk or cycle to their destination, usually due to disability, age-related frailty, or mobility problems. There are a number of community transport schemes in West Oxfordshire including a dial-a-ride scheme, community buses and volunteer car schemes as well as the Oxfordshire Comet, a bookable transport service for those who can't access suitable public transport. These receive advice and practical support from Community First Oxfordshire.

²⁶ Source: LTP4 Volume 3: Rail Strategy

7.75 We will continue to work in partnership with ORCC, Oxfordshire County Council and the other District Councils in order to develop the community transport sector in West Oxfordshire, to increase capacity and improve the coverage of the district.

Active travel (walking and cycling)

7.76 Alongside improvements to public transport, enabling more active forms of travel including walking and cycling is essential to reducing car use. It also has the added benefit of encouraging more healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health concerns including rising rates of obesity.

7.77 The provision of high quality, well-designed and maintained pedestrian and cycle facilities as well as the provision of information such as clear signage is critical to encouraging more walking and cycling. The planning system has a key role to play in this regard by ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate levels of investment in new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. LTP4 includes an active and healthy travel strategy focusing on cycling and walking as well as door to door integrated multi-modal journeys.

7.78 At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities, although most of these linkages are focused on the main towns of Witney and Carterton including in particular routes installed as part of the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments. Cross-town cycle routes can however suffer from poor signage as well as having some gaps in provision.

7.79 Outside the main towns and rural service centres although there are a number of national cycle network routes running through the District, most pedestrian and cycle opportunities involve the use of 'quiet roads' rather than dedicated pedestrian and cycle links. Increased traffic levels on these quiet roads may prevent vulnerable road users from accessing these routes safely.

7.80 In discussion with Oxfordshire County Council, we have identified a number of improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth in the District. These include the provision of additional footways and cycle paths and improvements to existing routes, with a particular focus on improving accessibility to key locations. Greater use of public transport can be encouraged (through provision of walking and cycling routes to bus stops and cycle parking at bus stops).

7.81 The County Council have also identified the potential provision of a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney, as well as a number of specific improvements in Witney and the need for improved cycle parking at key destinations and employment sites in Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.

7.82 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver attractive, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District including through new development.

POLICY T3:

Public transport, walking and cycling

All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school.

Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils, bus and rail operators and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to:

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan (Connecting Oxfordshire) and IDP; and
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP.

Parking provision

- 7.83 The amount of parking provided can also have a direct impact on people's travel choices and the District Council can influence the amount of parking available in two ways. Firstly we can determine how much parking is provided as part of new development such as housing, shops and offices.
- 7.84 In this regard we will determine the level of provision in accordance with the residential, non-residential and cycle parking standards adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority. The residential parking standards are based on the provision of an 'optimum' number of spaces rather than a 'maximum' or 'minimum' and are based on the provision of a mix of allocated and unallocated spaces.
- 7.85 We can also influence parking through our approach towards the provision of off-street parking. National planning policy suggests that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. In addition to the quality and cost of parking provision, we can influence the amount of parking available.
- 7.86 With regard to off-street public car parking, there are 16 car parks in West Oxfordshire and the Council's long standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of local centres. Car parking is managed through time restrictions, the effectiveness of which is kept under review. Sufficient and convenient parking provision can make a significant contribution to the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas.
- 7.87 In Chipping Norton public car parking spaces in the town centre are insufficient to meet current needs and in Witney although public car parking spaces in the town centre are considered adequate to meet current needs, the Woolgate and Woodford Way car parks operate at a high level of usage.

7.88 Car parking is also under pressure in popular tourist towns such as Burford and Woodstock particularly at weekends and there is a need to continue to review car and coach parking arrangements to ensure available spaces are efficiently used and provide additional car parking where capacity is being exceeded. The Council is preparing a parking strategy that will help to inform future decisions about the quantum and distribution of parking needed within the District.

7.89 We will continue to monitor car parking requirements and parking management whilst promoting alternative means of travel. We will also seek improvements and capacity increases to public parking as appropriate including through new development.

POLICY T4 :
Parking provision

The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality.

Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership.

Proposals for new off street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential.

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.



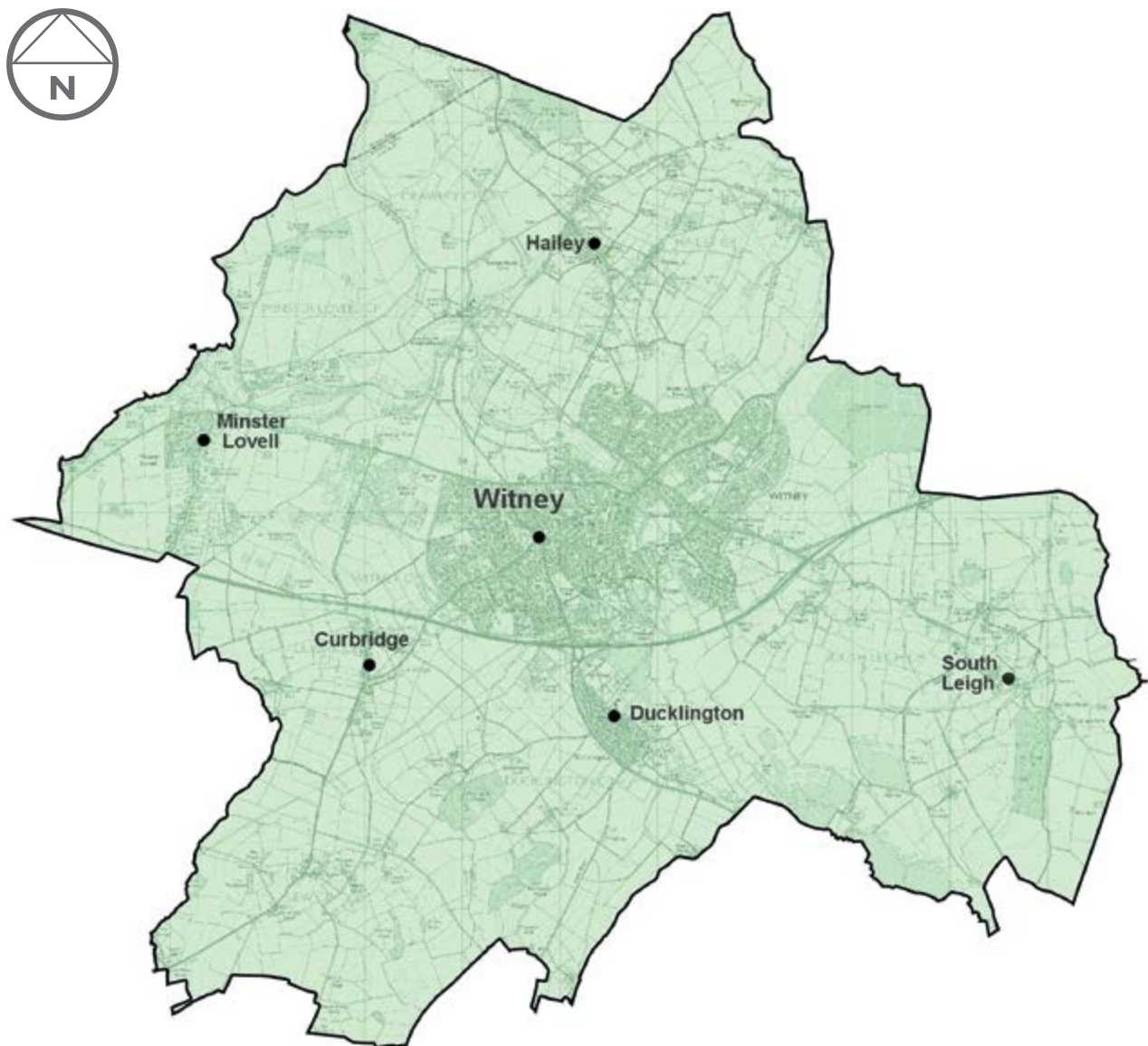
Witney sub-area

Witney

9.2.1 This is the smallest of the five-sub areas covering an area of around 7,000 hectares. However, it is the most heavily populated, containing around 33,000 people. The majority of residents (28,000) live in Witney a vibrant and historic market town famed for its association with the blanket industry. Witney is the District's largest town, acting as the main service centre and offering a broad range of housing and employment opportunities as well as key services and facilities including retailing, health care, leisure and culture.

9.2.2 The rest of the sub-area comprises a number of villages and hamlets on the fringes of Witney including Crawley, Hailey, Minster Lovell, Ducklington, South Leigh and Curbridge. Although these places offer some local facilities they naturally look to Witney for most essential services.

Figure 9.2a: Witney sub-area



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Housing

- 9.2.3 Most of the existing housing in this sub-area is located in Witney (around 12,000 dwellings) which has experienced major growth over the last 30 years, more than doubling its population. Much of this growth has been accommodated through successive urban extensions in the post-war era, to the north, west and east of the town.
- 9.2.4 Property prices are relatively high (although not as high as some parts of the District) and there is considerable housing need³⁵ with about 550 households on the housing waiting list having identified Witney as their preferred location. The County Council has also identified Witney as its priority location for the provision of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs.
- 9.2.5 Whilst there are some further opportunities for housing within the built up area of Witney, these are relatively limited and to accommodate future housing needs there is a need to develop on the fringes of the town on Greenfield land. This needs to be carefully balanced with the need to protect the town's setting and the separate identity of nearby villages. There are some further development opportunities within the rest of the sub-area although these are relatively modest in scale.

Employment

- 9.2.6 The Witney sub-area plays an important economic role containing just over 30% of the District's employment opportunities (almost 15,000 jobs) and almost 30% of the District's economically active residents³⁶.

9.2.7 Witney is the main economic centre in the District and its role as a centre for blanket manufacturing was important in the town's expansion. Today the economy is diverse with a range of shopping, leisure and tourist facilities and accommodation, several small employment sites throughout the town and large employment estates on the southern and western edges. The town retains a strong manufacturing and engineering presence, and the availability of good quality employment sites on the western side of the town has attracted significant investment, including some high technology manufacturers linked to the Oxford Bioscience Cluster.

9.2.8 Around 8 hectares of land remains on several sites within the large employment area to the west of the town. However, much of this is earmarked for the future expansion of existing businesses meaning it is not available to facilitate inward investment from outside of the District. An additional 10 hectares is proposed as part of the committed urban extension at West Witney (see Figure 9.2h) and will meet a significant proportion of future business land requirements in the town, benefitting from improved access onto the A40 via a new junction at Down's Road. In the longer-term, the delivery of this new junction could also unlock further employment land potential to the west of Down's Road. This would need to be considered alongside other reasonable alternatives through a review of the Local Plan.

Transport

9.2.9 Transport is a key issue for the Witney sub-area which contains a number of important and well-used routes including the A40 the A4095 and A415. Although Witney has the best road connections and bus services in the District context, traffic congestion is a significant problem due to high car use particularly for journeys outside of Witney.

35 People who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable property at market prices

36 Economic snapshot and outlook report

- 9.2.10 Improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction were implemented by Oxfordshire County Council in 2014 to help improve traffic flow, but problems persist in the historic core of the town around Bridge Street where the town's single river crossing creates a 'bottleneck' that causes delays to journey times and poor air quality.
- 9.2.11 A further key issue is the A40. Currently access to the A40 at Witney is relatively limited and the route is also heavily congested at peak times between Eynsham and the edge of Oxford. The A40 problems are seen as a major constraint to inward investment into the District as well as a great inconvenience for those sitting in long queues every day. An award of £35m through the Local Growth Fund will be used to deliver improvements comprising a new park and ride at Eynsham and an eastbound bus lane from the park and ride toward Oxford. Longer-term improvements to the A40 have also been identified although funding is yet to be secured.
- 9.2.12 Relieving congestion through investment in transport infrastructure is not only important in terms of public amenity and air quality, it is also essential to unlocking future housing provision and sustainable economic growth.

Retail and leisure

- 9.2.13 Witney is the primary shopping and a key leisure destination serving West Oxfordshire and beyond. With the historic Market Place and High Street at its core, the centre retains its market town character and has a large number of independent and national multiple retailers as well as service uses. The town centre is performing well, maintaining a strong market share with low vacancy rates.
- 9.2.14 Major developments including the Marriott's Walk town centre expansion and the extension to the Woolgate Centre have enhanced the shopping and leisure offer of the town. The availability of free car parking is a significant attraction over competing centres but car park capacity is already under pressure.
- 9.2.15 Evidence³⁷ suggests there is capacity for additional shopping provision in Witney in the medium and longer term and recommends a strategy of phased development to reinforce the role of the town centre in the context of increasing competition elsewhere, such as Oxford.

³⁷ Retail assessment 2012

Environment and heritage

- 9.2.16 Witney grew up as a valley settlement near crossing points of the River Windrush. The river and associated floodplain forms a significant green corridor that is an important part of the character of the town and its historic setting as well as an ecological and recreational resource. The Windrush Valley is a designated Conservation Target Area (CTA)³⁸ and includes the Windrush in Witney Project Area³⁹ which provides guidance for the management of the area in order to protect and enhance its special landscape, character, ecological, cultural and recreational value.
- 9.2.17 Immediately to the south of the town is the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area, an area that has been transformed by sand and gravel extraction. The project was set up in 2001 and is a jointly funded initiative that seeks to strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley, protect and enhance biodiversity, improve opportunities for countryside access and raise awareness of the issues that influence the valley environment.
- 9.2.18 Whilst representing a significant asset, the River Windrush and its tributaries create a flood risk and there have been several flood events in the Witney area with particularly severe flooding in July 2007.
- 9.2.19 The landscape surrounding the town is a mix of valley floor, valley side and open ridge and is generally sensitive to new development. Land to the north and east rises to form a prominent ridge which is a backdrop in many views to and from the town and where there are remnants of the ancient landscape of the Wychwood Forest.

- 9.2.20 In terms of the historic environment, as described above, Witney is an historic market town, famed for its association with the blanket industry with some of the former mill buildings having now been converted to new uses. A Conservation Area washes over much of the central area of the town and there are several scheduled monuments and numerous listed buildings. A number of the smaller settlements surrounding Witney also have designated Conservation Areas.

Infrastructure

- 9.2.21 Infrastructure provision within this sub-area is naturally focused on Witney as the District's main town. Witney offers a significant range of infrastructure including key roads, public transport, schools, health care, museum, library, sports pitches, informal open space, allotments, leisure centre and so on.
- 9.2.22 The growth of Witney in recent years has placed these services and facilities under increasing pressure and careful consideration is needed in terms of the impact of additional housing and business growth. This is a particularly important consideration for Witney which is intended to accommodate a significant proportion of future development in the District to 2031.

Scope for future expansion

- 9.2.23 Opportunities for major development within the built up area of the town are relatively limited. This means that development on the fringes of the town will be required to meet future needs. Land to the west of the town (north Curbridge) is already committed, incorporating 1,000 homes and 10 hectares of new business land but it is quite possible that a modest increase in the number of homes (e.g. to around 1,100) could be achieved as detailed planning applications are dealt with. The remaining strategic options considered through the Local Plan process are to the south, east, north-east north and further west of Witney. There are some further development opportunities within the rest of the sub-area although these are relatively modest in scale.

38 www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

39 www.westoxon.gov.uk/ldfevidence

9.2.24 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Witney sub-area. These include:

- This is the smallest of the five sub-areas but is the most densely populated with most people living in the main town Witney;
- Witney is a key service centre with other nearby settlements looking to it for their principal needs;
- Witney is a vibrant and historic town and the protection of its setting and the individual identities of nearby villages is a key consideration;
- Major housing development has taken place at Witney in the last 30 years doubling the population;
- Property prices although not as high as some parts of the District are still high compared to the national average;
- There is a high level of affordable housing need with Witney being the preferred location for almost half of the Council's housing waiting list;
- Witney is a priority location for the provision of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs;
- This sub-area plays an important economic role, particularly Witney which provides most of the District's job opportunities and economically active residents with a particularly strong presence of manufacturing and engineering;
- Although there is additional business space available, much of this is already earmarked for the expansion of existing businesses rather than inward investment;
- Witney is a key shopping and leisure destination with scope for additional shopping provision in the medium to long-term although parking capacity in the Town Centre is an issue at peak times;
- Traffic congestion is a key issue for this area both in the centre of Witney and on the A40 toward Oxford;
- Flood risk is an important issue due to the presence of the River Windrush;
- This is an environmentally sensitive area with a number of local designations and a small element of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- There are significant mineral resources (sand and gravel) within the Lower Windrush Valley and the after-use of quarry sites presents good opportunities for suitable forms of informal recreation;
- The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is an important issue in this area which includes many heritage assets such as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings;
- There is an extensive range of infrastructure primarily at Witney but major growth in recent years has placed this under increasing pressure and future development will need to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place;
- Relatively limited development opportunities within Witney mean that the development of Greenfield land on the edge of the town will be required to meet future needs. There are some further development opportunities within the rest of the sub-area although these are relatively modest in scale.

Strategy

- 9.2.25 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the strategy for the Witney sub-area is set out below. Regard will also be given to any adopted (made) Neighbourhood Plans in the sub-area.

Housing

- 9.2.26 In terms of future housing provision the anticipated housing delivery for this sub-area is 4,702 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031. In accordance with the overall strategy, the majority of these new homes will be located at Witney which is ranked as the District's most sustainable settlement and offers a number of opportunities for further development.
- 9.2.27 It is anticipated that this will be provided through a combination of homes already completed (2011 – 2017), existing commitments, windfall development, two allocated Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) and two 'non-strategic' housing allocations. This is summarised in the table right. Further sites will also be identified through any subsequent review of this Local Plan.

Table 9.2b: Anticipated housing delivery in the Witney sub-area

| | |
|---|---|
| Homes already completed (2011 – 2017) | 600 |
| Existing large planning commitments at 1 April 2017 (10 or more units): | 1,772 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Curbridge (West Witney) (1,000) • Land at Downs Road, Curbridge (257) • Land off Well Lane, Curbridge (14) • Standlake Road, Ducklington (24) • Land West of Minster Lovell (85) • Land at Northfield Farm, Witney (4)* • Springfield Nursery, Witney (13)* • Dark Lane, Witney (14) • Land at Thorney Leys, Witney (26) • Land north of Springfield Oval, Witney (75) • Land north of Burford Road, Witney (260) | |
| Existing small planning commitments at 1 April 2017 (less than 10 units) | 114 |
| Local Plan Allocations | |
| WIT1 - East Witney strategic development area (SDA) | 450 |
| WIT2 - North Witney strategic development area (SDA) | 1,400 |
| WIT3 - Woodford Way Car Park, Witney | 50 |
| WIT4 - Land West of Minster Lovell** | 125 (net gain of 40 units as 85 units already listed in commitments above) |
| Anticipated windfall (2017– 2031) | 276 |
| Total anticipated housing delivery | 4,702 |

* Remaining units forming part of a larger scheme

Past completions, existing commitments, and windfall

- 9.2.28 In the first six years of the plan period (2011 – 2017) a total of 600 homes were completed in the Witney sub-area. As of 1 April 2017, a further 1,886 homes are already committed through the planning process⁴⁰. This includes 1,772 homes on larger sites (i.e. 10 or more units) and 114 homes on smaller sites (i.e. less than 10 units). The largest committed site is the proposed West Witney (north Curbridge) urban extension which was allocated as a reserve site in the adopted Local Plan. The outline consent envisages the provision of 1,000 new homes plus 10 hectares of new employment land although it is possible that through detailed planning applications the number of new homes could increase to around 1,100.
- 9.2.29 In addition to past completions and existing commitments it is reasonable to include a ‘windfall’ allowance to cater for unidentified sites expected to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence of historic rates of windfall delivery by sub-area, it is reasonable to expect delivery of at least 276 units from unidentified windfall sites in the period 2017 - 2031.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

- 9.2.30 Because there is relatively limited capacity for further housing development within the built up area of Witney, it will be necessary for development to take place on undeveloped land on the edge of the town. Land to the west of Witney (north Curbridge) was identified as a reserve site in the previous Local Plan and is now a firm commitment, expected to deliver at least 1,000 homes within the plan period and possibly more as detailed planning applications are dealt with.

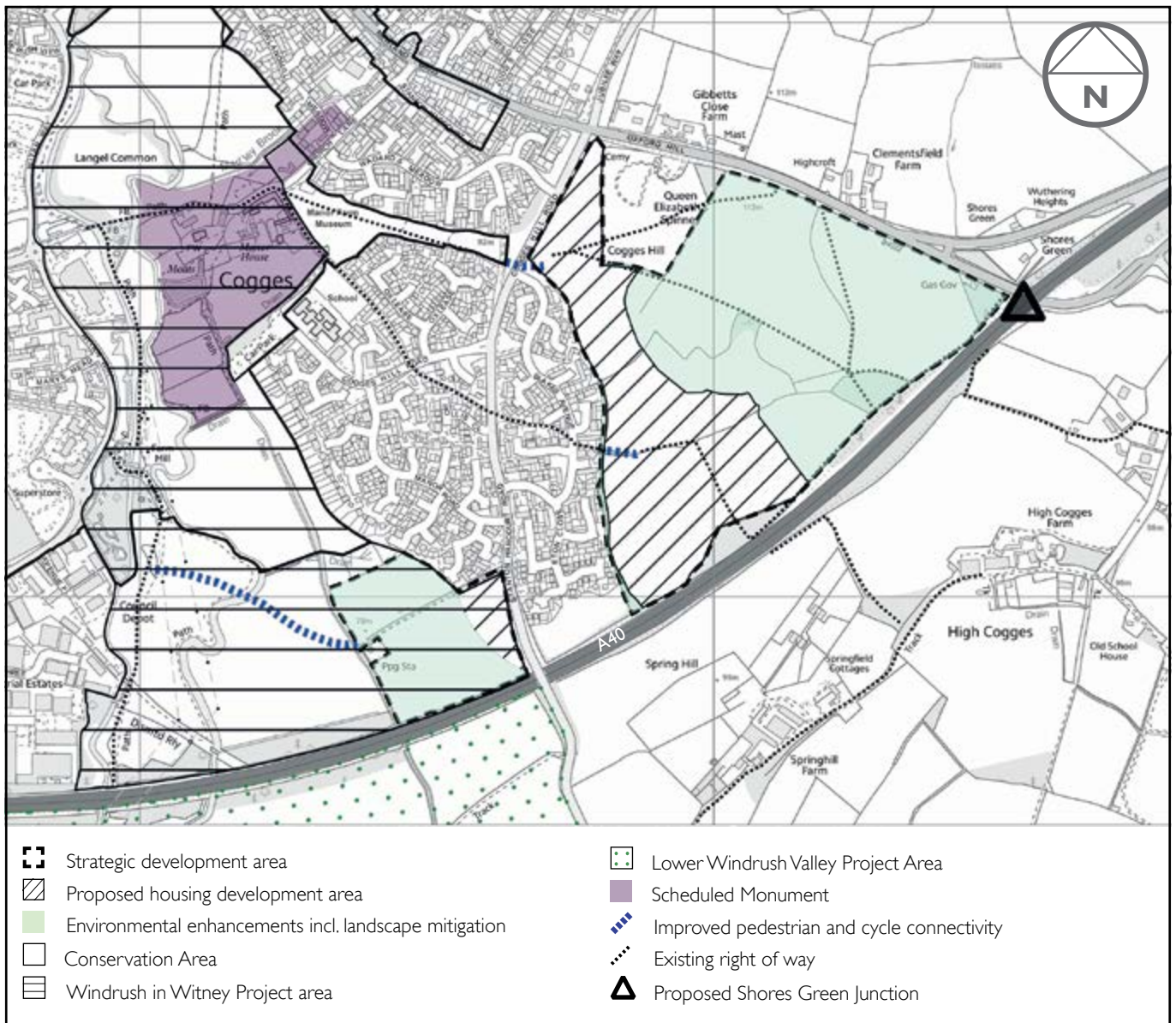
- 9.2.31 Throughout the preparation of this Local Plan, a number of other options for strategic extensions to Witney have been considered including land further land to the west, south, east, north-east and north of the town. Following detailed consideration and analysis, the Council has concluded that land to the east of Witney which falls within Witney Parish and land to the north of Witney which falls within Hailey Parish, represent the most sustainable options for future strategic growth. As such it is proposed that these sites are allocated for 450 homes and 1,400 homes respectively.

East Witney strategic development area (SDA) – 450 homes (Witney parish)

- 9.2.32 Land to the east of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 450 new homes. The site has no significant environmental or heritage constraints, is well-located in relation to the Town Centre and provided the extent, scale and design of development is sensitively controlled, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 will need to be delivered alongside the development in order to help manage the impact of the development.
- 9.2.33 The Shores Green improvements allow traffic using the junction to travel both east and west. A financial contribution towards the slip roads has already been secured from another housing development north of Burford Road in Witney and the East Witney SDA provides another mechanism by which the slip roads can be delivered. The development itself is able to deliver the ‘off-slip’ through a planning obligation and an appropriate financial contribution will be sought towards the ‘on-slip’ potentially as part of a wider strategic transport infrastructure fund/package for Witney.
- 9.2.34 The proposed allocation is shown in Figure 9.2c (note: the extent of the developable area shown is indicative only).

⁴⁰ i.e. already benefit from planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement

Figure 9.2c: East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)



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9.2.35 The allocation is split across two separate sites. A small parcel of land served off the Stanton Harcourt Road will provide a limited development of around 30 homes. The inclusion of this land within the allocation will help to facilitate the provision of links to the Town Centre across the Windrush Valley thereby increasing the integration of the overall development with the existing built area. It will also provide early revenue for the developer to help fund the infrastructure needed to bring forward the larger part of the site.

9.2.36 The remaining homes (c. 420) will be provided on the land known as Cogges Triangle, subject to consideration of the likely traffic impact on Witney in particular Bridge Street and an agreed strategy for the delivery of the Shores Green junction improvements. The precise quantum of development on both sites will depend on a number of issues including landscape and heritage impact, surface water run-off and traffic impact. A balanced mix of housing types including affordable housing will be sought together with the provision of essential supporting infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development.

POLICY WITI:

East Witney Strategic Development Area (450 homes)

Land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:

- a) about 450 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.30 homes on land adjacent to Stanton Harcourt Road (subject to landscape impact and flood risk) and c. 420 homes on land at Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off).
- b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan.
- c) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures.
- d) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving the linkages across the Windrush Valley into the town centre consistent with the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and to Hanborough Station.
- e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure.
- f) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements.
- g) biodiversity, landscape and public access enhancements within the Lower Windrush Valley including arrangements for future maintenance.
- h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments.
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise.
- j) the conservation, and enhancement where possible, of the setting of the Cogges Scheduled Monument and the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area.
- k) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and be deposited in a public archive.
- l) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- m) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.
- n) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.
- o) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.

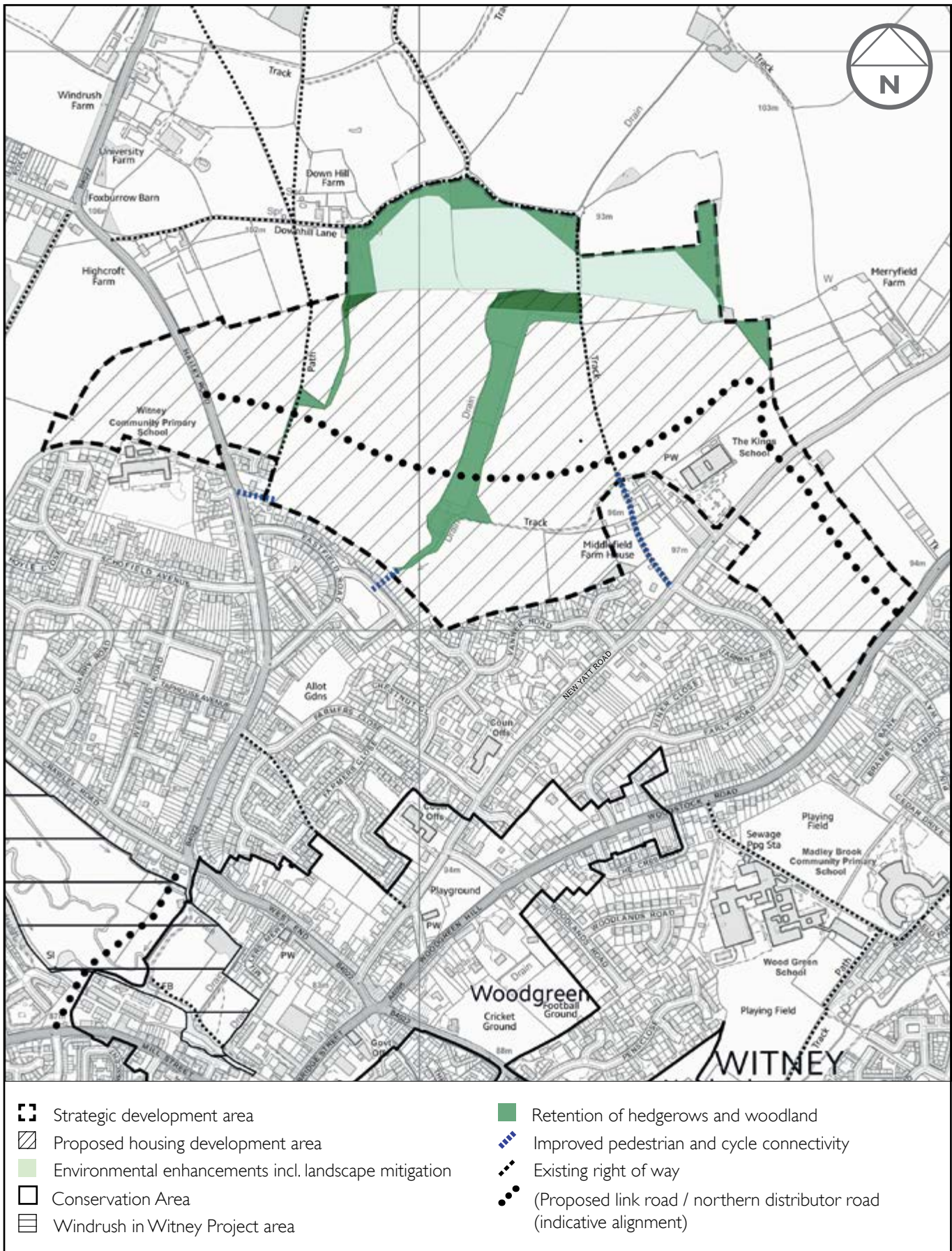
North Witney strategic development area (SDA) - 1,400 homes (Hailey parish)

- 9.2.37 Land to the north of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 1,400 homes. The site is considered to be well-related to the main services and facilities of Witney, has no major ecological or heritage constraints and based on the proposed quantum of growth, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the development will require the delivery of the West End Link (WEL) a second river crossing for Witney together with a new northern distributor road connecting Hailey Road to New Yatt Road and onto Woodstock Road.
- 9.2.38 The proposed allocation is shown overleaf (note: the extent of the developable area is indicative only).
- 9.2.39 The proposed site allocation comprises three separate parcels of land, a larger area of land (c. 49ha) between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road a parcel between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road (c. 7ha) and a smaller parcel of land west of Hailey Road (c. 4ha). It is anticipated that across the allocation as a whole, around 1,400 homes could be provided.
- 9.2.40 The land west of Hailey Road is capable of accommodating around 100 new homes, the land between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road, around 1,100 homes and the land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road around 200 homes.
- 9.2.41 In addition to the proposed site allocation shown on Figure 9.2d, there may also be some potential for further development on the land further north between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road. The site has not been promoted for development through the Council's housing land availability assessment and has therefore not been included within the allocation but in principle may be suitable subject to there being a demonstrable benefit eg. in terms of improved highway access arrangements and Green Infrastructure provision.
- 9.2.42 Key considerations for this site include flood risk, ecology, landscape impact, transport impact, deliverability and phasing. Consideration of the archaeological significance of the area, including historic landscape, will also be needed.
- 9.2.43 In terms of flood risk, evidence⁴¹ suggests that there is scope to reduce surface water run-off from the site itself through the use of sustainable drainage and potential off-site enhancements. The site promoter has identified land to the north of the SDA boundary which could be used for the purpose of off-site storage. Although the associated West End Link falls within an area of designated floodplain, it is classed as 'essential infrastructure' and there are no sequentially preferable alternatives available (other than the A40/Shores Green slip roads scheme which is also being taken forward).
- 9.2.44 Importantly, the West End Link could offer the potential to serve a 'dual' role not only in terms of transport but also in terms of flood risk mitigation – the concept of which has the support of Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. Any development proposal will need to be supported by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 9.2.45 With regard to ecology, evidence⁴² suggests that both the site and the West End Link have no significant ecological constraints and that the proposed development presents a number of opportunities to deliver positive enhancements.

41 North Witney and WEL Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015)

42 North Witney and WEL Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2015)

Figure 9.2d: North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)



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9.2.46 In terms of landscape impact, evidence⁴³ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggested that the originally proposed quantum of development (1,000 homes) was able to be accommodated on the site without undue adverse impact. Taking account of the additional development capacity provided by the inclusion of land west of Hailey Road, a modest increase in the extent of the developable area to the north (see Figure 9.2d) and slightly higher density assumptions, it is considered that around 1,400 homes can be delivered on the site whilst ensuring an acceptable degree of impact in landscape terms. A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment would however be required in support of any future application to determine the most appropriate form and layout of development which would ultimately influence final housing numbers.

9.2.47 Traffic impact is a key consideration and any development will need to be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan. Evidence⁴⁴ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggests that whilst not eliminating congestion in the central core of Witney around Bridge Street, the provision of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road will, in combination with other strategic highway measures proposed at Witney, have a number of tangible benefits as well as mitigating the impact of the proposed development.

9.2.48 In terms of deliverability, there are no known constraints in terms of land assembly to prevent the site coming forward and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁴⁵ suggests that the scheme is a financially viable proposition.

9.2.49 As a large site, development of the North Witney SDA is likely to fall into a number of phases. There is already a current planning application on part of the site for 200 dwellings which is likely to form 'Phase 1' (subject to a comprehensive masterplan/delivery framework for the whole site). Because of the lead-in times associated with larger strategic sites, it is likely that the majority of the site will come forward later in the plan period after 2021 unless delivery can be accelerated. Delivery of the bulk of development in the medium to long-term would however offer the following advantages:

- help to ensure that housing delivery is provided evenly across the whole of the Local Plan period;
- ensure the transport impact of the scheme is minimised by allowing for the new A40/Down's Road junction and A40/Shores Green improvements to come forward first;
- allow time for the east and west Witney schemes to come forward in advance; and
- allow for the West End Link element of the scheme to be phased in appropriately as an integral part of the development.

43 Kirkham Associates Landscape and Visual Review of Submissions for Carterton and Witney Strategic Development Options (2012)

44 Technical Note: Witney Development and Infrastructure Strategic Modelling (White Young Green October 2014)

45 Aspinall Verdi – SDA appraisal North Witney (2015)

POLICY WIT2:

North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,400 homes)

Land to the north of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:

- a) about 1,400 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing;
- b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan;
- c) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential delivery of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road;
- d) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas including the town centre and other key destinations;
- e) the provision of a new primary school on-site (2FE including nursery) on a 2.2ha site together with financial contributions towards secondary school capacity as appropriate;
- f) the conservation and where possible enhancement of the setting of the grade II listed Middlefield Farmhouse and dovecote and the Witney and Cogges and Hailey Conservation Areas;
- g) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and should be deposited in a public archive;
- h) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development including a positive landscape framework to create a new town edge;
- i) retention of important on-site hedgerows and plantation woodland;
- j) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance;
- k) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments;
- l) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. This may include consideration of 'off-site' solutions. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- m) all development should be steered to areas at least flood risk within Flood Zone 1 and flood alleviation measures to reduce flood risk associated with the Hailey Road Drain should be incorporated where appropriate.
- n) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.
- o) ensuring that the design and construction of the West End Link has no undue impact on heritage assets and biodiversity and provides for mitigation and enhancements where feasible;
- p) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.
- q) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.

Alternative options for strategic growth at Witney

- 9.2.50 In terms of alternative strategic directions of growth at Witney, several other options have been considered including land to the south and land to the north east of the town as well as land to the west of Downs Road. Having regard to the overall housing requirement and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁴⁶ these sites have not been allocated at this point but will be re-considered alongside any other reasonable alternatives as part of any subsequent review of this Local Plan.
- 9.2.51 Land to the south of Witney which straddles the boundaries of Ducklington and Curbridge Parishes, whilst physically proximate to the town centre and main employment areas in the south is segregated from the town by the A40. There are concerns regarding noise, odour and landscape impact and unlike the alternative options, the scheme would not deliver any strategic highway improvements for Witney.
- 9.2.52 Land to the north east of Witney which straddles the boundaries of Witney Parish and South Leigh Parish is highly sensitive in terms of landscape impact and importantly, in terms of deliverability, there is some uncertainty in relation to the assembly of land needed to provide satisfactory access arrangements onto Jubilee Way.
- 9.2.53 Land to the west of Downs Road is at present rather divorced and isolated from the existing built area of Witney. However, when the committed urban extension at West Witney (North Curbridge) is completed, the context of the site will change and it could potentially form a logical urban extension to the town.

Non-strategic housing allocations

- 9.2.54 In order to help meet identified housing needs, in addition to the two strategic development areas outlined above, two smaller site allocations are proposed in the Witney sub-area; Woodford Way Car Park at Witney and Land to the west of Minster Lovell, near Witney.

Woodford Way Car Park (50 homes)

- 9.2.55 This site is currently in use as a surface level car park close to the centre of Witney on Woodford Way. It is a highly sustainable location for residential development being within easy walking and cycling distance of a broad range of services and facilities. The principle of residential development on the site has previously been accepted through a planning permission although this has now lapsed. The proposed site allocation is shown in Figure 9.2e overleaf.
- 9.2.56 Whilst not available in the short term, it is reasonable to expect that a residential scheme could come forward on this site within the plan period most likely as part of a mixed-use scheme including other suitable and compatible town centre uses. The southern part of the site falls within Flood Zone 2 and is a key consideration for any future redevelopment.

⁴⁶ West Oxfordshire Assessment of Strategic Site Options Update (February 2015); Sustainability Appraisal of Pre-Submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan (Enfusion February 2015); SA Addendum Report (Enfusion 2016); SHELAA (2016)

Employment

- 9.2.60 The Witney sub-area plays an important role in terms of the West Oxfordshire economy, with Witney itself accommodating a significant proportion of the District's job opportunities.
- 9.2.61 In accordance with the overall strategy, Witney will be a key focus for additional business and employment opportunities over the period of the Local Plan. There is around 8 hectares of existing business land to the west of the town but much of this is unavailable having been set aside for the expansion of existing businesses. An additional 10 hectares of new business floorspace will be provided as part of the committed urban extension at West Witney (north Curbridge).
- 9.2.62 In the longer term, there may be potential for further business land provision to the west of Downs Road. Part of the land adjoins an existing industrial area which includes number of leading local employers including Chris Hayter Transport and Stewart Milne Timber Systems. A further extension of this area to the south and west would be logical in planning terms and could provide the opportunity to deliver an additional road connection between Downs Road and the B4047. There is also scope for additional business land to be provided around the new Downs Road/A40 junction.
- 9.2.63 It is anticipated that the provision of new employment land could also facilitate the upgrading of Witney's existing employment land stock through the provision of modern business premises enabling businesses to move and expand. There is for example considerable potential for redevelopment of the Station Lane employment estates in the medium to longer term.
- 9.2.64 We will seek the retention of existing employment sites and support in principle, the modernisation of premises to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- 9.2.65 Employment provision in the rest of the sub-area will generally be limited to meeting local community and business needs. Rural diversification projects will be supported in principle.

Transport

- 9.2.66 Transport is a key issue for the Witney sub-area which includes a number of key routes. Congestion within the town and further afield on the A40 are known to be significant problems. The Local Plan therefore proposes a number of measures to help alleviate congestion and improve the flow of vehicular traffic.
- 9.2.67 A number of strategic highway improvement schemes are proposed to complement the improvements that were made to the Ducklington Lane junction in 2014. These include:
- **A40/Down's Road junction** – the provision of a new 'all movements' junction onto the A40 at Downs' Road to the west of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney (north Curbridge).
 - **A40/Shore's Green Western Slip Roads** - the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. This will be facilitated by new development including primarily the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
 - **West End Link Road (WEL)** – the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney. This will be facilitated by new development including primarily the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
 - **Northern Distributor Road** – the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road via New Yatt Road. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
- 9.2.68 It is anticipated that this 'package' of strategic highway improvements will help to mitigate the impact of planned housing and business growth in Witney and provide a significant improvement to the flow of vehicles in and around the town. It is proposed that a strategic transport strategy and fund will be created

for Witney in conjunction with the County Council as highway authority. Other 'non-strategic' highway improvements will be sought as appropriate through new development including those identified in the IDP.

- 9.2.69 Provision will also be made for improved public transport provision in the Witney sub-area including the frequency and coverage of bus services. This will be accompanied by measures to promote the use of public transport including improved waiting facilities and cycle parking.
- 9.2.70 Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes and the provision of new routes will be sought where appropriate. This will include the potential provision of a new cycle route between Witney and Carterton as identified in the IDP.
- 9.2.71 Parking capacity will be kept under review with additional provision to be sought from new developments where necessary. Parking will also be managed in order to try and reduce car use for short journeys.

Retail and leisure

- 9.2.72 Witney will be the focus for new retail and leisure provision. Our retail assessment has identified capacity for additional shopping provision in the medium and longer term and recommends a strategy of phased development to reinforce the role of the town centre in the context of increasing competition elsewhere, such as Oxford. In accordance with national policy and Policy E6, new town centre development in Witney will follow the 'town centre first approach'.
- 9.2.73 A strong and diverse town centre will be maintained with a good mix of independent and national multiple retailers. Further town centre development will be accommodated through phased and organic extension of the Woolgate shopping centre and at Welch Way, opposite Marriott's Walk in a way which strengthens the connecting High Street as the primary pedestrian route and strong shopping core, reinforcing the town centre as a whole.

- 9.2.74 A primary shopping frontage, where the loss of shops will be resisted, is defined linking Marriott's Walk and Woolgate. Elsewhere, such as at the Market Square and Corn Street, there are opportunities to continue to promote these areas for shopping, leisure and cultural uses, including the Corn Exchange, hotels, restaurants and performing arts. These areas are designated secondary shopping frontages.
- 9.2.75 We will seek to raise the profile of Witney as a visitor destination investigating opportunities for additional accommodation and visitor related facilities such as coach drop off and waiting facilities.
- 9.2.76 The historic significance and special qualities of the Conservation Area, which encompasses the town centre, should be conserved and enhanced through development proposals which respect the architectural quality, established fabric and heritage assets emblematic of the area.
- 9.2.77 There is a need to enhance the market town character and ensure that the historic centre remains attractive whilst striving to improve accessibility to all through investment in the public realm, particularly in the Market Square and Corn Street. The town centre will be enhanced through improvements to the public realm including improved street furniture, sympathetic shop fronts and the de-cluttering of signage. This will be enabled by developer contributions or other funding and may include opportunities for public art. The provision and management of free car parking is significant to the attractiveness of the town centre. Significant new development which creates additional car parking demands in the town centre will be required to contribute to increasing public car parking provision alongside improvements to bus, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.
- 9.2.78 In the remainder of the sub-area, existing retail and leisure facilities will be safeguarded and any new facilities will be modest in scale and appropriate to the function and setting of the village in which they are proposed.

POLICY WIT5:

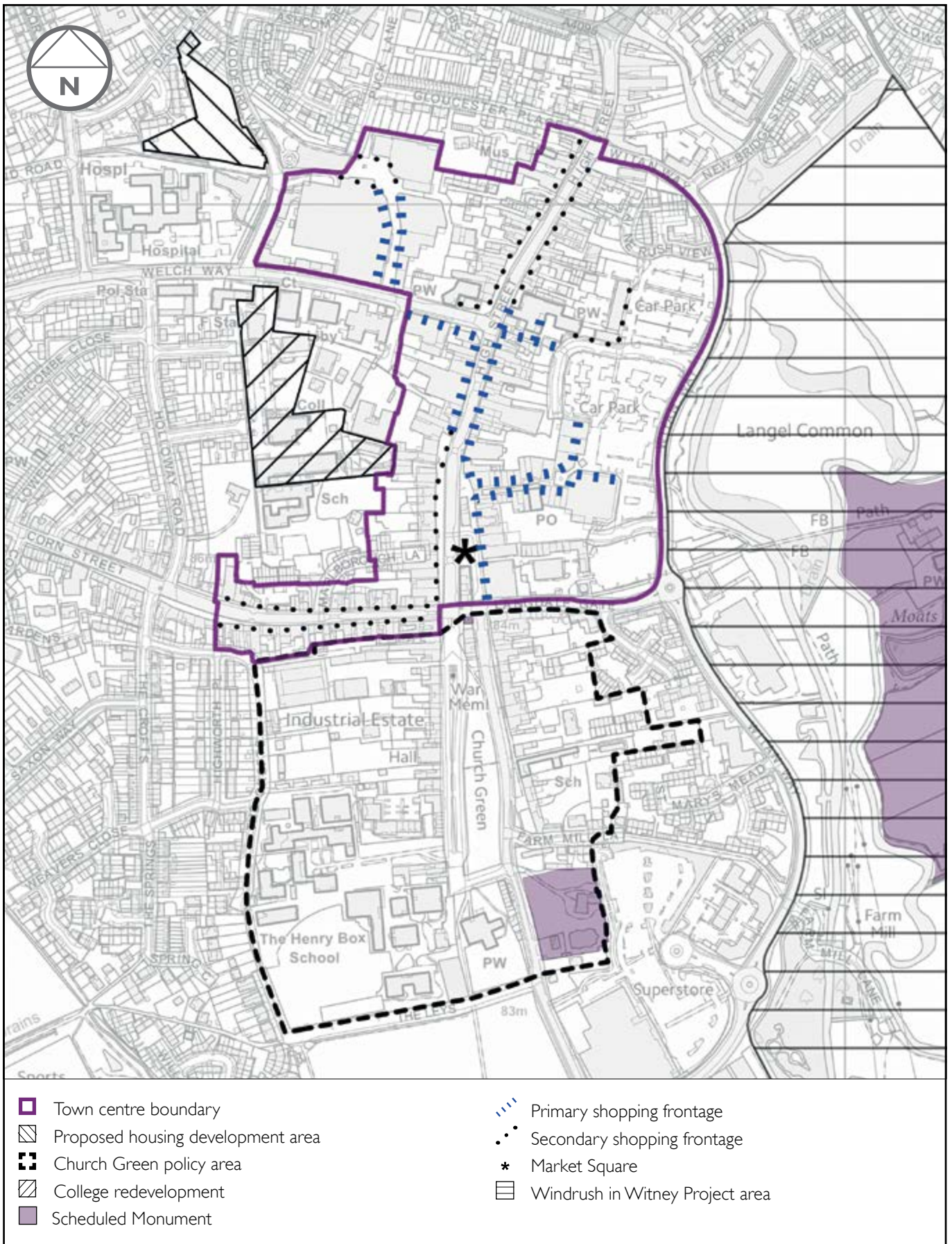
Witney Town Centre Strategy

The overall objective is to maintain and enhance Witney Town Centre providing an accessible, attractive and diverse shopping, visitor and evening economy offer and the principal shopping and leisure destination for West Oxfordshire and the surrounding area. This will be achieved by:

- Maintaining a strong and diverse shopping core with a good mix of retailers, focused on the High Street as the main pedestrian route and connector between the Woolgate and Marriotts Walk shopping centres. A primary shopping frontage is defined between these shopping centres and along the High Street where development resulting in the loss of shops will be refused unless the criteria listed in Policy E6 (Town Centres) can be met in full.
- Promoting the Market Square and Corn Street areas as shopping, leisure and cultural quarters, whilst resisting concentrations of single uses where this would be likely to cause issues of amenity or affect the vitality of the area. Secondary shopping frontages are defined in these and other areas where development proposals resulting in the loss of town centre uses will be refused unless the criteria listed in Policy E6 – Town Centres, can be met in full.
- Investigating opportunities for phased, organic extension of the Woolgate shopping centre and at Welch Way to meet retailer needs, well connected to and strengthening the High Street.
- Maintaining and enhancing the Market Square as an attractive public space which can be used for other purposes at other times.
- Seeking to raise the profile of Witney as a visitor destination, investigating opportunities for additional accommodation and improved visitor facilities such as coach drop off/waiting areas.
- Conserving and enhancing the special interest of the Witney Conservation Area and the significance of the other heritage assets in the town.
- Enhancing the historic market town character and public realm by seeking to ensure investment in paved areas, street furniture, signage and shop fronts and through the provision of appropriate servicing and waste collection arrangements.
- Ensuring the town centre, as a key destination, remains accessible, through the provision and management of car parking and through enhancing public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure.
- In the Buttercross/Church Green area south of Corn Street and Langdale Gate, the further intensification of shopping or commercial development will be resisted except where the proposed use would be incidental to the primary permitted use of the building (e.g. working at home).

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or provide equivalent financial contributions.

Figure 9.2g: Witney town centre strategy



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Environment and heritage

- 9.2.79 The Witney sub-area is environmentally sensitive including part of the Cotswolds AONB, the Upper and Lower Windrush Conservation Target Areas, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Lower Windrush Valley Project. It also includes some areas of ancient woodland.
- 9.2.80 In determining future development proposals, the Council will have significant regard to the potential impact on the environment, particularly where the proposed development would affect a designated area. In accordance with Policy EH1 and national policy, any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty. Major developments will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
- 9.2.81 Where applicable, development will be expected to have regard to the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and Lower Windrush Valley Project and where appropriate, make a positive contribution either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.
- 9.2.82 In accordance with national policy and Policy EH9 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and conserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings.

Infrastructure

- 9.2.83 Infrastructure capacity is a key consideration for this sub-area. Witney has accommodated significant growth in the last 30 years more than doubling its population. As the key focus for growth within the Local Plan, it is essential that further development at Witney is supported by appropriate investment in new and improved infrastructure.
- 9.2.84 A number of strategic transport improvements are set out above but other forms of supporting infrastructure will also be needed including education, health, open space, community facilities and so on.
- 9.2.85 Some of these will be provided directly as part of new developments (e.g. a new primary school as part of the north Witney SDA) whilst others will be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding.
- 9.2.86 The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan. This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced.
- 9.2.87 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Witney sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure.

POLICY WIT6:

Witney sub-area strategy

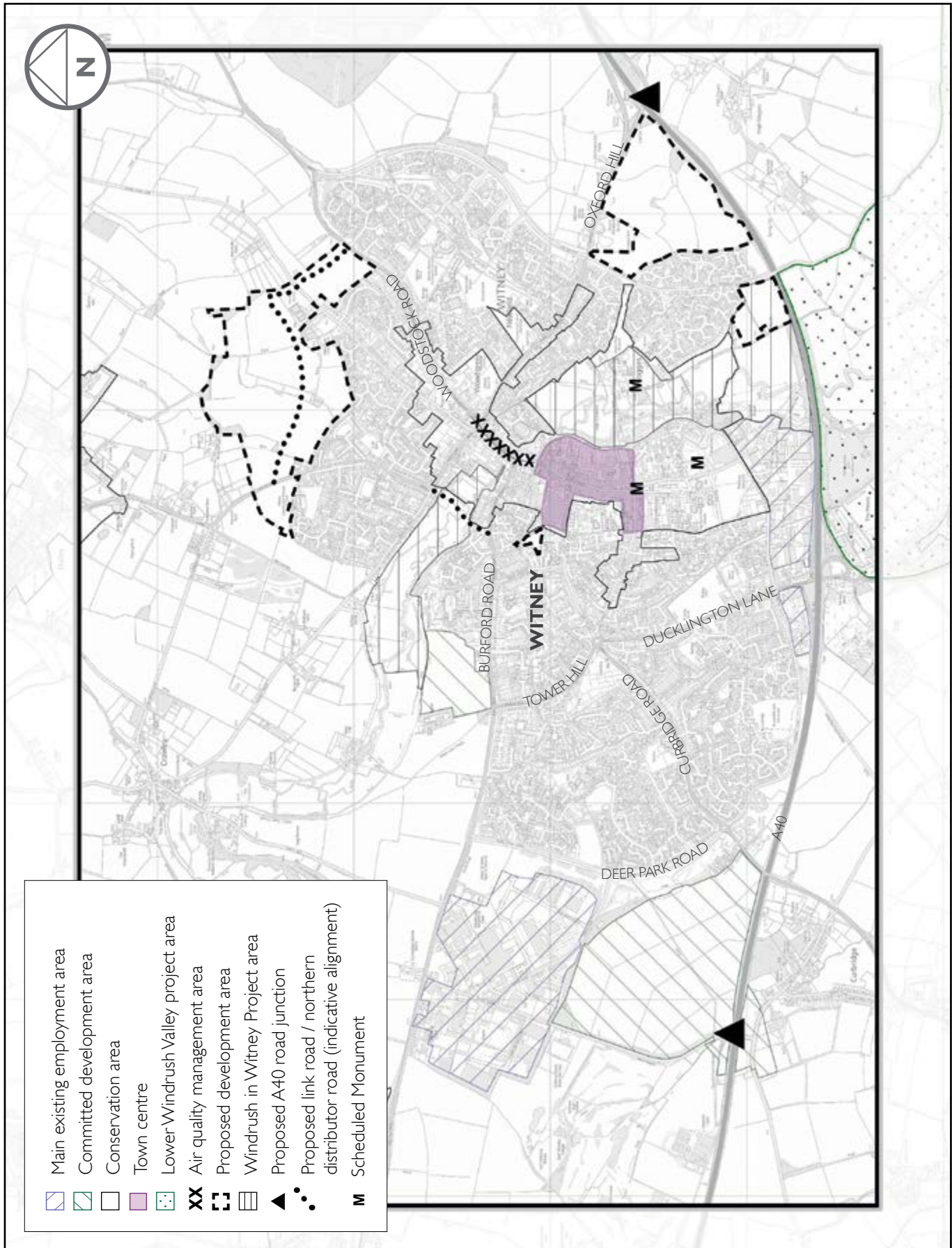
The focus of new housing, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities will be Witney. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of around 4,702 new homes* to be focused on Witney and to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.
- a Strategic Development Area of around 450 dwellings on the eastern side of Witney (see Policy WIT1)
- a Strategic Development Area of around 1,400 dwellings to the north of Witney (see Policy WIT2)
- a non-strategic housing allocation of 50 dwellings on Woodford Way Car Park, Witney (see Policy WIT3)
- a non-strategic housing allocation of 125 dwellings on land west of Minster Lovell (see Policy WIT4)
- expansion of employment opportunities in the town through the retention and modernisation of existing sites, development of remaining available employment land (8ha) and the provision of further employment land (at least 10ha) on the western edge of Witney to provide sufficient space for business expansion, relocation and inward investment
- continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council and landowners/developers to deliver improvements to key highway infrastructure to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes, with priority on delivering the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements), Shore's Green junction (west facing slip roads) the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road and other supporting highway improvement measures
- enhancing public transport, and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will be at risk of or increase the risk of flooding and working with landowners/developers and partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- protection and enhancement of the market town character and setting of Witney, neighbouring villages and the Windrush Valley
- development on land within or where it would be visible from the Windrush in Witney Policy Area will be required to protect and enhance the intrinsic landscape, character, ecology and cultural value of the valley
- conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- conservation and enhancement of the historic environment
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for essential supporting infrastructure, including new transport, education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities in accordance with the IDP
- maximising opportunities for enhancements within the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs).
- masterplanning of strategic development areas that takes adequate account of open space and green infrastructure networks and needs, and maximises opportunities to create and strengthen green infrastructure in accordance with the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan (to be prepared).

* Note: In accordance with Policy H1, the figure of 4,702 homes is not an absolute target or a maximum ceiling to development.

Figure 9.2h: Witney Sub-Area Strategy (inset map)



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