

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 July 2020
Report of: Head of Planning Services
Title of Report: Oxford Local Plan Local Development Scheme 2020-25

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present the updated programme for the preparation of documents that will form the Council's statutory Development Plan for approval.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery
Corporate Priority:	Enable an inclusive economy; Deliver more affordable housing; Support thriving communities; Pursue a zero carbon Oxford.
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24 Local Plan 2036
Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1. Approve the Oxford Local Development Scheme 2020-25	
Appendices	
Appendix 1	Local Development Scheme 2020-25
Appendix 2	Risk Assessment

Introduction and background

1. The Oxford Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project plan that sets out timescales for the preparation and revision of documents in Oxford City Council's statutory Development Plan and other planning policy documents.
2. The LDS provides details on what the Local Plan will contain and the geographical area it will cover. The LDS is an important tool to enable local communities and interested parties to keep track of the Local Plan documents' progress and to ensure that they are aware of when opportunities for involvement are likely to

arise. It is a statutory requirement that all local planning authorities prepare and maintain a LDS.

3. The lifespan of the Council's current LDS is 2019-22. The LDS is intended to be a dynamic document, updated at intervals to reflect the timetable for developing the Local Plan and other significant work programmes. The LDS 2020-25 will come into effect following approval by Cabinet¹ and will supersede the existing LDS 2019-22.
4. The work programme focuses primarily on actions to ensure successful implementation of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 in 2020/21 alongside continuing to support the work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This includes putting in place the following:
 - Technical Advice Notes (TANs) across a range of key policy areas (see paragraphs 2.4-2.8 of Appendix 1);
 - West End Supplementary Planning Document to support the significant growth identified for this area in the Local Plan;
 - Review of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect new regulations and requirements for Infrastructure Funding Statements to be published annually
5. In 2020/21 the Council will also be looking to begin early informal engagement on the Local Plan 2040 and to put in place a revised Statement of Community Involvement for Planning to inform the next Local Plan.
6. From 2021/22 a significant focus of the work programme is on the Oxford Local Plan 2040 and continued engagement on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to ensure policies are aligned with it and that we are aligned with other Oxfordshire Local Plans. The timetable for the Local Plan is informed by several factors but the key drivers are explained further in the relevant section of this report and Appendix 1 and include:
 - aligning timeframes to follow key stages of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 so that the plan can take account of the strategic policies effectively;
 - ensuring alignment in plan periods with neighbouring authorities to ensure that Oxfordshire plan making is aligned;
 - ensuring that there is sufficient time to reflect on what is working from the current Local Plan and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic to inform the next plan; and
 - allowing sufficient time to engage iteratively as the plan emerges.

¹ As this is a key decision it becomes effective after the period for call in has expired as per the Constitution (January 2020, paragraph 17.2 page 107)

Development Plan documents

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

7. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will set out strategic policies to deal with key issues for Oxfordshire with a cross-boundary approach. The plan period for the Oxfordshire Plan is 2020 to 2050.
8. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will cover the administrative county area of Oxfordshire. This will comprise the local planning authorities of:
 - Cherwell District Council
 - Oxford City Council
 - South Oxfordshire District Council
 - Vale of White Horse District Council; and
 - West Oxfordshire District Council.
9. The Oxfordshire Plan will be a formal Development Plan Document, prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which enables two or more local planning authorities to agree a joint Plan. It will form part of the development plan for each of the authorities in Oxfordshire and will be used in the formulation of more detailed plans locally and in determining planning applications where appropriate. The scope of the Oxfordshire Plan was developed in the Scoping Document² which was agreed by the partner authorities in October 2018 and endorsed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
10. A Regulation 18 Part 1 consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was undertaken in June 2019. Work on the Plan will be undertaken during the LDS period, with the intention of adopting the Plan in late 2022. This timetable has been revised from September 2019 as per the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal report³ considered by the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 2nd June 2020. This is set out below and reflected in the LDS at appendix 1. The timetable after the plan has been submitted for examination is not within the control of local authorities. The timescales assumed from submission to adoption are therefore estimates.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 key stages	Latest timetable considered at Growth Board on 2nd June 2020
Further engagement (Oxfordshire Thought)	May 2020 & Sept 2020
Consultation on spatial options (scale and broad locations) (Regulation 18 part 2)	Jan 2021

² Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan Scoping Document (Oct 2018)

³ <http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/documents/s19516/OGB.Covid-19%20Impact%20Report.pdf>

Consultation on Draft Plan (Regulation 19)	Sept 2021
Submission	Jan 2022
Examination	Apr 2022
Inspector's Report	July 2022
Adoption	Oct 2022

Oxford Local Plan 2020-2040

11. The Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036, was only very recently adopted (8th June 2020), therefore it contains policies based on recent evidence and is compliant with current guidance. However, government guidance requires that all Plans are reviewed every 5 years. Given that a Local Plan takes considerable time to produce, a review must be started a relatively short time after adoption of a Local Plan. In this case there are several reasons for expediting the start of this review. One of these is the need to co-ordinate plans across Oxfordshire. This will help to avoid the issue of trying to apportion housing need generated across the whole county and calculated for a particular period, between local plans that have differing base and end dates. A plan must cover at least 15 years from adoption.

A great amount of flexibility has been built into the Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 in order to deal with a twenty year period. The Covid-19 pandemic could mean unpredictable and unanticipated changes. Paragraph 39 of the Inspectors' report pronounces that: 'the examination hearings took place before the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the short-term effects are here for all to see, there is currently no evidence that the fundamental assumptions and requirements of the plan in respect of housing need, or indeed any other strategic matter, will be affected to the extent that its soundness will be undermined.'

12. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 has made big strides forward that will support the city in managing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and support the city in building back better. The effectiveness of policies are always monitored and this will be important in understanding the scope of the new Local Plan. The Council needs to give enough time to understand how its new policies are working and better understand any challenges posed by Covid-19 before taking action. Through the process of producing another local plan the needs and opportunities that emerge can be understood properly considered collectively and ensure that the response to the crisis is not reactionary. It can also seek to balance carefully issues such as carbon efficiency, inequalities and the quality of the built and natural environment as the existing Local Plan does and seek to build upon these comprehensively.
13. The Oxford Local Plan 2040 will need to be adopted by 2025 at the latest in order for it to have 15 years to run from adoption and to meet the legal requirements to complete a review within 5 years of adopting a development plan. Officers consider that significant stakeholder engagement and input will be needed in the early stages to try and clarify what key issues need addressing, particularly given the unprecedented events associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The LDS 2020-25 is therefore proposing the following timetable for production of the Oxford Local Plan 2040:

Local Plan stage	Programme LDS 2020-25
Issues and Scope/Options Consultation	June/July 2021
Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18)	June/July 2022
Proposed Submission Consultation (Regulation 19)	June/July 2023
Submission (Regulation 22)	December 2023
Inspector's Report	January 2025
Adoption (Regulation 26)	March 2025

14. The indicative timetable above shows that the adoption of the Local Plan 2040 is expected to occur around March 2025, which would meet the expectation of allowing it to run 15 years after adoption to 2040. These timescales have sought to allow enough time for:
- evidence gathering that can reflect on the implications of the current pandemic and other key issues comprehensively;
 - several rounds of engagement; and
 - enough flexibility to align to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 in a way that enables the Oxford Local Plan to utilise evidence and build upon the strategic policies it seeks to bring forward.
15. The timetable after the plan has been submitted for examination is not within the City Council's control. The timescales assumed from submissions to adoption broadly reflect those experienced with the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

Neighbourhood Plans

16. The remaining neighbourhood areas, which are at various stages of plan production, are:
- Littlemore; and
 - Wolvercote.
17. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan was due to have its referendum in May 2020. However, the [government published guidance in April 2020](#) outlining changes that have been introduced to neighbourhood planning in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This referendum is now postponed until 6th May 2021 as regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020 postpone all neighbourhood planning referendums until then. The Government is committed to keeping these regulations under review, so they may be amended or revoked in response to changing circumstances.
18. In response to these delays, the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan can be given significant weight in decision-making, so far as the plan is material to the

application. This is due to the fact that the Council has issued a decision statement detailing its intention to send the neighbourhood plan to referendum. This was approved at Cabinet on 9 October 2019.

Other planning documents

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule review and Infrastructure Funding Statement

19. In March 2020, the City Council withdrew the CIL Charging Schedule review from its Examination resolving to continue to apply the existing CIL Charging Schedule. The main reason for this withdrawal was to fully consider the impact of the amended CIL Regulations that came into force in September 2019, subsequent to the submission of the CIL Charging Schedule as it became clear that the change would affect how developer contributions could be collected. Withdrawal of this review from examination (under Regulation 18 of the CIL Regulations 2010 as amended) has allowed the City Council time to take account of recent regulatory changes comprehensively, working with key stakeholders.
20. Presently, there are a number of different ways for the City Council to undertake a review of CIL. These include a simple review of the methods and also looking at whether certain developments could have abnormal infrastructure costs that would result in, with the inclusion of CIL, negative implications for the viability of these developments.
21. The City Council will therefore be appointing consultants in July 2020 to investigate the most appropriate way forward for collecting developer contributions, looking at both a simple review of CIL (such as that as previously undertaken) and a more involved CIL review which takes accounts of the potential infrastructure needs of certain development sites. This work is expected to be ready for consultation in November 2020. It is anticipated that the revised CIL Charging Schedule will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2021. Once submitted for examination the timetable is not within the council's control but it would be anticipated that the examination would be completed in a timescale to enable the Council to adopt the CIL Charging Schedule by September 2021. Once adopted this would replace the current CIL charging schedule adopted in October 2013.
22. Alongside this work the City Council will produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement, which will be published in December 2020 in accordance with the national requirements.
23. The LDS 2020-25 is therefore proposing the following timetable for production of the revised CIL Charging Schedule, which is summarised below.

CIL Charging Schedule stage	Programme LDS 2020-25
Consultation on draft document	December 2020/January 2021
Submission	March 2021
Adoption	September 2021

24. The timetable after the CIL schedule has been submitted for examination is not within the City Council's control. The timescales assumed from submission to adoption are therefore estimates.

West End SPD

25. Much of the West End is under- utilised and does not reflect Oxford's international reputation or live up to its potential. There is a clear vision and objective for the West End to "be developed as part of a comprehensive regeneration plan for the area." There is a recognition within the supporting text that "with a number of different landowners within the site this would help delivery and ensure that piecemeal development does not prejudice the overall aim of a comprehensive regeneration of the site." The role of the SPD is to provide some detailed advice and guidance to show how working with landowners, partners and key stakeholders, this regeneration can be delivered. The West End is also identified as a key opportunity in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy that identifies the area as a Global Business District. The principle of undertaking an SPD for the West End has been discussed informally with key stakeholders and is widely supported.
26. There are currently several supporting documents that cover the West End area. These include:
- Oxpens Masterplan SPD (November 2013)
 - West End Design Code (2008)
 - Oxford Station SPD (November 2017)
27. There had also previously been a West End Area Action Plan but this has already expired and no longer forms part of the current development plan.
28. The new West End SPD will replace these documents and provide detailed guidance to support the over-arching policies in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 in a single document.
29. Policy AOC1: West End and Osney Mead and Policy SP1: Sites in the West End set the strategic policy context for the West End Area, within the Area of Change. It therefore provides the opportunity for an SPD to provide some further detailed advice and guidance on these adopted development plan policies to manage change within this area. The bullet points in Policy AOC1: West End and Osney Mead help to provide the scope for the SPD. These set out the need for:
- High density urban living
 - Vibrant mix of uses
 - Maximising contribution to Oxfordshire's knowledge economy
 - Improved public realm
 - Better connections for all users, including across the rivers
 - Improved space for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Respect for the heritage of the area
 - Development of a well-designed transport interchange around the station

- Reduce the amount of car parking
30. The complex issues present in the West End mean the SPD will have a key focus on creative and deliverable solutions to achieve a co-ordinated approach to development and comprehensive regeneration. It will seek to provide clarity on what is needed to support the development in this area. The intention is that this will include detailed information on infrastructure that is needed to facilitate and support the change. Masterplanning of key sites will be included in the SPD as part of providing locational specific guidance. Work on the masterplanning of Oxford Station has already commenced due to specific needs around that site. This will be reviewed and embedded as appropriate into the guidance in the West End SPD.
31. In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI) two key consultations will be undertaken alongside ongoing engagement. The first will be to consult on the scope of the SPD. This is expected to take place in Autumn 2020. This will include the reasons for producing the SPD and identifying its geographic scope and key deliverables. The second consultation will be on the draft SPD and this is expected in Spring 2021. More informal engagement will also happen throughout the preparation of the document.

West End SPD stage	Programme LDS 2020-25
Issues/Scoping Consultation	October/November 2020
Consultation on draft document	March/April 2021
Adoption	August 2021

Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI)

32. The SCI sets out how the Council will involve the community in the planning process, including Local Plans and Development Management. It sets out the activities that the Council will undertake to reach stakeholders and the public during the various stages of preparation of Local Plan documents. The most recent SCI was adopted on 9th July 2015. It can be viewed at www.oxford.gov.uk/sci.
33. An Addendum to the SCI was approved by Cabinet on 8th June 2020. This was a focussed update on how the Council will amend its approach during the restrictions imposed by Government throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This is available on the City Council's [website](#).
34. The SCI will be updated to inform the development of the Oxford Local Plan 2040. A six week consultation on the draft SCI will take place in October/November 2020. Comments will be considered and a final draft taken for consideration at Cabinet for adoption in March 2021.

Annual Monitoring Report

35. Each year the City Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report. This will be taken for Cabinet approval in November 2020 for publication in December 2020. The Annual Monitoring report published in December 2020 will be reporting on the monitoring year 2019/20.
36. The Annual Monitoring Report has the following main functions:

- to measure progress made in respect of the planning documents being prepared;
- to review the effectiveness of the adopted planning policies;
- to monitor the extent to which policies and targets in adopted documents are being achieved against a range of indicators.

Technical Advice Notes

37. A series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are being prepared to support the implementation of the Oxford Local Plan 2036. These provide technical advice to developers and decision-makers. TANs are not adopted planning policy documents. Officers are scoping these now and working on a detailed timeline with the aim for their completion by the Autumn this year.
38. The TANs being produced for publication in the Autumn are:
- Sustainable design and construction
 - Heritage and carbon efficiency
 - Parking
 - New homes, student and self build accommodation including affordable housing
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure inc. biodiversity
 - Health impact assessments
 - Community Employment Plans
 - Shopfronts and advertisements
 - Waste

Financial implications

39. The timetable of the Local Development Scheme has been structured to enable key work to progress whilst minimising financial implications.
40. The work in 2020/21 financial year is focussed on putting in place the guidance around the implementation of the Oxford Local Plan 2036, updating the infrastructure delivery plans, reviewing the Community Infrastructure Levy and some early informal engagement on issues around the next Local Plan including reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement. This is to ensure the successful delivery of the Local Plan, which the council has invested in over several years. This work will be resourced by existing Planning Policy staff and almost fully funded by the existing Planning Policy budgets including CIL budget where applicable. The only project, where it is required this financial year to draw a proportion from another budget is the West End SPD. Current estimates are that the West End SPD will need a budget of approximately £150,000 and that £50,000 of the cost will be needed from the Regeneration Reserve.
41. The production of the West End SPD is not a statutory requirement, however there are a clear range of benefits to undertaking this SPD. Without it, important opportunities within the West End may be missed. Although the Local Plan guides development across the West End, there is a risk that certain uses and infrastructure important to supporting a global innovation district might not materialise. This area contains a significant amount of the city's housing and economic potential over the short, medium and longer term and ensuring this is delivered is key. This area will play an integral part in ensuring we can "build back

better” after the Covid-19 pandemic. Some more specific benefits are set out below.

- **Local Plan policy requirements for comprehensive masterplanning** – The Local Plan brings forward additional land at Osney Mead but requires that planning permission can only be granted in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan. It is important that work on a comprehensive masterplan for this and the wider west end moves forward to ensure that these requirements can be met.
 - **Achieving the land uses needed to support growth** – not all sites are specific allocations within the Local Plan and those that are only have minimum housing numbers. Working with landowners and other key stakeholders to understand the other uses that are needed and where these are able to come forward will be key to ensuring that the overall approach is sustainable.
 - **Fragmented infrastructure delivery** - Infrastructure will be a key to stimulating change in this area. Without the West End SPD there could be fragmented infrastructure delivery. A lack of a comprehensive approach could pose a risk that the City and County Councils will be unable to identify and therefore coordinate the collection of infrastructure contributions for maximum benefit. This would in turn risk that infrastructure is not appropriately phased to support the change in this important area.
 - **Maximising investment already made** - Both the City and County Councils have already levered in forward funding from the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and Growth Deal for infrastructure within the West End utilising the previous, now expired, plans e.g. West End Area Action Plan. These allocations have the ability to be recycled i.e. for contributions from developers to at least in part repay the forward funding so that it can be reinvested. The risk of not having clarity about infrastructure requirements, costs and phasing will impede the ability to ensure this happens.
 - **Levering in further investment** – Having clarity over what is needed to support investment and growth in the West End will help the council to lever in external funding to support the delivery of much needed housing and other development, which can be used alongside planning obligations and reduce increasing pressures on the Community Infrastructure Levy resources.
 - **Seeking to support delivery** - There is also the potential for slipped delivery without the West End SPD. The West end has several sites within several ownerships which will create a cumulative impact. The SPD will provide clarity about requirements in this area to support sites to come forward and to try and minimise delays to delivery. For example, having a clear understanding of requirements, supported by input from key stakeholders, in terms of design and infrastructure should help ensure support development through the planning process. Although all infrastructure may not be in place from day one the SPD will provide the clarity of what each site needs to contribute to and ensure opportunities are not lost whilst allowing individual sites to come forward within a wider framework.
42. From 2021/22 a key cost will be the new Local Plan 2040. It is a statutory requirement for the Council to have an up to date Local Plan in place and to complete a review of their Local Plans every 5 years. This LDS will meet this

requirement by completing the review by 2025. The financial implications arising from producing a Local Plan include the costs of a Local Plan Examination (including Counsel’s advice) and independent technical analysis of issues such as transport, environment and sustainability. Revenue to accommodate these anticipated costs will come out of existing annual budget allocated to Planning Policy. This budget supported the Oxford Local Plan 2036 production and was sufficient for the majority of the programme. However, during the examination, due to intensive costs within one financial year, the budget was topped up by an additional £130,000 drawn from additional income within the wider planning budget. There is a risk that this will be required again given, as set out above, the next Local Plan is likely to be a full rather than partial review. If the income is not available within the wider planning budget, Planning Policy may need to seek a growth bid to support the additional cost for 1 year. The examination is currently anticipated to take place in the 2024/25 financial year. The adoption of a reviewed Local Plan within 5 years of the adoption of the current one is a statutory requirement. Not undertaking this work will result in the City Council having an out of date local plan and having less control over managing growth within Oxford.

Legal issues

- 43. The preparation and publication of the Local Development Scheme is a statutory requirement under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 44. The Council is required to monitor compliance of the timescales for document production and revision set out in the LDS and to make this information publicly available. Compliance with the LDS is monitored and published through the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report.

Level of risk

- 45. A risk assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 2). All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

Equalities impact

- 46. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

Report author	Carolyn Ploszynski
Job title	Planning Policy and Place Manager
Service area or department	Planning Policy
Telephone	01865 252821
e-mail	cploszynski@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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