

Memorandum of Operation for addressing Oxford City's unmet need in West Oxfordshire

Introduction

In 2016, the Oxfordshire Growth Board co-ordinated a process of countywide work to consider how 'unmet' housing need arising from Oxford City in the period to 2031 should be apportioned across Oxfordshire as a whole.

As part of that process, it was agreed that, in addition to its own housing requirement of 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 (i.e. 660 homes per year) West Oxfordshire would accommodate an additional 2,750 homes to assist Oxford City, thereby taking the total housing requirement to 15,950 homes or 798 homes per year.

West Oxfordshire District Council subsequently published a series of 'main modifications' to its Local Plan in November 2016 with new strategic allocations proposed to the north and west of Eynsham to meet the additional requirement of 2,750 homes including:

- 2,200 homes to the north of the A40 near Eynsham in the form of a new Garden Village
- 1,000 homes to the west of Eynsham in the form of a sustainable urban extension.

The merits of both allocations were considered as part of the Local Plan examination held during 2017/18 and in August 2018, the Inspector's report was published concluding that both the allocations and the Local Plan as a whole were sound and legally compliant. The Local Plan was subsequently adopted in September 2018.

Development of the Garden Village (now referred to as Salt Cross) is currently being taken forward through an Area Action Plan (AAP) which the District Council is aiming to submit for independent examination in November 2020 with the West Eynsham allocation being taken forward through a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which the District Council is aiming to publish in November 2020.

Statement of Common Ground between West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City (May 2017)

As part of the Local Plan examination in 2017, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council entered into a Statement of Common Ground – SOCG (refer Appendix 1) to assist the Inspector with his consideration of the plan.

The main purpose of the SOCG was to reflect and confirm the current position agreed by both parties with regard to the Duty to Cooperate, the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the West Oxfordshire apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need.

As part of the SOCG, the following key points were agreed:

- 15,000 homes is an appropriate figure to plan for within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA) to contribute towards meeting Oxford's unmet housing need to 2031 pending further testing through the Oxford Local Plan review;

- That it is appropriate for West Oxfordshire to progress its local plan on the basis of 2,750 additional homes to help meet the unmet housing needs of Oxford;
- That any site options for meeting Oxford City's unmet housing needs should have a strong spatial relationship with the City and effective links using public transport along existing or planned infrastructure improvements, which for West Oxfordshire means principally along key corridors including the A40 and A44;
- That any site options should recognise and help to support the nationally significant economic role of Oxford;
- That West Oxfordshire District Council's proposed approach to meeting its apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs - that is to focus strategic growth around Eynsham - is appropriate, robust, reflective of the evidence base and sound;
- That such is the quantum of unmet need, strategic-scale developments are the most appropriate response to assisting Oxford and that the provision of large strategic sites has key advantages, in terms of delivering a sustainable development strategy for West Oxfordshire;
- That provision should be made for Oxford's unmet housing needs as soon as possible however it is recognised that the statutory planning process and lead in times on large strategic sites mean that it is reasonable for local plan housing trajectories to assume delivery from 2021 onwards (although this does not preclude the possibility of earlier delivery where possible);
- That a consistent approach towards affordable housing in relation to the unmet housing needs of Oxford would be beneficial including a 50% requirement for affordable housing on market-led housing schemes; and
- That in relation to more detailed matters of tenure mix, unit size and eligibility it would be appropriate to consider these matters through a form of common framework e.g. a memorandum of operation outside of the Local Plan process that could be applied across the Oxfordshire HMA when dealing with the apportionment of unmet housing need from Oxford.

1. Strategic site allocations and other potential opportunities

The adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 includes two strategic allocations at Eynsham including the Garden Village to the north of Eynsham (2,200 homes) and the West Eynsham SDA (1,000 homes).

The supporting text to the Local Plan explains that the Garden Village is intended to contribute entirely towards meeting the housing needs of Oxford (2,200 homes) and that a proportion of the West Eynsham SDA (550 homes) will contribute towards Oxford's housing needs (i.e. 2,750 in total).

Subject to viability, of those 2,750 homes, 50% (1,375) are to be affordable in line with Policy H3 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (and also aligning with the 50% affordable housing requirement set out in the Oxford Local Plan).

Whilst the SOCG (2017) recognises that strategic sites are likely to be the most appropriate response to assisting Oxford in view of the quantum of unmet need, it does not preclude other options coming forward, particularly where they have a strong spatial relationship and effective links with the City and may facilitate earlier delivery.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in September 2018, discussions have been ongoing between West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City regarding the most appropriate ways of meeting West Oxfordshire's agreed apportionment of unmet housing need arising from Oxford.

Good progress has been made in respect of the Garden Village with the Council's pre-submission draft Area Action Plan having been published and an outline planning application having been submitted by the site promoter Grosvenor Developments Ltd.

Good progress has also been made in respect of the West Eynsham SDA with planning permission having been granted for 237 homes (out of the total allocation of 1,000) and 160 of those currently under construction.

Notwithstanding the welcome progress which is being made on both of the strategic sites, in order to encourage early delivery of new homes to assist with Oxford's identified housing needs, the two authorities have agreed that other options within the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area (as defined in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031) should also be considered alongside, including in particular:

- Woodstock
- Bladon
- Long Hanborough
- Cassington
- Eynsham

Agreed position: Whilst the two strategic sites at Eynsham remain the primary mechanism for meeting West Oxfordshire's agreed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs, other sites within the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area are able to contribute where they have a strong spatial relationship with Oxford including a particular focus on Woodstock, Bladon, Long Hanborough, Cassington and Eynsham.

2. Site Locations and Quantum of Housing Proposed

Based on the agreed apportionment of 2,750 homes for Oxford, subject to viability, the affordable element of this would be 1,375 affordable homes.

Potentially this requirement could be met exclusively at the Garden Village and West Eynsham SDA.

The Garden Village is yet to secure planning permission but the Council has published a pre-submission draft Area Action Plan and an outline planning application has been submitted on the basis of 2,200 homes.

Subject to viability, assuming 50% affordable housing is achieved, this will result in 1,100 new affordable homes.

At the West Eynsham SDA, planning permission has already been secured for 237 homes including 119 affordable units. A total of 80 units have already been allocated to those on West Oxfordshire's housing needs register.

Subject to viability, based on 50% affordable housing, the residual element of the West Eynsham SDA allocation (763 homes) is expected to deliver a minimum of a further 381 affordable units.

Total remaining affordable housing provision yet to be built is therefore 1,481 units (i.e. 1,100 + 381 units) which are more than sufficient to meet the Oxford requirement of 1,375 affordable homes.

However, in the interests of creating mixed and balanced communities, the District Council and City Council agree that it would be inappropriate to set aside all of the Garden Village affordable units plus a further 275 of the residual West Eynsham SDA affordable units for those on the Oxford City housing register and that instead, consideration should be given to other affordable housing opportunities within the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area.

This would also help to accelerate delivery by avoiding too much reliance on strategic sites which have longer lead-in times.

In particular, it is proposed that a proportion of re-lets or voids, in particular social rented properties in Woodstock, Bladon, Long Hanborough, Cassington and Eynsham will be offered to those on Oxford City's affordable housing register.

It has been calculated that at a ratio of 2 out of 5 re-lets within the sub area, around 450 homes could be provided towards the overall affordable element of Oxford City's unmet need (1,375) over the plan period.

The use of voids or re-lets will have the advantage of immediately helping to meet Oxford's unmet need, providing units at social rent and supporting the provision of more balanced communities on the Eynsham strategic sites. The balance of affordable rented homes for WODC residents, with no local connection to Oxford, will therefore be increased, as and when relets to households with a local connection to Oxford are successful, and these are "netted-off" from the agreement.

Illustrative Example:

Source:	Indicative number of affordable units to be made available to those on Oxford's housing register
Use of voids or re-lets in the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	450
West Eynsham SDA	275
Garden Village	650
Total	1,375

Agreed position: The District and City Council agree that to accelerate delivery of homes to meet Oxford's unmet need and in the interests of creating mixed and balanced communities, that the affordable element of Oxford's unmet need (1,375 units) should be provided from a combination of opportunities within the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area including the use of void or sub-let properties to be allocated to Oxford City residents at a ratio of 2:5 as well as a proportion of the new affordable units to be provided at the Garden Village and West Eynsham SDA as shown illustratively above.

3. Affordable Housing Tenure and Mix

In terms of affordable tenures, the basic starting position of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 is that the Council will seek to secure two-thirds affordable rent to one-third intermediate housing including for example Shared Ownership, Discount Market Sale and Rent to Buy.

In support of the Garden Village and West Eynsham SDA, in 2019 the District Council commissioned ICENI to prepare a housing strategy looking at how to most effectively meet identified housing needs.

In respect of the Garden Village, the ICENI study suggests a 40/60 split between affordable home ownership (using the 2019 NPPF definition) and rented affordable products (including affordable rent and social rent).

In respect of the West Eynsham SDA, the ICENI study suggests that the Local Plan indicative requirement of two-thirds affordable rent and one-third intermediate and low cost home ownership products would be appropriate.

Oxford City's position as set out in its recently adopted Local Plan to 2036, is that on sites of 10 or more homes, 50% affordable housing will be required of which, at least 80% should be social rent (as the most discounted form of affordable housing to rent) with the remainder to be provided as intermediate forms of housing provided that they are affordable in the Oxford market (refer Policy H2 – Oxford Local Plan 2036).

This suggests that of the 1,375 affordable requirement for Oxford's unmet need, at least 1100 homes should be social rent with the remainder to be provided as intermediate forms of housing.

The pre-submission draft Garden Village AAP suggests that of the 1,100 affordable homes to be provided, 30% (660 units) will be rented affordable housing and 20% affordable home ownership (440 units). Of the rented element, the AAP suggests a balanced 50/50 split of social rent and affordable rent may be appropriate. If this were to be achieved, 330 new social rent units would be made available together with 330 new affordable rent units.

In conjunction with the anticipated 450 units from voids and re-lets in the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area (which will be predominantly social rent) this will make a significant contribution towards the City Council’s target for social rent.

Illustrative Example:

Source	Potential number of social rented units
Voids and re-lets in the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	450
Garden Village	330
Total	780
Requirement for social rent based on Oxford City Local Plan 2036	1100
Difference	-320

	Oxford Unmet Need	Garden Village	West Eynsham	Total
Number of Homes	2750	2200	1000	3200
50% Affordable	1375	1100	500	1600
OCC Policy				
80% at Social Rent		880	400	1280
20% Intermediate		220	100	320
WODC Indicative requirement				
<i>West Eynsham*</i>				
65% Affordable Rent			325	325
35% Intermediate			175	175
<i>Garden Village</i>				
30% Affordable Rent		330		330
30% Social Rent		330		330
40% Intermediate		440		440

Proposal					For OCC	For WODC
Social rent re-let and voids	450				450	0
Social rent new build		330	0	330	330	0
Affordable rent (capped at LHA)		330	325	655	320	335
Intermediate		440	175	615	275	340
Total				1600	1375	675

* No allowance has been made for social rent on the West Eynsham site however we expect some units will come forward.

The resultant overall mix for Oxford City is 56% social rent, 23% affordable rent and 20% intermediate tenures. The mix for WODC is 50% Affordable rent and 50% Intermediate.

Agreed position: The District and City Council agree that in line with Policy H2 of the Oxford Local Plan 80% of the 1,375 affordable requirement for unmet housing need arising from Oxford City (i.e. 1,100 units) should be provided in the form of social rent and affordable rent and that this will be met through a combination of re-lets and voids in the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area (450 units) and social rented units provided as part of strategic growth at Eynsham, most likely at the Garden Village (330 units) with the balance at affordable rent (320 units). Other tenures including intermediate tenures will also contribute towards meeting Oxford’s identified needs.

4. Potential unmet housing need beyond 2031

As outlined above, the currently agreed position between the two authorities is that West Oxfordshire District Council will provide 2,750 homes to assist Oxford in meeting its housing needs to 2031 of which, subject to viability, 1,375 will be affordable housing.

At this point in time, it is not known if there will be any additional unmet housing need from Oxford City to be accommodated in West Oxfordshire beyond 2031. This will be a matter for consideration through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the next review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan which is due to commence in autumn 2021.

Should there be any additional unmet housing need arising beyond 2031 and apportioned to West Oxfordshire, the authorities agree that any re-lets of affordable homes that are allocated to Oxford-connected applicants in the period to 2031, may continue to be allocated under the same mechanism beyond 2031.

Agreed position: In the event that there is any further agreed apportionment of unmet housing need from Oxford to West Oxfordshire in the period beyond 2031, the authorities agree that, subject to further discussion and agreement at that time, any re-lets of new build affordable homes allocated to Oxford connected applicants as part of the already agreed apportionment to 2031, may continue to be allocated under the same mechanism beyond 2031.

5. Allocations Policy

WODC are a non-stock owning Local Authority and allocate housing through the choice based letting system Homeseeker+¹ WODC propose handling the allocations of affordable housing for both Oxford City and West Oxfordshire residents. This would require Oxford City residents to register on the Homeseeker+ for affordable rental properties. For shared ownership, residents would need to register with Help to Buy South.

The Homeseeker+ housing register has 4 bands: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Emergency, and a description of the Band criteria are:

¹ <https://www.homeseekerplus.co.uk/choice/uploads/GHPolicy13.4.18homeseekerplus.pdf>

	Property Size etc.	Property conditions (this only applies to the district where the Notice is made)	Homelessness (this only applies to the district where any duty is owed)	Medical/welfare needs	General
EMERGENCY BAND	Giving up family sized social rented housing in the County to move to smaller non-family accommodation	Where a property has been assessed by Environmental Services as causing an imminent risk of serious harm due to disrepair, major defects, inadequate facilities. e.g. Emergency Prohibition Notice served (Time limit 1 month)		Assessed as immediate need of rehousing on medical grounds OR Exceptional circumstances where there is a proven threat to life or limb OR Exceptional circumstances where the current property has a critical detrimental effect on their welfare (Time limit 1 month)	
GOLD BAND	Giving up family sized social rented housing in the County to move to smaller family sized accommodation based on local housing demand OR Major overcrowding – lacking 2 or more bedrooms OR Where a Prohibition Notice (or Suspended Prohibition Notice) has been served by Environmental Services due to overcrowding (Does not apply if already awarded gold for Homelessness)	Where a Prohibition Notice (or Suspended Prohibition Notice) has been served on a property by Environmental Services due to disrepair, major defects or inadequate facilities and the landlord is unable/unwilling to comply	Full Statutory Homelessness Duty accepted (Time limit 1 month)	Assessed urgent medical/welfare need or long-term disability that would be alleviated by a move to more suitable accommodation	Move-on from Supported Accommodation where a planned move is agreed by the relevant local housing authority OR As a result of a multi-agency decision agreed by the relevant local housing authority OR Left in occupation of social rented housing such as Succession where the household is required to move (Time limit 1 month)
SILVER BAND	Overcrowding – lacking one bedroom (Does not apply if already awarded silver for Homelessness)		Applications before 1 st April 2018 Homeless or threatened with homeless Applications after 1 st April 2018 Homeless prevention or relief duty owed or assessed as homeless after all homeless duties have ended.	Assessed significant medical or welfare need or long-term disability that would be alleviated by a move to more suitable accommodation.	
BRONZE BAND	All other Applicants				

Applicants are able to record a local connection as part of their application. The criteria for local connection can be living, working or close dependent family member residing in Oxford City. Residents on the WODC register who currently work in Oxford City would also be able to record a local connection and count towards Oxford's unmet need quota.

The Local Connection is defined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as:

1. Currently resident or previously resident in Oxford City for six of the last 12 months or 3 out of the past 5 years.
2. In employment in Oxford City on a fixed term contract for a minimum of 16 hours per week.
3. With a family connection to the local area through either parent, brother, sister or child (over the age of 18 years) who themselves have lived in Oxford City for the past 5 years.
4. Member of the Armed Forces who have a local connection to their area of choice.

The local connection test will take precedence over all other WODC entries on the Homeseeker+ register, including emergency registrations.

Oxford City residents interested in bidding for properties in the Eynsham and sub-areas will be required to join the WODC register and will receive bidding preference only for properties within this area, including existing re-lets or voids as detailed above.

Applicants will be assessed and nominated for properties as they become available. If an applicant chooses not to proceed with the property, it will be offered to the next and subsequent Oxford City resident on the nominations list. If the property is not taken up by any Oxford City resident then it will be counted towards meeting Oxford's Unmet Need and re-classified and offered to residents on the WODC register.

Properties are made live on a daily basis and remain open for bidding for a period of 7 days. If after 7 days no OCC resident has placed a bid on a property it will then be reclassified as available for

WODC residents and re-advertised and the property will also count as an allocation towards the unmet need figure.

Once a property has been identified as being for an OCC resident and successfully let it will remain as that classification and should it come up for re-let will be offered to OCC residents again following the same procedure above. This second, and any subsequent re-letting, will also count as an allocation towards the total unmet need.

The allocations team at WODC will report to Oxford City of successful nominations and will provide a quarterly monitoring report on the number of lets to Oxford City residents. This process will be subject to review by an agreed panel of officers from WODC and Oxford City at the end of the first year of operation and at the mid-point (2025 / 2026).

Agreed position: The West Oxfordshire District Council allocations team will manage all the nominations for Oxford City residents who need to join the Homeseeker+ choice based letting system, reporting on the number of successful lets on a quarterly basis, including an annual review of the allocations process and a mid-point review to monitor progress against the target.

15/12/2020

**Appendix I - Statement of Common Ground between
West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council - 8 May 2017**



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

DOCUMENT REF: WOLP48

WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2031 EXAMINATION

JOINT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

EXAMINATION HEARINGS - STAGE 2 (9th – 19th May 2017)

PARTIES:

- West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)
- Oxford City Council

DATE: 8 May 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Oxford City Council to assist the Inspector during the examination of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- 1.2 Its purpose is to reflect and confirm the current position agreed by both parties with regard to the Duty to Cooperate, the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the West Oxfordshire apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need.
- 1.3 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the examination.

2. Background

- 2.1 WODC and Oxford City Council have a long history of working effectively together and have been working closely together on a number of matters of strategic cross boundary importance in accordance with the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 2.2 At a strategic level the Councils are members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board (OGB) and its supporting Executive Officers Group established in 2014.
- 2.3 The purpose of the Growth Board is to:
- Facilitate and enable collaboration between local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and growth
 - To deliver cross boundary programmes of work
 - To bid for the allocation of resources to support growth
- 2.4 Prior to the establishment of the OGB the authorities were also members of the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) which had begun the process of formal co-operation including for the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal and the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014).

- 2.5 At the strategic level, the authorities also collaborate on economic matters through the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (OXLEP) which prepares the Strategic Economic Plan. The Growth Board and OXLEP report to the Oxfordshire Partnership Board, of which both Councils are members.
- 2.6 A particular focus of joint working has been on housing matters including the commissioning of the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) as well as a series of different projects under what has been collectively referred to as the 'Post-SHMA process'. The Councils are both parties to the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation¹ which confirms the scope of the joint working arrangements.
- 2.7 In particular, both authorities have been consistently and actively engaged (including senior officers and members) in a programme of joint work to assess the level of unmet housing need from Oxford and how it should be apportioned. Both authorities have also sought to ensure timely progress in the joint working so that the programme timelines agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board could be met.
- 2.8 The positive approach of both authorities and commitment to find a workable solution to such a difficult strategic issue is evidenced by the effective outcomes that have been reached.

3. Matters on which the parties agree

1) West Oxfordshire 'OAN' and Housing Requirement

- 3.1 The parties agree that it is appropriate for WODC to plan for the provision of 660 homes per year (13,200 homes in total) in the period 2011 to 2031 in order to meet its own identified housing needs as set out in the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014).

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<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/ourworkwithcommunities/oxfordshirepartnership/spatialplanninginfrastructure/OxfordshireStatementofCooperation.pdf>

- 3.2 The parties agree that it is reasonable for any additional housing provision made by West Oxfordshire in relation to the unmet housing needs of Oxford to be treated separately from the District's own 13,200 dwelling requirement including for the purposes of calculating a 5-year housing land supply and also that any provision made for unmet housing need should be well-related to Oxford in spatial terms.
- 3.3 Oxford City Council considers that WODC has responded positively to the Local Plan Inspector's preliminary findings of December 2015 and welcomes the proposed main modifications to the pre-submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan which seek to meet West Oxfordshire's OAN in full together with an agreed proportion of the 'unmet' needs of Oxford for the period to 2031.

2. Quantum of 'unmet' housing need to be planned for

- 3.4 The parties agree that 15,000 homes is an appropriate figure to plan for within the Oxfordshire HMA to contribute towards meeting Oxford's unmet housing need to 2031, pending further testing through the Oxford Local Plan review which is not intended to be submitted until late 2018.
- 3.5 15,000 is the agreed 'working assumption' that has formed the basis of the joint evidence base and apportionment process to consider how the unmet need should be distributed across the Oxfordshire HMA.
- 3.6 If the Oxford unmet need figure increases in the future the parties agree that the most appropriate mechanism for addressing any additional housing apportioned to West Oxfordshire would be through a review of the Local Plan. However, on the basis of the current evidence and joint working, the parties agree that 15,000 is an appropriate figure to plan for at the present time.

3. The Process and Evidence for the Apportionment of Unmet housing need

- 3.7 The parties agree that the process which has been undertaken through the OGB to inform the apportionment of Oxford's unmet need across the Oxfordshire HMA has been objective and based on a proportionate evidence base which all OGB authorities have endorsed.
- 3.8 Joint working has been undertaken on the following matters:
- An understanding of the urban capacity of Oxford and the level of unmet housing need;
 - Green Belt study to assess the extent to which the land within the Oxford Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts;
 - The sustainability testing of spatial options / areas of search to help inform the apportionment or distribution of unmet housing need to the district and city councils;
 - Transport assessment of the spatial options / areas of search
 - An education infrastructure assessment of the spatial options / areas of search
- 3.9 The parties agree that the joint working undertaken forms an appropriate basis upon which to determine the apportionment of unmet objectively assessed housing need from Oxford.
- 3.10 A Memorandum of Co-Operation was considered at a meeting of the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 26 September 2016. The memorandum was agreed and signed by all of the Oxfordshire local authorities except South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) although they had been engaged and co-operated at an officer level throughout the process.

- 3.11 The agreed apportionment of unmet housing need across the Oxfordshire HMA reflects the capacity of sites and sustainability considerations including their spatial relationship and connectivity to Oxford:

Authority	Proportion of unmet need apportioned
Cherwell DC	4400
Oxford City Council	550
South Oxfordshire DC	4950 ²
Vale of White Horse DC	2200
West Oxfordshire DC	2750
Total	14850

- 3.12 The parties agree that the process by which the agreed apportionment has been established has been objective and based on a proportionate evidence base and provides a sound basis for the planning authorities to take forward and fully consider through their own local plan processes.
- 3.13 The parties agree that should any individual Oxfordshire authority not be able or willing to meet the Growth Board's apportionment of unmet need (following the completion of that authority's Local Plan) the implications would need to be considered on a joint and multi-lateral basis through the Growth Board.

4. Quantum of provision being made in West Oxfordshire for Oxford City's Unmet Housing Needs to 2031

- 3.14 The parties agree that it is appropriate for West Oxfordshire to progress its local plan on the basis of 2,750 additional homes to help meet the unmet housing needs of Oxford.
- 3.15 The parties agree that there is no evidence available at this point, prior to the Oxford Local Plan 2036 review, to support the use of any alternative figure to that which has been tested and agreed through the joint OGB processes.

² South Oxfordshire District Council has not accepted its apportioned figure of 4,950 homes and is currently proposing to provide a reduced figure.

- 3.16 The OGB approach reflects the capacity of the Districts to provide sustainable locations and absorb additional growth to meet a share of Oxford's unmet needs in the most appropriate and sustainable way. As such, the comparatively low figure for West Oxfordshire reflects the fact that it is less well linked to Oxford than other Districts with a higher apportionment.

5. Spatial Relationship to Oxford

- 3.17 The parties agree that any site options for meeting Oxford City's unmet housing needs should have a strong spatial relationship with the City and effective links with existing or planned infrastructure improvements, which for West Oxfordshire means principally along key corridors including the A40 and A44. Further joint working in relation to these key transport corridors is proposed.
- 3.18 The parties also agree that any site options should recognise and help to support the nationally significant economic role of Oxford.

6. West Oxfordshire's strategy/approach for meeting unmet housing needs

- 3.19 The parties agree that West Oxfordshire District Council's proposed approach to meeting its apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs - that is to focus strategic growth around Eynsham - is appropriate, robust, reflective of the evidence base and sound.
- 3.20 It is agreed that a number of other reasonable alternatives have been considered in West Oxfordshire but have been shown to be less favourable in terms of sustainability and relationship to Oxford and therefore not taken forward.
- 3.21 The parties agree that such is the quantum of unmet need, strategic-scale developments are the most appropriate response to assisting Oxford. The parties also agree that the provision of large strategic sites has key advantages, in terms of delivering a sustainable development strategy for West Oxfordshire, and that a more dispersed strategy based on a large number of smaller sites would not be an appropriate response to the unmet need issue.

7. Timing of provision for Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs

- 3.22 The parties agree that provision should be made for Oxford's unmet housing needs as soon as possible, however it is recognised that the statutory planning process and lead in times on large strategic sites mean that it is reasonable for local plan housing trajectories to assume delivery from 2021 onwards (although this does not preclude the possibility of earlier delivery where possible).
- 3.23 This reflects the common assumed start date of 2021 set out in the memorandum of co-operation (September 2016).
- 3.24 Oxford City Council recognise the significant effort that WODC is taking to bring forward development at Eynsham but recognise that a reasonable period of time will be needed to take the site through the planning process and onto the commencement of development.
- 3.25 The parties therefore agree that it is reasonable for West Oxfordshire District Council to assume delivery from 2021 onwards at Eynsham but that the commencement of development should be accelerated as much as is reasonably possible. This might include for example a fast-track timetable for the proposed Area Action Plan together with any opportunities to facilitate planning approval and associated legal agreements including the use of planning performance agreements and/or seeking to overlap the submission of any outline or detailed planning applications with the AAP process.
- 3.26 Good progress is already being made in relation to both land to the north and west of Eynsham with active developer interest, and financial backing has been given to the proposed garden village by Government which will be used to take forward the planning and delivery of the scheme in a timely way.
- 3.27 A separate delivery trajectory will be established, maintained and published to track progress of delivery against Oxford's unmet housing needs as part of West Oxfordshire District Council's AMR process.

8. Five-Year Housing Land Supply Considerations

- 3.28 The parties agree that 2021 should be the start date for 5-year housing land supply calculations as set out in the Oxfordshire Growth Board memorandum of co-operation but that this should not preclude earlier delivery where possible.
- 3.29 The parties agree that the delivery period for the 2,750 homes should be 2021 – 2031.

9. Affordable housing provision

- 3.30 The parties agree that a consistent approach towards affordable housing in relation to the unmet housing needs of Oxford would be beneficial. In terms of the percentage requirement, the submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan including proposed modifications requires the provision of 50% affordable housing on large residential schemes of 11 or more dwellings.
- 3.31 The Oxford Local Plan (including the Oxford Core Strategy and the Sites and Housing Plan) requires the provision of 50% affordable housing. The overall percentage requirement is therefore consistent between the two authorities.
- 3.32 The parties agree that in relation to more detailed matters of tenure mix, unit size and eligibility it would be appropriate to consider these matters through a form of common framework e.g. a memorandum of operation outside of the Local Plan process that could be applied across the Oxfordshire HMA when dealing with the apportionment of unmet housing need from Oxford.
- 3.33 The parties will seek to have this framework agreed within the next 12 months so that it can inform the development of the AAP and the early stages of the planning application and design process.

10. Economic Development and the role of Oxford City

- 3.34 The parties agree that it is vital for new development particularly of a strategic scale to support the economic prosperity and role of Oxford and the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine'.

3.35 Oxford City Council support in principle, West Oxfordshire's proposal to include a 40 ha 'science park' within the proposed garden village north of Eynsham.

3.36 The parties agree that this will help to support Oxford and the knowledge spine and play a complementary role in relation to other similar science related developments already allocated and coming forward for development in other areas such as at the Northern Gateway, Begbroke and Bicester.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The parties agree that:

- They have a positive working relationship and a demonstrable track record of successful collaborative joint working with effective outcomes;
- Through regular meetings the authorities will continue to work cooperatively on matters of mutual interest and cross-boundary strategic importance including implementing/delivering the agreed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs;
- Both authorities would welcome the adoption of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan at the earliest opportunity.

Signed:



Name:

Giles Hughes

Position:

Head of Planning and
Strategic Housing

Date:

8th May 2017

West Oxfordshire District
Council

Signed:



Name:

Patsy Dell

Position:

Head of Planning & Regulatory

Date:

8th May 2017

Oxford City Council