



# Oxfordshire Plan 2050

## Statement of Common Ground

Second Regulation 18 Consultation

July 2021



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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground documents the cross-boundary strategic planning matters being addressed through the production of the Oxfordshire Plan and the progress made in co-operating to address these matters up to the second Regulation 18 (preferred options) consultation.
- 1.2 As co-operation to address cross-boundary strategic planning matters will continue throughout the plan-making process, updates to this Statement of Common Ground will be published at future stages as appropriate (as set out in Section 10).
- 1.3 This Statement of Common Ground has been produced in accordance with Paragraph 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF) and the approach set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

## 2 The Oxfordshire Plan 2050

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Plan is a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) which is being jointly prepared by the five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire: Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council (referred to throughout this document as 'Oxfordshire's City and District Councils').
- 2.2 Oxfordshire's City and District Councils are working in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) throughout the plan-making process.
- 2.3 The Oxfordshire Plan will provide a long term, strategic planning framework for Oxfordshire. It will set out the level of growth to be delivered in Oxfordshire to 2050 and the spatial strategy for the distribution of growth in Oxfordshire to 2050. It will also set out a number of strategic planning policies around five key themes:
  - i. Addressing climate change
  - ii. Improving environmental quality
  - iii. Creating strong and healthy communities
  - iv. Planning for sustainable travel and connectivity
  - v. Creating jobs and providing homes
- 2.4 A core team has been established to co-ordinate the production Oxfordshire Plan, which includes officers seconded from Oxfordshire's City and District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council.
- 2.5 The Oxfordshire Plan is being developed by consensus, with officers and elected members, from all the Oxfordshire authorities and OxLEP, working together at every stage of plan-making process to ensure that individual and collective views are taken

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (February 2019) National Planning Policy Framework

into account. Further detail on the joint working arrangements established to deliver the Oxfordshire Plan is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement.

- 2.6 At each key stage of the plan-making process, Oxfordshire's City and District Councils will be asked to formally approve the emerging Oxfordshire Plan and its supporting documents (for example at the Regulation 18 and 19 stages).
- 2.7 The Oxfordshire Plan will be adopted by each of Oxfordshire's City and District Councils. It will then form part of each authority's development plan, providing the strategic planning framework for future local plans and decision-making on development proposals.

### **3 Scale of Cross-Boundary Strategic Planning Matters**

- 3.1 In producing the Oxfordshire Plan, there are a range of scales at which cross-boundary strategic planning matters need to be considered. These can be broadly grouped into three categories:

- i. **Cross-boundary strategic planning matters within Oxfordshire**

As a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, being produced by five local planning authorities, co-operation to address cross-boundary strategic planning matters within Oxfordshire is the foundation of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Oxfordshire County Council, with an administrative area spanning all five local planning authority areas, is a key partner in the production of the Oxfordshire Plan. Oxfordshire County Council has responsibilities including minerals and waste planning, transport, education, flood risk and public health.

OxLEP also spans all five local planning authority areas and is key partner in the production of the Oxfordshire Plan. OxLEP champions Oxfordshire's economic potential on the national and international stage to attract jobs and investment into the County and ensures that the voices of businesses are heard.

Oxfordshire does not currently have a Local Nature Partnership (LNP). However, progress is being made to establish a LNP for Oxfordshire. Should an LNP be formed during the plan-making process, the LNP would also become a key partner in the production of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Oxfordshire's City and District Councils are engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with each other, Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP to maximise the effectiveness of the Oxfordshire Plan in addressing cross-boundary strategic planning matters in Oxfordshire in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate. Further detail on the joint working arrangements established to deliver the Oxfordshire Plan is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement.

**ii. Cross-boundary strategic planning matters with areas adjoining Oxfordshire**

As functional relationships do not end at Oxfordshire's boundary, cross-boundary strategic planning matters with local authorities, LEPs and LNPs that adjoin Oxfordshire are also being considered throughout the plan-making process.

Oxfordshire's City and District Councils are engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with the local authorities, LEPs and LNPs adjoining Oxfordshire to maximise the effectiveness of the Oxfordshire Plan in addressing cross-boundary strategic planning matters in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate. Further detail on the engagement undertaken to date and how this is informing the production of the Oxfordshire Plan is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement.

**iii. Wider cross-boundary strategic planning matters**

Cross-boundary strategic planning matters across other relevant geographies are also being considered throughout the plan-making process as appropriate.

Oxfordshire is a key component of the Oxford-Cambridge (OxCam) Arc - a strategic 'arc' in central England which is home to a unique business, science and technology ecosystem. The OxCam Arc also covers the ceremonial counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. The government has committed to producing a Spatial Framework for the OxCam Arc, which will focus on strategic opportunities for growth and environmental improvement that cross administrative boundaries and require more joined up thinking across the area.

Oxfordshire is also part of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) - a strategic collaborative partnership, stretching from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire, with a shared commitment to realise the region's economic potential while achieving net-zero carbon. EEH is the sub-national transport body for the region, with a transport strategy that establishes a 30 year strategic vision for the region's transport system. EEG also works with delivery partners to identify investment priorities, secure funding and deliver schemes.

Wider cross-boundary strategic planning matters may also relate to other geographies such as river catchments, water resource zones or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Wider cross-boundary strategic planning matters include those identified as being relevant to Prescribed Bodies<sup>2</sup>. This includes the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, Civil Aviation Authority, Homes England,

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<sup>2</sup> Prescribed Bodies as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Part 2. Regulation 4.

Clinical Commissioning Groups, The Office of Rail and Road, Highways England and the Mayor of London.

Oxfordshire's City and District Councils are engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with relevant Prescribed Bodies to maximise the effectiveness of the Oxfordshire Plan in addressing cross-boundary strategic planning matters in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate. Further detail on the engagement undertaken to date and how this is informing the production of the Oxfordshire Plan is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement.

## 4 Geographical Area

- 4.1 The geographical area covered by this Statement of Common Ground is the county of Oxfordshire (Figure 1).
- 4.2 This Statement of Common Ground focuses on the geographical area of Oxfordshire for the following reasons:
- i. It is the geographical area covered by the Oxfordshire Plan;
  - ii. It reflects the Oxfordshire housing market area;
  - iii. It reflects the Oxfordshire functional economic market area, the area covered by OxLEP and the area covered by the Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy, as well as related strategies on energy, skills and Covid-19 economic recovery;
  - iv. It reflects the administrative area of Oxfordshire County Council providing consistency in relation to county matters such as transport (including consistency with the adopted Local Transport Plan<sup>3</sup> and the emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan), education and public health;
  - v. There is a long history of co-operation and joint working in Oxfordshire in relation to cross-boundary strategic planning matters, including the production of shared evidence such as the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2014) and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) (2017);
  - vi. There are established governance and joint working arrangements, including the Oxfordshire Growth Board - a joint committee with the leaders of all six Oxfordshire authorities as the core voting members. The Oxfordshire Growth Board also includes associate members from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Universities, Oxfordshire Skills Board, Environment Agency, Homes England, Network Rail and Highways England;
  - vii. It is consistent with the area covered by the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, which was signed with the UK Government in 2018; and
  - viii. No cross-boundary strategic planning matters with authorities adjoining Oxfordshire, Prescribed Bodies or other geographical areas have been

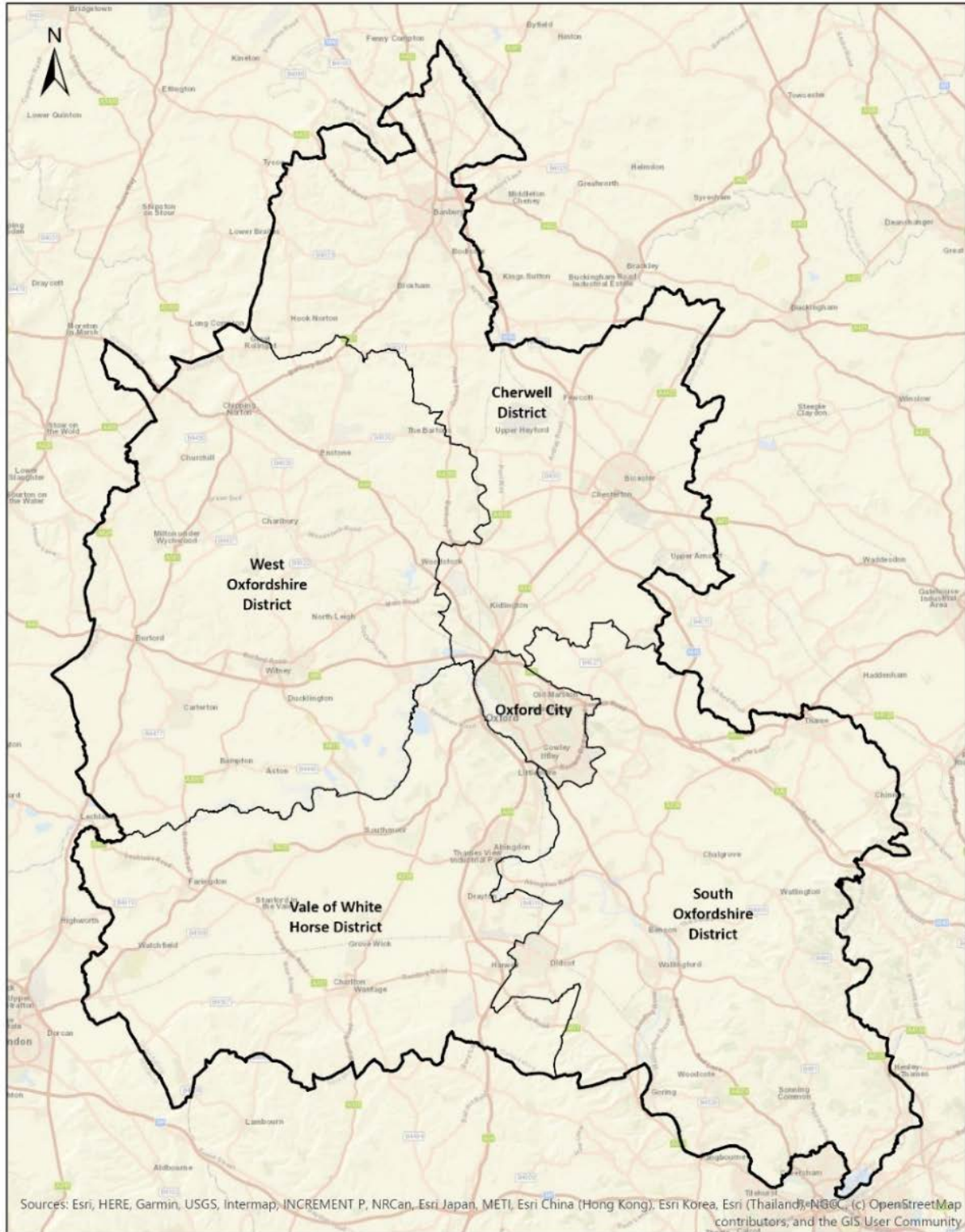
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<sup>3</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (September 201) Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015 - 2031



identified that require a statement of common ground at this stage. In particular, there are no known issues of unmet housing need arising in neighbouring housing market areas that Oxfordshire's City and District Councils are being asked to accommodate.

**Figure 1: Administrative and geographical areas covered by this Statement of Common Ground**



- 4.3 Further detail on the background to joint working in Oxfordshire, established governance and joint working arrangements and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.4 The need for a statement of common ground, or additional statements of common ground, covering alternative geographical scales will be considered as work on the Oxfordshire Plan progresses.

## 5 Parties Involved

- 5.1 The plan-making authorities responsible for the joint working detailed in this Statement of Common Ground are:
- Cherwell District Council
  - Oxford City Council
  - South Oxfordshire District Council
  - Vale of White Horse District Council
  - West Oxfordshire District Council
- 5.2 The additional signatories to this Statement of Common Ground, who have a role in the strategic matters identified and with whom Oxfordshire's City and District Councils need to co-operate with in order to plan for these matters, are:
- Oxfordshire County Council
  - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- 5.3 The need for additional signatories, such as authorities adjoining Oxfordshire, Prescribed Bodies and/or infrastructure providers will be considered as work on the Oxfordshire Plan progresses.

## 6 Strategic Matters

- 6.1 The cross-boundary strategic planning matters that are addressed in this Statement of Common Ground and the parties that are signatories to those matters are set out in Table 1.
- 6.2 The cross-boundary strategic planning matters to be addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan were originally identified through the Oxfordshire Plan Scoping Document (October 2018), which was jointly produced by Oxfordshire's City and District Councils at the commencement of the project. However, the strategic planning matters to be addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan have evolved over time in response to the outcomes of joint working, engagement (including the first Regulation 18 consultation and engagement under the Duty to Co-operate) and emerging evidence.
- 6.3 The cross-boundary strategic planning matters to be addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan may continue to evolve as the plan-making process progresses.

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<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Duty to Co-operate Statement Second Regulation 18 Consultation (July 2021)



**TABLE 1: Strategic Matters covered by this Statement of Common Ground and Relevant Signatories**

		Signatories					
		Cherwell	Oxford City	South Oxon	Vale of White Horse	West Oxon	Oxon County Council
Cross Boundary Strategic Planning Matters	Theme One: Addressing Climate Change						
	Climate Change (including mitigation and adaption)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Water Resources / Water Quality	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Flood Risk	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Theme Two: Improving Environmental Quality						
	Natural Environment / Green Infrastructure	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Landscape Quality and Character	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Contaminated Land	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Theme Three: Creating Strong and Healthy Communities						
	Healthy Place-Shaping	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Community Facilities (inc. health and education)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Heritage and Historic Environment	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Theme Four: Planning for Sustainable Travel and Connectivity						
	Transport	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Other Infrastructure (including water supply)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Theme Five: Creating Jobs and Providing Homes						
	Economy and Employment	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Retail/Leisure/Other Commercial Development	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Housing Requirements	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
	Housing Supply	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Gypsies, Travellers, Caravan Dwellers, Travelling Showpeople	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	
Boat Dwellers	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	
Green Belt	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	

## 7 Record of Agreement: Oxfordshire's City and District Councils

7.1 This is a record of progress made by Oxfordshire's City and District Councils in co-operating to address cross-boundary strategic planning matters through the production of the Oxfordshire Plan up to the second Regulation 18 (preferred options) consultation.

### Governance and Joint Working

7.2 As a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, being produced by five local planning authorities, co-operation and joint working to address cross-boundary strategic planning matters is the basis of the Oxfordshire Plan.

7.3 Officers (at all levels) and elected members from Oxfordshire's City and District Councils have worked together to identify and agree the policy and spatial options set out in the second Regulation 18 (preferred options) consultation document.

7.4 Each council will formally approve the documentation for publication and consultation at the second Regulation 18 stage, following appropriate scrutiny arrangements.

7.5 Established joint working arrangements will continue throughout the plan-making process. Further detail on these arrangements is provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement<sup>5</sup>.

### Oxfordshire Plan Scope

7.6 Oxfordshire's City and District Councils agree that the Oxfordshire Plan will:

- relate to cross-boundary strategic planning matters of relevance to the whole of Oxfordshire, with detailed and more locally specific policies to be provided by local and neighbourhood plans as appropriate;
- seek to address the cross-boundary strategic planning matters identified in Table 1, recognising that this list of strategic matters may continue to evolve during the plan-making process;
- establish the housing requirement for Oxfordshire from 2020-2050 and seek to meet that requirement within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area;
- establish the strategy for the distribution of development in Oxfordshire to 2050, including the identification of broad locations for growth (with detailed allocations to come forward through future local plans), based upon an understanding and appreciation of both the environmental quality and natural capital of Oxfordshire;
- outline the strategic infrastructure required to support development in Oxfordshire to 2050;

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<sup>5</sup> Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Duty to Co-operate Statement Second Regulation 18 Consultation (July 2021)

- seek to deliver ‘good growth’ as defined by the Oxfordshire Growth Board’s ‘Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development to 2050’ (known as the ‘Strategic Vision’);
- seek to realise transformational opportunities associated with producing a joint strategic plan to 2050, whilst also responding appropriately to the uncertainty associated with planning for the longer-term; and
- seek to add value, as an additional layer sitting between national and local planning policy and guidance.

7.7 At this stage, how the Oxfordshire Plan will meet the scope set out in paragraph 7.6 is being explored through a range of policy and spatial options.

### Policy Options

7.8 Oxfordshire’s City and District Councils have worked together to identify and agree a range of policy options based on the cross-boundary strategic planning matters identified in Table 1. This includes the identification and agreement of preferred policy options. Identified policy options will be tested through the plan-making process, including through the second Regulation 18 consultation.

### Spatial Options

7.9 Oxfordshire’s City and District Councils have worked together to identify and agree five spatial options:

*Option 1:* Focus on opportunities at larger settlements and planned growth locations

*Option 2:* Focus on Oxford-led growth

*Option 3:* Focus on opportunities in sustainable transport corridors and at sustainable transport hubs

*Option 4:* Focus on strengthening business locations

*Option 5:* Focus on supporting rural communities

7.10 It is agreed that the Oxfordshire Plan’s spatial strategy may comprise components from more than one of the spatial options.

7.11 The shared principles underpinning the spatial options are:

- All options should help deliver the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision and the Oxfordshire Plan's Vision and Objectives. They seek to align environmental, social and economic objectives - though each option does this in different ways and to varying degrees because each is based on a different key driver for transformation.
- Options should make effective use of land by planning positively for re-use of previously developed or brownfield land, including under-utilised land and buildings as urban regeneration schemes.
- All options should prioritise the environment as a common thread that flows from the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. This includes climate change, nature recovery,

natural capital and enhanced resilience. This means there is no separate environment-led option.

- All options support the City of Oxford as the key driver for good growth within Oxfordshire.
- All options give priority to national policies that protect areas or assets that are of particular intrinsic importance and are likely to endure over the whole Plan period and are likely to impact on the distribution of development at the strategic scale.
- All options will seek to influence and shape the priorities within the emerging Spatial Framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
- All options recognise that in the short-term, adopted local plans will be particularly important in shaping Oxfordshire's spatial strategy, but that over the longer-term – the 30-year time-span of the Oxfordshire Plan – there is greater scope to effect change, but also greater uncertainty.

7.12 It is agreed that the Oxfordshire Plan's spatial strategy and broad locations for growth will be identified through a joint assessment process as set out in the 'Next Steps: Proceeding from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19' section of the second Regulation 18 consultation document.

### Evidence

7.13 Oxfordshire's City and District Councils agree that the Oxfordshire Plan will be founded on a robust and proportionate countywide evidence base.

7.14 Oxfordshire's City and District Councils have jointly commissioned a range of evidence to inform the Oxfordshire Plan. This includes:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment (early risk assessment)
- Health Impact Assessment
- Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment
- Oxfordshire Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment
- Oxfordshire Strategic Water Cycle Study
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Transport Evidence

7.15 Much of this evidence will continue to be developed to inform the production of the Regulation 19 draft plan.

7.16 Further evidence will also be jointly commissioned prior to Regulation 19. This includes a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Air Quality Impact Assessment and Viability Assessment.

7.17 In addition, the Oxfordshire Plan will also be informed by a range of other countywide evidence, which has been developed with other partners, including:

- Local Energy Oxfordshire (Project LEO)
- Natural Capital Evidence

- Oxfordshire Energy Strategy
- Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)
- Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

## **8 Record of Agreement: Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

- 8.1 This is a record of progress made by Oxfordshire’s City and District Councils in co-operating with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP to address cross-boundary strategic planning matters through the production of the Oxfordshire Plan up to the second Regulation 18 (preferred options) consultation.

### **Governance and Joint Working Arrangements**

- 8.2 Oxfordshire’s City and District Councils are working in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP throughout the plan-making process. Details of established joint working arrangements are provided in the Duty to Co-operate Statement<sup>6</sup>. These joint working arrangements will continue throughout the plan-making process

### **Oxfordshire Plan Scope**

- 8.3 Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP support the scope of the Oxfordshire Plan as set out in paragraph 7.6.

### **Policy and Spatial Options**

- 8.4 Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP have been involved in the process of identifying the policy and spatial options set out in the second Regulation 18 (preferred options) consultation document. Co-operation has taken place where cross-boundary strategic planning matters identified as being relevant to Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP are being addressed (Table 1).
- 8.5 Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP agree that the policy and spatial options identified, including preferred policy options, are appropriate for testing through the plan-making process, including through the Regulation 18 consultation.

### **Evidence**

- 8.6 It is agreed that the Oxfordshire Plan will be informed by relevant evidence and align with relevant strategies produced by Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP.
- 8.7 Relevant evidence and strategies produced by Oxfordshire County Council include the emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, public health data, historic environment records and education provision.

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<sup>6</sup> Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Duty to Co-operate Statement Second Regulation 18 Consultation (July 2021)

- 8.8 Relevant evidence and strategies produced by OxLEP include the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy, as well as related strategies on energy, skills and Covid-19 economic recovery.

## **9 Governance Arrangements**

- 9.1 The Statement of Common Ground for the Oxfordshire Plan will be maintained by the Oxfordshire Plan core team in their role as coordinators of the production of the Oxfordshire Plan on behalf of Oxfordshire's City and District Councils.
- 9.2 The Statement of Common Ground for the Oxfordshire Plan will be signed by a senior member or senior responsible officer from Oxfordshire City and District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP.

## **10 Timetable for Review**

- 10.1 Co-operation between Oxfordshire's City and District Councils, in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP, is integral to the production of the Oxfordshire Plan as a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire. Engagement between the partners is embedded at every stage of the plan-making process.
- 10.2 The Statement of Common Ground for the Oxfordshire Plan will be reviewed and updated throughout the plan-making process.
- 10.3 As a minimum, the Statement of Common Ground will next be updated and published at the Regulation 19 consultation stage, when the content of the proposed submission plan has been agreed.
- 10.4 Additional updates to the Statement of Common Ground may be required in the following circumstances:
- i. If additional formal stages of consultation are added to the Oxfordshire Plan timetable; and/or
  - ii. If there is any other significant change in circumstance or position where a revision to the Statement of Common Ground is considered necessary, appropriate and proportionate.
- 10.5 The need for a Statement of Common Ground, or additional Statements of Common Ground covering alternative geographical areas or with additional signatories, will be considered as work on the Oxfordshire Plan progresses, informed by relevant evidence and engagement.



## 11 Signatures

### **Cherwell District Council**

Signature: 

Name: David Peckford

Position: Assistant Director – Planning and Development

Date: 01/07/21

### **Oxford City Council**

Signature:




Name: Adrian Arnold

Position: Head of Planning

Date: 01/07/2021

### **South Oxfordshire District Council**


Signature: 

Name: Adrian Duffield

Position: Head of Planning

Date: 01/07/21

### **Vale of White Horse District Council**

Signature: 

Name: Adrian Duffield

Position: Head of Planning

Date: 01/07/21

**West Oxfordshire District Council**



Signature:

Name: Giles Hughes

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Oxfordshire County Council**



Signature:

Name: Rachel Wileman

Position: Assistant Director Strategic Infrastructure and Planning

Date: 01/07/21

**Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**



Signature:

Name: Nigel Tipple

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 29/06/21