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Oxford City Council

Local Development Scheme
2023 - 2028

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
What is the Local Development Scheme?	3
Oxford's Development Plan.....	3
Documents in Oxford's Development Plan.....	3
Oxford Local Plan 2036	3
Neighbourhood Plans	4
Other Documents	4
Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI)	4
Annual Authority Monitoring Report	5
Work Programme for 2023-2028	6
Development Plan documents	6
Local Plan 2020-2040	6
Other documents	7
Annual Authority Monitoring Report	7
Appendix 1: Gantt chart of the LDS work programme	8

Introduction

- 1.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for councils to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS specifies which local development documents are to be development plan documents and sets out the work programme for the preparation of documents to be included in the Development Plan. This document supersedes the Oxford 2022-2027 LDS.

What is the Local Development Scheme?

- 1.2. This LDS is a five-year project plan for preparing documents and provides the starting point for the local community, businesses, developers and other interested parties to find out what the City Council's current planning policies are for the area. It includes 'milestones' to inform the public about opportunities to get involved with the plan making process and to let them know the likely dates for involvement. The LDS is published on the City Council's website at www.oxford.gov.uk/lds.

Oxford's Development Plan

- 2.1. Oxford's Development Plan contains a range of documents to guide development within Oxford. Applications for planning permission are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Council-produced documents within the statutory Development Plan are subject to extensive community and stakeholder involvement, and an independent examination by an Inspector to ensure that the necessary legal requirements for the preparation of the document have been met and the document is 'sound'. All these documents are subject to the European Strategic Environment Assessment Directive and will incorporate a sustainability appraisal to ensure that they accord with the principles of sustainable development. They must be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide further details and guidance to supplement policies. SPDs are adopted by the City Council following public consultation, and are not part of the statutory Development Plan.

Documents in Oxford's Development Plan

- 2.3. Currently, the statutory Development Plan consists of:
 - Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 (June 2020)
 - Barton Area Action Plan (December 2012)
 - Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (July 2015)
 - Headington Neighbourhood Plan (July 2017)
 - Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019)
 - Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (June 2021)

Oxford Local Plan 2036

- 2.4. The Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted in 2020 and superseded the following documents:
- Saved policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 (November 2006)
 - Oxford Core Strategy (March 2011)
 - Sites and Housing Plan (February 2013)
- 2.5. The Adopted Policies Map (2020) illustrates graphically the policies and proposals of the adopted Local Plan. The Policies Map (2020) has been revised and updated to reflect the new policies that have been adopted.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.6. The Localism Act introduced new rights and powers to enable communities to get directly involved in planning for their areas. Neighbourhood planning allows communities to come together through a parish council or formal neighbourhood forum and produce a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhoods can decide what they want to cover in their neighbourhood plan. They may allocate land for development, or influence the type and design of development that comes forward. Neighbourhood plans must however be in general conformity with the strategic planning policies already adopted by the City Council. They should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan and/or undermine its strategic policies. They are also subject to an independent examination and need to be approved by a majority vote in a local referendum.
- 2.7. Once plans are adopted they will become part of the Development Plan. To date, Oxford City Council has formally designated four neighbourhood areas where plans are being led by neighbourhood forums. Three Neighbourhood Plans, Headington, Wolvercote and Summertown and St Margaret's, are made.

Oxfordshire Plan

- 2.8. The previous LDS included mention of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This Plan had gone through several stages of consultation and the intention was that it would become a part of the Oxford Development Plan. However, work on this plan has now ceased.

Other Documents

- 2.9. In addition to the Oxford Development Plan there are several other important planning documents:
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (October 2013)
 - West End SPD (2022)
 - Jericho Canalside SPD (December 2013)
 - Diamond Place SPD (July 2015)
 - Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (2021)

Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI)

- 2.10. The Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 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 at Cabinet on 16th June 2021. It can be viewed at www.oxford.gov.uk/sci.

Annual Authority Monitoring Report

2.11. Each year the City Council produces an Authority Monitoring Report, which is approved at the City Cabinet in the autumn. The Authority 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.

2.12. All of the Authority Monitoring Reports produced by the City Council can be viewed on the City Council's website at www.oxford.gov.uk/amr.

Work Programme for 2023-2028

- 3.1. During the period covered by this LDS, the City Council will commence / continue work on the following documents:

Development plan documents

- Oxford Local Plan 2020-2040
- Neighbourhood Plans

Other documents

- Annual Authority Monitoring Report

Development Plan documents

Local Plan 2020-2040

- 3.2. The Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted on 8th June 2020 and contains policies based on relatively recent evidence and is compliant with current guidance. However, government guidance requires that all Plans are reviewed every 5 years. That is to say that the Plan must have been reviewed by the date 5 years after adoption. 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.
- 3.3. The Oxford Local Plan 2040 will replace the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The Barton and Northern Gateway AAPs will remain relevant to those sites if they are not yet fully built out, although some policies may be superseded. These documents, as well as any neighbourhood plans, will form the statutory Development Plan. Following the council meeting to approve the pre submission draft, that draft will be used as a material consideration for development management decisions on planning applications; its weight will be limited initially, but increases as it proceeds towards adoption.
- 3.4. The Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 has a great deal of flexibility in order to deal with a twenty-year period and many of the policies within it place Oxford in a strong position to effectively manage growth and change that will face the City over this period. The Inspectors' report in paragraph 39 says that: 'the examination hearings took place before the Covid-19 epidemic. 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.'
- 3.5. Although the Oxford Local Plan 2036 will already help us carefully manage change and assist the city to "build back better" it will be important for the new Local Plan 2040 to actively look at the issues the pandemic will leave with us and to consider if any alterations of policies are required as a result. The effectiveness of policies are always monitored and this will be important in understanding the scope of the new Local Plan. We need to give enough time to understand how our 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 the route to zero carbon, inequalities and the quality of the built and natural environment as the existing Local Plan does and seek to build upon these comprehensively.

- 3.6. In order for the Oxford Local Plan 2040 to have 15 years to run from adoption, adoption will need to be in 2025 at the latest. Therefore, the plan will need to be submitted to the secretary of state in early 2024, based on the timescales from the Oxford Local Plan 2036 that was submitted in March 2019 and adopted in June 2020. Because of the uncertainty of the current time, significant stakeholder engagement and input will be needed in the early stages to try and clarify what the plan needs to address.
- 3.7. Early, non-statutory engagement took place in summer 2021. The Preferred Options Regulation 18 consultation took place in October/November 2022. Work ending on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 affected the evidence base for the Oxford Local Plan 2040, and some work has had to be recommissioned and evidence gathered in a different way. This meant that the preferred options consultation went ahead before the evidence base on housing need was complete. Instead, an additional regulation 18 consultation is to take place, focused on housing need only. That is intended to take place in February/March 2023. This means that the consultation on the draft plan and then the submission are pushed back by a few months. Engagement on the pre-submission draft of the Local Plan will be in November/December 2023, with the expectation to submit the plan for examination by the end of March 2024. Once submitted for examination the timetable is not within the council's control. Based on the timescales for the examination of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 we have allowed 15 months from submission to adoption. This would mean adoption would be expected in June 2025.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.8. One neighbourhood plan area has been defined but does not yet have a made neighbourhood plan, which is Littlemore

Other documents

Annual Authority Monitoring Report

- 3.9. Each year the City Council produces an Authority Monitoring Report. This will be taken for Cabinet approval in November 2023 for publication in December 2023. The Authority Monitoring report published in December 2022 will be reporting on the monitoring year 2022/23.

