

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 10 December 2025  
**Report of:** Director Planning and Regulation  
**Title of Report:** Approval of Local Development Scheme 2025-2030

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To approve the Local Development Scheme 2025-2030, which sets out the work programme for the revised Oxford Local Plan 2045.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Strong, fair economy Good, affordable housing Thriving communities Zero carbon Oxford A well-run council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	The Local Plan is a statutory requirement, and the LDS sets out the timetable for its production. The scope of the policies is wide and encompasses all of the Council's corporate priorities

**Recommendation(s):** That Cabinet:

- Approve the** Local Development Scheme 2025-2030;
- Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation Services to make any necessary minor corrections not materially affecting the document prior to publication.
- Agree** the change to the Oxford Local Plan period from 2022-2042 to 2025-2045

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Local Development Scheme 2025-2028
Appendix 2	Risk Assessment

## Introduction and background

1. The Oxford Local Development Scheme (LDS, Appendix 1) is a project plan that sets out timescales for the preparation and revision of documents forming part of Oxford City Council's Development Plan, and other planning policy documents. The Local Plan is the name for the document that contains the majority of the Council's statutory planning policies. The focus of the work programme set out in the LDS 2025-2030 is the Oxford Local Plan 2045.
2. The LDS provides details on what the Development Plan documents will contain and the geographical area they will cover. The LDS is an important tool to enable local communities and interested parties to keep track of the Development 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. The LDS 2025-2030 will come into effect from the date of approval and will supersede the existing first version of the LDS 2025-2030. The Oxford Local Plan 2045 will be prepared to that timetable as far as is practicable. Any changes to the LDS timetable will need a further decision of Cabinet.
3. The currently approved and published version of the LDS 2025-2030 needs updating to delay the Regulation 19 submission version, and all subsequent stages, by two months. The Regulation 18 Oxford Local Plan 2042 consultation took place to the scheduled time. However, since that time a decision has been made to change the plan period from 2022-2042 to 2025-2045. This has necessitated an update to the evidence base, which has led to the slight delay.
4. The period for the Oxford Local Plan 2045 has been amended for two reasons. The start date of the plan being 2025 means that this aligns with when the Regulation 18 consultation commenced, and also it means that the new Standard Method for calculating housing need introduced in December 2024 can be applied from the start of the plan period onwards, without it needing to be applied retrospectively for the first years of the plan. The change to the end date of the plan gives a lot more certainty that, on adoption, there will be the stipulated 15 years left to run to the end date of the plan. Given that, once a plan is submitted, the timeline is entirely in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate, and therefore unpredictable, the additional years give more flexibility should the process take longer than anticipated. Both these changes reflect the approach increasingly being expected of plans by the Planning Inspectorate, and amending the date now gives a lot more certainty than being asked to do so during the examination process.

## **Local Development Scheme for the Oxford Local Plan 2045**

5. Because of the previous withdrawal from examination of the Oxford Local Plan 2040, the Oxford Local Plan 2036 remains the extant plan for planning decisions. A key consideration in setting the timeline for the Oxford Local Plan 2045 is that there will be minimal time from the date five years after adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (which was June 2020) to adoption of the new Local Plan 2045. This is important, because within 5 years from adoption a plan is automatically considered in-date (assuming other conditions are met), but after that it is not.
6. Another key consideration in setting the timeline is that only plans submitted before December 2026 can be examined under the Planning Act 2004. This date is confirmed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation dated 24 September 2024. After that date there is very likely to be a new local plan process in place as enabled by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, forthcoming secondary legislation, and new national planning policy and guidance.
7. The Oxford Local Plan 2045 will replace the Oxford Local Plan 2036. This document, as well as any neighbourhood plans, will form the statutory Development Plan for Oxford. Following the Council meeting to approve the pre-submission draft of the OLP2045, that draft will be used as a material consideration for development management decisions; its weight will be limited initially, but increases as it proceeds towards adoption.
8. The proposed timetable set out in the LDS would mean only about 7 months between June 2025 and the Council meeting to approve the submission draft of the Oxford Local Plan 2045. The Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 has sufficient flexibility to deal with a twenty-year period and the policies within it place Oxford in a strong position to manage growth and change effectively over this period. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 will remain a relevant and appropriate plan to guide development in the city until such time as it is replaced.

## **Financial implications**

9. The timetable of the Local Development Scheme has been structured to enable key work to progress whilst minimising financial implications. In particular, much of the existing evidence base and policy drafting from the now withdrawn Oxford Local Plan 2040 is still relevant and can continue to be used.
10. There are exceptions to this as some evidence is being reviewed, in particular Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) and jobs forecasting that took place as part of the Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA), and a Green Belt review to update the work in-line with the revised NPPF. Much of the evidence base and supporting documents can be largely undertaken in house, using existing staff resources, but there will be a need for some technical input.
11. A revised budget has been calculated, and the work can be resourced by existing Planning Policy staff and can be funded by existing Planning Policy budgets and reserves. The financial implications of producing a local plan

include the costs of a local plan Examination (including Counsel's advice periodically throughout the preparation of the plan).

### **Legal issues**

12. 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). The Council is required to monitor compliance with the timescales for document production and their 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 Authority Monitoring Report.

### **Level of risk**

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

### **Equalities impact**

14. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not necessary for this report as it merely proposes a timetable for producing a local plan. The Council will continue to monitor equalities impact as the revised local plan is developed.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

15. The LDS is merely a timetable and work programme, so it does not itself have any environmental impacts.

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**Background Papers:** None