

To: Cabinet
Date: 8th July 2026
Report of: Director Planning and Regulation
Title of Report: Approval of Local Development Scheme 2026-2031

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To approve the Local Development Scheme 2026-2031, which sets out the work programme for the Oxford Local Plan 2045.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Zero Carbon Oxford
Corporate Priority:	Strong, fair economy Good, affordable housing Thriving communities Zero carbon Oxford A well-run council
Policy Framework:	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 2026-2031; Authorise the Director of Planning and Regulation Services to make any necessary minor corrections not materially affecting the document prior to publication.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Local Development Scheme 2026-2031	No

Appendix 2	Risk Assessment	No
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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 2026-2031 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 progress of Development Plan documents 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 2026-2031 will come into effect from the date of approval and will supersede the existing 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 prior to submission of the document to the Secretary of State may need a further decision of Cabinet.
3. The currently approved and published version of the LDS 2025-2030 needs updating to delay the target date for submission of the plan to the Secretary of State for examination. Subsequent stages are dependent on the Planning Inspectorate, so are only indicative estimates, but a delay has also been assumed for all subsequent stages. The reason for the delay to submission is that an injunction has been granted preventing submission whilst the High Court deals with a Judicial Review request made by a claimant. This will not be resolved by the June date as shown currently for submission in the LDS.

Local Development Scheme for the Oxford Local Plan 2045

4. The proposed timeline in the updated LDS has the effect of delaying submission of the Local Plan from June 2026 to a target date of July 2026, with the subsequent milestones also adjusted, although these can only be indicative as once the Plan has been submitted the City Council will hand control of the programme to the Planning Inspectorate. The LDS unusually shows a target date for submission, with other potential dates as well, and also it shows two alternative timeline scenarios. Officers deem this necessary and appropriate in order to deal with the uncertainty around the timelines for a court hearing on the submission injunction/JR. This approach will enable officers to respond promptly to decisions of the court and submit the Plan in a timely manner. The second scenario, as a backstop position, involves a potential second Regulation 19 consultation. If Cabinet approves the return of the Plan to Council to make a

fresh decision to submit, there is a risk that Council would wish to make a substantial change to the Plan that affects the overall strategy. This would require a repeat of the Regulation 19 exercise. Including this alternative scenario prevents the need for a further report to amend the LDS again in such circumstances.

5. Officers consider that there will be no negative effects for other parties through the flexible approach in the LDS. The City Council will continue to liaise closely with the Planning Inspectorate to facilitate submission as soon as possible.
6. In setting the timeline for the Oxford Local Plan 2045 it is important to consider that the Oxford Local Plan 2036 remains the extant plan for planning decisions. This is important, because within 5 years from adoption a plan is considered in-date (assuming other conditions are met), but after that it must be weighed against national policies such as the standard method for assessing housing need. The Local Plan 2036 was adopted in June 2020 which is now over 5 years ago. It is therefore important that there will be minimal time from the date five years after adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 to adoption of the new Local Plan 2045.
7. Another key consideration in setting the timeline is that only plans submitted before 31st December 2026 can be examined under the Planning Act 2004. After that date, submitted plans must have followed the wholly new local plan process as enabled by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the secondary legislation enacted in March 2026, most notably the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, and anticipated new national planning policy and guidance.
8. 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, on 26th January 2026, that draft can be used as material consideration for development management decisions; its weight will be limited initially but increases as it proceeds towards adoption.
9. 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.

Alternative Options Considered

10. The only alternative option would be not to update the LDS, but it is clearly expected of the Council to keep LDSs up to date with the anticipated work programme for plan making.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

11. There are no implications for Local Government Reorganisation from this report, as it is simply an update to the work programme for plan-making.

Financial implications

12. There are limited financial implications from this report, which sets a revised timetable reflecting a delayed submission of the plan. The revised submission date changes very little in terms of the resource needed to progress the local plan. The implication is a subsequent delay to latter stages of plan preparation, which stretches the end of the plan production period during which Planning Policy team and legal resource is required, although it also delays deployment of the same resources to a new plan and this can be accommodated within existing budgets.

Legal issues

13. 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

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

Equalities impact

15. 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

16. 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

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