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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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West Oxfordshire District Council

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

2005/2006

November 2006

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2006**

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2006

#### I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 This is the second Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the District of West Oxfordshire prepared under Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Every Local Planning Authority is required to make an annual report to the Secretary of State containing information on the implementation of its local development scheme (the plan making work programme) and the extent to which the Council's planning policies are being achieved.
- I.2 In 2005/6 the Council's priority for plan preparation as set out in its Local Development Scheme (LDS), was to adopt the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. This was formally adopted in June 2006. Further information on the LDS and progress on implementation is described in the final section of this AMR.
- I.3 After an Executive Summary, this AMR is divided into three main sections:
- West Oxfordshire and its Context.
  - Monitoring of Outputs.
  - Monitoring of Plan Preparation.

It concentrates primarily upon information for the years since April 2001 with emphasis upon data for the year 2005/6 in particular.

- I.4 The Government's Local Development Framework Monitoring Good Practice Guide, along with its subsequent updates, specifies a range of 'Core Indicators' which are considered throughout this Annual Monitoring Report. **Table SI** summarises progress against all of these indicators and they are also shown alongside the commentary within the relevant sections in the body of the report.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### HOUSING

- 2.1. *Progress on allocated sites* – Development on the two major greenfield development areas at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) reached a peak in 2004/05 when they contributed over 500 dwellings to the District total of 629 new homes completed. Although less homes were built in these development areas in 2005/06 (409), redevelopment of other major previous employment sites are now well under way and have helped to deliver a higher total of 733 units. This total is over 60% higher than the implied structure plan annual target of 453. With the majority of housing being constructed on the two large greenfield development areas in 2004/05, the overall percentage of completions on previously developed land was only 14%. In 2005/06, that proportion has risen to 42% (gross) and is expected to rise to around 60% in 2006/07.
- 2.2. *Maintaining a high stock of housing permissions* – There had been a steady increase in the number of homes permitted on windfall sites between 2000 and 2005, with a peak in 2004/05, although the number of completions on such sites had steadily fallen. During 2005/06, however, well over twice as many homes were completed on windfall sites than in 2004/05 (215 compared to 85) whilst the number of new windfall units permitted dropped for the first time since 2000. However, there is still a total stock of unimplemented planning permissions, on windfall and allocated sites, sufficient to provide more than a five year supply of dwellings at the Structure Plan implied rate of 453 dwellings per year.
- 2.3. *Affordable housing* – During 2005/06, 218 affordable homes were completed throughout the District. The Council has set a minimum delivery target of 110 affordable units per year and expects to exceed an overall total of 1,100, based on this target, for the 10 year period 2001 to 2011.
- 2.4. *Density and Housing mix* – In line with government guidance, the Council encourages the efficient use of land, particularly in all major developments (more than 10 units). The Government's target is residential development at a nett density of no less than 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). During 2005/06, new homes built on major sites were completed at an average density of 46dph and over 50% were completed at a density in excess of 50dph. Last year's AMR noted the increase in the provision of smaller (1 or 2 bed) residential units (from 19% in 2001/02 to 56% in 2004/05) and the increasing number of flats being completed. This year the trend has continued with 68% of all units permitted being for 1 or 2 bed roomed properties. Over the year, 59% of all completions were homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms and 45% of all completed properties were flats.

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 2.5. The West Oxfordshire Employment Land Audit - published in September 2005 highlighted that employment land is concentrated in Witney and the larger settlements and that Local Plan policy is successfully steering new employment development to the larger settlements. The audit highlighted the fact that the large proportion of West Oxfordshire business activity revolves around smaller enterprises.

- 2.6. *New business development* – Information taken from all monitored development of 250m<sup>2</sup> or more showed that 47,003m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace was developed for employment uses within the 'B' Use Classes in 2005/06, with 75% being on previously developed land. 66% of the development was on land in Witney, allocated in the Local Plan, and a further 28% on existing employment sites within the District. Almost 60% of the total floorspace created was for B8 use. At 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 just over 9ha of land allocated for employment use, remained without planning permission in West Oxfordshire and planning permission was outstanding for 67,558m<sup>2</sup> of floor space in the Use Classes B1, B2, and B8. A particular use within the 'B' Classes had not been specified for just over 36% of this floorspace. 24% of all permitted space (16,214m<sup>2</sup>) is for B1(a) office use and 36.7% (24,788m<sup>2</sup>) for B1(c) light industrial use. Only 2.1% has been specifically permitted for B8 use and less than 1% for B2 general industry.
- 2.7. *Losses of employment land* - during the year 2005/06 0.46ha of employment land was lost to other uses through completed development. 0.43ha previously used for B2 purposes was redeveloped for D2 use and 0.03ha of B1 office space was converted to residential units. None of the land lost was on employment land allocated within the Local Plan.

#### **OTHER DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.8. Other development includes retail and leisure uses. During 2005/06, a new Co-op store of 450m<sup>2</sup> (A1) retail floorspace was completed as part of the Madley Park development in Witney and a soft play (D2) facility was created on a plot in Carterton, previously used for B2 purposes. A number of other projects, such as a new Co-op store in Long Hanborough and the Sainsbury's extension in Witney were completed during the summer of 2006.
- 2.9. New A1 floorspace is to be created in Carterton as part of the Shilton Park development (c. 1,000m<sup>2</sup>) and the West Oxfordshire Business Park (c. 3,000m<sup>2</sup>). Approximately 1,700m<sup>2</sup> of new D2 floorspace is to be developed on existing employment land in Witney as a sports/health club and a soft play area.
- 2.10. Among other community-related projects, either underway or completed during 2005/06, are a nursery/day centre in the Madley Park Neighbourhood Centre in Witney, a 60 bed care home, also at Madley Park, a village hall in North Leigh and a doctor's surgery in Shipton-under-Wychwood.

#### **ACCESSIBILITY**

- 2.11. 80% of the new homes built in 2005/06 were within the major towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, which typically offer a bus/walk journey time of 30 minutes to a series of key facilities (comprising a town centre, a primary school, a secondary school, areas of employment and a GP surgery). Many other developments outside of these towns were also within this journey time of those facilities and, in total, between 89% and 99% of all new homes built in 2005/06 were within the 30 minute range of each of those facilities (hospitals not included). This information is derived from the accessibility mapping produced by Oxfordshire County Council.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

- 2.12. *Flood protection and water quality* – During 2005/06 the Council has not permitted any development contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency.
- 2.13. *Biodiversity* – the data collected and provided by the Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC) last year (2004/05) was to form a baseline for monitoring biodiversity in West Oxfordshire. However, this base data is still being refined and new information has become available to TVERC over the year 2005/06. Consequently, although some changes in both species and habitats have been reported over the year, these may be attributed to this new data rather than to real changes in the monitored areas.
- 2.14. Renewable energy – other than small householder installations (photovoltaic cells for example) no major renewable energy installations have come forward over the past monitoring year. There has, however, been an increased householder interest in the installation of renewable energy schemes.

## CORE INDICATORS

- 2.15. Local Planning Authorities as part of their Annual Monitoring Report are required to monitor and submit information on a series of core indicators. These indicators are specified by the Government in the Local Development Framework Monitoring Good Practice Guide and subsequent updates. These indicators are presented in the following table (**SI**) along with an indication of progress against the objectives of the Local Plan.

<b>Table S1 Summary of progress against Core Indicators</b> (specified by ODPM (2005) in 'Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide' and subsequent updates)		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Core Indicator</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>		
1a	Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type (B1a - Office, B1b - R&D, B1c - Light industry, B2 - General industry, B8 - Storage and distribution).	47,003m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace was developed for 'B' uses in 2005/2006: 3,204m <sup>2</sup> (6.8%) for B1a, 132m <sup>2</sup> (0.3%) for B1c, 12,007m <sup>2</sup> (25.6%) for B2, 27,744m <sup>2</sup> (59%) for B8 and 3,916m <sup>2</sup> (8.3%) for unspecified use within B1, B2 or B8.
1b	Amount of floorspace developed for employment, by type, which is in employment or regeneration areas defined in the local development framework	66% of this floorspace was on land allocated for employment use in the Local Plan and a further 28% was on other sites already in employment use. There are no regeneration areas defined in the Local Plan.
1c	Amount of floorspace by employment type, which is on previously developed land	75% of floorspace created for employment use was on previously developed land. Of the floorspace developed on greenfield land, 85% was B8 floorspace. 80% of the development on greenfield land took place on Local Plan allocated sites.
1d	Employment land available by type	At 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2006 planning permission was outstanding for 67,558m <sup>2</sup> of floor space in the 'B' Use Classes. Just over a third of this floor space is for unspecified uses within classes B1, B2 or B8. Well over half (58%) of the area for specified uses is for B1(c) use with about 38% being devoted to B1(a).
1e	Losses of employment land in (i) employment/regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area	No employment land was lost in areas allocated within the Local Plan. 0.46ha were lost to other uses in the local authority area. 0.43ha, previously used for B2 purposes was redeveloped for D2 (assembly and leisure) purposes.
1f	Amount of employment land lost to residential development.	0.03ha of B1 (office use) premises were converted to residential units.
<b>HOUSING</b>		
2a	Housing trajectory.	See charts H1a and H1b. 733 dwellings completed 2005/06, above the annualised requirement (453 dwellings) and the housing trajectory is on target to meet the structure plan requirement to 2016.
2b	Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land	39% (42% gross) in 2005/2006. The redevelopment of large previous employment sites has helped to produce a figure around three times that of last year. The Council expects to achieve the County Structure Plan Target (55%) and Government Target (60%) by 2008.
2c	Percentage of new dwellings completed at: (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare; (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and (iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare	Although about 5% of new dwellings constructed on sites of 10 or more units were completed at a density of less than 30dph, all were within much larger development areas where the final average density will exceed this figure. The average density for completions on sites of 10 or more dwellings in 2005-2006 was 46dph with over 52% having a density in excess of 50dph.
2d	Affordable housing completions	218 affordable homes were completed in 2005-2006 – nearly twice the Council's minimum annual target of 110. This was almost 30% of all dwelling completions in the year.

<b>TRANSPORT</b>		
3a	Amount of completed non-residential development within UCO's A, B and D complying with car parking standards set out in the local development framework	The development plan contains maximum parking standards. Lower parking levels are acceptable in some circumstances and no development has exceeded the maximum standard.
3b	Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre(s)	583 homes (80% of all completions) were built within the major towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton in 2005/06 (585 completed in 2004/05 – 93%). Within these towns bus/walk accessibility is within 30mins for all key services except a hospital with A&E or Minor Injuries Unit (Witney only) Between 89% and 99% of all completions in the District were within 30 minutes of each of the remaining key facilities.
<b>LOCAL SERVICES</b>		
4a	Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development	450m <sup>2</sup> of A1 retail floorspace was completed as part of the Madley Park local centre in 2005/06. 1,000m <sup>2</sup> of floorspace was completed in 2005/06 for D2 leisure use on Carterton South Industrial Estate.
4b	Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres	No retail, office or leisure development greater than 250m <sup>2</sup> was created in town centres during 2005/06.
4c	Amount of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard	Most open space is managed by local parish and town councils.
<b>FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY</b>		
7	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality	There were no applications permitted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence or water quality grounds within the last monitoring year.
<b>BIODIVERSITY</b>		
8	Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including: (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional or local significance	(i) The baseline data collected in relation to priority habitats and species last year (2004/05) is still being refined and although this year's information shows changes in some habitats and species, this is not due to a creation or loss but to a better understanding of habitat structure or new information becoming available. (ii) The only reported change in area relates to County Wildlife Sites and is due to the de-selection or reduction in size of 4 sites.
<b>RENEWABLE ENERGY</b>		
9	Renewable energy capacity installed by type	There were no major schemes for renewable energy generation installations within the last monitoring year.

### 3. WEST OXFORDSHIRE – CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

#### Rural in character and environmentally rich

Because of its rural nature – with an overall density of less than 1.37 persons per hectare - West Oxfordshire faces some difficult challenges in meeting its obligations in delivering sustainable development.

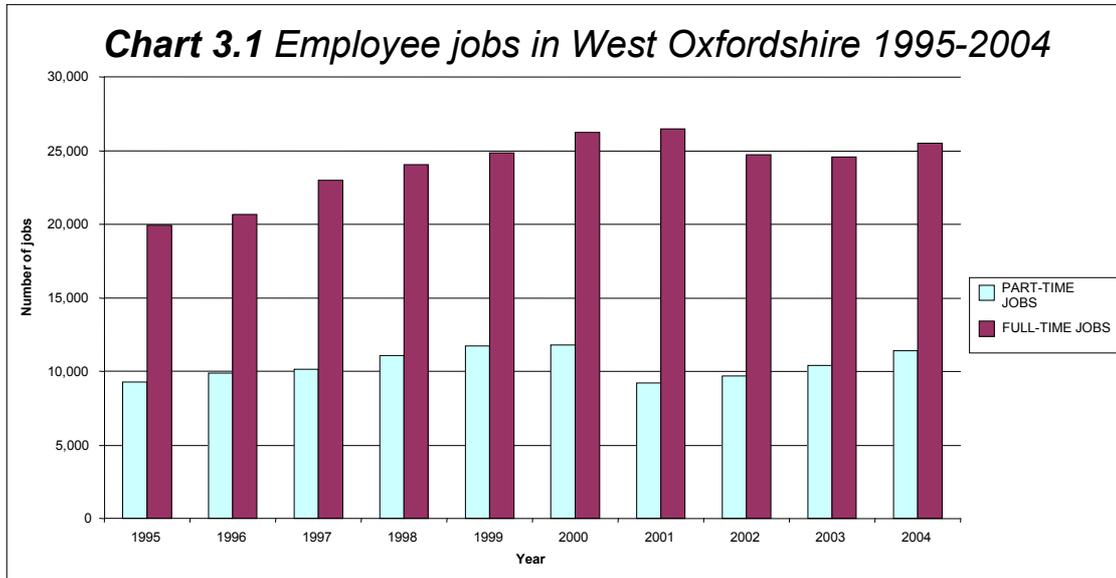
Its population which stood at 95,640 in the 2001 Census, has already risen by over 4% and the Oxfordshire Forecast of Population and Households (April 2006) shows this rising to 103,397 by 2011. Nearly 40% of the District's population lives in the two largest settlements of Witney (about 25,000) and Carterton (about 14,000).

34% of the District falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and another 2% within the Oxford Green Belt. West Oxfordshire is also home to approximately 3,200 Listed Buildings, nearly 50 Conservation Areas, 16 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and numerous Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Reserves, areas of Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Sites. The shaded areas in **Figure 3.1** show the extent of these constraints.

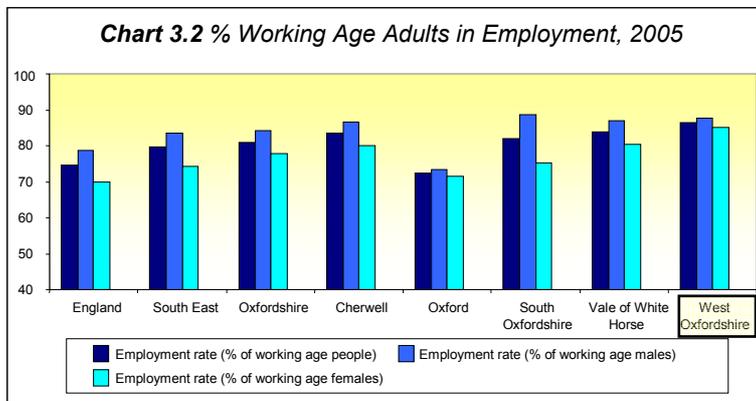


*Figure 3.1 Some key West Oxfordshire environmental constraints*

The changing picture of employment in the District has seen an increase in total employee jobs of 7,700 in the 10 years from 1995. There are 23% more part-time jobs in the District than there were 10 years ago and 28% more full-time posts. The percentage of those of working age in employment in West Oxfordshire (86.4%) is much higher than the England (74.6%) and South East (79.6%) rates – see **Chart 3.1** (source – *Nomis ABI employee analysis*)

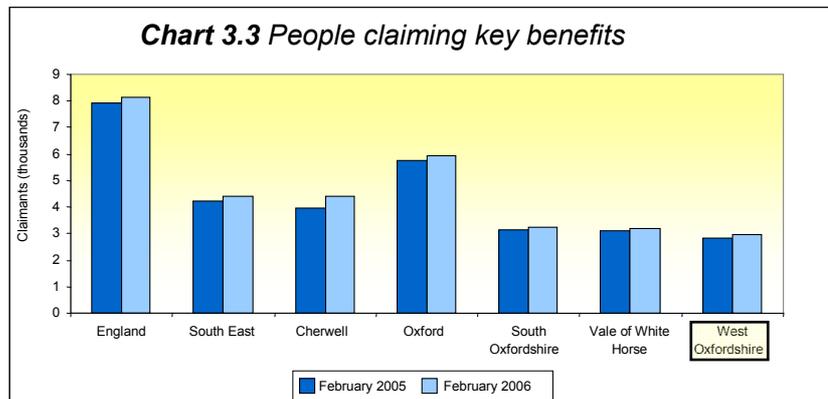


In 2004, only 1.7% of the District's jobs were in agriculture, historically, a major employment sector. Between 1995 and 2004, the percentage of jobs in manufacturing had fallen from 18.9% to 15.2% whilst those in the service sector had risen from 75.5% to 77.8%. At 13.0% of all jobs, tourism related employment is an important part of the District's economy.



Although the average age of residents in West Oxfordshire continues to rise, over 86% of the District's working-age population (16-64 males, 16-59 females) is in employment (see **Chart 3.2** source *Nomis 2006*). This is the highest rate in the County and compares with a figure of just under 80% for the South East Region and less than 75% for the whole of England.

Less than 3% of the working-age population in the District claims income benefit (0.47% unemployment and 1.27% income support). This compares with a South East rate of 4.39% and an England rate of 8.15% (see **Chart 3.3** source *Department for Work and Pensions*).



**Issues – Ageing, Affordability and Access**

The character of West Oxfordshire, along with its employment and leisure opportunities, make it an attractive area to live in. Although its population continues to grow (4% since 2001), it is an ageing population. There has been a marked increase (8%) in the number of residents over 64 years old. It is also an increasingly expensive area to live in. The house price to income ratio – an indication of access to owner-occupation in the housing market – has risen from 8.0 in 2004 to 8.7 in 2005, which is higher than both the South East (8.0) and England (6.9) ratios (see *Table 3.1*).

Issues such as these have a bearing on the form that house building takes within the District – both in terms of the type of home and the target market. However, an important rôle for the Council is in directing this housing growth to sustainable locations so that any adverse impact on the District, as a whole, is minimised and the greatest benefit is gained from existing resources. For planning purposes, West Oxfordshire's villages and towns are divided into groups which reflect the levels of services and facilities available in those settlements. Locational policies steer development towards the three largest towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) within the group of service centres.

	Median House prices, 2005	Median annual pay for full time employee jobs, 2005	Ratio
England	£159,950	£23,286	6.9
South East	£192,500	£24,194	8.0
Oxfordshire	£206,000	£25,048	8.2
Cherwell	£176,000	£22,903	7.7
Oxford	£225,000	£25,470	8.8
South Oxfordshire	£230,000	£25,475	9.0
Vale of White Horse	£213,500	£26,428	8.1
West Oxfordshire	£203,500	£23,366	8.7

Source: Income data: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, table 7.7, ONS.

House price data: DCLG Table 586 Housing market: median house prices based on Land Registry Data by district.

**Table 3.1** House price to income ratio 2005

#### **4. MONITORING OF OUTPUTS**

- 4.1. This is the main component of this AMR. The following pages examine specific physical activities over which planning policies can exert influence. The objectives of the Adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 form the framework for this analysis.
- 4.2. The data available from monitoring is presented under the following headings:
  - a) Housing development
  - b) Business development
  - c) Other development
  - d) Accessibility
  - e) Environmental indicators
- 4.3. The data used to monitor the performance of the Council's planning policies relating to a), b) and c), noted above, is collected through the normal planning process. Information provided through planning applications is recorded, analysed and shared at District, County and Regional level. The Land Development Progress System (LDPS) database, managed by Oxfordshire County Council, holds information relating to both residential and non-residential planning permissions and can produce a range of reports to assist in the monitoring function.
- 4.4. At District level, the monitoring of residential development has been taking place, and has been the subject of continual refinement, over many years. However, lack of resources has prevented the establishment of a similarly sophisticated system for the monitoring of non-residential development. Although planning permissions for non-residential schemes of 250m<sup>2</sup> and above are recorded when a decision notice is issued, not all are monitored from commencement to completion. In addition, small enterprises (i.e. less than 250m<sup>2</sup>) are not at present recorded through the LDPS process, although such small-scale businesses form an important part of the District's economy. Oxfordshire County Council and its constituent local authorities are currently investigating methods of improving the non-residential aspect of the monitoring process.

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Performance against Core Indicators (2a-2d) (see *Table SI* on pages 5-6 )  
(comparison of 04/05 and 05/06)

- a) ***Housing Trajectory*** – the build rate this year has been higher than in 2004/2005 and, again, is higher than the average annual rate derived from the Structure Plan
- b) ***Dwellings on previously developed land*** - the percentage of new and converted dwellings completed on previously developed land in 2004-2005 was reported as 14% in the 2005 AMR. For the year 2005-2006 that figure has risen to 42% (39% nett)
- c) ***Development density*** - over the year 2004-2005 all dwellings on larger sites (of 10 dwellings or more) were completed at a density of 30 dwellings or more per hectare. Over 30% were completed at densities in excess of 50dph. In 2005-2006 dwellings on larger sites were completed at an average density of 46dph with well over 50% being completed at more than 50dph.
- d) ***Affordable housing completions*** - because a large amount of affordable homes were completed shortly after the cut-off point of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005, the 2005 AMR showed a fairly low level of affordable housing completions (53) but forecast a much higher figure for the current year. In fact, a total of 218 affordable units have been completed in 2005-2006 – nearly double the Council's annual minimum target.

### Housing Supply

- 4.5. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (adopted in October 2005 ) provides for 6,800 additional dwellings in West Oxfordshire, during the years 2001-2016 (an average of about 450 units per year). About 3,000 of these (200 per annum) are to be built at Witney with the majority of the remainder being steered towards four of the larger settlements at Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.
- 4.6. The first West Oxfordshire Local Plan allocated two major greenfield development areas on the edge of Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park). The first residential units were completed here during 2001. By the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, over 1,700 dwellings had been constructed, with 409 being completed in the year 2005-2006. Between them, these areas will provide nearly 3,000 of the District's strategic allocation of 6,800 homes.
- 4.7. In the five years up to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 nearly 1,100 dwellings had been completed on other sites throughout the District. A further 2,612 dwellings are on sites with outstanding planning permissions (some already under construction) and another 596-656 on unimplemented Local Plan allocations. Existing planning permissions alone will provide more than a five year supply of dwellings at the Structure Plan implied rate of 453 units per year.

- 4.8. In addition to this provision, the Local Plan has identified a reserve mixed-use urban extension on the western side of Witney. This development area could include around 800 homes.
- 4.9. **Charts H1a** and **H1b** display the levels of actual and estimated annual residential completions within West Oxfordshire over the current Structure Plan period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2001–31<sup>st</sup> March 2016). **Table H1** shows the data behind these charts. An estimate is included for annual completions on windfall sites, and for completions on the reserve urban extension site, after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. As new housing continues to be built at both of the two greenfield development areas and at several large brownfield sites in Witney, completions are expected to peak next year (2007/8).

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 2a
Local Plan Policy Ref: H1

*Development on Previously Developed Land*

- 4.10. Government policy encourages developers to make the best use of previously developed land and aspires to achieve a target of at least 60% of all housing being provided on such land by 2008. In its Structure Plan, Oxfordshire County Council notes the fact that Oxfordshire is relatively less urbanised than other parts of the South East and, consequently proposes a County-wide target of 55%.
- 4.11. As the least urbanised of all of the 67 local authorities in the South East Region, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan expects 40-45% of homes built during the period 2001-2011 to be on previously developed sites. The 2005 Annual Monitoring Report saw this figure fall to just 14% in 2004/5 as over 85% of all dwellings delivered that year were completed on the two major greenfield development areas at Madley and Shilton Parks.
- 4.12. However, as predicted in the 2005 report, the redevelopment of some large, previous employment sites has now commenced and the completion of housing on these sites has helped to raise the percentage of residential development on previously developed land to 42% (39% nett) for the year 2005–2006 and the predicted level of 60% in 2007-2008 is still expected.
- 4.13. During the period 2006-2016, it is estimated that just under 50% of dwellings will be provided on previously developed land. However, according to how much of the Local Plan greenfield reserve site needs to be released between 2011 and 2016, this figure could rise to nearly 60%. **Table H2** shows the anticipated completion of homes in Witney and the rest of the District, on greenfield and previously developed land.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 2b
Local Plan Policy Ref: H1

Housing Trajectory - Monitor and Manage 2001-2016

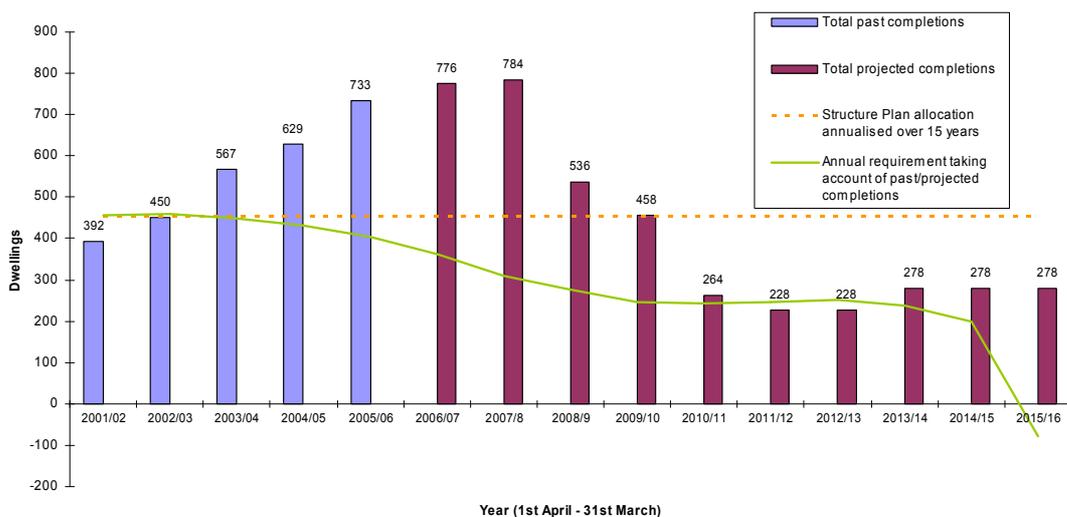


Chart H1a Residential Completions in West Oxfordshire 2001-2016

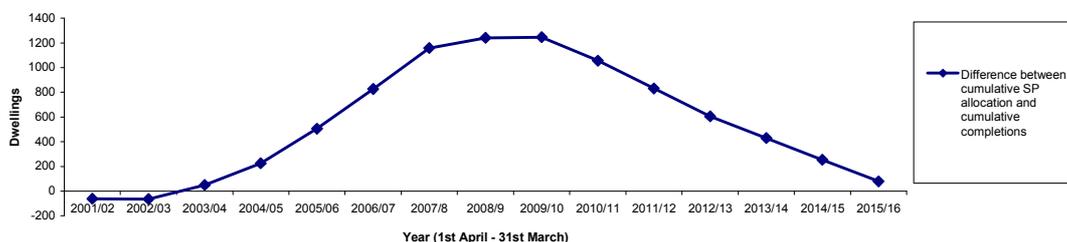


Chart H1b Difference between cumulative Structure Plan allocation and cumulative completions

Projected Housing Completions 2001-2016

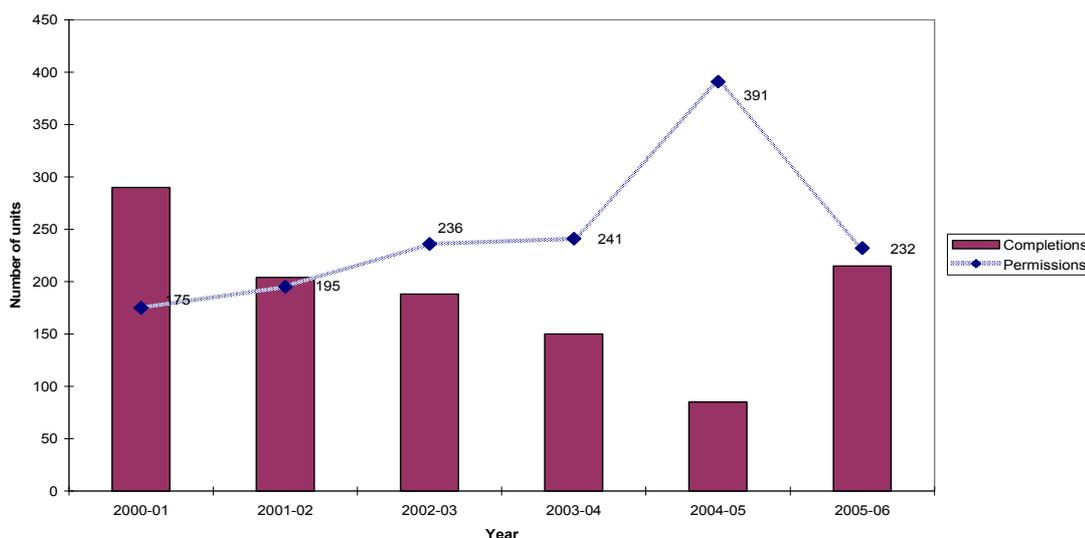
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	TOTAL
Actual completions - allocated sites	204	250	382	544	510											1890
Actual completions - unallocated sites	188	200	185	85	223											881
Projections - allocated sites						517	616	368	290	96	100	100	150	150	150	2537
Projections - unallocated sites						259	168	168	168	168	128	128	128	128	128	1571
Total past completions	392	450	567	629	733											2771
Total projected completions						776	784	536	458	264	228	228	278	278	278	4108
Cumulative completions	392	842	1409	2038	2771	3547	4331	4867	5325	5589	5817	6045	6323	6601	6879	
Structure Plan allocation annualised over 15 years	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	453	6795
Difference between cumulative SP allocation and cumulative completions	-61	-65	49	225	504	827	1158	1240	1245	1056	830	605	430	254	79	
Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions	458	458	449	433	403	361	309	276	246	242	246	252	239	199	-79	

Table H1 Residential Completions in West Oxfordshire 2001-2016



conversions during that year, there were outstanding permissions for 122 units. As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, a slightly lower number of units (114) was covered by permissions but more such conversions had been completed over the year, resulting in 22 dwellings.

- 4.19. Similarly, the proportion of dwellings granted permission as ancillary accommodation remained high at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 with a figure of 153 (this figure was 160 in the previous report). This type of accommodation accounted for nearly 23% of all units permitted outside of the four main settlements – commonly in areas where new self-contained dwellings would not otherwise be appropriate under development plan policy.



**Chart H2** Completions and permissions on previously unidentified sites

Affordable Housing

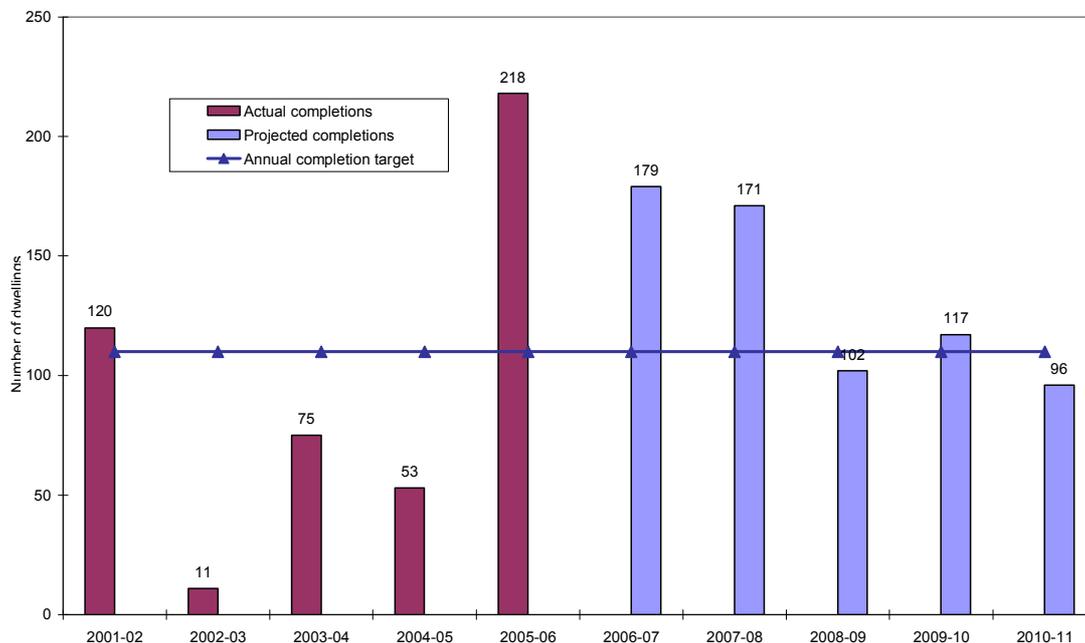
- 4.20. The Council has set a minimum target of 110 affordable units to be delivered annually. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, 476 affordable dwellings have been completed in the District (17% of all dwellings produced over that period) and **Chart H3** plots the progress of that delivery. The two major development areas in Shilton Park and Madley Park have contributed significantly to the total supply of affordable units and the first 55 on these two sites were completed in 2003-2004. Over the following two years (2004-2006) they have contributed a further 199 such dwellings.

- 4.21. There are still further phases of affordable housing to be built on these two development areas and these are expected to deliver around 170 more homes. In addition, the contributions from the redevelopment of large brownfield sites in Witney and Chipping Norton are starting to come forward and these have helped to achieve a total supply of around 270 affordable homes over the period 2004-2006. This is well above the minimum target of 110 units per annum. At 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 there were about 275 affordable homes with outstanding permission, still to be built.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core
Indicator: 2d
Local Plan
Policy Ref: H11

- 4.22. The Housing Needs update, carried out in 2004, recommended that a minimum of 70% of the overall affordable housing provision should be in the form of social rented dwellings. This recommendation is reflected in the

balance of units completed in the current year (73% rented, 23% shared ownership and 4% discount market housing).



**Chart H3 Affordable Housing – actual and forecast completions 2001-2011**

Density and house types

4.23. In developing land for housing, Government policy encourages us to make the most efficient use of that land by constructing housing at a nett density of no less than 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) and suggests that in urban areas densities between 40-75 dph may be appropriate.

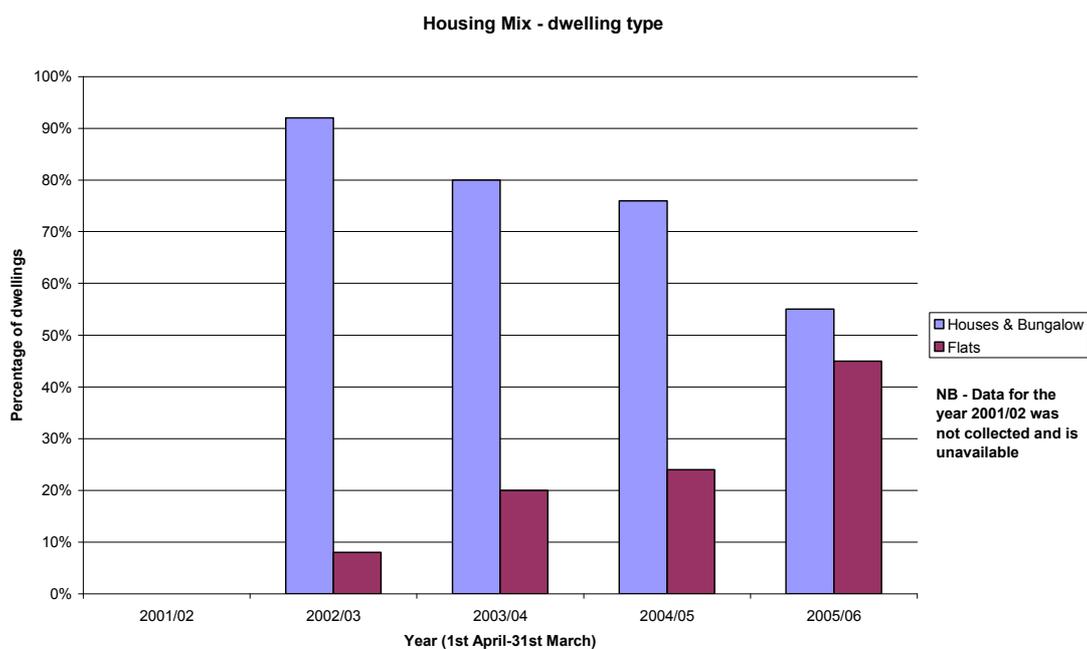
4.24. The West Oxfordshire AMR 2005 noted the fact that all new homes completed on major sites (containing 10 or more dwellings) during 2004-2005 had been developed at a density greater than 30 dph and that 30% of the units had been completed at densities in excess of 50 dph. Over the year 2005-2006, new homes constructed on major sites have been built at an average density of 46 dph with over 52% being completed at more than 50 dph. Although a little over 5% were constructed at less than 30 dph (in accordance with an approved planning brief), these dwellings were part of a major development area where the overall density will exceed 30 dph.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 2c
Local Plan Policy Ref: H3

4.25. The increase in demand for smaller homes (with 1 and 2 bedrooms) reported in last year’s AMR appears to be sustained. **Table H3** shows the corresponding drop in the number of 4 or more bedroomed properties granted permission in 2005-2006. **Chart H4** shows the associated trend, also noted in the 2005 AMR, of the increased construction of flats compared to larger houses and bungalows.

<b>DETAILED PLANNING PERMISSIONS (PERCENTAGES)</b>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>1 &amp; 2 bed</u>	<u>3 bed</u>	<u>4 or more beds</u>
2001-02	19%	38%	43%
2002-03	36%	33%	31%
2003-04	53%	29%	18%
2004-05	56%	22%	22%
2005-06	68%	22%	10%

**Table H3** Breakdown of residential permissions by numbers of bedrooms



**Chart H4** Housing completions by dwelling type

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**Performance against Core Indicators (1a-1f) (see *Table S1* on pages 5-6)  
(comparing 04/05 and 05/06)**

- a) ***Floorspace developed for employment*** – in 2005/2006 18,686m<sup>2</sup> more floorspace was developed for employment use than in the previous year (total of 47,003m<sup>2</sup> in 2005-2006).
- b) ***Floorspace developed on allocated employment sites*** – although the percentage developed on allocated sites this year is lower (66% compared to 78% in 2004/2005), this actually represents over 9,000m<sup>2</sup> more floorspace developed in allocated areas in 2005/2006.
- c) ***Employment floorspace created on previously-developed land*** – 75% of the employment floorspace developed in 2005/2006 was on brownfield land, compared to 62% in the previous year.
- d) ***Employment land available by type*** – there has been a decrease in outstanding permitted employment floorspace (67,558m<sup>2</sup> in the current year compared to 84,821m<sup>2</sup> in 2004/2005). This difference is very similar to the much greater amount of floorspace developed during 2005/2006 (see a) above).
- e) ***Losses of employment land*** – no employment land was lost on sites allocated in the Local Plan but 0.46ha was lost to other uses in the District as a whole. Most of this (0.43ha) was the change of use of a B2 (general industrial) site to D2 (assembly and leisure) use.
- f) ***Employment land lost to residential development*** – during 2005/2006 0.03ha of employment land (B1 offices) was developed for residential use. This compares with 0.17ha in the previous year.

### Supply and Location of Employment Land

- 4.26. As the economic make up of West Oxfordshire has changed over the years, with its move away from a largely agricultural and manufacturing base, Local Plan policies have tried to ensure that alternative employment opportunities are available for the District's growing population. By far the largest number of jobs are available within the main settlements where the majority of the population increase has been accommodated. However, to offer employment opportunities to residents living in the more rural areas and to provide a range of sites for local firms, a number of smaller business parks have been developed to try to maintain more sustainable communities.
- 4.27. The move away from our historical reliance on agriculture as a source of employment is clearly demonstrated by the ABI Employee Analysis (2004)

which showed that 78% of all employee jobs in West Oxfordshire were within the service industry and a further 20% in the manufacturing and construction sectors. The same report also shows that the District's number of employee jobs had risen by 7,698 since 1995 – a 26% increase.

- 4.28. In order to gauge the effectiveness of the Local Plan's objectives and policies in meeting changing requirements for types and location of employment land and premises, the Council monitors development falling within the Use Classes B1(a), B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8 (see **Glossary** for Use Class definitions). Its source is the County-wide Land Development Progress System which tracks non-residential development of 250m<sup>2</sup> or more.

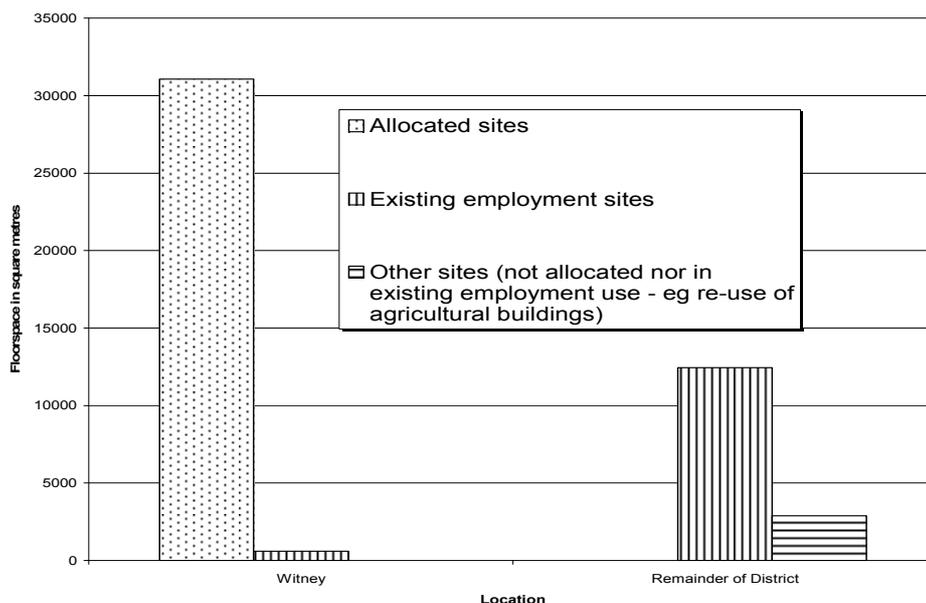
### New Business Development

- 4.29. The amount of floorspace developed for employment purposes in the 'B' Use Classes, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, amounted to 47,003m<sup>2</sup> (**Table B1**). 66% of this development (31,068m<sup>2</sup>) took place on sites in Witney, allocated for employment in the Local Plan, and a further 28% on existing employment sites within the District. 75% of all floorspace created for employment use in the 'B' Classes was on previously-developed land with substantial extensions to existing businesses (e.g. Medisense in Witney, Cooks Foods near Standlake) and redevelopment of older buildings (e.g. Lakeside Industrial Estate in Stanton Harcourt and at Enstone Airfield) contributing to this figure. See **Chart B1** and **Chart B2**.

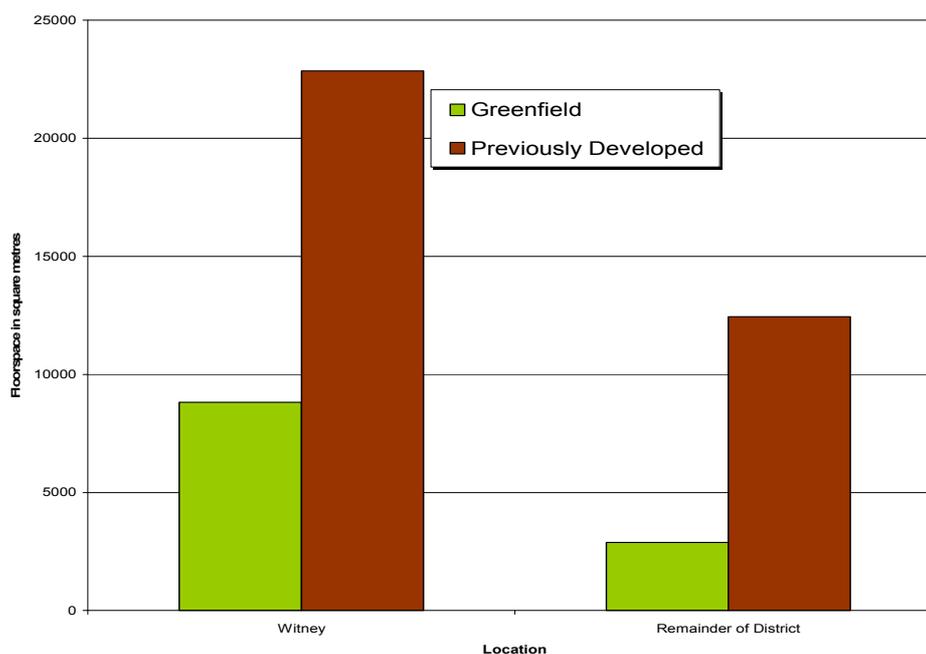
Indicator
Core Indicator: 1a, 1b, 1c
Local Plan Policy Ref: E1,E2, E3

Land type	Square metres of floorspace developed					Totals
	B1(a)	B1(c)	B2	B8	B class not specified	
Allocated in Plan	680		10,283	20,571	-466	31,068
Existing employment	2,524	132	1,724	5,373	3,292	13,045
Other				1,800	1,090	2,890
	3,204	132	12,007	27,744	3,916	<b>47,003</b>
Previously developed	2,524	132	12,007	17,808	2,826	35,297

**Table B1** Business floorspace developed by type



**Chart B1** Location of new business floorspace – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005-31<sup>st</sup> March 2006



**Chart B2** Land type developed for business use – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005-31<sup>st</sup> March 2006

4.30. Although 59% (27,744m<sup>2</sup>) of all monitored business development in the current year was for B8 use, only just over 2% (1,404m<sup>2</sup>) of the remaining outstanding permissions are specifically for this use. Similarly, 26% (12,007m<sup>2</sup>) of the land developed for business use in 2005-2006 was for B2 use but this use class accounts for less than 1% of remaining permissions. Conversely, development of floorspace for office use was much lower in the current year than it was in 2004-2005 – 3,204m<sup>2</sup> compared to 11,384m<sup>2</sup> – but this use accounts for 24% of all remaining permissions.

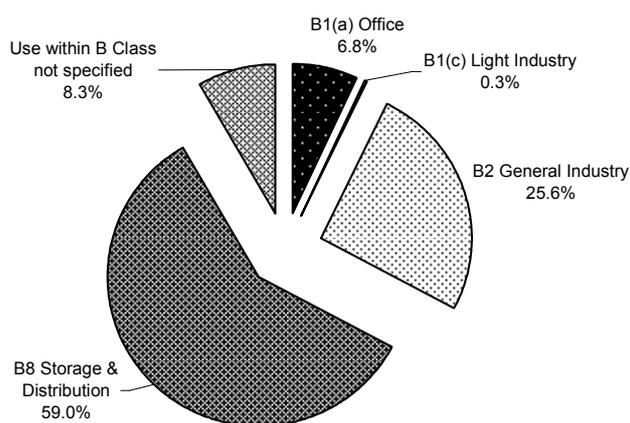
4.31. Over the last 2 years there has been very little new development in the B1(c) (light industry) class – 1% of all business development in 2004-2005 and only 0.3% in the current year. However, a large amount of floorspace (24,788m<sup>2</sup>) is currently permitted for this use, accounting for 37% of all outstanding permissions for development in the ‘B’ Classes. See **Table B2** and **Table B3**.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core
Indicator: 1d
Local Plan
Policy Ref: E1

4.32. As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 just over 9ha of land, specifically allocated for employment use in the Local Plan, remains without planning permission. Most of this allocated land is in Witney (6.25ha) and Chipping Norton (0.90ha). 1.90ha was allocated, in 2005, on the Lakeside Industrial Estate near Standlake.

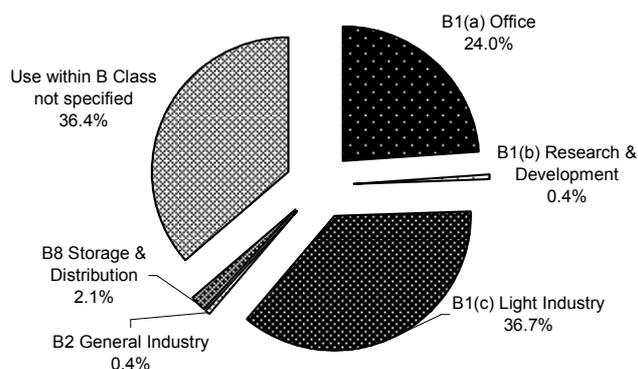
4.33. Land allocated in successive Local Plans for new employment at Carterton, the District’s second largest town, now has planning permission and is in the process of being developed. The new jobs to be created will help to meet the needs of the new residents of the Shilton Park development as well as diversifying the local economy, which is mainly dependent upon RAF Brize Norton.

Location	B1(a) Office	B1(b) Research & Development	B1(c) Light Industry	B2 General Industry	B8 Storage & Distribution	Use within B Class not specified
(Floorspace developed in Square Metres)						
Witney	1,551			10,283	20,303	-466
Chipping Norton			-271		271	
Remainder of District	1,653		403	1,724	7,170	4,382
<b>Whole District</b>	<b>3,204</b>		<b>132</b>	<b>12,007</b>	<b>27,744</b>	<b>3,916</b>
	6.8%		0.3%	25.6%	59.0%	8.3%
						100.0%



**Table B2** Classification of new business development built 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006

Location	B1(a) Office	B1(b) Research & Development	B1(c) Light Industry	B2 General Industry	B8 Storage & Distribution	Use within B Class not specified	
(Floorspace permitted in Square Metres)							
Witney	10840		15300		-2612	15789	
Carterton	65	282	5150		95	2377	
Chipping Norton			1488			1332	
Remainder of District	5309		2850	300	3921	5072	
Whole District	<b>16214</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>24788</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1404</b>	<b>24570</b>	<b>67558</b>
	24.0%	0.4%	36.7%	0.4%	2.1%	36.4%	100.0%



**Table B3** Classification of outstanding permitted business floorspace as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006

Loss of employment land

4.34. In total, 0.46ha of employment land was developed for uses other than 'B' Class use between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. Most of this (0.43ha) was the change of use of a site on Carterton South Industrial Estate, previously used for B2 purposes, for D2 purposes (a soft play area for children). The premises had been vacant for some time and the new use is expected to employ 15 workers. The change from business to uses such as soft play areas, health clubs and nurseries within major employment areas is a trend that has progressed throughout West Oxfordshire for more than a decade. Examples of such development exist in Witney (Thorney Leys Business Park, Station Lane Industrial Estate), Eynsham (Oakfield Industrial Estate) and Hanborough (Long Hanborough Business Park).

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 1e, 1f
Local Plan Policy Ref: E6

4.35. Redevelopment of four large previous employment sites, mainly for residential use, is underway in Witney and Chipping Norton. Work commenced on the two largest sites, at Early's of Witney and Bridge Street Mills, in 2004-2005 and is expected to continue into 2007-2008. The redevelopment of Tower Hill Works in Witney (completion expected in 2006-2007) and Parker Knoll in Chipping Norton (completion expected in 2008-2009) began in the current year. The Bridge Street Mill and Parker Knoll sites are for mixed-use development and will include some new employment opportunities.

**OTHER DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.36. Other development includes retail and leisure development and the development of community uses.
- 4.37. A number of the projects noted in last year's report have either been completed or are nearing completion. A new Co-op store, of 450m<sup>2</sup> of retail (A1) floorspace, was completed during 2005/6 as part of the Neighbourhood Centre in Madley Park at north east Witney.
- 4.38. Further A1 floorspace was also in the process of being created at another new Co-op store in Long Hanborough (428m<sup>2</sup>) and at the extension to the existing Sainsbury's store in Witney (1,450m<sup>2</sup>). Both developments were completed during the summer of 2006.
- 4.39. In Carterton other schemes, which are part of the North East Development Area (Shilton Park), will provide about 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of A1 floorspace. Construction of the non-food A1 units forming part of the West Oxfordshire Business Park (over 3,000m<sup>2</sup>) is well under way and construction of the units within the Shilton Park Local Centre (930m<sup>2</sup> of A1 floorspace) should start in 2006-2007.
- 4.40. The change of use of a vacant plot within the Carterton South Industrial Park has resulted in 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of D2 floorspace and this was completed as a soft play facility during the current year. Further sites in Witney, currently in business use have permission to create around 1,700m<sup>2</sup> more D2 floorspace on the form of a sports/health cub (316m<sup>2</sup>) and a soft play area (1,400m<sup>2</sup>).
- 4.41. A number of other community-related projects have also been completed during 2005-2006 or are now underway. A nursery/day centre of about 850m<sup>2</sup> was completed in the Madley Park Neighbourhood Centre and a 60 bed residential care home was also opened elsewhere in Madley Park. In Carterton, the Shilton Park Local Centre includes planning permission for a nursery school, and a residential care home has now been granted permission within the overall development area. Outside of these two larger settlements planning permissions were granted for a new village hall in North Leigh (presently under construction), a doctors' surgery in Shipton-under-Wychwood (now complete) and a museum in Long Hanborough.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core
Indicator: 4a, 4b
Local Plan
Policy Ref: SH1

## ACCESSIBILITY

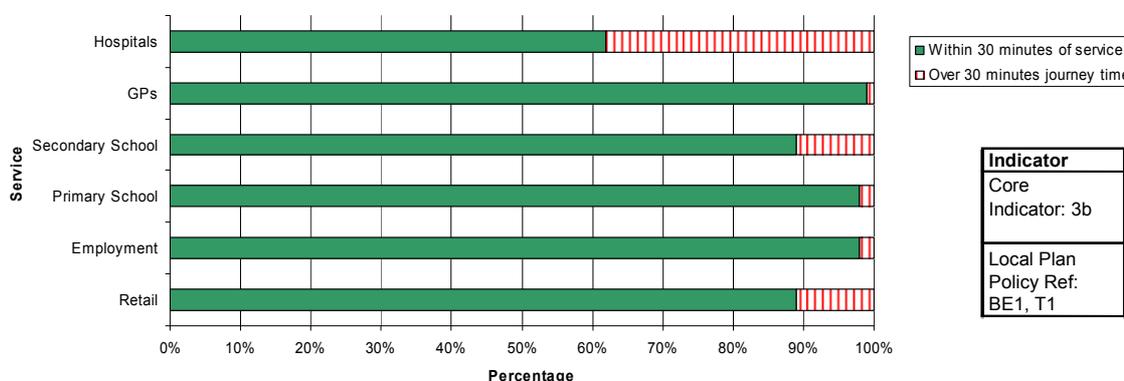
- 4.42. One of the key land-use objectives for the Local Plan 2011 is:

- to guide new development to locations where the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be minimised, and where the opportunity exists for an increasing number of trips to be made on foot, by cycle and by public transport.

- 4.43. In assessing which locations provide the opportunity to use alternative modes of travel to access a range of key services and to inform the Local Transport Plan, Oxfordshire County Council has used the Accession model to map simulated bus/walk accessibility across the County. These maps provide a valuable insight into accessibility by public transport across West Oxfordshire. The Local Transport Plan and the Framework Accessibility Strategy can be viewed at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltp](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltp).
- 4.44. The maps indicate that within the major towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) bus/walk accessibility is typically within 30 minutes

journey time for a range of local facilities including a town centre, a primary school, a secondary school, areas of employment (by ward) and a GP surgery. Outside of these major towns some areas have bus/walk accessibility within the 30 minute threshold to one or more of the above facilities but public transport provision throughout the majority of the rural area of the District and away from major routes is more limited.

- 4.45. The accessibility of areas of West Oxfordshire to hospitals was mapped using the Accession model for hospitals with A & E or a Minor Injuries Unit. The hospital in Witney offers these facilities and some areas of Carterton are within 30 minutes bus/walk access of this hospital. The Minor Injuries Unit at Chipping Norton Hospital was also taken into account in the mapping for 2005/06, although the Unit was downgraded to a First Aid Unit in December 2005. This change will be reflected in the next AMR.
- 4.46. The Accession model has been used to plot contours showing the areas of the District within a 30 minute public transport/walk distance of each of the key facilities noted above (4.44). The percentages of all new homes completed within West Oxfordshire in 2005/06, that fall within these 30 minute contours, are shown in **Chart A1**.



**Chart A1** Housing completions 2005/06 within 30 minutes public transport accessibility of key services

- 4.47. To improve reporting on the accessibility of residential development to a range of key facilities in future Annual Monitoring Reports the District Council is actively working with Oxfordshire County Council to map planning applications directly onto the accessibility maps.
- 4.48. The aims of the Local Plan 2011 also recognise that within the rural area the car will remain a main means of transport for people. In balancing the need to make provision for journeys to be made by car whilst not encouraging them where alternatives are available, Appendix 2 of the Local Plan sets out *maximum* car parking standards, which reproduce those in the Local Transport Plan. Development may provide less parking but should not provide more than the standard.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 3a
Local Plan Policy Ref: BE3

- 4.49. Although not specifically monitored, no development exceeded the maximum parking standard in 2005/06.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

- 4.50. This section measures the effectiveness of the policies supporting two sustainability objectives – the protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources.

### Flood protection and water quality

- 4.51. The Local Plan recognises the water environment within West Oxfordshire as a valuable but delicate resource. Through its policies and its frequent consultation with the Environment Agency, the Council tries to ensure that no inappropriate development, which might have an adverse impact on the supply or quality of the District's water reserves, takes place.
- 4.52. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, the Environment Agency did not object to any proposals for development, within the District, on the grounds of its likely effect on water quality (information from Environment Agency's website). Of the 12 applications where the Agency saw a risk of flooding and asked for a flood risk assessment, none were granted permission contrary to their advice.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 7
Local Plan Policy Ref: NE8

### Biodiversity in West Oxfordshire

- 4.53. Oxfordshire has its own 'Action for Wildlife' Local Biodiversity Action Plan framework. Changes in the habitats mapped within this framework are monitored by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC). Last year (2004-2005) was the Centre's first year of reporting on the condition of, and species within, these habitats and the information produced formed the baseline for future comparisons. However, this base data is still in the process of being refined and some changes reported this year are the result of new information becoming available rather than real changes in the environment or species.

### Priority Habitats and Species

- 4.54. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan has policies in place to protect or, wherever possible, to enhance the District's priority habitats and their associated species. The information provided by the TVERC helps us to monitor the effectiveness of those policies. However, although the aim is for the data to record actual changes in UK BAP priority habitats on a year-on-year basis, there is still an overall lack of data to adequately capture the baseline situation, with recent surveys of designated sites effectively filling the gaps.
- 4.55. **Table E1** shows the changes in priority habitats between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 but it should be noted that where habitats have been added or removed, this is the result of a better understanding of site habitat structure, rather than the creation or loss of the priority habitat itself.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core Indicator: 8(i)
Local Plan Policy Ref: NE13

**Table  
BAP  
priority**

<b>UK BAP priority habitat type</b>	<b>Area (hectares) 2004</b>	<b>Area (hectares) 2005</b>	<b>UK context</b>
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	0.1	0.0	300,000
Eutrophic standing water	90.9	90.8	1785km <sup>2</sup>
Fens	22.3	24.7	No data avail.
Lowland beech and yew woodland	14.4	13.9	30,000
Lowland calcareous grassland	146.0	151.2	<41,000
Lowland dry acid grassland	5.2	8.2	<30,000
Lowland heathland	0.0	0.0	58,000
Lowland meadows	155.8	195.4	15,000
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	987.0	992.3	No data avail.
Lowland wood pastures and parkland	3.6	414.9	10,000-20,000
Reedbeds	1.7	1.7	5,000
Rush pasture and purple moor grass	0.0	0.0	56,000
Wet woodland	18.0	18.0	50,000-70,000
<b>Total area of BAP priority habitat</b>	<b>1445.0</b>	<b>1911.0</b>	No data avail.

*EI UK  
habitat*

*resource in West Oxfordshire*

4.56. Similarly, the number of BAP priority species within West Oxfordshire has changed significantly since the 2005 AMR was published. The addition of eight species and the removal of nine is the result of new information becoming available rather than other factors. **Table E2** and **Table E3** elaborate on these changes.

	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Notes</b>
a basidiomycete fungus	Buglossoporus pulvinus	
a moss	Seligeria paucifolia	<i>West Oxon record is now 20 years old - no contemporary data</i>
Perfoliate Penny-cress	Thlaspi perfoliatum	
Early Gentian	Gentianella anglica	
Red Hemp-nettle	Galeopsis angustifolia	
Corn Cleavers	Galium tricornutum	
a freshwater mussel	Pseudanodonta complanata	<i>New in 2006 – reported as being associated with River Thames</i>
A pea mussel	Pisidium tenuilineatum	
a ground beetle	Harpalus punctatulus	<i>A 1988 record found on the TVERC database</i>
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	<i>A 1999 record found on the TVERC database</i>
Light Feathered Rustic	Agrotis cinerea	
Buttoned Snout	Hypena rostralis	<i>New in 2006 - county recorder reports this species resident and stable along the Thames Valley</i>
Chalk Carpet	Scotopteryx bipunctata	<i>New in 2006</i>
Pale Shining Brown	Polia bombycina	<i>New in 2006 - county recorder reports very recent records in the district</i>
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	
Bittern	Botaurus stellaris	<i>New in 2006 - 1995 records at Blenheim from OOS (Oxfordshire Ornithological Society) database</i>
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	<i>New in 2006 - mid-1990s record at Dix Pit from OOS database</i>
Grey Partridge	Perdix perdix	
Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	
Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	
Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	
Corn Bunting	Miliaria calandra	
Wryneck	Jynx torquilla	<i>New in 2006 - 2003 Charlbury record in OOS report</i>
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	
Brown Hare	Lepus capensis	
Water Vole	Arvicola terrestris	
Common Dormouse	Muscardinus avellanarius	<i>New in 2006 - 2004 Woodstock Meadows incidental record</i>
Otter	Lutra lutra	

**Table E2 UK BAP species identified in West Oxfordshire**

<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Orange-fruited Elm-lichen	Caloplaca luteoalba	<i>Removed in 2006 - most recent record on TVERC database is 1980</i>
Marsh Fritillary butterfly	Eurodryas aurinia	<i>Removed in 2006 - No evidence within Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire State of Butterflies since 1987</i>
Waved Carpet moth	Hydrelia sylvata	<i>Removed in 2006 - last records now date back to early 1980s</i>
Lunar Yellow Underwing moth	Noctua orbona	<i>Removed in 2006 - last records now date back to 1980s</i>
Bordered Gothic moth	Heliophobus reticulata	<i>Removed in 2006 - last records approx. 1981 on National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway</i>
White lined Snout moth	Schrankia taenialis	<i>Removed in 2006 - county recorder reports no records since mid-1980s</i>
Tower Mustard plant	Arabis glabra	<i>Removed in 2006 - No records on TVERC data system in last 20 years</i>
a ramshorn snail	Segmentina nitida	<i>Removed in 2006 - reported that this may now be extinct</i>
Freshwater Crayfish	Austropotamobius pallipes	<i>Removed in 2006 - no evidence from TVERC surveyors</i>

**Table E3 Losses from the 2005 list**

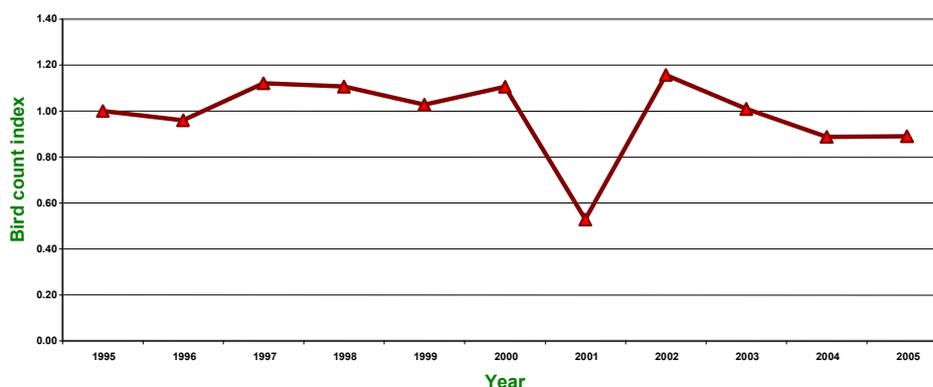
- 4.57. For monitoring purposes, three contextual indicators were selected for the first AMR in 2005: *Distribution and Status of the Water Vole*, *Distribution and status of farmland birds* and *Distribution and status of garden butterflies*.

**Distribution and status of water vole.** The Thames region offers an important home for this, the Country's fastest declining mammal. Yet even here it is under grave threat and a survey in 1996-98 showed that its population had decreased by 32.6% in this region since the 1989-90 survey. It has been difficult to draw any firm conclusions based on collected data as the monitoring project is still developing with more sites being surveyed each year (36 sites were surveyed between 1998 and 2001 whilst 85 sites were surveyed in 2005). However, the 2005 survey data suggests that this decline has been reduced or even halted in Oxfordshire.

In West Oxfordshire, 13% of sites surveyed in 2005 were positive for water voles and 87% were negative. The survey figures reveal a 5% gain in water vole sites (sites that were negative in the past and are now positive for water voles), 45% of sites where water voles were present in the past and are still present (stable) and 50% of sites no longer positive that used to be positive (loss).

Some loss and gain of occupied sites can be the result of natural movement of colonies (a stable state is where loss more or less equals gain).

**West Oxfordshire Farmland Bird Indices, 1995 - 2005**



**Chart E1** *Distribution and status of farmland birds in West Oxfordshire*

The indicator is based on the surveyed populations of 19 farmland bird species produced by the RSPB. The surveys are carried out in specific 1km squares to produce a farmland bird index. British Trust for Ornithology breeding bird records have been used from 1995 onwards, using that year as the base date (i.e. an index of 1). As the chart above shows, there has been no real change in the overall farmland bird index from last year's AMR and this reflects the national picture.

**Distribution and status of garden butterflies**

Although the amount of new information available in 2005 was not sufficient to allow for a meaningful analysis of the situation, compared to last year's figure, local experts agree that the trend for the 22 'indicator' butterflies that are present in the District remains the same as last year.

*Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Importance*

- 4.58. Many sites within the District have been designated for their intrinsic biodiversity or geodiversity importance and Policy NE14 of the Local Plan affords them protection. A number of these sites have suffered from a lack of suitable protection in the past and have been fragmented or significantly reduced in area and number. Through judicious use of the Plan's policies it is hoped that as well as offering protection to these sites, the management of the sites will improve.
- 4.59. **Table E4** shows the sites falling within West Oxfordshire's boundary and the areas covered by each classification. There have been no recorded changes apart from the area covered by County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The CWS process is a dynamic one and sites are selected, de-selected and extended in area on a regular basis. There has been a decrease in the area of CWS in West Oxfordshire as result of site selection panel meeting decisions. This can be attributed to the de-selection or reduction in size of four sites as a result of them being surveyed and assessed against site criteria. A reduction in the area of the Cotswold Railway Line County Wildlife Site had the largest impact.

Designated site	Area in hectares (2004)	Area in hectares (2005)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1118.6	1118.6
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Not provided	7.0
County Wildlife Sites	1567.6	1479.9
Local Nature Reserves	0.7 (1 site)	0.7 (1 site)
Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)	268.3 (17 sites)	268.3 (17 sites)

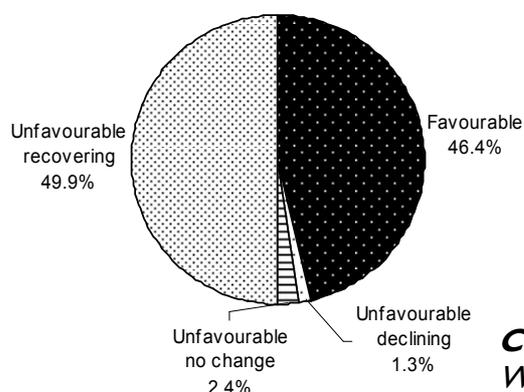
**Table E4** Areas of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value

- 4.60. The 29 SSSIs in West Oxfordshire are visited by officers from English Nature to assess their condition. Data supplied by English Nature in August 2006 indicates that there was no change in the condition of the SSSIs from 2004/5 to 2005/6. **Table E5** and **Chart E2** show the current condition of West Oxfordshire's SSSI resource.

Condition	No. of units or part units	Sum of hectares	% of District resource
Reaching EN target*	48	1077.33	96.3
Favourable	37	519.53	46.4
Unfavourable declining	3	14.81	1.3
Unfavourable no change	4	26.44	2.4
Unfavourable recovering	11	557.8	49.9
TOTAL	55	1118.58	100

\* EN target = 100% of SSSI units in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition

**Table E5** SSSI condition in West Oxfordshire



**Chart E2**  
West Oxfordshire  
SSSI condition 2005/6

<b>Indicator</b>
Core
Indicator: 8(ii)
Local Plan
Policy Ref: NE13

Renewable energy

- 4.61. The Council generally encourages the provision of renewable energy installations where they have an acceptable impact on the local environment and local amenity. Major schemes, such as commercial wind developments are, however, considered inappropriate in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.62. Other than small householder installations (photovoltaic cells for example) there have been no major renewable energy installations that have come forward over the past monitoring year. There is, however, a marked increase in householder interest in installing their own renewable energy schemes.

<b>Indicator</b>
Core
Indicator: 8(ii)
Local Plan
Policy Ref: NE13

## 5 MONITORING OF PLAN PREPARATION

- 5.1 The Council's first Local Development Scheme (LDS) came into effect in April 2005. This was reviewed by the Council in August 2006. The 2005 LDS and the revised 2006 draft version can be downloaded from the Council website [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk).
- 5.2 The initial priorities of the 2005 LDS covering the period 2005-2008 was to proceed to formally adopt the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 by mid 2006 and to prepare supplementary planning documents (SPDs).
- 5.3 The Local Plan was adopted on 16 June 2006.
- 5.4 Two SPDs have been published - a design guide and guidance on affordable housing. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide was formally adopted in September 2006 after extensive consultation in 2005/6 and taking on board sustainable building design. An Affordable Housing SPD (referred to as a Balancing Housing Markets SPD in the 2005 LDS) has been published for consultation (Sept – Nov 2006). It is hoped to formally adopt this second SPD by April 2007. The timing of this SPD was influenced by the local plan adoption process and new related Government guidance.
- 5.5 Other issues of relevance are:
- a) in August 2006 the Council decided not to prepare an early Core Strategy (as proposed in the 2005 LDS) but instead to prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) as proposed in the draft 2006 LDS. Discussions continue with the Government Office on the most appropriate way forward to meet the needs of West Oxfordshire through the Local Development Framework process. In the meantime work on the evidence base is well underway;
  - b) As the North Curbridge Development Area in Witney is now a reserve site in the Local Plan for longer term development, preparation of the proposed development brief is not immediately necessary. Issues regarding future growth in Witney will be addressed through the proposed Site Allocations DPD;
  - c) the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was submitted in August 2006 as specified in the 2005 LDS.

## SOURCES OF REFERENCE

- Census 2001 information for West Oxfordshire  
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/publications/1952-284.pdf>
- Economic Development Strategy 2004-2007 –  
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/1941-830.pdf>
- English Nature – <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>
- Environment Agency – [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)
- Housing Needs Update 2004 -  
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/publications/1464-250.pdf>
- Local Development Scheme -  
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/2101-1173.pdf>
- Local Transport Plan – [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltp](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltp)
- ODPM - Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3): Housing –  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143940>
- ODPM – PPS12: Local Development Frameworks and Guidance on Annual Monitoring Reports  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143846>
- Oxfordshire Data Observatory ('Quality of Life' Indicators)  
[www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk) and also  
<http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk>
- Oxfordshire Structure Plan – <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/landuse>
- South East Plan – <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/>
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre - <http://www.tverc.org/>
- West Oxfordshire Employment Land Audit (September 2005) -  
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/publications/2430-325.pdf>

## GLOSSARY

**Affordable housing** – is defined in the Local Plan 2011 as being affordable to those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to either rent or purchase. It is housing provided with either public or private subsidy for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing cost and local incomes.

**Allocated site** – land identified in the Local Plan for development (with/without planning permission)

**Ancillary self-contained accommodation** – a self-contained unit of accommodation that can only be used in association with a particular main dwelling and not as a separate unit.

**Biodiversity** - the diversity, or variety, of plants, animals and other living things in a particular area or region. It encompasses habitat diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Biodiversity is of value in its own right and has social and economic value for human society.

**Core Output Indicator** – specified by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

**Density** - the floorspace of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; or a combination of these. Within this Monitoring Report the term density refers to the number of dwellings per hectare and is guided by the advice in Annex C of PPG3.

**Green Flag Awards** - are national awards given for high standards in individual parks and green spaces.

**Housing trajectory** – forecasts of housing completions in a spreadsheet model provided by the ODPM

**Land Development Progress System (LDPS)** – a County-wide data collection and analysis system which records certain types of planning permissions and development within Oxfordshire.

**Previously-developed land** - land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural and forestry), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. The full definition used for the purposes of the plan is described in Annex C of PPG3 Housing.

**Priority habitats** - These are particular habitats which are deemed to be of national/international importance. Their conservation is therefore regarded as a priority within the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) of the UK

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL)** - a voluntary (i.e. not for profit) organisation which provides affordable housing to people in housing need and which is registered with the government body called The Housing Corporation.

**Rural exception site** – a small site within or adjoining a settlement which would not otherwise be released for housing, specifically to meet local housing needs that cannot be accommodated in any other way.

**Use Classes Order 2005 (UCO)** - a set of Government regulations which define categories for different uses of land and buildings:

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial and professional services
- A3 Restaurants & Cafes
- A4 Drinking Establishments
- A5 Hot Food Takeaway
- B1 Business (a) offices other than a use within A2 (b) research & development (c) light industry
- B2 General Industrial
- B8 Storage and Distribution
- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential Institutions
- C3 Dwellinghouses
- D1 Non-residential Institutions
- D2 Assembly & Leisure

**Windfall site** - land of any size which gains planning permission for housing and which has not been previously identified as a housing allocation in the Development Plan.