



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**West Oxfordshire District Council
Local Plan**

**Proposed Main Modifications
Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report**

October 2016

enfusion



West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan

Proposed Main Modifications Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF THE SA ADDENDUM REPORT

The Local Plan & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 1.1 West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is preparing a Local Plan to guide future development in the Local Authority area during the period up to 2031. In accordance with legislative and policy requirements¹, the Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its Local Plan. The SA/SEA of the Local Plan has been on-going since 2007 and is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the plan. The Local Plan, together with its accompanying SA Report and other evidence, was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2015 for independent examination.
- 1.2 The plan-making and SA/SEA processes, documents and consultation to submission are detailed in the Final SA Report (February 2015²) [CD2 & CD2a]. The Proposed Submission Local Plan and the SA Report were subject to public consultation. A summary of the plan-making and SA/SEA processes and documents since March 2015 to date is presented in the following table:

Table 1.1: Local Plan and SA/SEA documents

Local Plan Stage and Documents Consultation	SA/SEA Stage and Documents Consultation
Proposed Submission Local Plan 2031 27 March – 8 May 2015	SA Report (Feb 2015) 27 March – 8 May 2015
Local Plan 2031 Submitted to Planning Inspectorate on 14 July 2015 for independent examination.	SA Report (Feb 2015) submitted as supporting evidence to accompany the submission Local Plan 2031
Examination Part 1 (dealing with strategic matters, including duty to cooperate, housing & employment requirements) 23 – 26 November 2015	Representations were also made on the SA at the Hearings
Suspension of Local Plan Examination in January 2016 to allow the Council to undertake further work in response to the Inspector's Preliminary Findings (December 2015)	
Proposed Main Modifications to Submitted Local Plan November-December 2016	SA Addendum Report October 2016 (this SA Report) Public consultation November – December 2016

Submission of the Local Plan & Examination (2015)

- 1.3 The Submitted Local Plan 2031 was considered at the first hearing sessions of the examination held 23 – 26 November 2015. These dealt with strategic

¹ Town & Country Planning Regulations (2011, 2012); National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1264894/document-library-live.pdf>

matters, including the duty to cooperate, and housing and employment requirements. The Inspector's preliminary findings³ were published in December 2015 and are in two parts:

- Part 1 deals with the housing requirement, the needs of Oxford City and the duty to cooperate [IN015]
- Part 2 deals with housing supply and delivery, affordable housing and requirements for particular housing needs [IN016]

- 1.4 Overall, the Inspector considered that the local plan's housing requirement of 10,500 dwellings was not justified. He found that the Council's evidence to support its housing requirement had been worked-up independently of its partners in the rest of the Housing Market Area (HMA) without due regard for consistency across the HMA and the potential wider implications of its actions [IN015]. The Inspector was unable to identify what the housing requirement should be but indicated that it was likely to be between the recommended figure in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of 660 dwellings per annum (dpa) and that in the submitted plan of 525 dpa. Accordingly, the Inspector did not come to conclusions with regard to the Part 2 preliminary findings but rather highlighted matters of potential concern that would need to be addressed during any further work undertaken by the Council.
- 1.5 The Inspector considered that the SA had adequately addressed reasonable alternatives for a plan seeking only to address the needs of West Oxon. However, if any further work undertaken by the Council anticipates some apportionment of Oxford's needs to West Oxon, then the range of alternative strategies to be considered in the SA will need to be reviewed [IN015]. The Inspector reported that he was satisfied that the SA is adequate in its general scope and approach, but advised that he was not commenting here on its assessment of individual sites.
- 1.6 As a result of the Inspector's preliminary findings that the proposed housing requirement was too low, the examination was suspended in January 2016 [IN017] to allow the Council to undertake further work including the identification of additional sites. Any proposed modifications arising from further work need to be considered with regard to their significance for the SA/SEA process and its previous findings.

Consultation Representations on the Submission SA Report (2015)

- 1.7 Representations were made on the SA Report [CD2] accompanying the Submitted Plan on consultation during March to May 2015, and through hearing statements prior to the examination in November 2015. A summary of these and the responses made is provided in this report at Appendix I. It should be noted that these responses were made at the time they were prepared and that many of the matters raised have now been superseded by the suspension of the examination and further work done by the Council. For example, there were some concerns about the SA of strategic growth

³ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2031>

options – this was discussed at the examination, the SA has been refreshed and is reported in this SA Addendum Report.

Revised Housing Requirement & Proposed Main Modifications

- 1.8 In order to address the concerns raised by the Inspector in his preliminary findings, the Council has undertaken further work including a partial update of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and updating of other technical studies such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). This work also included a refreshed consideration of strategic options such as concentrating development along transport corridors and/or within a new village.
- 1.9 The proposed changes to the Local Plan 2031 are primarily associated with the increase in the overall number of homes from 10,500 to 15,950. The majority of this (13,200 homes; 660 per year) is to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs but a proportion (2,750 homes during the period 2021-2031) are proposed to assist neighbouring Oxford City Council under the duty to cooperate. The proposed Main Modifications are mostly concerned with this uplift in housing requirements and meeting this need through additional site allocations.

Purpose and Structure of this SA Report

- 1.10 Some matters for the SA were raised at consultation on the Submission reports and at examination. The further work associated with the housing uplift required re-consideration of the SA of strategic options and appraisal of new potential options for site allocation. Any proposed main modifications that might give rise to significant sustainability effects need to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal to help inform plan-making and meet with statutory requirements. Therefore, the purpose of this SA Addendum Report is to:
- explain matters with regard to the SA that have been raised through consultation and examination in 2015, resulting in further work by the Council
 - report the refreshed and new SA of strategic and site allocation options
 - demonstrate how the proposed main modifications have been screened for significance with regard to SA requirements
 - assess and report the implications for the SA findings
- 1.11 The principle of addressing matters raised through examination by publication of an SA Addendum Report is established in English Case Law (see The Rochford Judgment⁴ and confirmed by Appeal). SA is an iterative and ongoing process that aligns with the iterative plan-making process. There is no requirement to repeat previous appraisal studies and this SA Addendum Report addresses matters and issues arising from the examination and proposed modifications of the Local Plan. With regard to compliance with legislative and policy requirements, this SA Addendum Report comprises a

⁴ Cogent Land LLP v Rochford District Council (2012) EWHC 2542

further part of the SA Report as submitted in February 2015 [CD2] and has been prepared in accordance with relevant guidance and legislative requirements. It seeks to be a proportionate assessment relevant to the stage of plan-making and in line with NPPF requirements for SA (paragraph 167).

- 1.12 Following this introductory Section 1, appraisal methods are described in Section 2. The alternatives considered and SA is reported in Section 3. The changes to the Local Plan and how these affect the findings of the previous SA work, together with the findings of refreshed or new SAs is set out in Section 4 with details provided where relevant in Appendices III-V. Section 5 sets out the overall summary findings and next steps for the Local Plan and the SA.

2.0 METHODS

General Approach

- 2.1 The general approach has been to build upon the previous SA work to ensure consistency so that options and changes are assessed to the same level, as required, in order to inform plan-making and decision-making. This SA does not duplicate previous work but rather takes a proportionate approach relevant to this level of plan-making – the suspended examination and further work associated with an uplift in housing requirements. A staged approach was taken as follows:
- consider the implications of the uplift for the strategic options (spatial/settlement strategy; levels of housing & employment growth; directions of growth) and refresh or carry out new SA as appropriate
 - consider the options for allocating additional development and refresh or carry out new SA as appropriate
 - screen the Proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan 2031 for significance with regard to SA
 - appraise significant changes & consider the implications for the previous SA findings
- 2.2 As with the previous SA Report [CD2], the SA has been prepared by independent specialists Enfusion Ltd (<http://www.enfusion.co.uk/>), supported by Council Officers - particularly with regard to checking matters of fact and updating the baseline information (planning & SA guidance acknowledge the shared evidence base for both the two processes). The specialists and the Officers worked together in an iterative way to refine and develop the alternatives that should be further tested through SA – this is an important aspect of SA and is in accordance with SA process guidance.
- 2.3 The appraisals were undertaken by the independent assessors at Enfusion. Evidence was cited where applicable, a commentary was provided and suggestions for mitigation or enhancement were made where relevant. The nature of the likely sustainability effects (including positive/negative, duration, permanent/ temporary, secondary, cumulative and synergistic) were described, together with any uncertainty noted. Where necessary, detailed SA matrices were prepared; otherwise a narrative updating and/or refreshing the appraisal was reported. The findings of the SA (together with consultation, other technical studies and planning matters) have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the proposed Modifications to the Local Plan 2031.

Updating the Sustainability Context, Baseline and Objectives

- 2.4 The plans and programmes (PPs) Review was updated with key documents as follows:

- Connecting Oxfordshire (Local Transport Plan 4)
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan to 2031
- Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2016
- Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031
- Stratford upon Avon Core Strategy 2011-2031
- West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2016-2019
- Thames River Basin Management Plan 2015

The objectives of these plans were reviewed; the implications for plan-making and the SA are considered to remain valid and relevant to the SA issues and objectives such that the SA Framework remains applicable for the further SA work in 2016.

- 2.5 It is important that the baseline evidence that forms the basis for appraisal is relevant. The baseline information and plans & programmes review was updated in February 2015 and reported in the Submission SA Report (Section 3; Appendices I & II) [CD2]. In consideration of the significant uplift in housing numbers identified for the modified Local Plan, the baseline information was updated again in September 2016.
- 2.6 The baseline information updated since February 2015 is detailed in Appendix II of this SA Report and the main changes are summarised as follows:
- The proportion of older people in West Oxfordshire is continuing to increase
 - Affordability of market housing has worsened and the cost to rent has increased
 - Full time employment has increased but apprenticeship participation has fallen
 - There has been a reduction in carbon emissions per capita and rates of recycling have increased
 - The number of heritage sites “at risk” has reduced
- 2.7 Other factors that characterise the West Oxfordshire area with regard to spatial and development planning remain similar to that reported in February 2015 [CD2]. Thus the sustainability issues and problems for the Local Plan remain the same as previously identified with regard to SA Objectives, the SA Framework is still considered relevant and it is retained for continuity of appraisal for this further work in 2016 and as previously reported in section 2 of the Submission SA Report [CD2]. The SA Framework comprises the SA Objectives; sub-objectives or decision-aiding questions; monitoring indicators; and the significance of effects key as set out in table 2.1 of the Submitted SA Report [CD2].

SA of Strategic Options

- 2.8 The SA of additional and changed strategic options arising from the uplift in housing numbers were subject to SA using the same method and SA Framework of Objectives as reported in the SA Report 2015 [CD] and confirmed as still relevant through updating of evidence. An approach that is proportionate to the current level of plan-making and SA was taken – for example, the 3 options for the spatial strategy that have been tested through SA during 2010 to 2015 were refreshed; the 2 new options were subject to detailed SA and a high level comparative appraisal in a consistent way to the previous assessments.

Screening Proposed Main Modifications for SA Significance

- 2.9 The main changes are associated with the requirement for the uplift in housing and the implications for the site allocations (both an increase in the capacity of existing sites and new draft allocations being made). The proposed changes were screened for their significance with regard to SA using professional judgment – do the changes, deletions and additions significantly affect the findings of the SA Report (Feb 2015 CD2) accompanying the Submission West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and/or do they give rise to significant environmental/sustainability effects?

SA of Proposed Main Modifications & Implementation of the Local Plan

- 2.10 The refreshed and new appraisals identified as required through the screening were carried out using the same methods and SA Framework of Objectives as described previously in this section paragraphs 2.1- 2.7. The appraisals were undertaken to the same level and by the same independent specialist consultants. Additional non-strategic site options were investigated to accommodate the uplift in housing numbers and these were subject to detailed SA.

Consultation on the SA

- 2.11 The SEA Regulations require that the public shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinion on the draft plan and accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan. The SA has been subject to public consultation since 2007; representations and responses have been reported at each iteration of the SA and plan-making, and as set out in the Submitted SA Report [CD2].
- 2.12 This SA Report will be published on the Council's website <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/> alongside the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan and be sent to statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders. Consultation remains an important part of the ongoing and iterative SA process; any responses received will be considered and views integrated into the SA Report to accompany the Local Plan at the resumed examination.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED & SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Context

- 3.1 The development of plan-making options and the SA/SEA of alternatives have been on-going throughout the production of the Local Plan and its accompanying SA. The SA/SEA has an important role to help identify, refine and assess reasonable alternatives and this is explained in detail in Section 4 of the Submission SA Report (Feb 2015) [CD2]. Concerns discussed at examination and resulting in the uplift in housing numbers are significant and require reconsideration of relevant alternatives.

Strategic Options

- 3.2 **Spatial Strategic Options:** In his interim findings [IN015 paragraph 9.1] the Inspector considered that the 3 reasonable alternatives had been adequately addressed by SA for a plan seeking only to address the needs of West Oxon. However, if further work on uplifting housing numbers is undertaken to include some apportionment of Oxford's needs to West Oxon, then the SA would need to be reviewed. The SA should reconsider two alternatives (new village and concentration along transport corridors) that had not been progressed beyond the Issues & Options stage of plan-making in 2008. Therefore, the high level SA of the 5 strategic options for the Spatial Strategy was refreshed. This approach also addresses some of the representations made on the Submission SA and at the hearing sessions.

- 3.3 The Spatial Strategy options considered through SA were as follows:

- Option 1 Witney Focus
- Option 2 Three Towns Focus – Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton
- Option 3 Dispersed but still including development at the 3 Towns
- Option 4 Concentration along transport corridors including expansion of existing settlements and/or new villages
- Option 5 A New Village

The appraisals have been updated to reflect changes to Local Plan policies as well as new evidence. Options 1-3 were detailed in 2014, updated in 2015 and updated here in 2016. Options 4-5 were detailed as new strategic options using the full SA Framework. The findings are summarised in Section 4 of this SA Report with the detailed appraisal matrices presented in Appendix III.

- 3.4 **Housing Growth Options:** In consideration of the uplift in housing numbers identified as a result of further work arising from the Inspector's Preliminary Findings [IN015], the SA of strategic options for housing growth was revisited. The submission SA Report summarised the SA findings from testing 5 options for possible levels of housing growth - 500, 541, 590, 660, & 800 dwellings per

annum (dpa) in table 4.7 and detailed the SA findings in Appendix IV [CD2]. This took into account the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2014).

- 3.5 To help inform its decision on the Local Plan housing requirement, during the suspension of the examination the District Council commissioned a partial update of the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014). Having regard to this as well as the original SHMA, it was determined that the following strategic options should be tested through SA:
- 568 dpa – the OAN in the partial SHMA update⁵ (2016), although it is acknowledged that an uplift on this would be needed to meet with affordable housing need
 - 635 dpa – the lower end of the range in the SHMA (2014) (635–685)
 - 660 dpa – the mid-point of the range (635-685)
 - 685 dpa – the top end of the range in the SHMA (2014) (635-685) & intended to meet affordable housing in full
 - 800 dpa – the mid-point of the SHMA plus additional provision to take account of unmet housing need from Oxford City
- 3.6 These 5 options for levels of housing growth were subject to SA, taking into account the SA findings from previous testing and using professional judgment with the SA Framework to provide a high level strategic assessment.
- 3.7 **Employment Growth Options:** Four main strategic options have been considered in plan-making and tested through SA since 2010:
- Indigenous Growth
 - Steady Growth
 - Higher Growth
 - Small-Scale Dispersal

The Submission Local Plan proposed a combination of the steady growth and dispersed options with provision for 60 hectares (ha) of employment land with SA findings reported in the February 2015 Report [CD2]. There is the potential for employment land to be increased to up to 89 ha in the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan and the implications for the SA findings are addressed through a narrative.

- 3.8 **Directions of Growth at Witney:** Strategic directions for growth have been investigated through plan-making and tested through SA in a number of iterations since 2010. Taking into account the Inspector's Preliminary Findings [INF015 & 016] and updated evidence indicating the need for an uplift in housing, strategic options were reconsidered for growth at Witney. Opportunities for major development is limited in the built up area of the town such that strategic options are only possible on the fringes of the town. The 5 options assessed in 2015 [CD2] remain valid and their appraisal was refreshed, including taking into account proposed changes to increase housing

⁵ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1448178/W-Oxon-revised-15-July-2016.pdf>

numbers at North Witney and East Witney. A new potential direction for development growth west of Downs Road between Witney and Minster Lovell was identified with the potential for mixed use development for around 750 homes and 10-20 ha employment land. This was tested through SA using the full SA framework and in a comparable, consistent approach to the SA of the other 5 strategic options. Thus, 5 options were refreshed and 1 new option was subject to full SA as follows:

- Land west of Downs Road & Minster Lovell (new)
- Land south of the A40
- East Witney
- North Witney
- North East Witney
- Multi-site

3.9 **Directions of Growth at Carterton:** Strategic directions for growth have been investigated through plan-making and tested through SA in a number of iterations since 2010. Taking into account the Inspector's Preliminary Findings [INF015 & 016] and updated evidence indicating the need for an uplift in housing, strategic options were reconsidered for growth at Carterton. Three of the 5 options assessed in 2015 [CD2] remain valid (one has a resolution to grant outline planning permission; the REEMA North and Central site is now proposed as a non-strategic site), and their appraisal was refreshed. A new strategic option was subject to SA using the full SA framework and in a comparable, consistent approach to the SA of the other strategic options. Thus 3 options were refreshed and 1 new option was subject to full SA as follows:

- North East Carterton (new)
- Northern Extension (Kilkenny Farm site)
- West Carterton
- Multi-site

3.10 **Directions of Growth at Chipping Norton:** One strategic option (East – Tank Farm) has been considered through plan-making and tested through SA since 2010. Taking into account the Inspector's Preliminary Findings [INF015 & 016] and updated evidence indicating the need for an uplift in housing, this option was reconsidered by including a wider site area to accommodate further homes increasing from 600 to 1,400 dwellings plus the provision of 9 ha of employment land. This option was subject to detailed SA in February 2015 Appendix V [CD2] and the SA findings remain relevant and valid. The implications for the uplift in housing and employment land provision are considered in Section 4 of this SA Addendum Report.

3.11 **Directions of Growth at Eynsham:** At Submission, there were no strategic options for growth proposed within the Eynsham sub-area including at Eynsham itself. Taking into account the Inspector's Preliminary Findings [INF015 & 016] and updated evidence indicating the need for an uplift in housing, the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area was investigated again. A further, key

consideration has been the work⁶ undertaken by consultants LUC on behalf of the Oxfordshire local authorities and co-ordinated by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (OGB). Eynsham is constrained to the east by the Oxford Green Belt and to the south by flood risk. The Oxford Growth Options Study (LUC, July 2016) investigated 3 strategic options for the Eynsham area – North, West & Eynsham Park Estate near Barnard Gate (further to the west of Eynsham). The options to the north and west were progressed as reasonable alternatives since they are closest to Oxford and are most likely to be deliverable with regard to helping meet Oxford's unmet housing needs. The land near Barnard Gate is not being actively promoted so there is uncertainty of deliverability in the plan period; it also was found to have a number of likely major negative sustainability impacts so was not progressed as a reasonable alternative at this stage of plan-making.

3.12 Thus, taking into account the proximity to Oxford and the Oxfordshire knowledge spine, together with the relatively good level of public transport available, two new strategic options for potential growth were identified. These were tested through SA with the full SA Framework as follows:

- A new Garden Village to the north of Eynsham
- Urban Extension to the west of Eynsham

Potential Non-Strategic Site Allocations

3.13 The Inspector reported in his Interim Findings [Part 1 IN015] that he was satisfied that the SA is adequate in its general scope and approach but made it clear that he was not commenting on assessment of individual sites. In Part 2 of his Interim Findings [IN016], he confirmed that the choice of any new allocations would need to be informed by Sustainability Appraisal which would assess reasonable alternatives.

3.14 Additional smaller non-strategic (300 homes or less) site options were identified to help meet with the uplift in housing numbers. One site (REEMA North & Central) had been previously subject to SA as a strategic option. A further 14 potential site allocations were identified from the Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which has been updated during 2016. Some are also the subject of current planning applications. The 15 proposed non-strategic allocations were subject to detailed SA using the full SA Framework, as follows:

- Woodford Way Car Park
- Land West of Minster Lovell
- REEMA North and Central, Carterton
- Land at Milestone Road, Carterton
- Land at Swinbrook Road (North of Carterton)

6

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordSpatialOptionsFinalReport.pdf>

- Land east of Woodstock
- Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock
- Land north of Banbury Road, Woodstock
- Oliver's Garage, Long Hanborough
- Land at Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough
- Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield
- North of Woodstock Road, Stonesfield
- Land east of Burford
- Land north of Jeffersons Piece, Charlbury
- Land south of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood

3.15 Whilst a number of other sites have been considered through the Council's SHELAA process, most were found to be unsuitable. Of the remaining SHELAA sites, these 15 proposed smaller site allocations were identified as best aligning with the Spatial Strategy and being the most sustainable, such that the others are not being progressed at this time. The reasons for progression or rejection of non-strategic sites is discussed in the following Section 4 on SA Findings.

3.16 In addition to the 15 non-strategic housing allocations listed above, the proposed modifications to the submission draft Local Plan also include a new site for travelling showpeople at Cuckoo Wood Farm. This is an existing authorised site for travelling showpeople, approved in 2009. There is the capacity to accommodate further expansion of this site that is not subject to any statutory landscape, heritage or wildlife designations. Whilst there are a number of other travelling showpeople in the District, none have the capacity for expansion nor are as sustainably located as the site at Cuckoo Wood Farm. This is the only site that was submitted through the call for sites and accordingly, is the only non-strategic option for travelling showpeople that was considered through SA.

4.0 SA FINDINGS

Strategic Options: Spatial

- 4.1 The SAs of the two strategic options (concentration along transport corridors and a new village) reconsidered as a result of discussions at the examination in 2015 and the uplift in housing numbers are detailed in Appendix III of this SA Addendum Report. The SAs of the three strategic options that have been considered in various iterations of plan-making and SA between 2010 and 2015 were refreshed again, and the summary findings are presented in the following table:

Table 4.1: Summary SA of Spatial Strategy Options

SA Objective	OPTIONS (1-3 SA 2010- 2015; refreshed in 2016; 4-5 new SA in 2016)									
	1. Witney Focus		2. Three Towns		3. Dispersed		4. Along Transport Corridors		5. New Village	
1. Housing	+	-	++		+	-	+	-	++	--?
2. Health & well-being; equalities	+	-	+	-	+	?	+	?	+	-
3. Communities	+	-	+		+	-	+	-	+	-
4. Education & training	+	-	+		-		-?		+	-
5. Low level of crime	○		○		○		○		○	
6. Improve accessibility	+	--	+	-	-?		++ ?	--?	+	-
7. Improve land use efficiency	-		-		-		-		-	
8. Reduce waste	○		○		○		○		○	
9. Improve air quality	-?		0?		0?		++ ?	-?	○?	
10. Climate Change	?		?		- ?		++ ?	-?	?	+
11. Soil & water resources	○?		○?		○?		○	?	+	?

SA Objective	OPTIONS (1-3 SA 2010- 2015; refreshed in 2016; 4-5 new SA in 2016)									
	1. Witney Focus		2. Three Towns		3. Dispersed		4. Along Transport Corridors		5. New Village	
12. Reduce flooding	○		○		○		○		○	
13. Biodiversity and geodiversity	?		?		?		○?		○ +?	
14. Landscape & Historic	--?		-?		--?		--? ?		○?	
15. Employment	+	-	++		+	-	+	-	+	-
16. Economic growth & competitiveness	+	-	++		+	-	+	-	+	-

4.2 The uplift in housing from 10,500 to 15,950 proposed through the Modifications is clearly a significant increase. However, at this high level strategic appraisal, the positive effects, such as provision of high quality housing, are likely to be more positive, and the negative effects, such as pressures on the road network capacity and landscape effects, are likely to be more negative. Generally, the SA findings remain as previously identified for Options 1-3 and a comparative appraisal can be undertaken with the new Options 4-5. Overall, each option tends to have both positive and negative effects.

4.2 **Option 1 Witney Focus:** This will help meet housing, employment and infrastructure needs and improve accessibility for the Witney area but not for other communities in the District – with both positive and negative effects. Concentrating new development is likely to have major cumulative negative effects on the transport network and the landscape for the Witney area.

4.3 **Option 2 Three Towns:** With a focus on Witney, Carterton & Chipping Norton (and limited dispersal across the District), major positive effects remain for meeting the housing and employment needs across the District. Minor positive effects also continue to be likely for communities and accessibility since the focus is on the main service centres; minor negative effects for road transport, although the focus on the 3 towns can encourage improvements in sustainable transport modes within the towns. Negative effects on landscape are likely to be minor, compared with a focus at Witney, as the effects are spread across the 3 main service centres.

4.4 **Option 3 Dispersal:** This would help meet housing, employment and infrastructure needs for rural communities but not for the main service centres; both positive and negative effects remain for housing, communities, and economy SA Objectives. The need to travel by car is likely to increase, so less positive effects for accessibility than Options 1 and 2. There is a greater

likelihood of new development in the AONB with major negative effects indicated.

- 4.5 **Option 4 Concentration along Transport Corridors:** This would distribute development across the District along the railway and A44 & A40 road corridors, including some expansion of existing settlements (the potential effects for new village(s) is considered in Option No 5). This would help to meet the housing, employment and infrastructure needs for some rural communities along the road and railway corridors and the main service centres at Witney & Chipping Norton, but unlikely to meet the needs of other rural areas or Carterton which does not enjoy direct access by A-road to the A40. Therefore, both a minor positive and minor negative long term effect against SA Objectives relating to housing, communities, education, employment and the economy.
- 4.6 The main road corridors are essentially the A44 and the A40. Access to the A40 is already constrained and transport assessments indicate that negative effects are most likely to occur in Witney. Focusing development along these two road corridors would exacerbate existing issues for sustainable transport and there is the potential for major negative effects, particularly for Witney - although there is the possibility for more significant improvements to public transport at Witney (A40) and Chipping Norton (A44) with positive effects.
- 4.7 Focusing new development along the railway transport corridors is likely to have major positive effects for accessibility by reducing the need to travel by car but this would be limited to accommodating growth around the existing main railway stations at Charlbury, Hanborough and Kingham. The Cotswold railway line runs through the Cotswolds AONB. Whilst mitigation provided by Local Plan policies and available at the project level may help to reduce the significance of this effect, it is still considered that there is the potential for residual major long-term cumulative negative effects on the landscape in this area of the District. Conversely, this Option is likely to have a reduced negative effect on the landscape around the main service centres compared to Options 1 and 2 as more development will be directed to other areas of the District. There is still an element of uncertainty, as the nature and significance of the effect on landscape will be dependent on the location and design/layout of development.
- 4.8 **Option 5 A New Village (s):** This has the potential for major positive effects for housing since the scale of development can accommodate flexibility, adaptability and a range of housing that can also improve health & well-being, reduce inequalities and promote inclusive communities. Conversely, focusing development in a new settlement will have negative effects by not meeting the needs in other parts of the District. A new village offers the possibilities to better enable enterprise and innovation through early planning and promotion of competitive economic growth. However, it would not help to meet the economic growth needs for the majority of the District with likely negative effects. Therefore, both a minor positive and minor negative long term effects against SA Objectives relating to housing, communities, education, employment and the economy.

- 4.9 The scale of development for a new village is likely to facilitate more sustainable transport modes and there can be major positive effects for reducing the need to travel by car and improving/providing cycle/walking routes as these can be designed in from the onset. The scale can also generate major funding for infrastructure improvements, including transport, and this provides strong mitigation for potential negative effects from increased traffic. However, there are likely to be minor negative effects elsewhere in the District as there is limited potential to improve access to services and facilities for existing residents.
- 4.10 The scale of a new village offers more possibilities for biodiversity enhancements through provision of new habitat and Green Infrastructure than the other 4 Options – at that location; conversely, there are less possibilities for other parts of the District. For a new village, there is the possibility to focus development in an area of less landscape sensitivity to mitigate potential negative effects, and negative effects on the 3 service towns and rural areas would be minimised with the potential for an overall neutral effect. Potential significant effects on the historic environment can be mitigated through location, design and layout; there could be possibilities for enhancing the access or setting of locally important historic assets.
- 4.11 **Reasons for Progressing Options 2 & 5:** The reasons for progressing Strategic Option 2 and rejecting Options 1 & 3 remain as set out in Table 4.3 of the Submission SA Report 2015 [CD2]. The focus on the 3 towns offers the most sustainable alternative with major positive effects for housing and the economy, and least negative effects on the road network and biodiversity. Option 4 was not taken further as effects were likely to be major cumulative negative in both short and longer term for the road network A44 & A40, and with regard to landscape effects in the Cotswold AONB along the main railway line.
- 4.12 Option 5 for a new village had not been progressed as a reasonable alternative in early plan-making (Issues & Options 2008), acknowledging that it was a high risk strategy with a long lead-in time for necessary infrastructure; it would also not contribute to the needs of the rest of the District. However, with the increased identified need for housing development, this option has been investigated further and the Council has submitted an Expression of Interest⁷ to central government to create a locally-led Garden Village.
- 4.13 A location is indicated (but not binding at this stage) near (but distinct from) the village of Eynsham. This location benefits from being a less sensitive landscape and a range of sustainable transport facilities including proximity to Hanborough railway station. It is outside the AONB and Oxford Green Belt, development can be contained within the low risk Flood Zone 1, and it has no significant ecological or heritage interest. Major significant effects are indicated in the longer term with around 2,200 high quality homes by 2031 and about 40 hectares of science/business parks building on the strength of the Oxford economy and able to meet longer-term needs beyond 2031. These preliminary studies suggest that the potential positive effects found for Option

⁷ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/news/aug/garden-village/>

5 would be confirmed and that mitigation measures have been considered to resolve potential negative effects.

- 4.14 Therefore, the overall development strategy proposed with the Local Plan Modifications builds upon the preferred strategy of the 3 towns that will enable the needs of communities throughout the whole of the District to be better addressed. Progression of the additional option for a new village helps to address the higher need identified for housing; the scale of development allows for the most sustainable choices and the opportunity to deliver an exemplar sustainable garden village.

Strategic Options: Level of Housing Growth

- 4.15 The findings of the updated SA for the identified 5 strategic options for levels of housing growth are summarised in the following table:

Table 4.2: Summary of SA Findings for Growth Options (2016)

SA Objective	OPTIONS									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	568 dwellings per year	635 dwellings per year	660 dwellings per year	685 dwellings per year	800 dwellings per year					
1. Housing	+		++?		++?		++?		++?	
2. Health and well-being; reduce inequalities	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
3. Communities	+		++?		++?		++?		++?	
4. Improve education and training	+		+		+?		+?		+?	
5. Low level of crime	0		0		0		0		0	
6. Improve accessibility	+	?	+	?	+	?	+	?	+	?
7. Improve efficiency of land use	-	?	--?	?	--	?	--	?	--	?
8. Reduce waste	0?		0?		0?		0?		0?	
9. Improve air quality	0?		0?		0?		0		0?	
10. Climate Change	0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?
11. Soil and water resources	0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?
12. Reduce flooding	0		0		0		0		0	

13. Biodiversity and geodiversity	?		?		?		?		?	
14. Landscape & Historic	-	?	--?	?	--	?	--	?	--	?
15. Employment	+		++?		++ ?		++ ?		++?	
16. Economic growth & competitiveness	+		++?		++ ?		++ ?		++?	

- 4.16 As with previous strategic appraisals, the SA found that as the level of housing growth increases so does the likelihood and significance of positive effects of the Options for SA Objectives relating to the provision of housing, communities, employment and economic growth. Major positive long term effects are indicated for the higher housing growth Options 2-5. Uncertainty remains as it is recognised that these 4 options will require a significant increase in the rate of delivery of new housing in the District compared with historic delivery rates.
- 4.17 The appraisal also found that as the level of growth increases so does the likelihood and potential significance of negative effects against SA Objectives relating to human health, the efficient use of land, traffic, air quality, biodiversity and heritage. It is considered that appropriate mitigation will be provided through Local Plan policies and available at the project level to address potential significant negative effects on health, traffic, air quality, biodiversity and heritage. However, at this stage there is also an element of uncertainty, as the nature and significance of effects will be dependent on the precise location of development and sensitivity of receptors.
- 4.18 All of the options are considered to have the potential for major long-term negative effects on the high landscape value of the District. Given the policy mitigation measures, it is assumed that Option 1 is likely to have only minor residual long-term negative effects against the SA Objective on Landscape. However, the higher levels of growth proposed in Options 2-5 could result in a greater amount of development needing to be accommodated in more sensitive landscapes. Taking a precautionary approach, it is therefore considered that these 4 Options are more likely to have a cumulative major long-term negative effect; Option 2 remains uncertain as the slightly lower housing numbers may be able to be mitigated.
- 4.19 **Reasons for Progressing Options 3 & 5:** The partially revised SHMA commissioned by the District Council during the suspension of the examination indicated an OAN for the plan period 2011-31 of 568 dpa – but this does not address affordable housing need nor does it include any cross-boundary unmet need from Oxford City. Notably the level of affordable housing need identified in the partial SHMA update (2016) was very similar to that identified in the original SHMA (2014). Updated information on the age profile of the population has changed the relationship between total population and the resident workforce with a concomitant change to the OAN (a job-led analysis). Option 1 (568 dpa) was not however progressed further as the Council must address identified affordable housing need and

must have regard to the implications for the rest of the Housing Market Assessment, as advised by the Inspector.

- 4.20 Option 2 (635 dpa) was not progressed for similar reasons. Previous options of 590, 660 & 800 dpa (SA Report 2015) [CD2] were not taken forward at that time as there were concerns about whether such quanta of development could be sustained, taking into account past deliverability rates and the availability of suitable and deliverable land, as well as concerns regarding loss of more greenfield land and risk to the AONB.
- 4.21 However, further work undertaken by the Council in the last year has identified more suitable and deliverable land to accommodate more growth – and including the potential for a new garden village to the north of Eynsham (2,200 homes). Therefore, effectively a combination of Options 3 & 5 has been taken forward which reflects the objectively assessed need for new homes in West Oxfordshire in the period 2011 – 2031 (13,200 dwellings or 660 dpa) plus an additional allowance for Oxford's unmet need in the period 2021 – 2031 (2,750 dwellings). Over the period 2011 – 2031 total housing provision at 15,950 new homes equates to 798 dpa. This proposed approach takes account of the Inspector's Preliminary Findings that require a higher housing number and addresses the need for affordable housing. Finding additional suitable and deliverable land, including a potential new village, mitigates the concerns previously identified for higher housing number options.

Strategic Options: Level of Employment Growth

- 4.22 The Submission Local Plan proposed a combination of the steady growth and dispersed options with provision for 60 hectares (ha) of employment land with SA findings reported in the February 2015 Report [CD2]. There is the potential for employment land to be increased to up to 89 ha (although some of this is committed development) in the Proposed Modifications, including as follows:
- 20 ha at Witney
 - 15 ha at Carterton (6 ha of this is aspirational with no specific site allocation identified and a further 4 ha is subject to replacement of existing leisure facilities)
 - 9 ha at Chipping Norton
 - 5 ha at other towns, villages & rural areas
 - 40 ha at Eynsham (indicative for the garden village proposal) although noting that in reality this will serve longer-term needs beyond 2031.
- 4.23 It is considered that that the 4 strategic options and the preferred approach to employment previously tested through SA still remain valid, and that the findings of the strategic level SA [CD2] still remain relevant and valid. The changes to levels of growth at Carterton and Chipping Norton are considered by SA for the Proposed Modifications to Policy E1 (please see later in this SA Addendum Report). The SA implications for the proposed

employment land at Eynsham are considered within the Strategic Directions of Growth in the following section and have been subject to detailed SA.

Strategic Options: Directions of Growth at Witney

4.24 Strategic development options for Witney have been tested in an iterative way since 2010; this is detailed in the Submission SA Report February 2015 [CD2], at which time 5 options were assessed again using the full SA framework (Appendix V). These 5 were reconsidered, including proposed changes for 2 options, and a new potential option as follows:

- Land west of Downs Road & Minster Lovell (New – 750 homes & 10-20 ha employment land)
- Land south of the A40 (1,200 homes)
- East Witney (400 homes – proposed change to 450)
- North Witney (1,000 homes – proposed change to 1,400)
- North East Witney (680/1,300 homes)
- Multi-site (4 x at least 300 homes)

4.25 It is considered that the findings of the strategic level SA [CD2] still remain relevant and valid. The detailed findings of the SA of the new strategic option is provided in Appendix IV of this Addendum Report and the comparative summary of the 6 options is as follows:

Table 4.3: Summary of SA Findings for Strategic Options at Witney

SA Objective	OPTIONS (1-5 SA 2014-15; 2 & 3 updated 2016; 1 new SA 2016)						
	6. West of Downs Road	1. South of the A40	2. East Witney	3. North Witney	4. North East Witney	5. Multi-site	
1. Housing	++	++	++	++	++	++	
2. Health & well-being; Equalities	+	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	
3. Communities	+ -	+ -	+ ?	+ + ?	+ ?	+ ?	

SA Objective	OPTIONS (1-5 SA 2014-15; 2 & 3 updated 2016; 1 new SA 2016)												
	6. West of Downs Road		1. South of the A40		2. East Witney		3. North Witney		4. North East Witney		5. Multi-site		
4. Education & training	+		+?		+?		+?		+?		+?		
5. Low level of crime	0		0		0		0		0		0		
6. Improve accessibility	0?	?	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	?
7. Improve land use efficiency	-		-		-		-		-		-		
8. Reduce waste	0		0		0		0		0		0		
9. Improve air quality	-?		-?		+?		+?		-?		-?		
10. Climate Change	-?	+	-?	+	?	+	?	+	-	+	-	+	
11. Soil & water resources	0	-	0	--	0	-	-	--	0	-	-	-	
		-?		?		-	?			-	?	-	
				?		?				?		?	
12. Reduce flooding	0		0		0?		0?		0		0?		
13. Biodiversity & geodiversity	0?		0?		0?		0?		0?		0?		
14. Landscape & historic	-	-?	--	-	--	--	-	--	--	-	-	-	
	-?			?		?				?		?	
15. Employment	+		?		+?		+?		+?		+?		
16. Economic growth	+		?		+?		+?		+?		+?		

- 4.26 There is updated evidence available, including the Oxfordshire LTP4 with Policy WIT1 and commitments to improve the A40 at Downs Road, providing measures to mitigate the negative effects from development already committed to the west of the town. However, uncertainty of effects for strategic assessment in consideration of land to the further west remains until further studies are completed at the masterplanning and project level stages.
- 4.27 At this strategic level of appraisal, the findings of the SA remain similar to the SA in 2015, including the comparative assessment. All the options have the potential to provide good housing with major long term positive effects and minor positive effects for health and well-being, and employment/economic growth objectives. All development proposals will be required to make appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure with potential for minor positive effects; uncertainty remains at the strategic level. Generally, these positive effects tend to increase in line with increasing levels of development – the scope and scale of larger sites can better facilitate a range of housing and supporting infrastructure to better meet with SA objectives.
- 4.28 The potential for minor negative effects on road-based traffic and air quality for Witney remains but with some uncertainty. All the options include loss of greenfield and potentially high grade agricultural land (although only likely to be Grade 3a); they avoid flood risk and internationally/nationally designated biodiversity. However, all the options are within areas of high landscape and visual amenity importance and sensitivity such that major cumulative negative effects are predicted. The likely major negative effects on the settings of the Witney & Ducklington Conservation Areas remain but are uncertain until project level studies that could provide some mitigation. As above, these negative effects tend to increase in line with increasing levels of development.
- 4.29 The reasons for progression or rejection of strategic options remain valid and relevant as set out in the Submission SA Report Table 4.14 [CD2]; options to the south, north east and multi-site were not taken forward to help accommodate the uplift in housing and may be summarised as follows:
- Land to the south - concerns remain for the with regard to noise/odour from nearby land uses, landscape sensitivity, and no strategic highway improvements for Witney
 - Land to the north east - concerns remain for high landscape sensitivity and deliverability
 - Multi-Site option - this continues to be rejected because, although impacts on landscape and the historic environment would be reduced, the limited potential to deliver wider benefits to the town as a whole reduces the overall sustainability of the option
- 4.30 The option to the east continues to be progressed because landscape impacts are limited by the topography and associated transport improvements improve accessibility and green infrastructure with wider sustainability benefits for the town. The option to the north continues to be progressed as it enables delivery of key highway infrastructure that will benefit

Witney as a whole. The new option to the west of Downs Road is not progressed at this time as it is somewhat isolated from the town, although it is near to the A40/Downs Road junction and when the committed urban extension at West Witney (North Curbridge around 1000 new homes) is completed, this strategic option could provide good opportunity for additional housing and employment land, subject to relocation of parts of the Witney Lakes Golf Club. The proposed Local Plan modifications therefore identify the land west of Downs Road as an 'area of future long-term development potential' (Policy WIT4 applies) and it will be considered alongside other reasonable alternatives through any subsequent review of the Local Plan.

- 4.31 For the Proposed Modifications, increasing the housing capacity at two options (East & North) is likely to enhance the positive effects identified for sustainable development; strong mitigation for any negative effects is provided by other Local Plan policies and at the project level assessments. This is further considered in this SA Addendum Report for the Proposed Modifications to Policies WIT1, 2 & 4.

Strategic Options: Directions of Growth at Carterton

- 4.32 Strategic development options for Carterton have been tested in an iterative way since 2010; this is detailed in the Submission SA Report February 2015 [CD2], at which time 5 options were assessed again using the full SA framework (Appendix IV). The first option for East of Carterton is no longer valid as it has a resolution to grant outline planning permission and the REEMA site is now a non-strategic option (please see Appendix V of this SA Addendum Report and later in this Section 4). However, the other 3 strategic options remain valid and were reconsidered through SA, together with a new potential option at North East Carterton as follows:

- North East Carterton (1,200 homes)
- Northern Extension (Kilkenny Farm site) (350, 750 or 1,000 homes)
- West Carterton (1,000 homes)
- Multi-site (up to 4 sites at >300 homes each)

- 4.33 It is considered that the findings of the strategic level SA [CD2] still remain relevant and valid. The detailed findings of the SA of the new strategic option is provided in Appendix IV of this Addendum Report and the comparative summary of the 4 options is as follows:

Table 4.4: Summary of SA Findings for Strategic Options at Carterton

SA Objective	OPTIONS							
	1. North East Carterton		3. North (Kilkenny Farm site)		4. West Carterton		5. Multi-site	
1. Housing	++		++		++		++	
2. Health & well-being; inequalities	+?		+?		+?		+?	
3. Communities	+	-?	+	-?	+	?	+	?
4. Education & training	+?		+?		+?		+?	
5. Low level of crime	0		0		0		0	
6. Improve accessibility	0?	0?	0?	?	0?	?	0?	?
7. Improve land use efficiency	-		-		-		-	
8. Reduce waste	0		0		0		0	
9. Improve air quality	0?		0?		0?		0?	
10. Climate Change	0?	+	0?	+	0?	+	0?	+
11. Soil & water resources	0	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?
12. Reduce flooding	0		0		+?		0?	
13. Biodiversity & geodiversity	0?		0?		0?		0?	
14. Landscape & historic	-?	0?	-?	0?	-?	0?	-?	0?
15. Employment	+?		+?		+?		+?	
16. Economic growth	+?		+?		+?		+?	

- 4.34 There is updated evidence available, including ONS information on Indices of Deprivation and the Oxfordshire LTP4 that includes Policy CA1 with commitments to improve the A40 and B4477 in the Carterton area and providing measures to mitigate the negative effects from the scale of development. However, uncertainty of effects for strategic assessment remain until further studies are completed at the masterplanning and project level stages. More detailed information is also available from promoters of sites to the north and west of Carterton. This includes potential mitigation measures such as indicative proposals or suggestions for provision of community facilities and/or green infrastructure. Where relevant, these have been noted in the refreshed SAs, but generally uncertainty remains at the strategic level of assessment.
- 4.35 Negative effects found by the SA are associated with the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. There is no record of any of the options including the higher grades 1 & 2; uncertainty remains until more detailed studies at the project level can differentiate between grade 3a and 3b. A minor negative remains for all the options due to loss of greenfield and the soil resource. Negative effects remain with regard to landscape for all the options, although studies for the Council identified that west of Carterton was the most sensitive and therefore likely to have more negative effects than the other strategic options. Mitigation measures are provided through other Policies in the Local Plan.
- 4.36 Three of the strategic options (North- Kilkenny Farm, West Carterton & Multi-site) were reconsidered with regard to helping meet the required uplift in housing. The reasons for not progressing them at this time remain valid as set out in the Submission SA Report February 2015 [CD2] and may be summarised again:
- Land to the north (Kilkenny Farm) is poorly related to the town and poorly served by public transport; a significant incursion into the open countryside; and sensitive landscape, particularly for the northern parts. It was acknowledged that a reduced development in the south east area could potentially address landscape concerns.
 - Land to the west is segregated from the town, and negative landscape effects are the most for the strategic options considered; also some concern with regard to flood risk at the Shil Brook, although it was acknowledged that access could be achieved by building over.
 - A Multi-Site option would reduce the negative effects on landscape and accessibility but each would not be of sufficient scale to support key infrastructure and affordable housing.
- 4.37 The new strategic option to the north east of Carterton including land between Burford Lane and the B4477 is also somewhat segregated from the town and development would represent a significant incursion into the open countryside, including landscape concerns in the north. Whilst these areas to the north, north east and west have been identified in the Carterton Masterplan as having some future development potential, in terms of the

Local Plan, they have not been allocated at this stage and will be reconsidered as part of any subsequent review of the Local Plan (to 2031).

Strategic Options: Directions of Growth at Chipping Norton

- 4.38 Development expansion potential at Chipping Norton is relatively limited due to the constraints of the Cotswold AONB around much of the town. One strategic development option (East – Tank Farm) has been tested in an iterative way since 2010; this is detailed in the Submission SA Report February 2015 [CD2], at which time the option was assessed again using the full SA framework (Appendix V). In order to meet with the required uplift in housing need identified, the Council considered again whether there are any other strategic options available and concluded that land to the east of the town remains the only potential direction of strategic growth due to AONB constraints.
- 4.39 Studies indicated that the Tank Farm strategic site could be extended and provide additional houses from 600 to 1,400 dwellings and employment land of 9 hectares, together with additional supporting infrastructure. This potential proposed expansion of the Tank Farm site was subject to refreshed SA, taking account of the further information available.
- 4.40 It is considered that the findings of the strategic level SA [CD2] still remain relevant and valid. The expanded site will still have major positive effects for housing with concomitant minor positive effects for health and well-being; uncertainty is removed as the larger scale of the development is more likely to be able to provide a range of affordable and adaptable housing that will help mitigate against inequalities. Positive effects for community SA objectives are strengthened as the larger scale of development could provide further green infrastructure – to be detailed in masterplanning. The potential negative effects through loss of existing allotments with the land expansion have been mitigated through a requirement for relocation in the supporting text of the changed Policy CN1.
- 4.41 Uncertainty is removed and minor positive effects are confirmed for employment SA objectives with the proposed increased allocation to 9 ha of employment land. The previous SA identified minor negative effects on landscape, as it abuts the AONB, and is adjacent to the Chipping Norton Conservation Area. The new inclusion of requirements for specific protection of the Rollright Stones Dark Skies Site addresses concerns raised through consultation and provides further mitigation measures, strengthening the sustainability of the Policy CN1. The Council considers that the increase in housing numbers and expansion of land can be accommodated without undue harm to the landscape assets. Some uncertainty remains as the significance of effects will depend on the detailed masterplanning and extent of proposed mitigation measures.
- 4.42 The previous SA also identified minor negative effects for the historic environment with the proximity of the Chipping Norton Conservation Area. Further mitigation is provided by other Policies including OS2-5, EH1-3 & EH7,

and through project level assessments. The new inclusion of requirements for archaeological investigation provides further mitigation measures and strengthens Policy CN1. The previous SA found uncertainty and neutral effects for biodiversity SA objectives. With the expanded site and scale of the proposed development, there could be enhance opportunities for green infrastructure and biodiversity with potential positive effects, dependent upon detailed masterplanning. Major negative effects for loss of best and most agricultural land remain. Policy EH6 should mitigate any potential negative effects on the sensitive water environment.

- 4.43 Uncertainty is removed for effects on transport SA objectives and positive effects confirmed for SA objectives for transport and air quality. Transport evidence⁸ has tested the implications of a much larger scheme of up to 1,500 dwellings and concludes that if supported by an eastern distributor road (effectively a bypass for the town) not only would the traffic impact of the additional growth be able to be mitigated but there could also be a diversion of a large proportion of HGV movements from Chipping Norton Town Centre, with likely positive cumulative effects of improving air quality - a key issue for the town. Overall, the proposed modifications to the strategic site option (and Policy CN1) remove some uncertainties, confirm mitigation measures for potential negative effects, and offer potential enhancements. Some uncertainty remains as details for mitigation/enhancement for landscape and biodiversity effects are dependent upon detailed masterplanning.

Strategic Options: Directions of Growth at Eynsham

- 4.44 The Submission Plan [CD1] included a proposed target of 1,600 homes for the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area to be met through a combination of homes already built, existing commitments and other smaller sites mostly at Woodstock, Eynsham and Long Hanborough. Strategic options for directions of growth at Eynsham were not considered at the submission stage since the agreed strategic approach for the Plan is to focus significant development growth in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas. The Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area, with its proximity to Oxford and relatively good level of public transport, was reconsidered in the light of the required uplift in housing in particular to address the issue of 'unmet' housing need from Oxford City.
- 4.45 Studies identified the scope for two new strategic directions of growth at Eynsham that were considered to be reasonable (deliverable in the plan period and best able to contribute to meeting both West Oxfordshire District's identified housing needs and Oxford's unmet housing needs); and these were tested through the full SA framework:
- A new Garden Village to the north of Eynsham (2,200 homes + 40 ha employment land)
 - Urban Extension to the west of Eynsham (1,000 homes)

⁸ Chipping Norton Transport Options Study – White Young Green (July 2016) for Oxfordshire County Council

4.46 The detailed findings of the strategic SAs are provided in Appendix IV of this SA Addendum Report and the summary findings are shown in the table following:

Table 4.5: Summary of SA Findings for Strategic Options at Eynsham

SA Objective	OPTIONS			
	North of Eynsham Garden Village		West of Eynsham	
1. Housing	++		++	
2. Health & well-being; Equalities	++		+?	
3. Communities	+	0?	+	
4. Education & training	+		+	
5. Low level of crime	0		0	
6. Improve accessibility	0?	+	+	+
7. Improve land use efficiency	-		-	
8. Reduce waste	0		0	
9. Improve air quality	-?		-?	+
10. Climate Change	-?	+	-?	+
11. Soil & water resources	0	-?	0	-?
12. Reduce flooding	0		0	

SA Objective	OPTIONS			
	North of Eynsham Garden Village		West of Eynsham	
13. Biodiversity & geodiversity	0?		0?	
14. Landscape & historic	-?	0?	-?	0?
15. Employment	++?		+?	
16. Economic growth	++?		+?	

4.47 Both strategic options are likely to have positive effects for housing, health, communities, employment and economic growth. The scope and scale of a garden village offers major positive effects in these respects as the scale of development can provide a mix of housing including affordable and adaptable; creative and early high quality design can help ensure that supporting infrastructure and services/facilities are in place and timely to promote thriving and inclusive communities. The separation of the new village from Eynsham by the A40 promotes new communities; the proposals⁹ for a new sustainable transport link into Eynsham provides mitigation and promotes integration with the existing communities. The proposals in the Garden Village for a new 40-hectare science park that would capitalise on the proximity to the Oxfordshire knowledge spine and opportunities to attract high-tech university spin-outs from Oxford has the potential for major synergistic and long-term positive effects.

4.48 As with most of the strategic options, neutral effects were found for objectives on low crime, waste reduction, water resources, and flood risk, as development management policies (OS3-5; EH1-7) provide mitigation measures to avoid or minimise any likely negative effects. No major negative effects were found for either option. As with most of the strategic options, minor negative effects were found for loss of greenfield land, including uncertain loss of Grade 3 agricultural land, and short-medium term air quality due to increase in traffic until the longer term when more stringent emissions regulation may reduce the effects.

⁹ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1483153/West-Oxon-Garden-Village-FoI-July-2016.pdf>

- 4.49 Similarly, as with most strategic options, minor negative effects were identified for landscape and visual amenity effects. Neutral effects were found for both options with regard to the historic environment as designated assets and their settings have been avoided and Policy EH7 will provide mitigation to ensure that locally important assets are conserved. However, some uncertainty remains until detailed masterplanning and further project level studies are undertaken. It is understood that the Council proposes to take the garden village proposal forward via a statutory Area Action Plan (AAP) that would be subject to a separate process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 4.50 Whilst a new village can offer the scope and scale for considerable sustainable development with major positive effects for many SA objectives, a concern is usually that such a development has a long lead-in time. However, much work has been done to progress the Garden Village, including various funding for infrastructure (most notably transport improvements), consultation with Eynsham communities and the Neighbourhood Development Plan team that recognises accommodating the significant growth proposed, discussions are ongoing with the multiple landowners with a view to appoint a development partner, and a submission¹⁰ has been made (July 2016) in response to the Government's Locally-Led Garden Village initiative. This suggests that the new village option could progress in a timely manner and progress within the timescale of the plan to 2031.

Non-Strategic Site Options

- 4.51 The potential options for non-strategic site allocations were tested through SA and the detailed appraisals are presented in Appendix V of this SA Addendum Report. The SA found no major significant negative effects and positive effects for SA objectives for housing and communities. Generally, potential negative effects on landscape and the historic environment are mitigated through other Plan Policies such as EH1-7. Two options for the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area are close to the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site but potential negative effects are mitigated through site-specific policy requirements. Four options for the Burford-Charlbury sub-area are within the Cotswold AONB but proposed development is relatively small and no major significant negative effects were found.
- 4.52 The reason for progression of these non-strategic sites to proposed allocation is primarily that they offer the most sustainable likely delivery of development with the least impacts on the important environmental assets of the District. Each option was considered individually and in consideration of the cumulative impacts for each town or sub-area. Where non-strategic sites have been allocated in villages, this helps maintain their vitality; care has been taken to respect the local character and distinctiveness.

¹⁰ Ibid

Proposed Modifications to Policies

- 4.53 The Proposed Modifications (PMs) to Policies were screened for significance with regard to SA and the details are presented in Appendix VI. Some changes are not significant as they are matters of clarification and/or updating and they do not significantly affect the findings of the Submission SA [CD2]. However, the uplift in housing is significant and a proportionate approach has been taken to refreshing the SA and undertaking new SA. The details of the SAs of strategic and non-strategic options for accommodating the additional growth are provided in Appendices III, IV and V. An overall summary of the SA findings for each significantly modified policy is presented in the following paragraphs - and including consideration of specific policy requirements that provide mitigation measures to resolve uncertainty or any negative effects identified through the SA.
- 4.54 **Policy OS2 Locating Development in the Right Places; Policy H1 Amount and Distribution of Housing:** Policy OS2 is amended to recognise the inclusion of new site allocations and the enhanced role of Eynsham in helping to deliver some of Oxford's unmet housing need, including the new Tilgarsley Garden Village. Policy H1 is amended to increase the housing target to 660 dwellings per annum for the District over the lifetime of the Plan 2011-31. The total revised housing target is from 10,500 to 15,950 and includes 2,750 homes to help Oxford City's unmet housing need. **Policy H4 Type & Mix of New Homes** changed with threshold for requirement to provide a proportion of accessible and adaptable housing will reduce the positive effects for SA objective number 2 in the longer term.
- 4.55 The implications for the SA findings are considered for each relevant Policy that has changed to accommodate this increase in housing numbers. Overall, the increased housing numbers are likely to increase the positive effects found for SA objectives on housing, communities, health, equalities, and accessibility. However, the increased housing also has the potential to increase the likelihood and significance of negative effects for SA objectives relating to air quality, climate change, soil and water resources, biodiversity/geodiversity, landscape and the historic environment. Mitigation is provided through Local Plan policies and available at the project level should ensure that these negative effects are not significant. However, overall there are likely to be cumulative negative effects in the longer term for loss of greenfield/agricultural land and effects on the landscape of the District. Some uncertainty remains for the cumulative effects for sustainable transport.
- 4.56 **Policy H7 Travelling Communities:** Clarification, updating and additional information in Policy H7 to help to make more explicit how Travelling Communities needs will be accommodated. A specific commitment to deliver additional gypsy and traveller plots and pitches, including as far as possible certainty provided about how accommodation requirements will be met, for example, consideration of a site within the Tilgarsley Garden Village proposal. These are minor changes updating with new evidence and not significant overall with regard to the SA but will strengthen the sustainability against SA objectives for housing, communities and inclusion with positive effects by reducing some uncertainty.

- 4.57 **New Policy H8 Land at Cuckoo Wood Farm:** There has been an existing authorised site for travelling showpeople since 2009 at Cuckoo Wood Farm, located to the north of the A40 and Eynsham. There is the capacity to expand the site to accommodate up to 6 plots. The land is not subject to any statutory landscape, heritage or wildlife protection designations and therefore, there will be no significant negative effects on environmental factors. The Policy specific requirements (a-e) provide mitigation measures to resolve any potential local negative effects on landscape, access, flood risk, sewerage and open space. The Policy will strengthen sustainability objectives for housing, communities and inclusion with positive effects.
- 4.58 **Policy E1 Land for Business:** Now includes reference to provision of 9 ha of business land at Chipping Norton and 40 ha science park north of Eynsham with the Tilgarsley Garden Village. Overall, these additional employment provisions will enhance the sustainability of strategic allocations, with direct positive effects on SA objectives for communities, health and employment; further indirect positive effects are indicated through reducing the need to travel.
- 4.59 **Policy T2 Highway Improvement Schemes:** Additional schemes identified at Eynsham and Chipping Norton to support increased scale of housing delivery. This provides mitigation measures for likely significant effects arising from increased housing numbers.
- 4.60 **Policies EH2-7 Environmental:** Various minor amendments and additions that strengthen the findings of the SA with regard to removing uncertainty of effects and/or confirming the likelihood of mitigation measures. Overall, no significant effects on the findings of the Submission SA Report [CD2]. Changes to Policy **EH7 Historic Environment**, including a requirement for archaeological evaluation, will strengthen the SA findings with regard to mitigation of negative effects for archaeology with overall positive cumulative effects in the medium to longer-term.
- 4.61 **Policy WIT1 East Witney SDA:** A proposed increase in housing from 400 to 450 dwellings represents a comparatively modest increase and is still less than the scale of acceptable development of around 500 homes determined¹¹ with regard to landscape and visual effects. The addition of policy requirements to conserve and enhance where possible the setting of the Cogges Scheduled Monument and the Witney & Cogges Conservation Area, and to investigate the archaeological significance of the area will provide mitigation measures for potential negative effects on the historic environment.
- 4.62 **Policy WIT2 North Witney SDA:** The proposed increase from 1,000 to 1,400 homes is significant but the site area has been expanded to include land to the west of Hailey Road to enable the increase in housing numbers alongside a modest increase in the extent of the developable area on the main part of the site. The land to the west of Hailey Road is not known to have any designated ecological constraints and is understood to be available for

¹¹ West Oxfordshire District Council (2012) Landscape and Visual Review of Submissions for Carterton and Witney Strategic Development Options.

development. Accordingly, the findings of the SA as reported in the Submission SA Report remain valid [CD2]. The precise location of houses, supporting infrastructure, and green infrastructure including sustainable flood risk management, is not known at this stage. It will be dependent upon detailed design and layout. Other strong policies in the Local Plan will help ensure that potential negative effects are mitigated, and WIT2 requires a number of specific studies for proposed development.

- 4.63 It had been considered through landscape and visual impact studies¹² that 1,000 homes could be accommodated within the original suggested boundary of the site without undue adverse impacts. It is considered that an acceptable landscape impact can still be achieved by including additional land to west, a modest increase to the developable area to the north, and slightly higher density assumptions. However, some uncertainty until lower level detailed studies have been completed to inform final numbers, site layout and form.
- 4.64 The addition of policy requirements to conserve and enhance where possible the setting of the grade II listed Middlefield Farmhouse and dovecote and the Witney & Cogges and Hailey Conservation Areas, and to investigate the archaeological significance of the area will provide mitigation measures for potential negative effects on the historic environment. The addition of consideration for off-site solutions to flood risk will strengthen the mitigation for possible negative effects and could create possibilities for enhancing sustainable water management.
- 4.65 **Policy WIT2a Woodford Way Car Park; Policy WIT2b Land West of Minster Lovell Witney:** New policy for housing allocation of 50 dwellings expected to come forward in the medium to long term. The potential site allocation was subject to full SA using the SA Framework and details are provided in Appendix V of this report. The SA found positive effects for housing and communities; mitigation for any potential negative effects on environmental factors is provided through other Plan Policies such as EH1-7.
- 4.66 **Policy WIT3 Witney Town Centre Strategy:** Requirement to conserve and enhance the Witney Conservation Area and other heritage assets in the town added to the Policy. This will strengthen the positive effects and provide mitigation measures to reduce potential negative effects; it also removes uncertainty as mitigation will be implemented. However, not significant overall with regard to the findings of the SA [CD2].
- 4.67 **Policy WIT4 Witney Sub-Area Strategy:** Strategy amended to reflect the uplift in housing for the Witney area from 3,700 to 4,400 homes to help meet the increased housing numbers needed. This is significant and reflects the increased housing numbers at 2 strategic sites (East & North Witney), inclusion of 2 non-strategic sites (Woodford Way Car Park & West of M Lovell). It includes Land West of Downs Way as an area of future long-term development potential.

¹² ibid

- 4.68 The implications for the findings of the SA with regard to the proposed sites have been considered above for WIT1-2. The overall additional housing numbers could have implications for the cumulative effects of the Witney area, particularly with regard to negative effects on traffic and landscape. However, it is considered that mitigation measures are provided through the proposed changes to the policies. Care will be needed to mitigate the negative landscape effects identified for Land to the West of Downs Road due to the proximity to the Minster Lovell Conservation Area and the Cotswold AONB to the north west. However, with regard to cumulative effects this will be set within a new context of the committed development to the west of the town.
- 4.69 A requirement to conserve and enhance the Witney Conservation Area and other heritage assets in the town was also added to the Policy. This will provide further mitigation measures (as described above) with regard to potential cumulative effects for the Witney area and historic environment.
- 4.70 **Policy CA1 REEMA North & Central; Policy CA1a Land at Milestone Road, Carterton; Policy CA1b Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton:** For Policy CA1 an increase from 200 to 300 homes and two further smaller non-strategic sites allocated. No significant major effects were identified through the detailed SA (Appendix V) and mitigation is provided through site-specific requirements. Positive effects found for housing and communities.
- 4.71 **Policy CN1 East Chipping Norton SDA:** Overall, the proposed modifications to the strategic site option (and Policy CN1) improve the sustainability of the proposed strategic development area (details provided earlier under SA of strategic options). Some uncertainty remains as details for mitigation/enhancement for landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure effects, including longer-term cumulative effects, are dependent upon detailed masterplanning.
- 4.72 **Policy EW1a Tilgarsley Garden Village Strategic Development Area (2,200 homes):** The strategic option for growth at north Eynsham was subject to detailed SA (Appendix IV) and found to have mostly positive or neutral effects against SA objectives. The 17 detailed policy requirements (a-q) set out in the new Policy EW1a provide mitigation measures to reduce the negative effects that had been identified and to help remove uncertainty. Policy requirements (e-g) confirm details for transport improvements and requirement (i) provides for appropriate landscaping measures. Criterion (j) requires biodiversity enhancements including for future maintenance – this will have minor positive effects improving the neutral effects and removing the uncertainty from the strategic SA by ensuring implementation (also linked to the sustainable drainage requirements). Criterion (k) requires provision of appropriate green infrastructure removing uncertainty; (m) requires specific archaeological considerations; and (n) requires improvement in greenfield run-off rates and this improves the sustainability from neutral to a slight minor positive.
- 4.73 Criteria (o) and (p) confirm neutral effects on the main sewerage network and positive effects for a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.

Policy requirements (a) and (q) confirm the major positive effects indicated with regard to a range of housing types. Overall, the positive sustainability effects identified through the strategic options assessment are confirmed and uncertainties have been removed, particularly with regard to implementation of certain mitigation measures. Policy H7 links possibilities with travelling showpeople and offers further strengthening of cumulative positive effects for inclusive communities. These could have been further strengthened through the requirement for an Environmental and/or Sustainability Management Plan to agree and monitor the detail of commitments. The requirement (h) for supporting infrastructure to be phased further confirms positive effects and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

- 4.74 **Policy EW1b West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (1,000 homes):** The strategic option for growth at west Eynsham was subject to detailed SA (Appendix IV) and found to have mostly positive or neutral effects against SA objectives. The 14 detailed policy requirements (a-n) set out in the new Policy EW1b provide mitigation measures to reduce the negative effects that had been identified and to help remove uncertainty. Policy requirements (c and e) confirm the provision of transport improvements, including a new western link road from the A40 to the north through to the B4449 to the south and as an integral part of the development. This will take pressure off the historic centre of the village and removes uncertainty of mitigation measures, confirming implementation through Policy requirement (f) with timely phasing and positive effects. Criterion (e) requires sustainable transport including a particular emphasis on improving linkages into Eynsham, to Tilgarsley Garden Village, and into the surrounding countryside. This removes the uncertainty associated with the strategic SA findings and is likely to have further positive effects that are cumulative and for the whole Eynsham area; also indirect effects for integrating new and existing communities.
- 4.75 Requirement (g) provides for appropriate landscaping measures. Criterion (h) requires biodiversity enhancements including for future maintenance – this will have minor positive effects improving the neutral effects and removing the uncertainty from the strategic SA by ensuring implementation (also linked to the sustainable drainage requirements). Criterion (i) requires provision of appropriate green infrastructure removing uncertainty; (j) requires specific archaeological considerations, and specific consideration for the Scheduled Monument adjacent to the B4449; and (k) requires improvement in greenfield run-off rates and this improves the sustainability from neutral to a slight minor positive.
- 4.76 Criteria (l) and (m) confirm neutral effects on the main sewerage network and positive effects for a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings. Policy requirements (a) and (n) confirm the major positive effects indicated with regard to a range of housing types. Overall, the positive sustainability effects identified through the strategic options assessment are confirmed and uncertainties have been removed, particularly with regard to implementation of certain mitigation measures. These could have been further strengthened through the requirement for an Environmental and/or Sustainability Management Plan to agree and monitor the detail of commitments.

- 4.77 **Policy EW1c Land East of Woodstock; Policy EWd Land North of Hill Rise, Woodstock; Policy EW1e Land North of Banbury Road, Woodstock:** These 3 new Policies provide for smaller non-strategic site allocations in Woodstock. Land east and north is close the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site with potential negative effects for its setting but site specific requirements provide mitigation measures, together with other Plan Policies including EW1 and EH7. Positive effects found for housing and communities. Although each non-strategic site allocation is relatively small, there is the potential for them to contribute to cumulative negative effects for landscape and transport in this sub-area – with uncertainty in the longer-term and until further detailed project level studies have been completed.
- 4.78 **Policy EW2 Eynsham-Woodstock Sub-Area Strategy:** The focus of new development has changed from Eynsham-Long Hanborough-Woodstock to Eynsham-Woodstock-Tilgarsley Garden Village. This now includes proposals amended from delivery of 1,600 to 5,500 new homes including 2,800 homes to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs and a further 2,750 (from 2021-2031) homes to meet the needs of Oxford city. Two new SDAs (2,200 + around 1,000 homes) and 6 non-strategic sites (around 795 new homes); around 40 ha new employment – science park as part of Tilgarsley Garden Village. Each potential site allocation has been subject to SA and generally found to have positive effects for SA objectives for housing, health, communities, and employment/economic growth. Strong policies are in place, including specific requirements for proposed site allocations, to protect environmental factors and help ensure timely provision of supporting infrastructure especially associated with transport and accessibility.
- 4.79 The mitigation measures provided by these Policies should ensure that potential negative effects are minimised with residual neutral effects identified for SA objectives for education, low crime, waste reduction, flood risk, biodiversity & geodiversity, and the historic environment. Some minor negative effects remain for SA objectives for improving air quality, addressing climate change, loss of greenfield land and landscape - but with some uncertainty as emissions of greenhouse gases and effects of road transport are difficult to predict for the longer-term.
- 4.80 There is the potential for cumulative negative effects on landscape/visual amenity and road transport/accessibility for the Eynsham-Woodstock Sub-Area. However, the major developments proposed at Tilgarsley Garden Village and West of Eynsham avoid the sensitive landscapes to the east of Eynsham including the Oxford Green Belt, and the setting of the historic centre/Conservation Area. The scope and scale of a new village and an urban extension to the west offers opportunities for creative masterplanning and design to help mitigate negative landscape/visual effects – but some uncertainty for negative cumulative effects remains until more detailed project level studies are completed.
- 4.81 Congestion on the A40 is a known issue and the proposals for Tilgarsley include provision of a new park & ride with priority bus lanes into Oxford City, improvements to the A40, and an integrated sustainable transport system – all of which will help to mitigate cumulative negative effects on transport. The

proposals for the West of Eynsham SDA include provision of a strategic road connection from the A40 to the B4449 to the south, which should also mitigate some of the likely negative effects. Requirements for sustainable transport links, including into Eynsham and Tilgarsely, will also help mitigate negative effects on transport/accessibility. However, some uncertainty remains for negative cumulative effects on transport remains until more detailed project level studies are completed.

- 4.83 **Burford-Charlbury Sub-Area; New Policies BC1a-d Non-Strategic Sites:** Each potential non-strategic site allocation was subject to detailed SA (Appendix V) and no major significant negative effects were identified. The four new sites are located within the Cotswold AONB with potential major effects on landscape and visual amenity. However, the proposed development is small and site-specific requirements provide mitigation measures. Positive effects were found for SA objectives on housing and communities with potentially some minor negative effects on landscape and transport/accessibility SA objectives. However, there are strong Policies (T1-4, EH1-7) to provide mitigation measures, together with site specific requirements in each Policy BC1a-d, to reduce likely negative effects to a neutral residual effect. Although each non-strategic site allocation is relatively small, there is the potential for them to contribute to cumulative negative effects for landscape and transport in this sub-area – with uncertainty in the longer-term and until further detailed project level studies have been completed.

Cumulative Effects & SA of Main Modifications to the Local Plan

- 4.84 Each significant element of the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan has been considered through SA – strategic housing & employment options, strategic & non-strategic options for housing and employment; changed Policies. SEA/SA requires that the implementation of the plan as a whole should be considered through the appraisal process. The key change to the Local Plan is the uplift in housing from 10,500 to 15,950 new homes up to 2031. This allows for an increased identified need in West Oxfordshire of an additional 2,700 new homes and includes helping with the unmet need of Oxford City with a further 2,750 new homes in the District.
- 4.85 Overall, the proposed modified Plan will have positive effects with regard to SA objectives for housing, health, communities, employment and economic growth; these are likely to be cumulative in the longer term and synergistic positive effects are indicated for the new Village at Eynsham. Strong Policies (T1-4; EH1-7) are in place to guide and manage development proposals, providing mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential negative effects. Further site specific requirements are included in Policies WIT1-4, CA1-3, CN1-2, EW1-2, and BC1 and these provide additional mitigation measures for likely negative effects. Residual neutral or insignificant effects are indicated for SA objectives for education, crime, waste, pollution, water resources, flood risk, biodiversity/geodiversity, and the historic environment. Overall, there is some uncertainty with potential cumulative negative effects in the longer-term for loss of greenfield land, transport/accessibility, and landscape/visual amenity.

5.0 SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

Introduction

- 5.1 The Submitted Local Plan 2031 for West Oxfordshire District was considered at the first hearing sessions of the examination held 23 – 26 November 2015. These dealt with strategic matters, including the duty to cooperate, and housing and employment requirements. The Inspector's preliminary findings¹³ were published in December 2015 and he considered that that the local plan's housing requirement of 10,500 dwellings was not justified. Accordingly, the examination was suspended until December 2016 to allow the Council to undertake further studies.
- 5.2 The Council's further work has identified a need for further housing and the proposed changes to the Local Plan 2031 are primarily associated with the increase in the overall number of houses from 10,500 to 15,950. Most of this is to meet West Oxfordshire's needs but a proportion (2,750) is proposed to assist neighbouring Oxford City Council with its unmet housing need in the period 2021 - 2031. Any Proposed Modifications to the plan are required to be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process.
- 5.3 SA is an ongoing and iterative process that aligns with the iterative plan-making process. There is no need to repeat previous appraisals and this SA Addendum Report addresses matters arising from the examination and Proposed Modifications to the Plan. With regard to compliance with legislative and policy requirements, this SA Addendum Report comprises a further part of the SA Report as submitted in February 2015 [CD2] and has been prepared in accordance with relevant guidance and legislative requirements. It seeks to be a proportionate assessment relevant to the stage of plan-making and in line with NPPF requirements for SA (paragraph 167).
- 5.4 The baseline information was updated and the issues for West Oxfordshire were found to remain relevant and valid. The SA of additional and changed options and proposals arising from the uplift in housing numbers were subject to SA using the same method and SA Framework of Objectives as reported in the SA Report 2015 [CD] and confirmed as still relevant through updating of evidence. An approach that is proportionate to the current level of plan-making and SA was undertaken independently and in a consistent way to the previous assessments.

Findings

- 5.5 The refreshing and new testing of strategic options through SA found that the findings of the Submission SA [CD2] remain valid and relevant. The reasons for progressing some strategic options and not others also remain valid. Changes to strategic Policies provide clarification and additional information, including site-specific requirements that provide further mitigation measures to remove uncertainty and minimise any negative effects identified. Additional non-

¹³ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2031>

strategic site options were tested through SA and found to have positive effects for housing and communities; where relevant, site specific requirements are provided to mitigate negative effects.

- 5.6 The SA findings for the implementation of the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan 2031 align with the SA findings reported in the Submission SA Report [CD2]. The SA found that there is little to differentiate between the options for strategic development. Overall, the implementation of the Local Plan is likely to have significant cumulative effects against SA objectives through meeting the housing and employment needs of residents (and contributing to Oxford City's unmet housing need) and improving accessibility to services/facilities and highway transport with wider sustainability benefits.
- 5.7 As with the Submission SA findings, the increased housing is likely to have negative effects against SA objectives relating to the natural and historic environments. It is still considered that suitable mitigation is provided through Policies EH1-7 and site-specific requirements in other Policies. However, given the sensitivity of the landscape and historic environment within the District it is considered that the increased housing requirement has the potential for residual minor long-term effects against SA Objective 14 (landscape and heritage). While the Local Plan seeks to maximise the use of previously developed land it is inevitable that the increased housing requirement will result in a greater loss of greenfield and agricultural land. This has the potential for permanent cumulative negative effects against SA Objectives 7 and 11; however, it is likely that agricultural land loss will only be Grade 3a so that the significance of the effect may be reduced.
- 5.8 Some uncertainty remains as the effectiveness of mitigation of negative effects and the possibilities for enhancement on landscape, historic/cultural, biodiversity/geodiversity, green infrastructure and sustainable transport SA objectives depend on the details for further studies, masterplanning and project level design, discussion and evaluation.

Next Steps

- 5.9 This SA Addendum Report, consultation responses received and the updated evidence, will be used to inform the resumed examination in early 2017 and the preparation of the final Local Plan. This SA Addendum Report is available for comments alongside the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan 2031 for a six-week period commencing in November 2016. All responses should be sent to:

Address: Planning Policy Team, West Oxfordshire District Council, Elmfield,
New Yatt Road, OX28 1PB

Email: planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk

Responses may also be made using the West Oxfordshire District Council Website by using the following link:

<http://planningconsultation.westoxon.gov.uk/>