

Second Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Note for the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (September 2025)

Introduction

This Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Addendum Note relates to the Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Salt Cross Garden Village. The AAP is being produced by West Oxfordshire District Council and sets out the vision and objectives for the garden village as well as the policies that will guide the delivery of development at the site. This SA Addendum Note is an updated version of the SA Addendum Note that was prepared in March 2025 (Examination document ED9C).

The garden village is situated to the north of the A40 near Eynsham. The site is allocated through Policy EW1 in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Following public engagement that began in 2018, the AAP has been prepared to address key local issues identified.

A number of consultations were held as the AAP was prepared, as follows:

- An initial 'issues' consultation from June 2018.
- A three-day design workshop in May 2019.
- A 'preferred options' consultation from August 2019.
- A Pre-Submission consultation from August 2020.

West Oxfordshire District Council submitted the AAP to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on 10th February 2021 and Examination hearings took place between June and July 2021. Following a request by the Inspectors for the Council to undertake some additional work on the phasing of essential infrastructure, consultation on Main Modifications to the AAP was held between September and November 2022. In March 2023 the Inspector reported that, subject to the incorporation of the Main Modifications, the AAP could be found sound and adopted. Shortly afterwards, a legal challenge was launched which meant that the AAP was not adopted. Following the conclusion of the challenge, the Examination into the AAP has been re-opened on a focussed basis to consider only Policy 2 which relates to net zero carbon development.

The AAP has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations) throughout its preparation, with SA documents having been prepared and consulted on alongside each iteration of the AAP. The full SA Report for the Pre-Submission AAP (August 2020) was submitted alongside the AAP for Examination. Further to that, an SA Report Addendum for the Main Modifications to the submitted AAP was prepared in July 2022. This considered the implications of the changes that were proposed to be made to the policies in the submitted AAP, including to Policy 2.

The March 2025 SA Addendum Note (ED9C) presented an appraisal of Policy 2 as it was proposed to be modified at the time, following the outcome of the High Court challenge and further re-working of the policy by West Oxfordshire District Council. The amended policy and the SA Addendum were submitted to the re-opened Examination and further hearings were held in June 2025. Following those hearings, the Council has made further proposed amendments to the wording of Policy 2 and this updated SA Addendum Note has been prepared to address these changes.

This updated SA Addendum Note should be read alongside the SA Report for the submitted AAP, as well as the July 2022 Main Modifications SA Addendum in relation to the AAP policies which are not part of the current Examination process. This updated SA Addendum Note supersedes the parts of the July 2022 SA Addendum that relate to Policy 2, as well as document ED9C.

Methodology

The SA work undertaken and reported on in this note follows the same methodology that was used during earlier stages of the SA process for the AAP, detailed in full in the August 2020 SA Report and the July 2022 SA Addendum. The options and policies in the AAP have been appraised throughout the plan-making process against the 17 SA objectives in the SA framework for the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP (see **Appendix A**), with symbols being attributed to each option or policy to indicate its likely sustainability effects on each objective as follows.

Table 1 Key to symbols and colour coding used in the SA of the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP

++

The option or policy is likely to have a **significant positive** effect on the SA objective(s).

++/-	The option or policy is likely to have a mixture of significant positive and minor negative effects on the SA objective(s).
+	The option or policy is likely to have a minor positive effect on the SA objective(s).
0	The option or policy is likely to have a negligible or no effect on the SA objective(s).
-	The option or policy is likely to have a minor negative effect on the SA objective(s).
--/+	The option or policy is likely to have a mixture of significant negative and minor positive effects on the SA objective(s).
--	The option or policy is likely to have a significant negative effect on the SA objective(s).
?	It is uncertain what effect the option or policy will have on the SA objective(s), due to a lack of data.
+/- or ++/--	The option or policy is likely to have an equal mixture of both minor or both significant positive and negative effects on the SA objective(s).

Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark is added to the relevant score (e.g. +? or -?) and the score is colour coded as per the potential positive, negligible or negative score (e.g. green, yellow, orange, etc.). Colour codes illustrating variations in the significance of mixed effects have been included, as shown in **Table 1** above, to clearly show differences in the performance of options and policies.

The likely effects of the options and policies need to be determined and their significance assessed, which inevitably requires a series of judgments to be made. The appraisal has attempted to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols shown above. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either '++' or '--' has been used to distinguish significant effects from minor effects ('+' or '-') this is because the effect of an option or policy on the SA objective in question is considered to be of such magnitude that it would have a noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

Appraisal of Policy 2 as proposed to be modified

Table 2 below presents in the second column the effects of Policy 2 that were identified in the August 2020 SA Report for the submitted AAP. The third column presents the appraisal findings for the policy as now proposed to be modified following the Examination hearings in June 2025, with the effects justified in the final column of the table. The justification text first explains the effects of the policy as proposed to be modified, with a final comment addressing any changes to the SA findings since the submitted Policy 2 was appraised.

Table 2 Summary of sustainability effects for Policy 2 as proposed to be modified (September 2025) compared to the effects identified previously

SA objective	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as submitted)	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as proposed to be modified)	Justification
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed affordable home	++/-?	++/-	Policy 2 will result in the development of low carbon housing as it requires development proposals to contribute to the delivery of net zero operational carbon on site through use of ultra-low energy building fabric, low carbon technologies and renewable energy generation. Development proposals must also include other measures relating to overheating and meet specified targets for energy efficiency. These measures are expected to work in conjunction to create high quality new dwellings for residents of the Garden Village. They are also likely to help minimise utility bills and the overall cost of

SA objective	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as submitted)	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as proposed to be modified)	Justification
			house maintenance for residents and therefore a significant positive effect is expected in relation to SA objective 1: Housing for Policy 2. At the same time, potential adverse effects are identified as the stringent requirements of the policy could potentially limit the rate of housing delivery due to developer concerns over viability. A mixed effect is therefore likely overall. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP – while the specific policy requirements are different, the threshold for a likely significant positive effect is reached by both versions of the policy.</i>
2. Improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
3. Promote thriving and inclusive communities	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
4. Improve education and training	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
5. Maintain a low level of crime and fear of crime	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
6. Improve accessibility to all services and facilities	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
7. Improve the efficiency of land use	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
8. Reduce waste generation and disposal	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
9. Reduce air pollution and improve air quality	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
10. Address the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions	++	++	The overarching purpose of Policy 2 is to ensure all development proposals at the Garden Village contribute to the delivery of net zero operational carbon on-site, through ultra-low energy building fabric, low carbon technologies and renewable energy generation. Developments must be fossil

SA objective	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as submitted)	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as proposed to be modified)	Justification
and be prepared for its impacts			fuel free and 100% of the development's energy demand must be met through on-site renewable energy such as solar PV. Development proposals must also meet stringent energy efficient targets at the design and construction stage. The policy requires development proposals to carry out embodied carbon calculations and submit an energy strategy which demonstrates compliance with the net-zero carbon objectives and includes arrangements for Post-Occupancy Evaluation monitoring and reporting, which will be secured by planning condition or Section 106 agreement. A significant positive effect is therefore expected on SA objective 10. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP – while there are differences in the specific policy requirements, the threshold for a likely significant positive effect is reached by both versions of the policy.</i>
11. Protect and improve water resources	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
12. Reduce the risk from all sources of flooding	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
13. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
14. Conserve and enhance landscape character	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
15. Conserve and enhance the historic environment	0	0	There is no direct link between the policy and the achievement of this objective. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP.</i>
16. Maintain high and stable levels of employment	+	+	Expansion into the field of renewables provides potential for employment provision and economic diversification at the Garden Village. A particular opportunity in this area of growth is likely considering that the policy requires 100% of a development's energy demand to be met through on-site renewables. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP – while there are differences in the specific policy requirements, the justification for a minor positive effect on SA objective 16 exists for both versions of the policy.</i>

SA objective	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as submitted)	SA findings for Policy 2: Net zero carbon development (as proposed to be modified)	Justification
17. Promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	+	+	Expansion into the field of renewables provides potential for employment provision and economic diversification at the Garden Village. A particular opportunity in this area of growth is likely considering that the policy requires 100% of a development's energy demand to be met through on-site renewables. <i>No change in likely effect from the submitted AAP— while there are differences in the specific policy requirements, the justification for a minor positive effect on SA Objective 17 exists for both versions of the policy.</i>

Conclusions

The likely effects of Policy 2 as proposed to be modified following the June 2025 Examination hearings on the SA objectives remain as reported in the August 2020 SA Report for the submitted AAP. While the policy wording has been revised and amended, this does not result in changes to the headline effects identified against each SA objective, which are mostly positive.

Cumulative effects

The cumulative effects of the AAP as initially proposed to be modified were reported in the July 2022 SA Addendum for the Main Modifications. The effects of Policy 2 as now proposed to be modified, reported in this Note, supersede those reported for that policy in the July 2022 SA Addendum. Considering the effects of Policy 2 as now proposed to be modified alongside the effects of the other AAP policies as reported in the July 2022 SA Addendum, there are no changes to the expected cumulative effects of the AAP.

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September 2025

Appendix A

SA Framework for the Salt Cross AAP

Table A1: SA framework for the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed affordable home	■ Provide a balanced mix of dwelling types and tenures to meet identified needs including unmet housing need arising from Oxford City, specialist accommodation, self-build and the travelling community. ■ Increase affordable housing provision, especially for young people, first-time homeowners and essential local workers. ■ Accelerate housing delivery, including affordable housing, in a timely manner (e.g. modular construction, phasing of infrastructure). ■ Provide high quality, sustainably constructed, accessible and adaptable new homes. ■ Promote high quality design that protects and enriches the character of the District.
2. Improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities	■ Safeguard key public rights of way and deliver new and enhanced provision as appropriate including multi-use transport networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooter users to increase opportunities for physical activity. ■ Ensure the early delivery of health-promoting infrastructure including a network of high-quality green infrastructure to benefit new and existing residents and workers. ■ Ensure the availability and accessibility of adequate capacity for primary healthcare. ■ Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. ■ Ensure proximity and good access to the provision/production of healthy food environments supported by community activities including space for people to grow their own food. ■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people.
3. Promote thriving and inclusive communities	■ Ensure that new development is supported by appropriate and timely investment in infrastructure. ■ Ensure that new development does not have a harmful impact on the vitality and vibrancy of Eynsham and instead, integrates in an effective, complementary and mutually-beneficial manner. ■ Promote effective and meaningful interactions between different age groups to promote social cohesion and well-being (e.g. inter-generational spaces and mix of uses). ■ Provide new cultural, leisure and recreational opportunities including improved access to the countryside to help increase rates of physical activity. ■ Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. ■ Provide for the needs of an ageing community. ■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people.
4. Improve education and training	■ Ensure the availability of and accessibility to adequate capacity of primary and secondary education. ■ Provide new and enhanced opportunities to increase educational attainment, skills and training. ■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the propensity to travel to work elsewhere. ■ Promote high levels of home-working. ■ Support innovation-led growth, underpinned by the strength of Oxfordshire's research, business collaboration and supply chain potential.
5. Maintain a low level of crime and fear of crime	■ To minimise both the fear of crime and opportunities for/incidences of crime through appropriate design, layout and mix of uses. ■ Promote high quality design that protects and enriches the character of the District.

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives
6. Improve accessibility to all services and facilities	■ Maximise the opportunities to improve and better connect to existing public transport in the area including links to Oxford and Hanborough Station. ■ Effectively integrate with proposed improvements to the A40 including park and ride and bus priority. ■ Maximise opportunities for non-car travel including improved pedestrian, cycling and riding connections across the A40 and between the Garden Village, West Eynsham SDA, Eynsham village, Hanborough Station and Oxford City. ■ Develop a high quality, innovative and resilient integrated transport system. ■ Reflect the 'compact' and 'walkable' nature of Eynsham in new development. ■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people. ■ Encourage the protection and enhancement of village centre. ■ Promote the provision of new and the protection of existing services and facilities at sustainable locations including as part of mixed-use development.
7. Improve the efficiency of land use	■ Ensure land use meets identified community needs. ■ Ensure development is of a suitable density or range of densities to minimise the extent of any 'developable' land-take and maximise opportunities for greenspace provision. ■ Explore opportunities for sustainable waste management to ensure a sufficient supply of aggregate materials is available to meet identified development needs with priority given to secondary and recycled aggregate materials (where practicable). ■ Safeguard mineral resources. ■ Minimise impact on the soil resource and seek to ensure the conservation of best and most versatile agricultural land.
8. Reduce waste generation and disposal	■ To reduce the amount of waste generated both initially during construction and in the longer-term, post-occupation. ■ Maximise opportunities to re-use, recycle and recover waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy.
9. Reduce air pollution and improve air quality	■ Ensure new development does not have a harmful effect on air quality, especially with regards to the Oxford Meadows Special Conservation Area (SAC). ■ Improve multi-use transport networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooter users to decrease dependency on the private car. ■ Avoid, minimise and mitigate the effects of poor air quality.
10. Address the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and be prepared for its impacts	■ Maximise opportunities for the use of renewable, low-carbon and local energy sources. ■ Minimise the use-of non-renewable energy sources. ■ Develop a high quality, innovative and resilient integrated transport system. ■ Minimise the need to travel and promote travel by sustainable means. ■ Promote the use of designs and materials which will promote energy efficiency at new development. ■ Promote increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, to reduce out-commuting and increase the self-containment of communities.
11. Protect and improve water resources	■ Maximise resource efficiency including water. ■ Ensure no deterioration in water quality.
12. Reduce the risk from all sources of flooding	■ Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources both directly (on-site) and indirectly (off-site) taking account of the potential impacts of climate change. ■ Increase the provision of sustainable drainage at new developments.
13. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	■ Take all available opportunities to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the site or locality including biodiversity and geodiversity designations.

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives
	■ Contribute to wider biodiversity and green infrastructure networks where appropriate. ■ Demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible. ■ Provide and manage opportunities for people to come into contact with resilient wildlife places whilst encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of such locations.
14. Conserve and enhance landscape character	■ To ensure that development will conserve, integrate with and where possible enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and man-made features of the local landscape, including hedgerows, streams and ponds. ■ To identify, safeguard and enhance key views.
15. Conserve and enhance the historic environment	■ Conserve and/or enhance the historic environment including identified heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. ■ Mitigate any potential impacts on any heritage assets 'at risk'. ■ Ensure no harmful impact on the existing historic core of Eynsham as a result of new development. ■ To maximise opportunities to better reveal heritage assets and improve education and understanding of their significance. ■ Promote sustainable and appropriately managed access to as well as enjoyment and understanding of the local historic environment for Eynsham's residents and visitors. ■ Ensure archaeological features are preserved and recorded.
16. Maintain high and stable levels of employment	■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the propensity to travel to work elsewhere. ■ Provide for accessible employment opportunities. ■ To address the current demographic imbalance and help increase rates of economic activity. ■ Promote high levels of home-working.
17. Promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the propensity to travel to work elsewhere. ■ Address the current demographic imbalance and help increase rates of economic activity. ■ Promote increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, to reduce out-commuting and increase the self-containment of communities. ■ Maintain and improve transport connections to support economic growth and vitality. ■ Ensure a strong link between jobs and housing growth. ■ Promote innovation-led growth, underpinned by the strength of Oxfordshire's research, business collaboration and supply chain potential.