

Local Plan 2031

Part 1

Strategic Sites
and Policies

TOPIC PAPER 1

Duty to cooperate
and cross boundary
issues

This paper is one of 9 topic papers, listed below, which form part of the evidence base in support of the Publication Version of Vale Local Plan 2031: Part 1 – Strategic Sites and Policies.

These topic papers have been produced to summarise the evidence that has been considered in drafting the local plan to explain how we have reached our conclusions.

The papers are all available from the council website:

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidencebase

Topic Papers

1. Duty to cooperate and cross boundary issues
2. Spatial strategy
3. Strategic sites selection
4. Housing
5. Supporting economic prosperity
6. Transport and accessibility
7. Responding to climate change
8. The built and historic environment
9. The natural environment

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Policy review – national policy	6
Localism Act 2011	6
National Planning Policy Framework 2012	7
National Planning Practice Guidance 2013	8
3. Evidence	10
Summary of previous consultation stages and key issues	10
Oxfordshire Growth Board (incorporating the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership).....	12
Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers Group	15
Oxford & Oxfordshire City Deal	15
Joint working on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.....	17
Joint working on a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment.....	18
Other one-to-one meetings with councils in Oxfordshire	18
Engagement with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire	18
Science Vale Partnership	19
Science Vale Area Action Plan.....	20
Vale of White Horse Infrastructure Delivery Plan	20
North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners	21
Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership.....	22
Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership	22
Other organisations	23
4. Issues (challenges and opportunities).....	24
Table 4.1: Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities, relevant content of the publication version of LPP1, and how the Duty-to- Cooperate has been met	27
5. Recommendations.....	42
Appendix 1: Abbreviations/ Glossary	44
Appendix 2: Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation.....	46
Appendix 3: Cherwell Local Plan Examination 2014.....	52

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This topic paper provides an overview of how we are meeting our obligations under the 'duty-to-cooperate' as required by the Localism Act 2011 and National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- 1.2 The evidence and processes summarised in this paper have helped to inform the preparation of the Publication Version of the Vale Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – Strategic Sites and Policies.
- 1.3 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 sets the strategic priorities for the district to deliver sustainable development. It identifies the number of new homes and jobs to be provided in the area for the plan period up to 2031. It also makes appropriate provision for retail, leisure and commercial development and for the infrastructure needed to support them.
- 1.4 Significant work has been carried out to inform the Local Plan, starting in 2007, and several stages of consultation have been undertaken with the public and stakeholders over the last few years. These stages have informed the preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and include:
 - Issues and Options (November 2007) – which identified a range of options for how we should plan for the Vale
 - Preferred Options (January 2009) – which outlined the council's preferred approach for planning for the Vale
 - Additional Consultation (January 2010) – which consulted on a few additional policies relating to specific issues
 - Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013) – which consulted on a complete draft of the Local Plan 2031, and
 - Housing Delivery Update (February 2014) – which set out the updated housing target for the district and the strategic sites package needed to meet the new target.
- 1.5 The duty to cooperate is a legal requirement on plan-making. Whilst it is not a 'duty to agree' its primary purpose is to help achieve positive and effective local plans in relation to matters of wider than local importance. Meeting our obligations under the duty-to-cooperate is therefore also an important part of plan making and forms part of the 'tests of soundness' as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.6 The planning authorities for which the duty most directly applies to the Vale of White Horse District are listed below (they are also shown by **Figure 1.1**):

Oxfordshire county and housing market area

 - West Oxfordshire District Council

- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council

Other neighbouring authorities

- West Berkshire Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Gloucestershire County Council

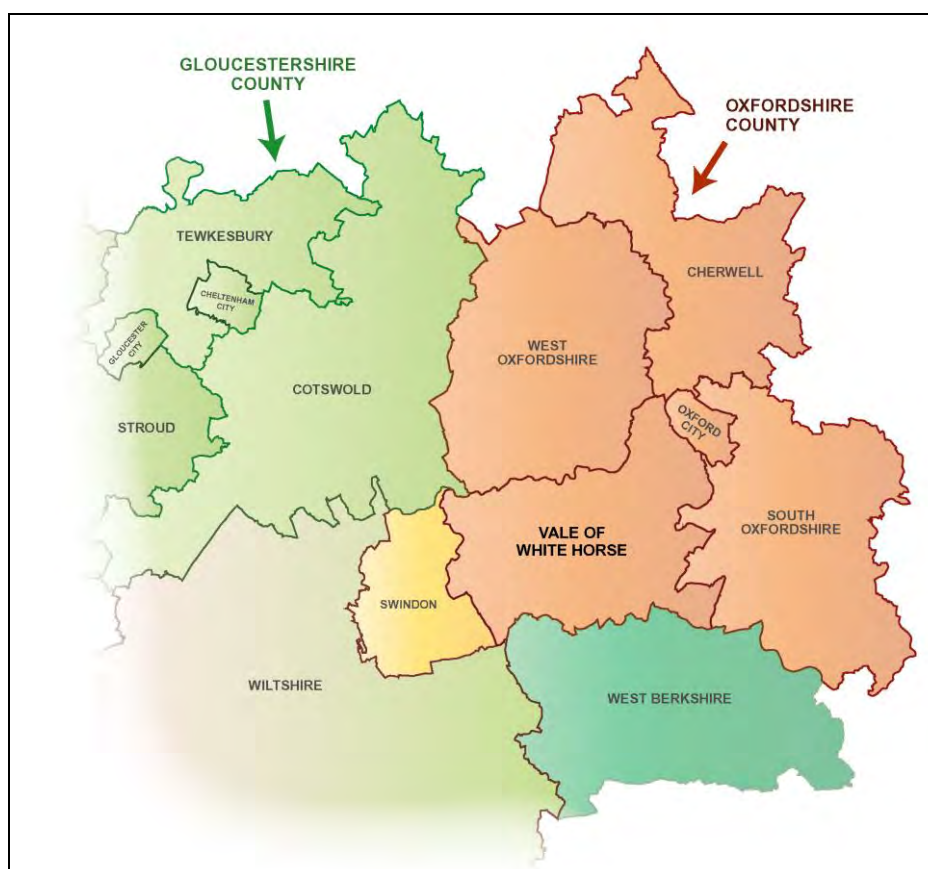


Figure 1.1: Map showing the authorities neighbouring the Vale of White Horse District

- 1.7 Other prescribed bodies are identified in Part 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012¹. This list of prescribed bodies was subsequently amended to include the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Nature Partnership². The prescribed bodies relevant to the Vale of White Horse are listed below:

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>

² The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2012 are available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2613/made>

- the Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- the Civil Aviation Authority
- the Homes and Communities Agency
- Clinical Commissioning Groups³
- the Office of Rail Regulation
- the Highways Agency
- Highway Authorities
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnership

1.8 It is important that the options we develop for policies are also tested through Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This is a legislative requirement of the plan making process⁴ and has taken place alongside the preparation of the plan. The SA helps to identify a preferred policy option to inform the preparation of the plan.

1.9 This topic paper is arranged into the following sections:

Section 2: Policy review – setting the context for the ‘duty-to-cooperate’

Section 3: Evidence – a short summary of key issues identified from consultation or through joint working

Section 4: Issues (challenges and opportunities) – a brief summary of issues identified from sections 2 and 3 of the paper that the Local Plan 2031 will need to respond to

Section 5: Policy options – an overview of those policy options which have been tested for possible inclusion within the local plan, and

Section 6: Recommendations – the key findings for how this topic area has been addressed in the Local Plan 2031

1.10 While a number of policies have some relevance for the duty to cooperate, certain policies in key topic areas such as housing, transport and employment are most relevant. The assessment of policy options for these types of policy in section 5 focuses on ‘duty to cooperate’ aspects. Options for other aspects of these policies are covered in greater detail in other, more directly relevant topic papers which support the publication version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

³ Primary Care Trusts were abolished on the 31 March 2013 as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, with their work taken over by Clinical Commissioning Groups

⁴ For more information see the Sustainability Appraisal at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

2. Policy review – national policy

Localism Act 2011

- 2.1 The duty-to-cooperate is set out in Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011⁵. It requires local authorities to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies in preparing their Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Localism Act introduced a new requirement for the duty-to-cooperate to be considered as part of the examination of Local Plans⁶. The Duty to Cooperate places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 2.3 Planning Inspectors must first consider whether local plans meet the legal test of being prepared in accordance with the Duty-to-Cooperate. Secondly, the effectiveness of cooperation to address strategic matters also forms part of the testing of local plan soundness.
- 2.4 The Localism Act states that the duty-to-cooperate:
- relates to a 'strategic matter' defined as sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council
 - requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues
 - requires that councils and public bodies 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies, and
 - requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making⁷.
- 2.5 Each local planning authority or other prescribed body will have its own strategic priorities. It is important that, through exercising a collaborative approach to working, strategic matters and any strategic issues of particular or cross border significance are identified early on in the process with a view to demonstrating that co-operation between authorities has led to outcomes and actions.

⁵ The Localism Act 2011 is available at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

⁶ Localism Act 2011 Section 110(3)

⁷ Planning Advisory Service (2012) 'A simple guide to Strategic Planning and the 'Duty to Co-operate'; available at: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/40-a-simple-guide-to-strategic-planning>

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives guidance on the types of strategic matters where the duty may apply.
- 2.7 Strategic matters include:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area
 - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development
 - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)
 - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities
 - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape⁸.
- 2.8 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that cross boundary issues are properly addressed and reflected in local plans. It also highlights the importance of joint working to meet development requirements that cannot be wholly met within a single local planning area, through either joint planning policies or informal strategies such as infrastructure and investment plans⁹. In addition to the requirement to demonstrate that the plan has been prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate, local authorities also need to demonstrate how joint working has influenced policy outcomes within the plan¹⁰, in order for the plan to be found sound at examination.
- 2.9 The NPPF sets out the tests of soundness which will be used in the examination of local plans. To be 'sound' the plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Two of these tests of soundness relate specifically to the duty-to-cooperate. In this regard the plan must be:
- positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so while achieving sustainable development, and

⁸ Paragraph 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Communities and Local Government, March 2012

⁹ Paragraph 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Communities and Local Government, March 2012

¹⁰ Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Communities and Local Government, March 2012

- effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities¹¹.

National Planning Practice Guidance 2013

- 2.10 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was launched on 6 March 2014 with the intention of making all planning guidance available in one place in a clear and easy-to-use form¹².
- 2.11 The Guidance includes a dedicated section with respect to the duty-to-cooperate and expands on the role and function of it in the plan making process.
- 2.12 For the examination of local plans, “Local Planning Authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty. If a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the local plan will not be able to proceed further in examination”¹³. It mentions that the process should produce “effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters”.
- 2.13 The NPPG expands on the extent to which Local Planning Authorities should cooperate. It states that it
- “... is not a duty to agree. But Local Planning Authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their local plans for examination. If another authority will not cooperate this should not prevent the authority bringing forward a local plan or from submitting it for examination. However the authority will need to submit comprehensive and robust evidence of the efforts it has made to cooperate and any outcomes achieved and this will be thoroughly tested at the examination. Local Planning Authorities should discuss their particular circumstances with the Planning Inspectorate prior to submitting the local plan.”¹⁴
- 2.14 In looking at what outcomes are expected from the duty-to-cooperate, the NPPG states that cooperation “should produce effective policies on strategic cross boundary matters. Inspectors testing compliance with the duty at examination will assess the outcomes of cooperation and not just whether local planning authorities have approached others”¹⁵.

¹¹ Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Communities and Local Government, March 2012

¹² Planning Practice Guidance, available at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk>

¹³ Planning Practice Guidance, Duty to cooperate, Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 9-001-20140306

¹⁴ Planning Practice Guidance, Duty to cooperate, Paragraph 003 Reference ID: 9-003-20140306

¹⁵ Planning Practice Guidance, Duty to cooperate, Paragraph 010 Reference ID: 9-010-20140306

- 2.15 The NPPG advises that authorities submit robust evidence of the efforts they have made to cooperate on strategic cross boundary matters. This could be in the form of a statement submitted to the examination. Evidence should include details about who the authority has cooperated with, the nature and timing of cooperation and how it has influenced the local plan.
- 2.16 Where Local Planning Authorities are at difference stages of local plan preparation, the NPPG states that
- “...the respective Local Planning Authorities should try to enter into formal agreements, signed by their elected members, demonstrating their long term commitment to a jointly agreed strategy on cross boundary matters. Inspectors will expect to see these agreements at the examination. A key element of the examination will be to ensure that there is sufficient certainty through the agreements that an effective strategy will be in place for strategic matters when the relevant local plans are adopted¹⁶.

Other relevant plans and strategies

- 2.17 Relevant plans and strategies of our neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies have been reviewed to inform the preparation of our Local Plan 2031. A review of relevant plans and strategies has also been carried out to identify cross-boundary issues to inform this topic paper. The cross-boundary challenges and opportunities identified through this review are presented in Section 4, along with proposed policy responses and future actions to address these issues.
- 2.18 Plans and strategies produced by our neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies also contain relevant cross-boundary issues that have to be taken into account in the preparation our Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Such plans include: Strategic Economic Plan prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Transport Plan prepared by the County Council as Highways Authority.
- 2.19 A review of relevant plans and strategies has therefore been carried out to identify cross-boundary issues. A summary of this review is presented in Section 4, along with proposed policy responses and future actions to address these issues.

¹⁶ Planning Practice Guidance, Duty to cooperate, Paragraph 017 Reference ID: 9-017-20140306

3. Evidence

- 3.1 This section summarises the steps we have taken to meet the requirements of the duty-to-cooperate, including taking account of responses to formal consultation exercises, reviewing relevant plans and strategies of neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies and meeting with them, and continuing our involvement with strategic bodies such as the Oxfordshire Growth Board (superseding the former Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership).

Summary of previous consultation stages and key issues

- 3.2 As part of our statutory consultation processes during the preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 we have carried out formal consultation with all the required and relevant neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies as listed in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of this topic paper. This consultation was carried out in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement¹⁷.
- 3.3 As part of developing the Local Plan 2031 we have consulted at a number of key stages listed in paragraph 1.4.
- 3.4 Responses to these previous consultation stages were taken into account in the preparation of the Publication Version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (November 2014). A summary of these consultation stages is available on the council website¹⁸. Specific comments relating to Vale's duty to cooperate included:
- concerns that Vale would need to address some or all of the un-met need expected to arise from Oxford City and potentially from other neighbouring authorities in the housing market area
 - some comments raised the point that Vale's Local Plan was proceeding prematurely in relation to the above point and questioned its soundness as a result
 - some general comments in support of the inclusion of a policy in the local plan looking at addressing Oxford's un-met need
 - Oxford City Council objected to the Housing Supply Update consultation in that it did not make provision for any unmet Oxford City needs
 - concerns raised by the public with respect to the proposed "Eastern Villages" developments within the administrative boundary of Swindon Borough Council close to the Vale's western boundary. Concerns of the impact that this would have on the rural setting of villages in the Western Vale Sub-Area and also the impact it would have on the local and wider transport network, such as the A420.

¹⁷ Statement of Community Involvement 2009: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale/sci-adopted-dec-o9-finaltcm4-7421.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.whitehorsedc.uk/evidence>

In addition, concerns were raised as to the impact of the proposed strategic sites at Faringdon and Shrivenham on the same road network

- fears about the stress development outside of Oxfordshire will place on county-wide infrastructure, including transport and water/wastewater treatment catchments that occur across administrative boundaries
- a request for clear and demonstrable cooperation to take place between relevant authorities regarding the expansion of Oxford Brookes University
- some commented on the need for a strategic review of the entire Oxford Green Belt rather than a local review
- comments received that some of Vale's housing target should be accommodated outside of their administrative area due to the constrained nature of the district due to flooding, Green Belt and AONB
- comment from Oxfordshire County Council stating that they will continue the partnership working with the Vale of White Horse District Council to overcome the issues raised by planned growth to enable timely preparation of the Local Plan, and
- support from Thames Water stating the importance of working with neighbouring authorities to ensure that sufficient water supply and wastewater treatment capacity is available for all development.

Ongoing engagement

3.5 In addition to the formal consultation processes described above, we have also engaged with neighbouring authorities, and the other prescribed bodies on cross-boundary matters, throughout the preparation of the Local Plan 2031. Our engagement activities are summarised below and fall into the following main categories:

- Oxfordshire Growth Board (previously the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership or SPIP)
- Local Transport Board
- Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers Group
- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal
- Health and Well-Being Board
- Joint working with South Oxfordshire District Council
- Joint working on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- Joint working on a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment with South Oxfordshire and Oxford City Council
- Other one-to-one meetings with councils in Oxfordshire
- Engagement with Swindon Borough Council and Western Vale Villages relating to proposed growth to the east of Swindon within Swindon Borough
- Science Vale Partnership

- Working with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford County Council to prepare the Science Vale Area Action Plan in progress
 - Collaborative work to prepare the Vale's Infrastructure Delivery Plan
 - North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners
 - Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership
 - Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership
- 3.6 Early engagement has ensured that any relevant comments have been taken on board during the preparation of the Local Plan 2031. This has helped to ensure the Local Plan 2031 is robust and minimises the risk of major issues being raised later in the process or during more formal consultation periods.

Oxfordshire Growth Board (incorporating the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership)

- 3.7 The Oxfordshire Growth Board is a Joint Committee charged with the delivery, on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership, the projects agreed in the City Deal and Growth Deal that fall to the councils, working collaboratively to deliver.
- 3.8 It also exists to advise on matters of collective interest, to seek agreement on local priorities and influence relevant local, regional and national bodies. As a forum for liaison on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and infrastructure issues across Oxfordshire it supersedes the former Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP).
- 3.9 Growth Board members include Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire District Councils, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Non-voting members include Local Enterprise Partnership, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, the Science and Technology Facilities Council Harwell, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority Culham, Oxfordshire Skills Board plus Network Rail and the Highways Agency when considering Local Transport Board Issues. The Growth Board also liaises with other stakeholders including the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency and Natural England.
- 3.10 The Growth Board (then as SPIP) members and stakeholders worked together to prepare the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan (LIP) in March 2010. This was updated in May 2013¹⁹. The LIP sets out a

¹⁹

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/ourworkwithcommunities/oxfordshirepartnership/spatialplanninginfrastructure/LIP%20May%202013.pdf>

shared vision and priorities for delivering housing growth, economic development, regeneration and infrastructure to 2030. The LIP identifies priority employment-led economic development schemes at Bicester Business Park, Oxford and within the Science Vale area.

- 3.11 The Growth Board supported the Local Enterprise Partnership on the production of the Strategic Economic Plan 2014²⁰ and EU Investment Strategy 2014²¹ and also works with the Local Transport Board.

Growth Board (SPIP) and the Duty to Cooperate

- 3.12 The Vale of White Horse supported by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and South Oxfordshire arranged a workshop held in October 2012 on the duty to cooperate in Oxfordshire, attended by Growth Board (then SPIP) councillor representatives and senior officers from the Oxfordshire authorities and other relevant bodies.
- 3.13 Amongst other things this meeting paved the way for
- agreement to jointly update the 2007 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and
 - the completion in September 2013 of an Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation agreed by all Oxfordshire council leaders²².
- 3.14 The Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation is attached as Appendix 2. It sets out processes for the 'duty-to-cooperate' and in particular the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This is the primary mechanism by which the council is engaging under the Duty to Cooperate with the wider Oxfordshire housing market area to consider and agree how any unmet need from Oxford City or elsewhere in the housing market area will be accommodated in the other Oxfordshire authorities.
- 3.15 Importantly, the process outlined in the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation was considered in the context of the examination of the Cherwell Local Plan. Whilst that examination was suspended to reconvene in December 2014, the Inspector's note (Appendix 3) stated that

"...the tests of legal compliance and in relation to the "duty to co-operate" are considered to have been met by the Council, to date, with no compelling evidence to indicate otherwise... albeit the plan is likely to require an early review once the established process for considering the full strategic planning implications of the 2014 SHMA, including for any unmet needs in Oxford City, has been fully considered jointly by all the Oxfordshire Councils.

²⁰ <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-strategic-economic-plan>

²¹ <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/eu-strategy>

²² <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/spatial-planning-and-infrastructure-partnership>

- 3.16 The Oxfordshire authorities are working through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, with critical friend support including a senior planning inspector, to devise a robust methodology and process to determine how any unmet need shall be accommodated within the county / housing market area.
- 3.17 In meeting any unmet need, reasonable alternative options will need to be considered, with appropriate regard to national planning policy, planning regulations and guidance; the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations and the Habitats Directive (Habitats Regulations Assessment) to establish how and where any un-met need might best be accommodated within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. With effective cooperation this process is likely to take 12-18 months to complete.
- 3.18 However, in view of the scale housing needed in this district, the national economic importance of the Science Vale area and the current district lack of a five year housing land supply, we consider it unreasonable to delay progress on our own local plan whilst the appropriate solution to meeting needs elsewhere in the housing market area is identified. The Council will therefore first seek to meet its own housing needs in full, to help ensure that the needs of both the district and the housing market area as a whole are met as quickly as possible.
- 3.19 While it is important that Vale progresses with the adoption of its own Local Plan for the reasons stated above, it is also important that in parallel we are proactive in working with all the Oxfordshire authorities to determine the quantum of unmet housing need for the whole of the Oxfordshire area, and we are committed to doing so. This will include an early local plan review if required.

Local Transport Board

- 3.20 In 2012, the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed proposals to devolve funding for local major transport schemes, initially for a 4 year period (2015-2019) to new 'Local Transport Bodies'.
- 3.21 A Local Transport Board (LTB)²³ was subsequently established for Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire County Council remains the accountable body with funding to be managed as part of the capital programme; however the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would be involved, through the LTB, in the identification and prioritisation of schemes to ensure that this funding helps to facilitate economic development.

²³ <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-local-transport-board-0>

- 3.22 The LTB is comprised of members from Oxfordshire County Council, the five district councils, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Board and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Board. Department of Transport, Highways Agency and Network Rail have standing invitations to attend LTB meetings as observers.

Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers Group

- 3.23 The Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers Group (OPPO) comprises senior planning policy officers from the four district councils, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. The group exists to enable an open conversation about strategic planning issues. It provides a forum to initiate co-ordinated joint working by the relevant authorities, such as that relating to growth at Didcot, and the commissioning of the joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment for Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.
- 3.24 The OPPO group acts as a technical and advisory resource for the Oxfordshire Growth Board and the work of the group feeds into that of the Growth Board in an informal manner. An important example is that OPPO members were the core steering group for the Oxfordshire SHMA and supporting economic forecasting, working with other relevant officers and in particular the SPIP coordinator.

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

- 3.25 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was formally launched in March 2011.²⁴ The LEP seeks to drive economic development across the county, working with businesses, academia and the public sector to encourage innovation led growth. The LEP reports to the Local Enterprise Board (LEB). The Oxfordshire Growth Board has leader representation on the LEP Board.

Oxford & Oxfordshire City Deal

- 3.26 Oxford City and Oxfordshire were awarded 'City Deal' status in February 2013 following a successful joint bid involving all Oxfordshire authorities, the two universities (Oxford Brookes University and University of Oxford), and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

²⁴ <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/about-oxfordshire-local-enterprise-partnership>

- 3.27 The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal was published in January 2014²⁵ and sets out the actions the region will take to create new jobs, support research and business, and improve housing and transport. Key projects include:
- speeding up the development of homes across the county
 - helping small and medium enterprises to get better support through a Growth Hub
 - improvements to local roads and transport, including the first phase of the new “Science Transit” public transport scheme by focussing on the major pinch points in the network, such as the A34 between Abingdon and south Oxford and the access into Oxford from the A34 along the Oxford Southern Bypass.
 - creating more than 500 new apprenticeships for young people
- 3.28 The Local Plan has taken into account the implications of City Deal including that the core project outputs are factored into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which informs the Local Plan. The IDP sets out how approximately £6million of City Deal funding is to be utilised in major infrastructural improvements across Science Vale to enable and support planned growth.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 3.29 The Health and Wellbeing Board is a partnership between Oxfordshire County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch Oxfordshire²⁶, who identify the best methods for improving health and wellbeing of the people across the county, and in particular those with health problems or in difficult circumstances. The Oxfordshire Growth Board liaises with this Board on strategic matters.

Joint working with South Oxfordshire District Council

- 3.30 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have been working together since 2005. The two councils share a management team and have now integrated most of their services. Whilst there are two planning policy teams at this stage, there is a shared planning policy manager and head of planning, and the two councils work closely together on cross-boundary planning issues.
- 3.31 The boundary between the two districts is closely drawn around the town of Didcot, which given it is a focus for growth, has resulted in the need to liaise closely with South Oxfordshire on issues relating to this area in particular. Most significantly this includes the joint preparation

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-oxford-and-oxfordshire>

²⁶ Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an independent organisation comprised of members of the local community. More information is available at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

of a Science Vale Action Plan to ensure a coherent and coordinated plan for growth, including a spatial framework for growth, a single set of policies relating to growth in Science Vale in both districts, a single approach to leisure and sports provision and a joint IDP.

- 3.32 South's existing Core Strategy identifies that 6.5 hectares of employment land is to be provided in the Vale of White Horse district on land adjacent to Didcot to support the housing allocations proposed in the core strategy. This has been accommodated into Vale's Local Plan 2031 Part 1 through the allocation of employment land on the former Didcot A Power Station site.

Joint working on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- 3.33 We have worked together with Oxfordshire County Council and the other local planning authorities in the county to prepare an updated joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the housing market area. This work provides a robust assessment of the sub-regional housing market and housing need and demand in Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire Growth Board has a co-ordinating role in the delivery of this strategically important issue. Additional economic forecasting was commissioned jointly with all Oxfordshire authorities as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership in line with the NPPG. The SHMA and economic forecasting work was published in March 2014²⁷.
- 3.34 As part of the preparation of the Oxfordshire SHMA, steering group representatives met with adjoining housing market areas including the Berkshire authorities and Swindon to discuss whether the Oxfordshire SHMA should be taking into account any unmet needs arising elsewhere. No matters requiring attention in the Vale local plan were identified.
- 3.35 Work has progressed since the publication of the SHMA, with each Local Planning Authority working to assess the extent to which they can address their own objectively assessed housing need within their respective administrative boundaries. Should a figure for unmet need be identified by one or more authority, then further cooperation will follow to ensure that this is delivered in the most sustainable location within the Housing Market Area in accordance with the process and principles outlined in the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation.
- 3.36 The Housing Topic Paper sets out how the local plan addresses the findings of the SHMA.

²⁷ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031/evidence-base/strategi>

Joint working on a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment

- 3.37 We commissioned a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment jointly with Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. This work was carried out by Opinion Research Services and was published in February 2013. It identifies the accommodation needs for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities across the three districts.
- 3.38 An update to this study has been published alongside the Local Plan 2031 Part 1²⁸. The three councils continue to engage with one another to ensure that progress is made with respect to the identification of suitable sites to accommodate future need up to 2031.

Other one-to-one meetings with councils in Oxfordshire

- 3.39 The Vale of White Horse District Council has met from time to time with other Oxfordshire councils on a one-to-one basis on matters of common interest. The Council wrote to the other Oxfordshire local planning authorities in the summer of 2014 to establish whether there were any new matters that the Vale should take into account under the duty to cooperate in the emerging local plan. No new issues were raised; however Oxford City re-iterated points made in their public previous consultation response in relation to the Vale local plan needing to address housing needs Oxford City did not expect to be able to meet, and the urgency in meeting those needs.
- 3.40 Oxford City also updated the Council in relation to the work in progress on their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to identify how much of Oxford's objectively assessed need could be met within its own boundaries.

Engagement with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire

- 3.41 The Vale of White Horse District Council and Swindon Borough Council have worked together to identify and address cross boundary matters. Officers from both councils and Oxfordshire County Council met in February 2013 to discuss potential impacts of proposed development to the east of Swindon on the Vale's western communities. We responded to the consultation on the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Pre-submission Document and, more recently, we submitted comments to the Eastern Villages Supplementary Planning Document.

²⁸ www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

- 3.42 In March and April 2014, two statements of common ground were signed. The first was between Swindon Borough Council and Vale of White Horse District Council with both councils confirming their intentions and expected ability to meet their own respective housing needs (as then understood) within their own administrative areas²⁹. For Vale of White Horse, this included the revised target figure arising from the SHMA. The second was between Swindon Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and Western Vale Villages³⁰. This agreement committed the councils to cooperative working on the A420 corridor including that Oxfordshire County Council would prepare a route-based strategy for the A420. It also commits to any major applications that require a transport assessment or transport statement to take into account the planned growth in both authorities.
- 3.43 A further meeting was held with Swindon and Wiltshire in September 2014 to discuss any potential new issues or needs that may need to be addressed within the emerging Vale local plan under the duty to cooperate. No such issues were raised although there will be future cross boundary working as Swindon undertakes an early review of its recently examined local plan including consideration of longer term growth options.

Science Vale Partnership

- 3.44 Science Vale extends east-west across southern Oxfordshire from Culham and Didcot to Wantage and Grove. Science Vale is an internationally significant location for innovation and science based research and business. The two key Science Vale business sites within the Vale are the science and innovation campuses at Harwell Campus and Milton Park. Sites within Harwell Campus and Milton Park were awarded Enterprise Zone status in 2011, following a bid led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 3.45 The council is a member of the Science Vale Partnership, which is a constituent member of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Other partners include Harwell Campus, Milton Park, the Science and Technology Facilities Council, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (Culham Science Centre), Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

²⁹ <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/planningpolicy/ep-planning-localdev/localplanexamination/Documents/Statement%20of%20Common%20Ground%20-%20Vale%20of%20the%20White%20Horse.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/planningpolicy/ep-planning-localdev/localplanexamination/Documents/Statement%20of%20Common%20Ground%20-%20Vale%20of%20White%20Horse,%20Oxfordshire%20County%20Council%20and%20Swindon%20Borough%20Council.pdf>

- 3.46 The Science Vale Partnership is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the delivery of the Enterprise Zone. The council works with the Partnership to deliver growth in the area.

Science Vale Area Action Plan

- 3.47 The Science Vale Area Action Plan is a local plan which is being jointly prepared by Vale of White Horse District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.
- 3.48 The Science Vale Area Action Plan will cover the towns of Didcot in South Oxfordshire and Wantage in Vale of White Horse, and a number of neighbouring parishes which contain important employment land (such as Harwell Oxford, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre).
- 3.49 The purpose of this document is to support the emerging Local Plan 2031 and adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy by ensuring the effective delivery and implementation of housing, employment and large infrastructure projects in the Science Vale area.
- 3.50 Didcot has been identified as a New Growth Point. Within the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 6,300 homes have been allocated within South Oxfordshire at Didcot. There is also a need for significant regeneration with proposals for improvements to the central area of the town, the Orchard Centre and at Didcot railway station.
- 3.51 It is important that the strategic growth across these two authorities is delivered as one cohesive package, including in terms of infrastructure provision, and the Science Vale Area Action Plan seeks to achieve this. Progress of the document continues alongside Vale's Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and South Oxfordshire's review of their adopted Core Strategy.

Vale of White Horse Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 3.52 An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared to support the delivery of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. It sets out the infrastructure requirements of the district in order to accommodate the envisaged growth over the plan period. This includes:
- transportation: roads, bus routes, rail network;
 - education facilities: schools, colleges, universities, adult learning centres;
 - utilities: water, waste water treatment;
 - community facilities: libraries, sports and leisure facilities, community centres;
 - health care: hospitals, local GP surgeries and other facilities;

- emergency & essential services: fire, police and ambulance facilities;
- green spaces: playing fields and sport pitches, wildlife areas; and
- communication systems: mobile phone coverage, super fast broadband etc.

3.53 The collation of this information required consultation with and feedback from a wide range of infrastructure providers including prescribed bodies, a process which has been ongoing throughout the development of the Local Plan 2031. The IDP is a living document and will continue to evolve through regular monitoring of the Local Plan 2031 and it will be updated where appropriate. Some of the key infrastructure providers which the council has worked closely with include:

- Oxfordshire County Council
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail
- Thames Water
- Oxfordshire and Swindon Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS Property
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Thames Valley Police
- National Grid
- Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE)
- Southern Gas Networks
- Wales and West Utilities

North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners

3.54 The council is a member of the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners, which also includes representatives of the eight other local authorities within the AONB area, as well as representatives of Natural England, and community and parish, farming and rural business, historic environment, nature conservation and recreation and tourism interests.

3.55 We have taken account of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2009-2014³¹ in drafting the proposed landscape policy in the Local Plan consultation document (Core Policy 34) and have included a reference to both the Management Plan and the AONB Landscape Character Assessment³² within the proposed policy.

³¹ The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2009-2014 is available at:
<http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/About-Us/aonb-management-plan.html>

³² The North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment is available at:
http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/uploads/docs/publications/Landscape_publications/LCA-Chapters/Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%201%20-%20INTRODUCTION%20.pdf

Further feedback has been provided by the council towards the emerging AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, to better reflect the importance of Science Vale as a key growth area, and in particular with the internationally significant Harwell Campus.

- 3.56 The Management Board (and Natural England) raised concerns with respect to the strategic site allocations adjacent to Harwell Campus and the impact that these would have on the character and setting of the AONB. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was conducted to explore these concerns in greater depth. It identified that, with suitable mitigation, some of the land which was previously proposed for strategic site allocations could adequately provide housing without significantly impacting the nature and setting of the AONB. The work was discussed in depth at a meeting with Natural England on the 7 July 2014 and with the North Wessex Downs AONB Unit on the 7 August 2014.

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership

- 3.57 'Wild Oxfordshire' is Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership which sits under the umbrella of the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF). The Countryside Officer is a trustee of the ONCF and has provided a valuable contribution into the preparation of the Local Plan 2031.

Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership

- 3.58 The council is a partner in the Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership which was formed in 2001 to oversee and direct the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal. The partnership also includes prescribed bodies such as Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and Oxfordshire County Council. It is envisaged that the restoration will provide, amongst other elements:
- accessible routes on the tow path for everyone in the community
 - a long distance footpath and cycleway
 - a route for narrow boats, canoes etc. that connects into the wider canal/navigable river network
 - a means of water transfer to alleviate flooding
- 3.59 The Canal Partnership has produced a delivery strategy to fully restore the canal. The aim is to restore the canal to a navigable state. The historic line of the canal passes through the district from Swindon to Abingdon-on-Thames via Wantage. A new diversion is proposed south of Abingdon-on-Thames. The strategy is in need of updating to ensure that the restoration project remains viable for the plan period and this

will be assessed in more detail through Local Plan 2031 Part 2. Vale of White Horse District Council will continue to be involved in the partnership and liaise closely with the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust to ensure that a viable outcome can be achieved for the district.

Other organisations

- 3.60 Other bodies and organisations, such as Thames Water and town and parish councils, have also been consulted during the preparation of the Local Plan 2031. Although they are not prescribed bodies for the purposes of the duty-to-cooperate, their views are important to us, and have informed the preparation of the Local Plan 2031 to date.

4. Issues (challenges and opportunities)

- 4.0 We have identified a number of key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities through the review of relevant plans and strategies, through previous consultation exercises, and through ongoing engagement with our neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies. These are summarised briefly below:

Housing

1. ensure a robust approach to meeting the future housing needs of the Oxfordshire housing market area (HMA), including any unmet need that may arise from neighbouring authorities in particular Oxford city
2. ensure housing and employment development and accompanying infrastructure is comprehensively planned for across Science Vale, including strategically important locations such as Milton Park, Harwell Campus and Wantage and Grove within the district and the town of Didcot and the employment site of Culham Science Centre within South Oxfordshire, and
3. ensure that the accommodation needs of the gypsy, traveller and travelling show people communities are planned for appropriately across the Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City districts

Infrastructure

4. ensure necessary supporting infrastructure accompanies the growth proposed in the Local Plan 2031, and more specifically
5. ensure development proposed at the Swindon Eastern Villages does not negatively impact upon the Vale, including the A420, and
6. facilitate the delivery of increased skills and knowledge within Science Vale to provide opportunities for local people to gain the skills needed to access the jobs available.

Transport

7. ensure the Science Vale Area Strategy³³ is delivered to support the planned growth across the wider area, and
8. ensure proposed development (both within the Vale and in neighbouring districts) does not unduly add to the congestion already present on the A34 without adequate mitigation.

Employment

9. help deliver the economic objectives of the county, such as those set out by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership³⁴

³³ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/local-transport-plan-2011-2030>

10. ensure sufficient employment growth is allocated at Didcot in the Vale to complement the housing allocations made by South Oxfordshire District Council and support the growth of Didcot,
11. future demand for employment land in Oxford may need to be met outside the city's boundary³⁵. This may lead to increased demand over and above the job growth planned for within the district in particular at Science Vale

Retail

12. redevelopment and regeneration of Oxford's West End may lead to expenditure leakage from the Vale, particularly from the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe sub-area.

Water Supply

13. work with Thames Water to ensure that the necessary enhancements to the water and wastewater network keep apace with the phasing and location of planned growth, and that land is safeguarded for a potential new reservoir whilst it remains a reasonable alternative option to help meet the long term needs of the Thames catchment area.

Natural Environment

14. ensure any development pressures (e.g. A34 traffic emissions) that may affect the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are adequately assessed and mitigated
15. help deliver the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Thames River Basin Management Plan
16. help deliver the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
17. continue to preserve the protected view cones of the Oxford spires, which extend into the Vale, and
18. help facilitate the viable restoration of the Wilts & Berks canal.

Minerals and Waste

19. recognise that land will be safeguarded for mineral resources, aggregates, rail depots and waste management facilities through the emerging Oxfordshire Waste and Minerals Core Strategy³⁶.

³⁴ www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk

³⁵ Oxford Core Strategy 2026, adopted March 2011, paragraph 8.1.7, available at: http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Core_Strategy_occw.htm

³⁶ Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Submission Document, October 2012, available at: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy>

- 4.1 The above challenges and opportunities are set out in more detail in Table 4.1, along with what has been done to inform the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 4.2 All policies relating to the duty to cooperate have been subject to the sustainability appraisal process³⁷ which forms part of our evidence base. It is essential that outcomes arising from the duty to cooperate process can be achieved in a sustainable manner and do not adversely impact upon the district or its neighbouring areas.

³⁷ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

Table 4.1: Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities, relevant content of the publication version of LPP1, and how the Duty-to-Cooperate has been met

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Housing		
1. Need to ensure a robust approach to meeting the future housing needs of the Oxfordshire housing market area, including any unmet need that may arise from neighbouring authorities.	The housing proposals in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 are based on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire. This identifies the objectively assessed need for each local planning authority. For Vale of White Horse, the objectively assessed need is 20,560 dwellings for the plan period 2011 to 2031.	<p>We have worked as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Board/SPIP to deliver the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Each authority is currently seeking to identify how best to deal with their respective objectively assessed need. We continue to cooperate with our neighbouring authorities to ensure that the needs of the housing market area are addressed in full.</p> <p>We drafted a core policy as part of our February 2014 consultation entitled "Oxfordshire Un-Met Housing Need". This has evolved to form Core Policy 2 of Local Plan 2031 Part 1, entitled "Cooperation on unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire". It clearly reaffirms our active commitment to the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation and to timely and effective joint working and what we expect that to involve should there be a need to accommodate further housing in the Vale arising from unmet need from other authorities in the market area. The Vale Local Part 1 commits to an early local plan review if required to address unmet HMA needs. Oxford city have indicate they expect to have needs they cannot meet and are in the process of updating their SHLAA as part of clarifying the scale of their unmet need. Whilst this work continues and an HMA-wide solution is cooperatively identified to address unmet needs, and in view of the scale of Vale's own need and lack of a five year housing land supply, we consider that the needs of the Vale and the HMA as a whole are best</p>

		served by first meeting our own housing needs including backlog as quickly as possible.
2. Need to ensure that housing and employment development and accompanying infrastructure is comprehensively planned across Science Vale, including the town of Didcot and the employment site of Culham Science Centre within South Oxfordshire	Both Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District council recognise the scale of growth envisaged for the town of Didcot with strategic developments on both sides of the administrative boundary. Vale of White Horse have identified ten strategic site allocations in the South East Vale sub-area with a clear focus for housing growth to support the envisaged employment growth in Science Vale. This level of growth has been informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire.	<p>Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils have a shared management structure and both councils are committed to the preparation of a new Science Vale Area Action Plan. This is a joint development plan document that will have a strong focus on delivery and implementation and on successful place making, ensuring a high quality of development through the preparation of strategic and an urban design framework. It will inform updating of the Vale IDP and superseded joint Didcot Area IDP on a cross-boundary basis</p> <p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 includes supporting text setting out the scale and purpose of the Science Vale Area Action Plan and forms part of the Local Development Scheme for both local planning authorities.</p>
3. Need to ensure that the accommodation needs of the gypsy, traveller and travelling show people communities are planned for appropriately across the Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City districts.	A joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment was published early in 2013 and an update has been prepared to inform the publication version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.	<p>We will continue working with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council to ensure the accommodation needs of the gypsy, traveller and travelling show people are planned for appropriately.</p> <p>Core Policy 27 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 deals with meeting the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Infrastructure		
4. Need to facilitate the delivery of increased skills and knowledge within Science Vale to provide opportunities for local people to gain the skills needed to access the jobs available.	<p>It is an objective of the Local Enterprise Board for further and higher education facilities to be provided in Science Vale. There is a commitment for a science focussed University Technical College (UTC) to be provided at Great Western Park to the west of Didcot³⁸. There is also a requirement in our site templates for a 100 pupil special needs school to be provided at Valley Park.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council has also produced a school expansion study which highlights where levels of growth in the district will require the expansion of existing education facilities and where new facilities would be required.</p>	<p>We continue to work with the Science Vale partnership to address this issue.</p> <p>We continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council to secure enhanced/additional school provision where development generates demand which cannot be met by existing facilities.</p> <p>Core Policy 30 (Further and Higher Education) supports the development and enhancement of further and higher education facilities in the Vale</p> <p>Core Policy 9 (Harcourt Hill Campus) specifically supports proposals for the redevelopment of the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill campus where brought forward through a site-wide masterplan that sets a clear vision for the future use of the site.</p>
5. Need to ensure that the necessary supporting infrastructure accompanies the growth proposed in Local Plan 2031 Part 1.	We have liaised with key infrastructure/service providers since we began reviewing our local plan in 2007. This has culminated in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies the publication version of our Local Plan.	<p>We will continue to work with infrastructure/service providers, including Oxfordshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group, to review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as required, and to influence the updating of the County Council Local Transport Plan and (via our membership of the Growth Board) the identified Oxfordshire Local Investment Priorities.</p> <p>Core Policy 7 - "Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services" sets out key criteria to ensure that</p>

³⁸ <http://www.utcoxfordshire.org.uk/utc-oxfordshire/location/>

		infrastructure is delivered in a timely and sustainable manner alongside growth. Our site templates (Local Plan Appendix A) also identify the key infrastructural and service requirements which are to be provided within or as part of the strategic site allocations.
6. Need to ensure that the development proposed at the Swindon Eastern Villages does not negatively impact upon residents of the Vale, and that appropriate infrastructure is planned to mitigate the impacts of development on the surrounding road network, particularly the A420.	<p>Responses to our previous consultations on our Local Plan, particularly in February 2013 highlighted growing concerns over development to the east of Swindon along the A420 and the effect that it would have on the existing and immediate network of roads in the Western Vale sub area.</p> <p>The cross boundary challenges with Swindon have been identified and noted through Swindon's examination process and includes Statements of Common Ground which have been agreed by all relevant parties.</p> <p>The Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) study includes consideration of the cumulative impact of development in the Vale and in Swindon and other surrounding areas on the transport network.</p>	<p>We responded to the consultation on the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Pre-Submission Document and, more recently, commented on proposals coming forward for the Eastern Villages reiterating the need for the timely delivery of infrastructure alongside development. We also reiterated that any development in that area should not have a detrimental impact on the sensitive landscape of Lowland Vale, with mitigation and planting coming forward before or alongside any development. We have had a number of Duty to Cooperate meetings and correspondence with Swindon Borough Council and also with Wiltshire Council throughout 2013 and 2014, and we made representations to and participated in the examination of the Swindon Local Plan.</p> <p>As a result, two Statements of Common Ground were signed. The first was an agreement that both authorities would seek to address their own housing needs in full within their respective administrative areas. The second was signed by Swindon Borough Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Western Vale Villages. This committed Oxfordshire County Council to preparing an A420 route strategy that would look at the growth predicted across both authorities and identify key road and junction improvements. The agreement also committed future major planning applications within the area of concern to prepare traffic impact assessments, where necessary, to account for the predict growth of the Eastern Villages</p>

		<p>and the strategic site allocations in the Western Vale sub area.</p> <p>We will also seek to liaise with Swindon Borough Council in relation to their Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule to ensure that these documents take account of any mitigation measures required.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has identified land along the A420 which is safeguarded for junction improvements. This is outlined in Core Policy 21 with the safeguarded land identified in Appendix E.</p>
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Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Transport		
<p>7. Need to ensure that the Science Vale Area Strategy is delivered in order to support the planned growth across the wider area.</p>	<p>The Science Vale Area Strategy, as set out in the Local Transport Plan 3 (Oxfordshire County Council) sets the transport requirements for this key cross boundary growth area.</p> <p>Local authorities have been working together through the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to identify funding mechanisms for this infrastructure. As part of this work the package has been identified as one of the top priority projects within the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan.</p> <p>Further detail of this is outlined within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which supports the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (previously SPIP) and other partners to ensure that the Science Vale Area Strategy delivers the necessary transport requirements to allow for the envisaged growth to occur over the plan period and beyond.</p> <p>The IDP and Core Policy 17 – “Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale sub area” sets out the key infrastructure requirements including improvements to the strategic road network, and how they will be delivered. Such examples include improvements to junctions with the A34 and upgrades/improvements to the A417 connecting this area with Reading to the east and Faringdon to the west.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
<p>8. Need to ensure that proposed development (both within the Vale and in neighbouring districts) does not unduly add to the congestion already present on the A34 without adequate mitigation.</p>	<p>The Council have prepared an Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) Study to inform the preparation of the Vale Local Plan 2031. This has identified a number of impacts on the highway network associated with increased growth.</p>	<p>The Council have and continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council and the Highway Agency to deliver a comprehensive package of highway mitigation (for example new roads or junction configurations) to minimise any harmful impacts associated with new development. Work is also ongoing to improve public transport, both increased frequency and new services and to deliver an enhanced cycle network.</p> <p>The work supporting the Local Plan 2031 including the IDP is designed to mitigate impacts associated with development within the Vale as far as possible to minimise harmful impacts on the A34, which is clearly important for both local and strategic journeys.</p> <p>However, the Council are also committed to working with Oxfordshire County Council and the Highways Agency to develop a Route Based Strategy for the A34 to ensure this route also continues to function satisfactorily.</p> <p>Core Policies 12 and 17 safeguard land for strategic highway improvements to the A34 by means of the provision of a diamond interchange at the Lodge Hill and Chilton junctions and to deliver improvements at the Milton junction.</p> <p>Core Policy 34 commits the Vale of White Horse to continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency and other partners to develop and implement a Route Based Strategy for the A34.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Employment		
<p>9. Need to help deliver the economic objectives of the county, such as those set out by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.</p>	<p>The Strategic Economic Plan seeks to deliver 85,600 new jobs across Oxfordshire by 2031, representing a 1% increase per annum countywide. These reflect economic forecasts prepared alongside and to inform the SHMA and SEP including that 23,000 additional jobs could be created 2011-2031 in the Vale, representing a 1.5% increase per annum.</p>	<p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 identifies a combination of employment sites to provide for around 219 ha of strategic employment land. This includes the identification of 122 ha of Enterprise Zone land at Milton Park and Harwell Campus, which form part of Science Vale, an internationally significant location for innovation and science-based research and business.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 contains a number of key strategic policies promoting growth at existing employment sites while also allowing for other employment opportunities elsewhere in the district where appropriate. These include:</p> <p>Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites Core Policy 29: Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises</p> <p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 also supports skills development and infrastructure provision, as discussed under the relevant topic areas above.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners to ensure the economic objectives for the county are delivered.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
10. Need to ensure that sufficient employment growth is allocated at Science Vale to complement the housing allocations made by South Oxfordshire District Council to support the growth of Didcot.	Policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy ³⁹ includes by agreement 6.5 hectares of employment land to be provided at Didcot, within the Vale of White Horse District, in order to help meet the town's needs.	Paragraph 4.31 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 indicates that 'this 6.5 hectares is included within the 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park within Harwell Parish and contributes towards the identified requirement of 219 hectares for the Vale of White Horse District'. We will continue to work with South Oxfordshire District Council to ensure that sufficient employment land is allocated at Didcot to support the growth of the community. The Science Vale Area Action Plan will ensure that growth in Science Vale, including Didcot, will be delivered in a timely and effective manner.
11. It is likely that future demand for employment land in Oxford may need to be met outside the city's boundary.	The Oxford Core Strategy ⁴⁰ indicates that, 'in the longer term to 2026 and beyond, given the limited land supply in Oxford, the potential opportunities for strategic employment growth to meet forecast demand are likely to be outside Oxford's boundary'. This may mean increased demand for the job growth planned within the district at Science Vale. The Cambridge Econometrics Report identified the level of employment growth envisaged for the Oxfordshire housing market area, taking into account demographic and planned economic growth envisaged across the county up to 2031. It is a robust evidence base which adds clarity to the level of employment growth predicted for each local planning authority for that period of time.	The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 identifies 219 ha employment land to meet the anticipated demand in the Vale of White Horse up to 2031. This includes 6.5 ha to address the requirements of policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, as set out above. We will continue to work with the other Oxfordshire authorities to appropriately address this issue if it becomes apparent that there is additional need for Oxford's demand for employment land to be met outside the city's boundary.

³⁹ South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, adopted December 2012, available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

⁴⁰ Oxford Core Strategy 2026, adopted March 2011, paragraph 8.1.7, available at: http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Core_Strategy_occw.htm

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Retail		
<p>12. The redevelopment and regeneration of Oxford's West End will improve and enhance the already strong retail offer within Oxford City. This may further exacerbate the expenditure leakage that already occurs from the Vale, particularly from the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe sub-area, and may have implications for the redevelopment that is planned for the Abbey Shopping Centre in Abingdon-on-Thames and the Botley Central Area.</p>	<p>The Retail and Town Centre Study (and supporting addendum) published as part of the supporting material to the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 indicates that centres within the Vale should be capable of maintaining their existing comparison market share despite retail development in higher order centres, such as planned improvements in Oxford. The study notes that while development in Oxford would increase its attractiveness; this is likely to be at the expense of other higher order centres⁴¹.</p> <p>As part of this, it identifies the need for the existing centres in the district to expand their offering over the plan period.</p>	<p>The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 supports new retail development in the existing centre locations across the district. A number of specific policies support retail schemes, including:</p> <p>Core Policy 10 – “Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames” supports proposals which lead to environmental enhancement and major redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area.</p> <p>Core Policy 11 – “Botley Central Area” supports proposals for a comprehensive retail-led redevelopment and upgrading of Botley central area provided that certain criteria are met.</p> <p>Core Policy 16 – “Didcot A Power Station” supports the potential for some ancillary retail development (such as bulky goods retail) on this site, so long as it supplements an employment led scheme.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor and consider any cross-boundary implications of proposed retail developments in neighbouring authorities, including through any future updates to the Retail and Town Centre Study.</p>

⁴¹ Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, 2013, Vale of White Horse Retail and Town Centre Study

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Water supply		
<p>13. Need to work with Thames Water to ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect the water and wastewater network, and that land is safeguarded for a potential new reservoir.</p>	<p>Thames Water was consulted as part of the process of informing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which have been published as part of the supporting material to the Local Plan 2031 Part1.</p> <p>We have liaised closely with them as part of the evidence work to inform our strategic site allocations across the district.</p>	<p>Through close cooperation with Thames Water and the Environment Agency, we have prepared a Water Cycle Study which informs the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. It takes account of water catchments across administrative boundaries, particularly for the areas of Oxfordshire and Swindon. It also accounts for development in our district where treatment works lie outside of the area, in neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>The following policies are included within our Local Plan 2031 Part 1:</p> <p>Core Policy 7 – “Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services” sets out a specific set of criteria which developers will need to adhere by so that infrastructure delivery is not compromised.</p> <p>Core Policy 14 - “Upper Thames Reservoir” safeguards land for a reservoir between East Hanney, Drayton and Steventon pending the outcome of the examination of Thames Water’s Water Resources Management Plan 2019.</p> <p>Supporting text informing Core Policy 7 identifies that effective partnership working is essential between public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure infrastructure is efficiently provided and maintained.</p> <p>We will continue to work with Thames Water to ensure that future development proposals do not adversely impact the water and wastewater network. This includes engaging Thames Water together with site promoters in early housing site allocation masterplanning work to help ensure wastewater capacity issues are addressed promptly. We will also work with Thames Water on an ongoing basis regarding the potential need for a new reservoir within the district.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Natural environment		
14. Need to ensure that any development pressures at Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) caused by our strategy or arising from cumulative impacts are adequately assessed and mitigated.	Oxford Meadows SAC is located adjacent to the north eastern-boundary of Vale of White Horse district. Responses to our past consultations from Natural England highlighted this issue with us and requested to conduct further transport work to ensure that impacts from the A34 would not have an adverse impact upon Oxford Meadows.	<p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been published as part of the supporting material to the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, and includes consideration of potential effects of the proposed local plan on Oxford Meadows SAC (including recreational pressure, air quality impact and water quality impact). The HRA concludes that likely significant effects on the Oxford Meadows SAC as a result of development under the proposed Local Plan 2031 Part 1 will not occur, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>Core Policy 46 - "Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity" states that "the highest level of protection will be given to sites and species of international nature conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation and European Protected Species)</p> <p>We will continue working with partners, including Natural England and other Oxfordshire authorities, to investigate this issue further and to ensure that any development pressures at Oxford Meadows SAC are adequately addressed.</p>
15. Need to help deliver the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Thames River Basin Management Plan.	The Water Framework Directive requires that there is no deterioration in the status of water bodies and that they all achieve good ecological status by 2027. The Thames River Basin Management Plan sets out actions to help meet this obligation	<p>Local Plan 2031 Part 1, in the section entitled "Efficient Use of Natural Resources", indicates that core policies on Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainable construction will help achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive by ensuring that surface water run-off is appropriately controlled.</p> <p>Core Policy 43 – "Natural Resources" requires all</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
		<p>development proposals to, amongst other elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise water efficiently and • cause no deterioration in, and where possible, achieving improvements in water quality. <p>Our IDP identifies where water treatment upgrades are required, provision of which to the required treatment standards will help ensure that the ecological status of water bodies in the district will meet the required standards despite future increased treated waste water discharges arising from planned growth.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partners in helping to deliver the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Thames River Basin Management Plan.</p>
<p>16. Need to help deliver the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p>	<p>Natural England responded to an early consultation highlighting the need to attribute the highest level of importance to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This has been supported over the plan making process through the NPPF and also more recently through the National Planning Practice Guidance⁴².</p> <p>Further concerns were raised by Natural England, North Wessex Downs AONB unit and other stakeholders with respect to our strategic site allocations adjacent to Harwell Campus (within the AONB). More detailed landscape work was commissioned by the council in the form of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and followed up with Duty to Cooperate meetings between</p>	<p>Core Policy 44 – “Landscape” indicates that ‘high priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB and planning decisions will have regard to its setting’. The proposed policy also states that development proposals ‘should have regard to the information and advice contained in ... the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment and Management Plan’.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners and other local authorities to help deliver the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.</p>

⁴² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/landscape/>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
	Natural England and the AONB unit to discuss these concerns.	We revised our housing site allocations adjacent to Harwell campus in accordance with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment so that the impact would not significantly harm the landscape/setting of the AONB with the recommended mitigation measures. This requirement has been incorporated into the strategic site allocation templates for the two sites adjacent to Harwell campus.
17. Continue to preserve the protected view cones of Oxford, which extend into the Vale, and	Oxford City has a number of protected view cones, three of which are situated within the Vale. The view cones seek to prevent development within these areas that would either harm the landscape setting of Oxford or obscure the important skyline of the city. It is important that these remain protected.	<p>The view cones are currently protected by policy NE8 (the landscape setting of Oxford) of the Local Plan 2011. Appendix F of the Local Plan 2031 consultation document lists the Local Plan 2011 policies which we propose to continue to save, for use alongside Local Plan 2031. Policy NE8 is identified as one of the Local Plan 2011 policies which we are proposing to continue to save.</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed through Local Plan 2031 Part 2. We will consider emerging work by Oxford City Council, English Heritage and the Oxford Preservation Trust on strategic views when this becomes available.</p>
18. Opportunity to help facilitate the restoration of the section of the Wilts & Berks canal within the district.	We previously consulted on a core policy as part of our Local Plan 2029 Part 1 consultation document (February 2013). While there was support from a number of respondents to this proposed policy, including the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust, some objections were raised by landowners affected by the safeguarded route. It remains a longstanding aim of the council to support the restoration of the canal to a navigable state. However, concerns were raised that there was insufficient evidence that the scheme was viable over the plan	<p>The draft policy was removed from the publication version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. We have saved the existing policies from Local Plan 2011, namely Policies L14 and L15 and will review these as part of Local Plan Part 2.</p> <p>A section of supporting text remains in Local Plan 2031 in Chapter 6 – District Wide Policies, setting out clearly what evidence will be required to update the saved policies so that the policy is justified for inclusion in Part</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
	<p>period, and also the impact that the restoration would have on protected ecological species and mitigation steps required.</p> <p>Meetings took place with landowners and also with the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust.</p> <p>The proposed core policy 39 (The Wilts & Berks Canal) indicates that we will 'continue to safeguard a continuous route for restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal using the historic line and the diversion south of Abingdon-on-Thames'. The proposed policy goes on to state that we will 'support schemes for restoration of the canal in line with the delivery plan identified in the Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership Strategy'.</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership to ensure that future planning policy helps facilitate the viable and appropriate restoration of the canal.</p>

Key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities	Evidence which has informed these challenges and opportunities.	How has the Duty to Cooperate been met and how has it informed Local Plan 2031 Part 1
Minerals and Waste		
19. Need to recognise that land will be safeguarded for mineral resources, aggregates, rail depots and waste management facilities through the emerging Oxfordshire Waste and Minerals Core Strategy ⁴³ .	Policy W5 of the proposed Minerals and Waste Core Strategy identifies preferred areas for non-strategic waste facilities, and this includes an area around Wantage and Grove.	<p>Paragraph 6.106 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 explains that the safeguarded areas in the emerging Oxfordshire Waste and Minerals Core Strategy will be identified on the Vale's adopted policies map for reference. It goes on to state that Oxfordshire County Council will be consulted on any planning application received for development in these safeguarded areas.</p> <p>We will continue working with Oxfordshire County Council as part of delivering their Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and allocating or safeguarding future site allocations across the Vale. This will be particularly pertinent if waste management facilities are required either within the Green Belt, at Didcot A Power Station or Harwell Oxford Campus. Co-operation will also be needed to ensure that any waste facilities required in the Wantage and Grove area to meet local need are located in a suitable and appropriate location.</p>

⁴³ Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Submission Document, October 2012, available at: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy>

5. Recommendations

- 5.0 This topic paper has summarised the steps we have taken during the preparation of the publication version of Local Plan 2031 Part 1, in order to meet the requirements of the duty to cooperate. The content of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has been informed by the strategies and plans of our neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders, by responses to previous consultations, and by ongoing engagement activities such as joint working with South Oxfordshire District Council on the Science Vale Area Action Plan.
- 5.1 The topic paper has identified a number of areas where the content of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 seeks to address cross-boundary issues. It has also highlighted cross-boundary challenges and opportunities which we will seek to address through further joint working with our neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies.
- 5.2 Any options we have considered for the individual policies discussed in this paper are covered in greater detail in other, more directly relevant topic papers, which support the publication version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 5.3 The key additions or changes to the Local Plan 2031 to effectively address matters of cross boundary interest are set out in Section 4, and the highlights listed below
- introduction of a Duty to Cooperate policy in particular for dealing with the Oxfordshire un-met housing need. This reinforces our commitment to the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation and includes a commitment to timely and effective working, and if required to an early local plan review to address unmet housing need in the Oxfordshire HMA
 - commitment to joint working with South Oxfordshire on the Science Vale Area Action Plan to help coordinate and deliver planned growth and infrastructure in Science Vale including Didcot, including meeting some South Oxfordshire employment needs in the Vale of White Horse
 - cooperative working with Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency and South Oxfordshire to identify and plan for transport infrastructure requirements to deliver an updated Science Vale Area Strategy looking beyond the Local Transport Plan LPT 3
 - cooperative working with a range of infrastructure providers to inform an effective Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support planned growth

- cooperative working with Swindon Borough and Oxfordshire County Council to address the implications of growth in or near the western Vale including the A420 corridor.
- 5.4 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 will in itself form an important element of our work to meet the duty to co-operate, and may lead to the identification of further cross-boundary issues over the plan period.
- 5.5 We will continue to engage with our neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies on an ongoing basis in order to identify and address cross-boundary issues. This approach will help ensure that liaison with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies remains fully embedded within the plan-making process at the Vale.

Appendix 1: Abbreviations/ Glossary

Term	Acronym	Explanation
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	AONB	A national designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	IDP	A live document that identifies future infrastructure identified by the Council and other service providers as being needed to support the delivery of the Local Plan. It explains what is required, its cost, how and when it will be provided.
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.
Local Investment Plan	LIP	For more information please visit http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OxfordshireLocalInvestmentPlan.pdf
Local Nature Partnerships	LNP	Partnership to help local areas to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.
Local Plan 2031 Part 1	LPP1	This document contains long-term spatial vision and strategic policies that guide growth in the district.
Local Plan 2031 Part 2	LPP2	This document will contain the more detailed development management policies and site allocations for non-strategic sites.
Local Transport Board		The LTB manages the prioritisation and delivery of transport projects funded from devolved government funding. LTB is comprised of members from Oxfordshire County Council, the five district councils, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Board and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Board. Department of Transport, Highways Agency and Network Rail have standing invitations to attend LTB meetings as observers.
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied at a local level.
National Planning Practice Guidance	NPPG	A comprehensive online resource of practice guidance used to inform a wide range of planning matters, including local plan making processes.
Oxfordshire Growth Board		Joint committee including Oxford council leaders charged with the delivery of strategic growth projects and coordination on cross-boundary spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and

		infrastructure issues across Oxfordshire.
Oxfordshire Nature Partnership	ONP	Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire. For more information see http://www.oncf.org.uk/support/support.html
Planning Advisory Service	PAS	PAS is part of the Local Government Association and is funded directly by the Department of Communities and Local Government. They provide consultancy and peer support, learning events and online resources to help local authorities understand and respond to planning reform.
Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership	SPIP	Superseded by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, a forum for liaison on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport and infrastructure issues. The partnership is made up of Leaders or Cabinet/ Executive Members from each of the local authorities and the other organisations.
Special Area of Conservation	SAC	An area designated to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife under EU Directive 92/43.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	SHMA	An assessment of existing and future housing need and demand within a defined housing market area, focusing on all aspects of the housing market. More details are available in paragraph 159 of the NPPF.
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	The process of assessing the economic, social and environmental effects of a proposed plan. This process implements the requirements of the SEA Directive.
Science Vale		An area of economic growth in southern central Oxfordshire that is defined by the following locations: Didcot and Culham Science Centre (in South Oxfordshire), Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Grove (all in the Vale of White Horse District).

APPENDIX 2

Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Statement of Cooperation outlines the matters on which the six Oxfordshire local authorities will continue to cooperate. In particular, it sets out how the Parties will manage the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need.

PARTIES TO THE STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Statement of Cooperation is agreed by council Leaders from the following local authorities:
- Cherwell District Council
 - Oxford City Council
 - Oxfordshire County Council
 - South Oxfordshire District Council
 - Vale of White Horse District Council
 - West Oxfordshire District Council

PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

- 3.1 The purpose of this Statement of Cooperation is to set out the scope and structure of cooperation between the Parties on a range of issues. In particular, it outlines the process and arrangements for cooperation between local authorities should one of the Parties be unable to accommodate their objectively assessed need identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the national policy requirements in relation to planning across administrative boundaries at paragraphs 178-181. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated. The NPPF also outlines that joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of the NPPF.
- 4.2 For example in relation to housing the NPPF requires LPAs to use a valid evidence base to use a valid evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. The NPPF states that housing need should be established by conducting a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA will also identify the extent of the housing market area. The NPPF also requires that Local Plans seek to meet objectively assessed development requirements including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities.
- 4.3 The requirements of the NPPF are reinforced by the legal Duty to Cooperate introduced by the Localism Act. The duty to cooperate;
requires councils and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to planning of sustainable development;
requires councils to consider whether to enter into agreements on joint approaches or prepare joint local plans (if a LPA); and

applies to planning for strategic matters in relation to the preparation of Local Plans, and other activities that prepare the way for these activities

- 4.4 The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement of the plan preparation process and non-compliance cannot be fixed at Examination by the Planning Inspectorate – the plan cannot be adopted. In addition policies developed through the duty must also be found sound (i.e. evidence based and deliverable).

SCOPE OF COOPERATION

- 5.1 Each of the Parties will engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in any process that involves the following:
- The preparation of development plan documents
 - The preparation of other local planning documents
 - The planning and prioritisation of infrastructure and investment in Oxfordshire to support economic growth of the area
 - Activities that support any of the above so far as they relate to sustainable development or use of land that has or would impact on more than one of the Parties.
- 5.2 The engagement required of Parties includes, in particular considering whether to consult on and prepare, and enter into and publish, agreements on joint approaches to the undertaking of activities paragraph 5.1 where there are cross border issues and for LPAs considering whether to prepare joint local development documents. Parties have also agreed that they will act expediently when undertaking joint work related to the activities in paragraph 5.1 to avoid unreasonable delay.
- 5.3 A current example of implementing the requirements of this Statement is the joint work being undertaken in relation to accommodating housing need identified for Oxfordshire. The new Oxfordshire SHMA has been jointly commissioned by the Parties. The SHMA work will take place over the summer 2013. Once this technical work has established the scale of housing required across the housing market area each Local Planning Authority (LPA) must assess the implications for their own area. If we assume that an increase in housing is required, in some or all authorities, those which see an increase in need will have to assess potential new locations for housing sites. Should any of the Oxfordshire LPAs be unable to accommodate their objectively assessed need identified in the SHMA, the remaining Oxfordshire authorities must seek to accommodate this unmet need. As part of ongoing cooperation between the Parties on this issue to ensure that any unmet need is accommodated in accordance with national policy a process has been agreed and is included in Appendix One of this Statement.

COOPERATION STRUCTURE

- 6.1 The Parties will use the existing partnership arrangement of SPIP to act as a co-ordinating body for this joint working. An outline of the Duty to Cooperate structure in Oxfordshire is shown in Appendix 2.
- 6.2 The SPIP Executive meets every 6 weeks and the SPIP Board every 3 months. Additional meetings may be required to facilitate timely progression of work and this will be accommodated. SPIP will report its discussions and agreed actions back to the officers group via their Programme Manager as necessary. In addition SPIP will report its discussions and agreed actions to any or all of the following as it is deemed necessary:
- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

- Oxfordshire City Deal Bid Team

- 6.3 SPIP will be supported by an Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officer group (OPPO) to help deliver the technical work required as part of the agreed process. This group will meet every six weeks or more often as required. OPPO will provide progress updates to SPIP via the SPIP Programme Manager.
- 6.4 As part of this the Parties will ensure that the scope of cooperation identified in section 7 is applied to other bodies covered by the Duty to Cooperate. These bodies include:
- Environment Agency
 - English Heritage
 - Natural England
 - Civil Aviation Authority
 - Homes and Communities Agency
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups
 - Office of the Rail Regulator
 - Highways Agency
 - Integrated Transport Authorities
 - Highway Authorities
 - Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities outside Oxfordshire

RESOURCES

- 7.1 Each of the Parties will contribute at least one experienced planning officer to be on the OPPO group.
- 7.2 If consultants are used on a joint basis to complete work associated with this Statement their costs will be apportioned equally among the Parties. The SPIP Programme Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating authorisation from SPIP of any joint work required to complete the process.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 8.1 Subject to the rights of third parties, the Parties will share equally the intellectual property rights to all data, reports, drawings, specifications, designs, inventions or other material produced or acquired including copyrights in the course of their joint work. The Parties agree that any proposal by one of them to permit a third party to utilise the documents and materials produced by the partnership shall be subject to the agreement of all other Parties. Any changes, amendments or updates made to the documents and materials, if made under the terms of the Statement of Cooperation, shall be jointly owned by the Parties.

REQUESTS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

- 9.1 Each of the Parties will deal with Freedom of Information requests in accordance with the requirements of the Act. To ensure that all relevant information is issued, if any of the Parties receives a Freedom of Information request in respect of joint work associated with the Statement of Cooperation the request will be shared with the other Parties via the SPIP Programme Manager at the earliest opportunity.

DURATION

- 10.1 This Statement of Cooperation will remain in perpetuity. The content of this Statement will be reviewed annually or at the request in writing of one of the Parties. Amendments will require the agreement of all the Parties.

LIMITATIONS

- 11.1 The Statement of Cooperation is an operational document. It is not a formally binding legal agreement and the partnership is not a legal entity. This Statement does not fetter the discretion of any of the Parties in the exercise of any of their statutory powers and duties.

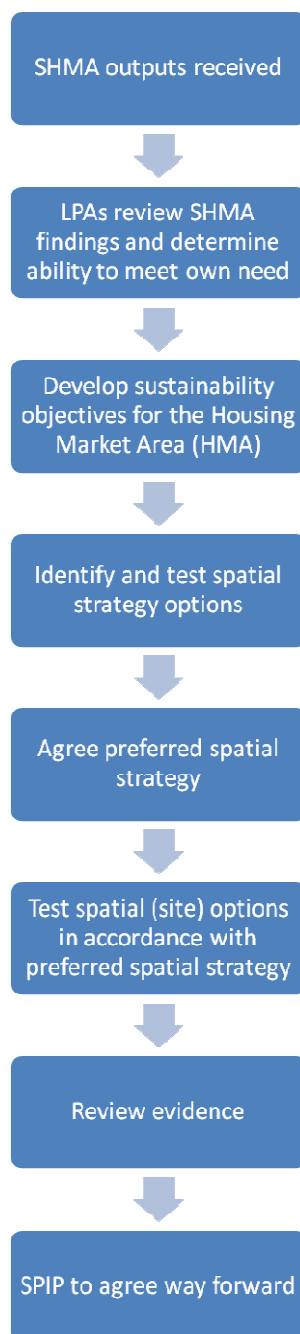
DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND TERMINATION

- 12.1 In the event of a dispute at OPPO that cannot be resolved these will be escalated to SPIP Executive via the SPIP Programme Manager. If the matter cannot be resolved by SPIP Executive then the matter concerned will be referred to the SPIP Board. If the matter is not able to be satisfactorily resolved, the Parties should put it in writing and keep it on file.
- 12.2 Those decisions in respect of agreement and dispute will be clearly logged and submitted, if necessary, as part of the evidence to each respective LPAs Local Plan examination to demonstrate how the Duty to Cooperate has been complied with.
- 12.3 Parties can terminate their involvement at any time. If the Statement of Cooperation is terminated, the Parties agree that any reports, studies or any other information which has jointly been prepared can be used by each of the Parties separately.

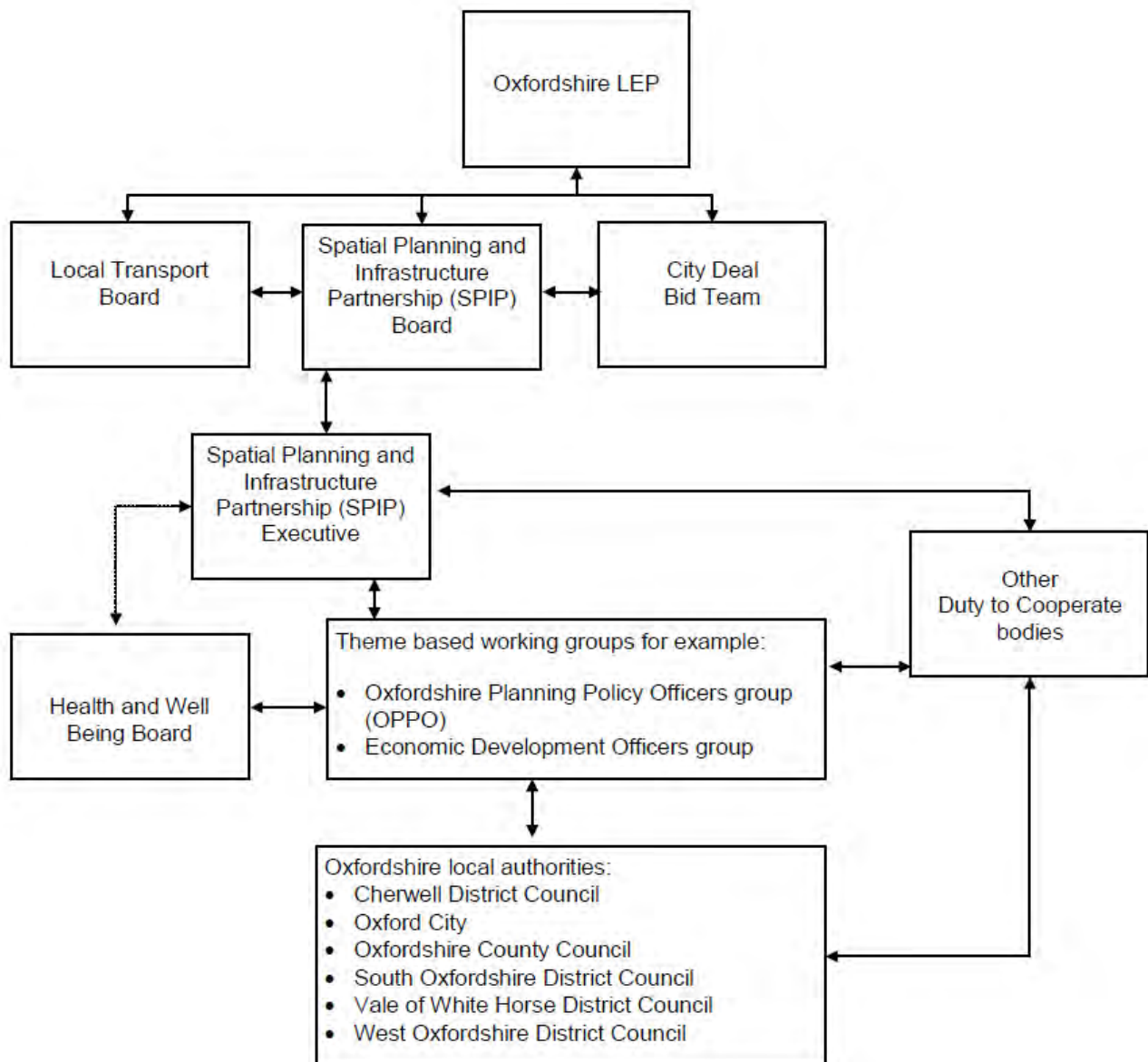
APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED DUTY TO COOPERATE PROCESS FOR MANAGING SHMA OUTCOMES

Notes:

1. The process below assumes that additional housing needs will be identified in the SHMA.
2. The process below recognises that SPIP is not a formal decision-making body but that it provides an effective mechanism by which the partner authorities can demonstrate they are applying the statutory Duty to Cooperate in an effective way.
3. Steps are not necessarily sequential and flexibility can be applied to ensure the process is implemented in the most effective and efficient way. Examples provided within the steps are not exhaustive and additional options may emerge for testing as work is progressed.



APPENDIX 2: OXFORDSHIRE DUTY TO COOPERATE OUTLINE STRUCTURE



Appendix 3: Cherwell Local Plan Examination 2014

Inspectors Note

The examination hearings were suspended on 4 June 2014 for six months. This is to enable the Council to put forward proposed modifications to the plan involving increased new housing delivery over the plan period to meet the full, up to date, objectively assessed, needs of the district, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and based on the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (SHMA).

Notwithstanding the above, the tests of legal compliance and in relation to the “duty to co-operate” are considered to have been met by the Council, to date, with no compelling evidence to indicate otherwise.

The proposed modifications, including consequential modifications arising from the increase in new housing, will be subject to a full, six week, period of public consultation, together with an appropriate Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), likely to be based on the draft timetable attached, with the hearings currently expected to resume on 9 December 2014.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council has indicated that it considers the increase in new housing needed to be achievable without significant changes to the strategy, vision or objectives of the submitted plan. There are considered to be reasonable prospects of delivery over the plan period.

This includes that there is no necessity for an immediate strategic review of the extent/boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt in the district for new housing, albeit the plan is likely to require an early review once the established process for considering the full strategic planning implications of the 2014 SHMA, including for any unmet needs in Oxford City, has been fully considered jointly by all the Oxfordshire Councils.

Further information regarding the proposed modifications and the next stages of the examination process will be sent to all representors and published on the examination website as soon as possible.

Nigel Payne – 09.06.14

Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Statement of Cooperation outlines the matters on which the six Oxfordshire local authorities will continue to cooperate. In particular, it sets out how the Parties will manage the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need.

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- Environment Agency
 - English Heritage
 - Natural England
 - Civil Aviation Authority
 - Homes and Communities Agency
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups
 - Office of the Rail Regulator
 - Highways Agency
 - Integrated Transport Authorities
 - Highway Authorities
 - Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities outside Oxfordshire

RESOURCES

- 7.1 Each of the Parties will contribute at least one experienced planning officer to be on the OPPO group.
- 7.2 If consultants are used on a joint basis to complete work associated with this Statement their costs will be apportioned equally among the Parties. The SPIP Programme Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating authorisation from SPIP of any joint work required to complete the process.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 8.1 Subject to the rights of third parties, the Parties will share equally the intellectual property rights to all data, reports, drawings, specifications, designs, inventions or other material produced or acquired including copyrights in the course of their joint work. The Parties agree that any proposal by one of them to permit a third party to utilise the documents and materials produced by the partnership shall be subject to the agreement of all other Parties. Any changes, amendments or updates made to the documents and materials, if made under the terms of the Statement of Cooperation, shall be jointly owned by the Parties.

REQUESTS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

- 9.1 Each of the Parties will deal with Freedom of Information requests in accordance with the requirements of the Act. To ensure that all relevant information is issued, if any of the Parties receives a Freedom of Information request in respect of joint work associated with the Statement of Cooperation the request will be shared with the other Parties via the SPIP Programme Manager at the earliest opportunity.

DURATION

- 10.1 This Statement of Cooperation will remain in perpetuity. The content of this Statement will be reviewed annually or at the request in writing of one of the Parties. Amendments will require the agreement of all the Parties.

LIMITATIONS

- 11.1 The Statement of Cooperation is an operational document. It is not a formally binding legal agreement and the partnership is not a legal entity. This Statement does not fetter the discretion of any of the Parties in the exercise of any of their statutory powers and duties.

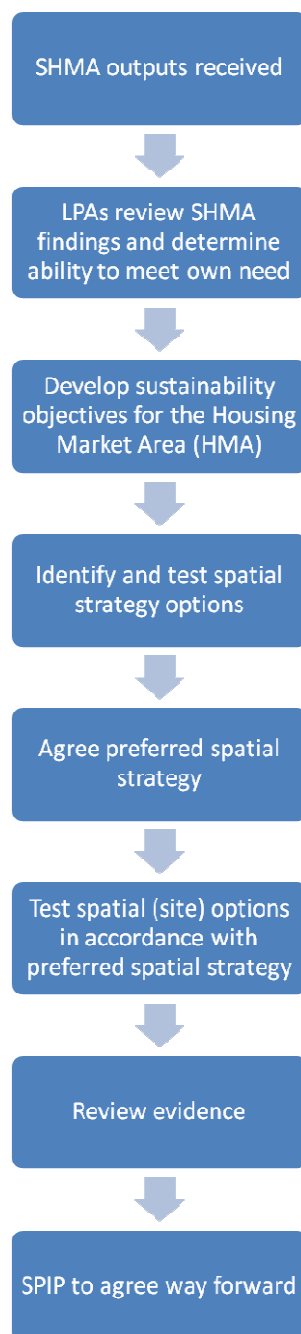
DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND TERMINATION

- 12.1 In the event of a dispute at OPPO that cannot be resolved these will be escalated to SPIP Executive via the SPIP Programme Manager. If the matter cannot be resolved by SPIP Executive then the matter concerned will be referred to the SPIP Board. If the matter is not able to be satisfactorily resolved, the Parties should put it in writing and keep it on file.
- 12.2 Those decisions in respect of agreement and dispute will be clearly logged and submitted, if necessary, as part of the evidence to each respective LPAs Local Plan examination to demonstrate how the Duty to Cooperate has been complied with.
- 12.3 Parties can terminate their involvement at any time. If the Statement of Cooperation is terminated, the Parties agree that any reports, studies or any other information which has jointly been prepared can be used by each of the Parties separately.

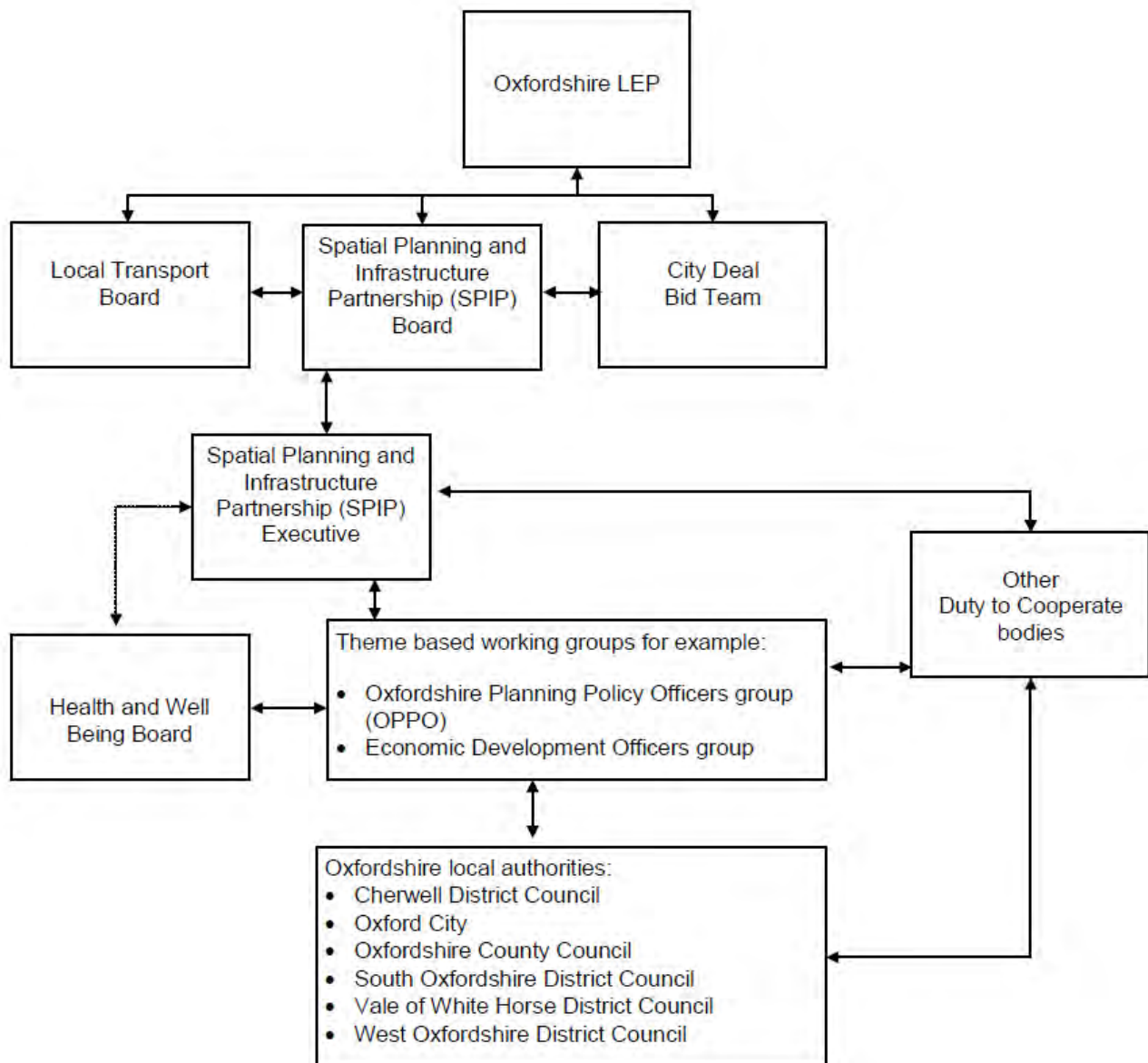
APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED DUTY TO COOPERATE PROCESS FOR MANAGING SHMA OUTCOMES

Notes:

1. The process below assumes that additional housing needs will be identified in the SHMA.
2. The process below recognises that SPIP is not a formal decision-making body but that it provides an effective mechanism by which the partner authorities can demonstrate they are applying the statutory Duty to Cooperate in an effective way.
3. Steps are not necessarily sequential and flexibility can be applied to ensure the process is implemented in the most effective and efficient way. Examples provided within the steps are not exhaustive and additional options may emerge for testing as work is progressed.



APPENDIX 2: OXFORDSHIRE DUTY TO COOPERATE OUTLINE STRUCTURE



Alternative formats of this publication
are available on request

These include large print, Braille, audio,
email, easy read and alternative languages

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