Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Consultation (Part 1)

Consultation Report

June 2019
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Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan – Consultation Report

1 Introduction

1.1.1 The district councils in Oxfordshire1 are working together to produce a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (known as ‘the Oxfordshire Plan’). The Oxfordshire Plan will provide a strategic planning framework for Oxfordshire to 2050, setting out housing, employment and infrastructure needs whilst seeking to protect and enhance our natural environment and improve quality of life for all.

1.1.2 The Oxfordshire Plan Statement of Community Involvement (February 2019) explains how the Oxfordshire Plan will be prepared with community and stakeholder engagement. It makes a commitment to early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees.2

1.1.3 As part of this commitment to early, proportionate and meaningful engagement, an initial Regulation 18 (Part 1) public consultation called ‘Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan’ took place from 11 February – 25 March 2019. The purpose of this consultation was to ask for views on what the vision, aspirations, objectives and broad spatial strategy for the Oxfordshire Plan should be.

1.1.4 This consultation will be followed by a second Regulation 18 public consultation (Part 2), which will focus on more detailed strategic policy options.

1.1.5 The purpose of this report is to document the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation process, to provide information on the number of responses received and to provide a summary of the responses received.

1.1.6 The responses received through the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation will be used to help shape and inform the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

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1 Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council
2 Oxfordshire Plan Statement of Community Involvement (February 2019) Paragraph 8
2 How we Engaged with Communities and Stakeholders

2.1 Overview of this section

2.1.1 A wide range of engagement methods were used to make people aware of the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation and to encourage them to participate. This included providing an opportunity to win £50 of shopping vouchers by responding to the consultation.

2.1.2 This section sets out all of the engagement method used as part of the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation.

2.2 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Launch Event (Pre-Regulation 18)

2.2.1 Prior to commencing the formal Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation, a launch event for key stakeholders was held on 18 December 2018. The aim of the launch event was to introduce key stakeholders to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 project and to ask for their initial views on what the Oxfordshire Plan's vision, aspirations and objectives should be.

![Image 1: Oxfordshire Plan Stakeholder Event 18 December 2018](image)

2.2.2 More than 100 delegates were invited to attend the launch event from key stakeholder organisations. This included:

- Statutory consultees (such as the Environment Agency);
- Special interest groups (such as Oxfordshire Preservation Trust and the Campaign to Protect Natural England (CPRE) Oxfordshire);
- Key infrastructure providers (such as bus companies);
- Planning agents; and
- District Councillors (Members of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Member Sub-group and the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel).

2.2.3 The event was led by consultants WSP and was highly interactive. A digital system called Mentimeter was utilised which enabled all delegates to respond to questions within minutes via their smartphones or laptops. This enabled a large amount of data to be collected which was used to help inform the production of the 'Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan' consultation document.
2.3 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Bus Roadshow

2.3.1 A bus roadshow visited destinations across Oxfordshire from 18 - 22 February 2019. The aim of the bus roadshow was to raise awareness of the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation amongst Oxfordshire residents.

2.3.2 The bus roadshow visited ten locations across Oxfordshire:
- Henley-on-Thames – Market Place (South Oxfordshire)
- Thame – Leisure Centre (South Oxfordshire)
- Wantage – The Beacon (Vale of White Horse)
- Faringdon – Old Town Hall (Vale of White Horse)
- Chipping Norton – Leisure Centre (West Oxfordshire)
- Carterton – Town Hall (West Oxfordshire)
- Kidlington – Exeter Hall (Cherwell)
- Cowley* – Templars Square Shopping Centre (Oxford)
- Bicester – Sheep Street (Cherwell)
- Summertown – Ferry Leisure Centre (Oxford)

*Please note that the Cowley roadshow was within a shopping centre rather than being on the bus, however the same consultation methods were utilised.

2.3.3 The bus roadshow was timed to take place within half term, during the second week of the Regulation 18 (Part 1) formal consultation period. The roadshow events were held during half term with the aim of enabling parents and children to attend.

2.3.4 The bus roadshow involved the following:
- A bus displaying a large Oxfordshire Plan banner parking up at a town centre destination. Further Oxfordshire Plan branded items such as flags, posters and banners were also positioned on and/or close to the bus, with aim of attracting attention and creating an obvious presence.
- Officers handing out leaflets in the area around the bus to help increase awareness. The leaflets provided details of the bus roadshows and drop-in events as well as signposting people to the Oxfordshire Plan website.
- Exhibition boards and consultation documents were on display within the bus for people to find out more about the Oxfordshire Plan. There were also officers on the bus to answer any questions that people might have and to listen to their views.
- Each roadshow event included activities for families such as rowing, science experiments and/or the opportunity to dress up as a bus driver and take a photo in the bus driver’s seat. The aim of the activities were to encourage people to come to the roadshow and to spend longer there.

Image 2: Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan bus and drop-in event leaflet
Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan – Consultation Report

Image 3: Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan Bus Roadshow (Thame, South Oxfordshire)

Image 4: Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan Bus Roadshow (Faringdon, Vale of White Horse)
2.4 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Drop-In Events

2.4.1 Drop-in events were held in each of the districts across Oxfordshire from 25 February – March 2019. The events were held from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm within the city and main towns with the aim of enabling as many people as possible to attend, including people dropping-in after work.

2.4.2 Drop-in events took place at the following locations:
- Abingdon – Guildhall (Vale of White Horse)
- Didcot – Cornerstone (South Oxfordshire)
- Witney – Corn Exchange (West Oxfordshire)
- Banbury – Town Hall (Cherwell)
- Oxford – Town Hall (Oxford)

2.4.3 The drop-in events involved the following:
- Flags, posters and banners positioned within and/or close to the venue, with aim of attracting attention and creating an obvious presence.
- Officers handing out leaflets in the area around the venue to help increase awareness. The leaflets provided details of the drop-in events and bus roadshows as well as signposting people to the Oxfordshire Plan website.
- Exhibition boards and consultation documents were on display within the venue for people to find out more about the Oxfordshire Plan. There were also officers within the venue to answer any questions that people might have and to listen to their views.

2.5 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Website

2.5.1 A dedicated Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website (www.oxfordshireplan.org) was built to provide a central point of information. The website provided information on how to participate in the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation, including an explanatory video. The Oxfordshire Plan website provided the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document and the nine supporting topic papers. It also provided a link to an online survey where people could submit comments and register to receive notifications of future Oxfordshire Plan consultations.

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3 Topic papers were published on the following issues: 1) Plan Context and Stages; 2) Spatial Strategy; 3) Supporting Economic Growth; 4) Housing; 5) Strong and Healthy Communities; 6) Securing Nature’s Benefits; 7) Heritage; 8) Improving Connectivity and Movement; and 9) Energy.
2.5.2 The Oxfordshire Plan website was launched at the beginning of 2019 and regular news items were published to keep people informed and updated. Between 1 January – 25 March 2019 the website saw 9,889 unique users visit, generating 13,006 page views. Most users were within the 45-54 (24%) or 35-44 (22%) age brackets. The most popular pages were the Homepage, About section and Have Your Say section, demonstrating that the website is serving its purpose of informing and encouraging engagement. Most people accessed the website directly (47%), while 27% found the site via searching, demonstrating the impact of advertising and leaflet distribution during consultation events. Social media represented 15% of traffic.

![Oxfordshire Plan website audience age ranges](image)

**Figure 1: Age ranges of Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website users**

### 2.6 Social Media

2.6.1 Press releases, consultation events and other announcements were publicised using the Oxfordshire Growth Board’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. These posts and tweets were also shared across each district authorities’ social media accounts, as well as some individual councillors and local organisations, resulting in increased reach and engagement. Social media was also used to address misconceptions and answer queries, directing people to the Oxfordshire Plan website and consultation portal accordingly.
2.7 Direct Notifications

2.7.1 Notifications of the consultation were sent directly (by email) to prescribed bodies and other key stakeholders. Each of the district councils also notified individuals, groups and organisations registered on their own consultation databases.

2.7.2 As the Oxfordshire Plan is an entirely new project, there was no existing consultation database for members of the public that could be used. However, through the various means of promoting the project, people were encouraged to sign-up to receive notifications of future consultations.

2.8 Press

2.8.1 A media briefing was held the day before the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation started. Reporters were given an advanced copy of the consultation document, were walked through the main discussion points and had the chance to question the chair of the member sub-group and the project sponsor.

2.8.2 Press releases were drafted for all major updates, promotions, news and to push consultation engagement. These were sent to a media distribution list covering local news organisations, hyperlocal publications and trade publications across print, online, TV and radio. Coverage was secured in titles including:

- That’s TV Oxfordshire
- Round and About (free Oxfordshire hyperlocal)
- Planning Resource
Last week the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (OP2050) team brought its roadshow to Banbury, seeking input from residents to shape the county for the next generation.

The scheme is the largest of its type in the UK and only the second one implemented and looks to turn housing, transport and connectivity planning on its head.

Image 7: Banbury Guardian Website Article 24 March 2019

2.9 Bus and Rail Advertising

2.9.1 A 30-second Oxfordshire Plan promotional video was displayed on 82 screens on 41 Oxford Bus Company buses across their network (including Park and Ride routes) for a four-week period starting on the 11 February 2019. It is estimated that around 1 million passengers would have had an opportunity to view the bus advert, with total viewings likely to be around 2.5 million.

2.9.2 A five-second animated advert was displayed for four weeks at Banbury, Bicester, Didcot Parkway, Oxford and Oxford Parkway railway stations on electronic display boards starting on 11 February 2019. The advert had an estimated 945,840 impressions over this period.

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2.10 Leaflets

2.10.1 Some 5,000 leaflets promoting the Oxfordshire Plan consultation events, website and shopping voucher giveaway were produced.

2.10.2 Half of the leaflets were distributed at more than 60 points of interest across Oxfordshire accessed by many thousands daily. Leaflets were distributed to a range of locations including:

- Gastro-pubs and restaurants
- Public buildings
- Libraries
- Hotels
- Arts Venues
- Shops & Cafes
- Visitor Information Centres
- Transport hubs – such as Thornhill and Water Eaton Park and Rides
- Railway stations

2.10.3 The rest of the leaflets were handed to members of the public, both engaged and in proximity, during consultation events.

2.11 Business Engagement

2.11.1 Leaflets were distributed and officers spoke to attendees at the Witney Business Breakfast (West Oxfordshire) on March 2019.

2.11.2 In March 2019, a piece on the Oxfordshire Plan was published in the West Oxfordshire Business Newsletter sent directly to 577 subscribers (primarily businesses) in West Oxfordshire5.

2.11.3 A consultation notice was also issued by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). This let businesses know that the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation was open and encouraged them to respond. The notice was published on the OxLEP website and sent to their database of more than 200 businesses. The consultation notice was also shared on the OxLEP social media channels.

2.12 Deposit Locations

2.12.1 Hard copies of the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document were available to view at locations across Oxfordshire during their usual opening hours for the entirety of the Regulation 18 (Part 1) consultation period.

2.12.2 The deposit locations included public libraries, council offices and leisure centres. A full list of deposit locations is provided at Appendix A.

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5 https://mailchi.mp/782d0d3e9772/businessmattersmarch19
3 Who Responded to the Consultation

3.1 Number of Responses Received
3.1.1 Table 1 shows the total number of responses received through the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 (Part 1) consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total comments received:</th>
<th>1,237 comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total questionnaire responses received:</td>
<td>716 questionnaire responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of consultation participants:</td>
<td>512 individuals and organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Total number of responses received

3.1.2 In addition to the responses received, 1,183 individuals and organisations registered to receive notifications of future Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultations.

3.2 Type of Respondent
3.2.1 Figure two shows the split between individual responses and responses from groups and organisations.

3.3 Spatial Distribution of Respondents
3.3.1 The distribution of consultation respondents (individuals and organisations) by postcode is shown in Figure 3. It should be noted that this only reflects those respondents who provided postcode information. Most respondents recorded in the consultation database have not provided postal address information, so the information presented may not be an accurate reflection of the whole picture.
Figure 3: Spatial distribution of respondents (by postcode area)
4 What Communities and Stakeholders Told Us

4.1 Overview of this section
4.1.1 This section of the report provides a summary of the consultation responses received as part of the Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation. All of the consultation responses received are available to view in full via the Oxfordshire Plan website.6

4.2 Introduction to the Oxfordshire Plan
4.2.1 The introduction to the consultation document set out the geographical coverage of the Oxfordshire Plan, why the Oxfordshire Plan is being produced and the time period that the Oxfordshire Plan will cover.

4.2.2 The preparation of a long-term plan for the whole of Oxfordshire was broadly welcomed. It was viewed as an opportunity to look forward to 2050 and to think holistically about Oxfordshire’s social, environmental and economic needs over the lifetime of the plan. However, many respondents highlighted that looking forward to 2050 would also be challenging, particularly with uncertainty around Brexit and future technological change.

4.2.3 Planning across district and county boundaries was regarded as positive, enabling the Oxfordshire Plan to better respond to challenges and opportunities both within Oxfordshire and the wider region.

4.2.4 The scale of growth that the Oxfordshire Plan might seek to deliver was a recurring theme in responses. Many respondents questioned aspirations for future growth, with the view that economic and housing growth targets are being dictated by central government. There was a concern that the Oxfordshire Plan will benefit developers and big businesses and not Oxfordshire residents.

4.2.5 Some concerns were expressed about the Oxfordshire Growth Deal. Some respondents suggested that the Growth Deal is undemocratic and that it commits Oxfordshire to deliver a scale of growth that is not necessary to meet the needs of the area.

4.2.6 Many respondents considered it important to secure an early understanding of how national aspirations for growth and strategic infrastructure investments (such as the Oxford to Cambridge (OxCam) Expressway) will relate to the Oxfordshire Plan and how growth in Oxfordshire might fit in with aspirations for the Arc.

4.2.7 A number of respondents felt that more clarity is needed in respect of the Oxfordshire Plan’s relationship with Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, particularly in relation to the alignment of timetables, how different plans might influence each other and what the adoption of an Oxfordshire Plan might mean for local decision making.

4.2.8 Some respondents sought clarification over who is accountable for preparing the Oxfordshire Plan and how decisions will be made.

6 https://oxfordshireplan.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/Oxfordshire_Plan_Intro/listresponses
Key Themes - Introduction to the Oxfordshire Plan:

- Need to ensure that opportunities associated with creating a long-term, cross-boundary plan for Oxfordshire are realised.
- Growth requirements for Oxfordshire to 2050 need to be understood.
- Oxfordshire’s role and position within a wider context, particularly the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, needs to be considered.
- The relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans needs to be clarified.

4.3 Vision for the Oxfordshire Plan

4.3.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document proposed a vision for the Oxfordshire Plan, setting out desired characteristics for Oxfordshire in 2050.

4.3.2 Two questions were asked about the vision (Discussion Point 1):

- Does the draft vision meet your aspirations for the future of Oxfordshire?
  - Yes: 23
  - No: 92
  - Unsure: 14

- Are there any changes you would like to see to the vision?
  - Yes: 108
  - No: 7
  - Unsure: 6

4.3.3 Whilst there was general support for the positive sentiments set out in the vision, there were concerns that the vision is too generic and could apply to anywhere. It was suggested that the vision should be made more specific and unique to Oxfordshire and that the vision should be more ambitious, powerful, radical, creative and/or innovative. It was also suggested that the vision should be more reflective of the views of local residents.

4.3.4 There were suggestions that the Oxfordshire Plan should aspire to proactively shape future changes as opposed to simply responding to them.

4.3.5 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should include specific and measurable targets and aspirations, with greater detail provided on how these would be achieved.
4.3.6 The level of growth that the Oxfordshire Plan might seek to deliver was a key theme in many of the responses received. A number of respondents felt that current levels of growth cannot be sustained due to environmental limitations and/or the negative impacts on existing communities. Many respondents emphasised the need to fully understand and take appropriate consideration of these constraints. It was suggested that economic needs should be balanced with ensuring social benefits and environmental protection/enhancement. It was suggested that the vision should aim to restrain growth in Oxfordshire and to facilitate a more ‘natural’ level of change. It was also suggested that addressing social inequalities, air pollution and aiming to achieve environmental net gains should be central to the Oxfordshire Plan’s vision.

4.3.7 Many respondents suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan’s vision should recognise the importance of Oxfordshire’s rural areas, their communities, economies, character and landscapes, including the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.3.8 Some respondents felt that there might be a conflict between the different aspirations proposed, particularly aspirations to simultaneously achieve growth and protect the environment. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan cannot have it all and that difficult choices are needed. Some respondents felt that it is important to be open and honest about the need to balance different aspirations and to let local residents choose, rather than setting idealistic, unachievable goals.

4.3.9 It was suggested that there should be greater consideration of Oxfordshire within its wider context, taking account of interrelationships with other areas regionally, nationally and internationally. In particular, it was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should say more about aspirations for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and what this means for Oxfordshire, principally in terms of future growth. Some respondents viewed the Arc as an opportunity that should be clearly recognised within the vision, whilst others objected to the arc concept.

4.3.10 Climate change was another key theme in many of the responses received. Climate change was cited as the biggest issue that needs to be addressed and it was suggested that this should be central to the Oxfordshire Plan’s vision. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should recognise that there is a climate emergency and should take positive steps to address this. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 should not only be considering climate change adaption and resilience, but proactively seeking to manage Oxfordshire’s contribution to climate change, with a focus on achieving zero carbon or carbon neutral standards. It was suggested that Oxfordshire should be aspiring to be a world leader in terms of addressing climate change.

4.3.11 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should set a clear vision for Oxfordshire’s economy, which recognises key clusters as well as economic diversity.

4.3.12 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan’s vision needs to recognise the need for infrastructure delivery to keep pace with growth. This includes transport infrastructure, green infrastructure, community infrastructure (including healthcare and education) and cultural infrastructure. Many respondents felt that it is important that infrastructure and services meet the needs of existing residents and are not purely focused on new communities.
Key Themes – Vision for the Oxfordshire Plan:
The vision for Oxfordshire in 2050 should:
- Be more ambitious, powerful, radical, creative and/or innovative.
- Be more Oxfordshire-specific.
- Be more reflective of local people’s views.
- Focus on ensuring social and environmental wellbeing, not just growth.
- Prioritise the need to address climate change.
- Recognise the importance of Oxfordshire’s rural areas.
- Refer to Oxfordshire’s role and position within a wider context.

4.4 Aspirations for the Oxfordshire Plan
4.4.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document proposed five aspirations for the Oxfordshire Plan:
- Protect environmental quality
- Strong and healthy communities
- Support economic growth
- Improve housing availability and affordability
- Improve connectivity and movement

4.4.2 Respondents were asked whether they felt that these were the right aspirations for Oxfordshire (Discussion Point 2):

Do you feel that we’ve identified the right aspirations for Oxfordshire?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 Discussion Point 2 also asked where the balance should lie in prioritising aspirations. Responses are included in the following topic-specific sections of the report.

Key Themes – Aspirations for the Oxfordshire Plan:
Responses were mixed on whether the right aspirations for Oxfordshire had been identified. Comments in other sections indicate that the aspirations could be refined.

4.5 Objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan
4.5.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document proposed ten draft objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050:
1. To maintain and enhance the historic built and natural environment of the county through strategic investment and high quality design and to capitalise on the benefits these assets contribute to quality of life and economic success.
2. To protect and enhance the county’s distinctive landscape character, recreational and biodiversity value by considering the benefits these assets bring when selecting areas for growth, by optimising densities, by improving connectivity between environmental assets and securing a net gain for biodiversity.
3. To improve health and wellbeing by enabling independence, encouraging healthy lifestyles, facilitating social interaction and creating inclusive and safe communities.
4. To create sustainable communities by providing good access to employment, housing, open space, transport, education, services and facilities to meet identified needs and that respond to the challenges of climate change.
5. To establish the right conditions to sustain and strengthen the role of Oxfordshire in the UK economy by building on our key strengths and assets.
6. To create a prosperous, successful and enterprising economy with benefits felt by all.
7. To meet the county’s identified housing needs, particularly affordable housing and support our selected economic aspirations.
8. To ensure that a range of housing options are available that will cater for a variety of needs and are built for adaptability, energy efficiency and to a high quality.
9. To reduce the need to travel and provide better travel choices, ensuring that walking and cycling are convenient and attractive, and that public transport is preferred by residents to private car ownership and use.
10. To promote development in the most sustainable locations and co-locating homes and jobs; then connecting those less sustainable locations through improved public transport and digital networks.

4.5.2 Respondents were asked whether they felt that the draft objectives were appropriate for the Oxfordshire Plan or whether there were any changes that they would like to see (Discussion Point 3):

| Do you feel the draft objectives are appropriate for the plan? |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Yes             | 18              |
| No              | 38              |
| Unsure          | 14              |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any changes or other objectives that you would like to see? Should they be bolder? Or more specific?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.3 The most common theme in responses made on the draft objectives was that climate change should be prioritised/emphasised. Linked to this, there were also comments about the importance of tackling greenhouse gas emissions, dealing with air pollution and aspiring to achieve zero carbon standards.

4.5.4 A number of respondents wanted to see the objectives give more emphasis to human health and wellbeing.

4.5.5 Another common theme in responses related to the need to reduce the need to travel (for example by increasing home working and ensuring that homes are close to jobs) and to encourage more sustainable travel choices (for example by ensuring that infrastructure is provided to make public transport, walking and cycling more convenient and attractive options). It was suggested that where car use is needed, a shift to electric cars (away from petrol) should be supported/facilitated.
4.5.6 There were some concerns that the draft objectives appeared to prioritise economic growth over the environmental considerations. Some respondents specifically mentioned the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the principle of biodiversity net gain. There were also concerns that national economic growth was being prioritised over local needs, especially local housing needs and the need for truly affordable housing. Many respondents wanted to see homes for local needs prioritised.

4.5.7 There were differing views in relation to the appropriate level and distribution of growth. Some respondents wanted to see growth dispersed to minimise negative impacts (particularly to help protect rural villages and local character), whilst others wanted to prioritise delivering homes where people need them most or near employment locations. Some respondents felt that levels of growth are too high, whilst others wanted to see more reference to the relationship with key areas outside of Oxfordshire such as Reading and Milton Keynes and the role of the Oxfordshire within the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.

4.5.8 There was support for making the objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan bolder and some respondents provided recommended wording. There were also general comments that the objectives, and the Oxfordshire Plan more generally, need to be transparent and based on consultation. It was also suggested that the objectives should be supported by actions to set out how they will be achieved/delivered.

**Key Themes – Objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan:**
The objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan should:
- Be bolder.
- Give greater emphasis to climate change.
- Give greater emphasis to human health and wellbeing.
- Give greater emphasis to sustainable travel.

4.6 Natural and Built Environment
4.6.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document set out some of the key characteristics that contribute to the character and quality of Oxfordshire’s built and natural environment. Aspiration 1 indicated how the need to protect and enhance Oxfordshire’s natural and built environment will help to guide the Oxfordshire Plan. Two draft objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 were also included.

4.6.2 A key theme in responses was that the natural environment does not have unlimited capacity to accommodate growth. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should aim to deliver environmental enhancements, not only mitigating the impacts of development, but also achieving environmental restoration.

4.6.3 Many respondents felt that significant housing and economic growth could conflict with aspirations to protect and enhance the natural and built environment. Respondents identified the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and the 100,000 homes planned to 2031 as two factors that could be incompatible with aspirations to protect the natural environment. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should be seeking to build an understanding of environmental limits and to plan within that context.
4.6.4 A number of respondents expressed concerns about the compatibility of growth with the protection of historic environment.

4.6.5 Some respondents expressed concern that aspirations related to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment were only included to give the impression of serious consideration, when the real focus of the Oxfordshire Plan is economic growth. Notwithstanding this, many respondents welcomed the prioritisation of the natural environment and health and wellbeing aspirations and objectives. It was suggested that ‘Aspiration 1: protection of environmental quality’ should set the context for all other policies in the Oxfordshire Plan.

4.6.6 A particular focus of consultation responses related to the need to recognise the significance of climate change and the scale of the threat that it represents. Many respondents felt that the Oxfordshire Plan should be far more ambitious in its attempts to address climate change. Some respondents suggested that the primary focus of the Oxfordshire Plan should be to address the causes of climate change and to aim to limit temperature increases in accordance with national and international targets and obligations. It was felt that there should be a specific objective within the Oxfordshire Plan related to climate change.

4.6.7 Many respondents cited Oxfordshire’s rural characteristics as being fundamental to Oxfordshire’s special character as well as residents’ quality of life. Oxfordshire’s rural areas were considered to be a major factor in attracting people to the area. It was felt that Oxfordshire’s rural characteristics should be protected and enhanced through the Oxfordshire Plan. It was also suggested that the importance of Oxfordshire’s three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) should be highlighted.

4.6.8 Many respondents emphasised the importance of the natural environment to human health. It was stated that the health and wellbeing of communities and the quality of the natural environment are intrinsically linked and that any threats to the quality and integrity of Oxfordshire’s natural environment threaten quality of life and human health and wellbeing.

4.6.9 It was suggested that aspirations and objectives could be further strengthened for the benefit of the natural, historic and built environment by:

- Separating out objectives for the natural, historic and built environment to ensure that there was a distinct focus on each;
- Using consistent terminology throughout the objectives such as ‘protect and enhance’. This would ensure that all environmental considerations were given equal weight;
- Focusing on environmental protection and restoration in response to environmental damage caused to date; and
- Aiming for a net gain in biodiversity in all development.

4.6.10 Many respondents, including statutory consultees, advocated a full understanding and mapping of Oxfordshire’s natural capital assets to underpin the Oxfordshire Plan. Such information could be utilised to shape the spatial strategy and to identify opportunities to protect, enhance and invest in the natural environment, including the strengthening of green infrastructure and ecological networks and for the buffering of natural habitats.

4.6.11 Environmental limitations cited as requiring particular understanding and consideration included:

- An understanding of water availability both now and in the future;
- Recognition of air quality issues;
- The value of natural capital;
- The availability of soil resources; and
- Ensuring food security and ability to produce food sustainably.
4.6.12 It was suggested that a green infrastructure strategy and action plan is required to support the Oxfordshire Plan.

**Green Belt**

4.6.13 A number of respondents were concerned that the integrity of the Oxford Green Belt is being threatened. Recent planning decisions were referred to. Many respondents felt that the Green Belt should be protected from further encroachment to protect its integrity, restrict the urban sprawl of Oxford and to prevent the coalescence of settlements. It was emphasised that Green Belt land should only be released in exceptional circumstances in accordance with national policy. It was suggested that where exceptional circumstances might exist, new areas of Green Belt should be identified to off-set any loss.

**Ecological Designations**

4.6.14 Many respondents expressed a desire for the Oxfordshire Plan to go beyond the established approach of guiding the location of new development to avoid areas that are designated for their landscape or biodiversity importance and wanted to see a more proactive approach, focused on improving habitat networks and avoiding further fragmentation through environmental enhancements, including increasing Green Belt coverage.

4.6.15 Responses received emphasised that protected ecological sites do not exist in isolation and require connected greenspaces to allow species migration. Further fragmentation should be avoided. It was suggested that development should be steered to the least sensitive areas, but this requires an understanding of the natural capital value of land as opposed to a focus solely on statutory designations.

**Landscape**

4.6.16 Responses received emphasised that high quality landscapes are valued for their scenic beauty, tranquillity, dark skies, wildlife and cultural value. It was suggested that this is particularly the case at the edge of settlements where landscapes can be accessed and appreciated by communities and where they play an important role in distinguishing the character and setting of Oxfordshire’s places.

4.6.17 Respondents considered the views into and out of settlements to be important, particularly in historic settlements such as Oxford.

4.6.18 It was suggested that high-quality landscapes should be recognised within the Oxfordshire Plan, even where they do not benefit from statutory protection, where they add particular value due to proximity to where people live.

4.6.19 It was suggested that one of the overriding principles of the Oxfordshire Plan should be the ongoing protection of landscapes designated for their scenic beauty such as the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Heritage and Cultural Assets**

4.6.20 It was suggested that the value of heritage and cultural assets to the economy and tourism should be recognised in the Oxfordshire Plan.

4.6.21 It was suggested that the terms ‘built’ and ‘historic’ environment are not interchangeable and both should be used, depending on the context, in the Oxfordshire Plan.

4.6.22 The need for high quality design of new development to protect Oxfordshire’s historic character was emphasised.
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Water Resources

4.6.23 Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring the long-term supply of water. However, the need for a new reservoir in Oxfordshire was questioned by some, as it was viewed as not meeting local needs and likely to result in environmental harm.

4.6.24 It was suggested that the provision of ‘clean’ water infrastructure is an important factor in ensuring a sufficient ‘clean’ water supply and that environmental harm arising from water treatment is avoided.

4.6.25 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should be mindful of flood risk in determining the spatial strategy. An increase in natural flood risk mitigation such as up-stream planting to delay the flow of water to downstream settlements at risk of flooding was advocated.

Air Quality

4.6.26 A number of consultation responses emphasised that air pollution levels are already breaking legal limits in many parts of Oxfordshire. It was suggested that Air Quality Management Areas are ineffective in addressing such issues, as traffic movements remain high. It was considered that new infrastructure will only exacerbate air quality issues where they continue to support the use of private motorised transport.

4.6.27 Some respondents saw it as being essential that the Oxfordshire Plan seeks to address issues of air quality and pollution. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should target emissions from transport, energy generation and buildings.

Sustainable Place Design and Construction

4.6.28 Responses emphasised that the design and construction of buildings and places has an important role to play in addressing and mitigating climate change and in protecting and enhancing Oxfordshire’s natural environment.

4.6.29 It was suggested that sustainable design and construction methods should be utilised to reduce emissions through the construction phase and during a development’s lifetime. This should include limiting the volume of concrete used in construction, incorporating renewable energy generation and reducing the level of water consumption. There was a view that the Oxfordshire Plan could be an opportunity to deliver innovative design.

4.6.30 It was suggested that better regard should be had to the quality of urban environments, with less focus on the needs of private car users, encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport. Doing so would encourage active and healthy travel which will support the health and wellbeing of communities. It was also suggested that increasing the density of developments could help to reduce the amount of greenfield land required to accommodate new development.

4.6.31 Comments suggested that enhancing Oxfordshire’s green infrastructure network, including public rights of way, would also deliver multiple benefits for the natural environment and for the health and well-being of residents.

4.6.32 A number of respondents thought that the Oxfordshire Plan should aspire for Oxfordshire to be zero carbon by 2050. It was suggested that to achieve this, S.M.A.R.T targets should be set to enable proper and effective monitoring of the Oxfordshire Plan.

7 Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic, Time-Based
Key Themes – Natural and Built Environment

The Oxfordshire Plan should:
- Recognise that the natural environment does not have unlimited capacity to accommodate growth.
- Make addressing climate change a key priority.
- Recognise the relationship between the natural environment and human health and wellbeing.
- Recognise the importance of Oxfordshire’s rural characteristics.
- Help to address air quality issues.
- Encourage sustainable design and construction.
- Be informed by robust environmental evidence.

4.7 Strong and Healthy Communities

4.7.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document set out some key statistics in relation to quality of life and health and wellbeing in Oxfordshire. This set the context for the aspiration to support strong and healthy communities. This was supported by two objectives focussed on improving health and wellbeing and supporting the creation of sustainable communities.

4.7.2 Responses highlighted the many overlapping and interrelated factors that contribute to the quality of life, sense of community and wellbeing of Oxfordshire’s residents. Many of these factors were considered to have been degraded or threatened by planned growth (including the loss of countryside) and cuts to community services and facilities.

4.7.3 A number of respondents felt that the consultation document made broad, overly positive statements about Oxfordshire’s strengths which did not reflect the experiences of all of Oxfordshire’s residents. Some respondents questioned the evidence behind these statements. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should be more honest and realistic about existing circumstances and different experiences across Oxfordshire, recognising the complexity of issues.

4.7.4 Other respondents suggested that whilst the consultation document recognised the existence of inequalities and deprivation in Oxfordshire, the document did not seek to address issues of social equity, rural isolation, low skills and low wages or meeting the needs of disabled people. There were requests for greater clarity on how any growth proposed in the Oxfordshire Plan would help to address issues of deprivation and inequality. There was a concern that if the Oxfordshire Plan focusses too heavily on high-tech industries and the knowledge-based economy then social equality issues could be further exacerbated.

4.7.5 A number of comments highlighted that inequalities are not just confined to economic deprivation and there are also issues of health inequality and varied life expectancy across Oxfordshire. It was noted that disadvantaged areas suffer disproportionately compared to other areas of Oxfordshire as a result of cuts to community services and facilities such as children’s centres and mental health services. Rural isolation was also highlighted as likely to have been exacerbated by cuts to rural bus services.

4.7.6 A number of respondents identified access to healthcare as being a current issue, particularly access to the main Oxford hospitals where car parking and congestion were highlighted as being problematic. It was suggested that opportunities should be sought to improve accessibility to hospitals through improved public transport, increased parking and/or relocation of healthcare facilities to more accessible locations outside of Oxford city boundaries. It was suggested that more accessible, localised provision of healthcare facilities could also help to alleviate pressure on Oxford hospitals.
4.7.7 Respondents also highlighted that healthcare services are being undermined by recruitment difficulties, as staff cannot afford to live near to where they work, particularly those working at the Oxford hospitals.

4.7.8 There were concerns that there is limited reference to mental health issues in the consultation document. It was suggested that as more people are suffering from mental health problems, mental health services in Oxfordshire are being stretched to breaking point.

4.7.9 Preventative measures were considered to be preferable in addressing the health and well-being of communities. Decisions about development, infrastructure and placemaking should all have active and healthy lifestyles at the heart of considerations. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should have a focus on healthy place shaping.

4.7.10 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should encourage physical activity in people of all ages as a way of improving health and reducing the burden on healthcare services. Every opportunity should be taken to encourage active travel for the multiple benefits that it brings to the health and wellbeing of communities and the quality of the environment. It was considered that locating housing in close proximity to public transport and safe and accessible pedestrian and cycle routes would help to reduce car dependency and encourage active and healthy travel.

4.7.11 Road traffic congestion was regarded as an issue which affects residents’ quality of life. There was concern that it was unclear how increasing Oxfordshire’s population will address such issues.

4.7.12 The links between environmental quality and human health and wellbeing were highlighted many times. The health impacts of air pollution from vehicle emissions were a particular focus, with concern about pollution levels exceeding legal limits in many parts of Oxfordshire.

4.7.13 The need to protect the qualities of Oxfordshire that contribute to residents’ quality of life, including the rural environment, cultural richness, accessible countryside and employment opportunities, was emphasised in responses. There was concern that these qualities risk being undermined by the delivery of new homes in Oxfordshire.

4.7.14 Responses suggested that access to the countryside and greenspaces should be a key theme running through the Oxfordshire Plan, with a need to restrict the sprawl of settlements to keep countryside accessible to local people.

**Key Themes – Strong and Healthy Communities:**
The Oxfordshire Plan should:
- Seek to maintain/enhance the quality of life of Oxfordshire’s residents.
- Recognise and seek to address different types of inequality.
- Recognise the relationship between the natural environment and human health and wellbeing.
- Help to improve access to healthcare services.
- Support healthy place shaping principles.
- Help to address air quality issues.
4.8 Economic Growth

4.8.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document highlighted Oxfordshire’s economic strengths in relation to innovative, high-tech industries and the contribution it makes to the national economy. It also provided some figures in relation to employment mix and the qualifications and skills of residents. These facts set the context for the aspiration to support economic growth and objectives to strengthen the role of Oxfordshire in the UK economy and to share economic benefits with all.

4.8.2 Many respondents emphasised that Oxfordshire already has a strong economy and that more should be done to distribute economic growth and opportunities to other parts of the country.

4.8.3 A number of respondents felt that aspirations for economic growth were too high.

4.8.4 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should decide the target for economic growth rather than using the targets from the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). This was due to concern that the LIS targets were agreed without consultation by an unelected and unaccountable Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). There was concern that Oxfordshire’s economic vision and growth levels appear to be pre-determined by the Growth Deal, the LIS and funding opportunities, rather than a balanced approach being taken. Respondents questioned who growth targets and projects like the Expressway truly benefit - is it more for the benefit of the national economy and big businesses rather than for the people of Oxfordshire?

4.8.5 Some respondents were more supportive of economic growth, suggesting that additional employment opportunities are required for existing Oxfordshire residents and those in surrounding areas, particularly workers affected by the Honda plant closure in Swindon. It was also suggested that economic growth could provide the necessary resources to help deliver the Oxfordshire Plan’s other aspirations.

4.8.6 The need for the Oxfordshire Plan to consider important economic connections with areas outside of Oxfordshire, particularly the economic opportunities and synergies that can be shared across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, was highlighted. It was also suggested that Oxfordshire Plan should consider the role that Oxfordshire could play in delivering the aspirations of the government’s Industrial Strategy. It was also suggested that thinking globally will enable Oxfordshire to attract global businesses and stay competitive.

4.8.7 It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan could aspire to achieve “economic wellbeing” rather than “economic growth”, recognising the many factors that support a healthy, sustainable economy such as addressing infrastructure challenges and tackling existing inequalities.

4.8.8 A number of respondents questioned the relationship between economic growth and the need for new homes. As Oxfordshire already benefits from high levels of employment the need for more housing was questioned, as there were concerns that there will not be jobs for new residents. Others suggested that the focus should be on building more affordable homes for lower paid workers as it is widely recognised that organisations, including the NHS, are struggling to recruit workers due to high housing costs (both to rent and buy).
4.8.9 In terms of the distribution of growth, there were comments about the need to align jobs and housing to ensure that there are enough homes and that the amount of time spent commuting is reduced. Many respondents considered that increasing the density of housing development around strategic employment hubs should be a key aspect of the Oxfordshire Plan’s spatial strategy. The importance of key locations such as Culham, Harwell and Begbroke to the economic success of Oxfordshire was reflected through the consultation responses, as was the need to optimise the potential of these science parks, through the provision of housing and infrastructure.

4.8.10 It was also suggested that economic policies need to recognise local differences, as there is a risk of Oxfordshire-wide policies undermining local economies which are thriving. A one policy fits all may not fit local circumstances.

4.8.11 Respondents were concerned that Oxfordshire’s economy is at risk from a range of factors, including Brexit. There were concerns that Brexit will have a negative effect on the Oxfordshire Economy, particularly in respect of a loss of funding for science projects and the loss of workers from EU countries. It was suggested that Oxfordshire needs a strategy for responding to the consequences of Brexit.

4.8.12 It was suggested that greater investment should be made in local schools and more support should be provided for school leavers with below average skills and qualifications. However, it was also suggested that education does not necessarily result in future job opportunities.

4.8.13 There was some support for focusing on a high-tech economy, building upon Oxfordshire’s strengths. It was suggested that lower-tech economic activities are likely to decline in future years, increasing potential for brownfield sites to become available for other uses and that this should potential should be assessed.

4.8.14 Some comments suggested that Oxfordshire should look more broadly than the knowledge-based economy. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should support tourism, agriculture, forestry and other rural economies.

4.8.15 It was also suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan needs to recognise distribution and logistics business needs by providing land to support large building footprints, which is well related to strategic transport corridors. It was suggested that if these needs cannot be met within Oxfordshire due to constraints, then the Oxfordshire councils should work with neighbouring authorities to meet this need under the duty to cooperate.

4.8.16 Respondents also raised concerns about the need to address inequality, suggesting that the Oxfordshire Plan needs to ensure that there are employment opportunities for people with a range of skills, qualifications and knowledge.

4.8.17 Many respondents felt that Oxfordshire’s economy should be sustainable, making good use of resources and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.

4.8.18 Many respondents felt that economic growth should not be prioritised to the detriment of social and environmental goals. One of the most common themes in comments was that there needs to be detailed consideration of the social and environmental impacts of economic growth. Some suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should be seeking to achieve “green/sustainable growth” or to more broadly “support long term prosperity” to encapsulate these broader issues of balance. A number of respondents stated that the Oxfordshire Plan should be driving innovation. It was considered that the benefits of economic growth could drive steps to carbon neutrality in Oxfordshire.
4.8.19 A number of respondents commented that evidence base references and documents should have been provided to support statements made about Oxfordshire’s economy in the consultation document. There were requests for more detailed evidence, including comparative analysis of how Oxfordshire’s economy is positioned relative to the UK or England average, quantification of the land and changes needed to achieve economic aspirations and breakdowns based on characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. Some respondents questioned the reliability of economic forecasting models in general, and the problems with trying to predict the effects of changes in the wider economy. It was suggested that planning for economic growth will need to build in resilience.

4.8.20 A further topic that generated substantial comment was the value and importance of Oxfordshire’s city and town centres. They were viewed as playing a key role in supporting economic growth particularly in terms of supporting small businesses, social enterprises, charities, and community groups. Many respondents felt that there was a need to understand the changing role of town centres, not just as centres of commerce but as a focal point for communities to meet and socialise.

Key Themes – Economic Growth:
There were mixed views as to whether we should be planning for further economic growth.

The Oxfordshire Plan should:
• Focus more broadly on economic wellbeing rather than just economic growth.
• Consider the social and environmental impacts of economic growth need to be considered.
• Consider economic connections at different scales, beyond the Oxfordshire boundary.
• Ensure new homes are well related to key employment locations.
• Support economic diversity.
• Support economic resilience.

4.9 Housing
4.9.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document provided information on housing affordability and availability in Oxfordshire. Aspiration 4 suggested a commitment to deliver housing numbers beyond the 100,000 homes committed to through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. There were objectives related to improving the affordability, mix and quality of new housing.

4.9.2 Many comments received related to the overall housing target for the Oxfordshire Plan, with the majority of those commenting that the numbers were too high. Some questioned the evidence to support such levels of growth and queried when evidence will be available for wider consideration. Respondents stressed the importance of having a robust evidence base with impartial analysis of Oxfordshire’s housing needs based upon up to date evidence.

4.9.3 Some respondents raised concerns that the existing Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is outdated and is not compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) because it does not use the latest data. Some comments suggested that it would be more appropriate to have a lower target than the SHMA figure, for example based on the Standard Methodology approach and latest Office of National Statistics (ONS) projections which indicate a lower level of housing need than the SHMA. However, others suggested that using the standard methodology would not be sufficient to truly meet the needs of Oxfordshire.
4.9.4 Comments suggested that the number of new homes required might be reduced if the Oxfordshire Plan were to support making better use of existing homes. Opportunities such as bringing empty stock back into use, addressing under-occupancy, building smaller homes to support people to down-size, supporting sub-divisions and encouraging self-building were suggested. Many respondents felt that these options should be explored before building new homes.

4.9.5 Some respondents felt that housing delivery and economic growth are paramount and should be prioritised. It was also suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan needs to be clear about how it will contribute to the delivery of one million new homes in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.

4.9.6 Some respondents questioned whether it was desirable to limit or reduce commercial growth due to the housing needs this creates, whilst others wanted to see a balanced delivery of jobs and homes. There were also various comments that supported housing growth in Oxfordshire to meet needs even though there may be some environmental impacts.

4.9.7 It was considered that delivering less than Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs would lead to insufficient supply of housing, worsening issues of housing affordability, a lack of homes for key workers affecting public services and constraining economic growth due to labour shortages. It was suggested that new homes should be affordable and accessible to Oxfordshire residents, making provision for the whole of society and helping all sectors of the economy including public services.

4.9.8 Many of the comments raised concerns about housing affordability. A frequent theme in responses was that housing is being built solely for developer and landowner profit and that the new homes delivered are not affordable. It was felt that affordable housing needs to be genuinely affordable to local people and this element of the aspiration was generally supported. There were also concerns about the lack of affordable housing being delivered by developers due to viability issues. It was suggested that local authorities should be taking a tougher stance in negotiations. Some respondents also highlighted the need for affordable key worker housing and that there is a potential role for large employers in helping to address that need. Others highlighted the need for social rent. It was suggested that affordable housing needs may differ across Oxfordshire, so a single Oxfordshire-wide policy might not be the best option.

4.9.9 Comments raised that homes should be to meet needs for local people and not investors from London or overseas.

4.9.10 A number of comments emphasised that simply building more homes does not necessarily address housing affordability issues. Some respondents took this point further, suggesting that the councils should intervene in the housing market to ensure delivery of homes of the right type (for example by councils directly delivering homes to rent or through Land Trust or community-led housing models). It was considered that these alternative models of delivery can also have social and well-being benefits.
4.9.11 Some comments were received about the distribution of housing growth, particularly wanting to see limited or no growth on sites in the Oxford Green Belt and minimising urban sprawl. A number of respondents emphasised the important role that the Green Belt plays in the landscape setting of settlements and heritage assets, in providing access to the countryside for residents and in preventing the unchecked sprawl of Oxford. Many respondents indicated support for a brownfield first approach to development.

4.9.12 The broad principle of locating new housing close to jobs and locations that maximise opportunities for sustainable transport, particularly cycling and bus routes into Oxford, was highlighted. The need to recognise the traffic and congestion impacts of commuting, if homes are provided in surrounding districts for those working in Oxford, was also highlighted. It was suggested that there may be an opportunity to introduce residential uses to areas like retail parks. Other respondents suggested areas that they considered should not be developed such as quiet rural villages or villages/towns which had recently seen large amounts of growth and are consequently already suffering increased congestion.

4.9.13 It was also suggested that housing should also be built at higher densities in order to reduce the amount of greenfield land used to accommodate development.

4.9.14 There were also a number of comments related to the design of new homes, including support for increased use of sustainable construction methods and low carbon development (including principles like Passivhaus) and support for the incorporation of renewable energy into housing design. Some respondents some felt that new homes need to provide more space, whilst others felt that new homes could be more compact and at higher densities to use less land. It was suggested that good design could help to address social and wellbeing issues, like loneliness and social care needs. It was also suggested that housing should be designed to meet a variety of needs, such as those of older people and people with disabilities.

**Key Themes – Housing:**
The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Be based upon an up-to-date assessment of Oxfordshire’s housing needs.
- Make better use of the existing housing stock before committing to building new homes.
- Take a brownfield first approach to selecting housing locations.
- Value the Green Belt.
- Locate new homes near to jobs and where there is most potential for travel by sustainable modes.
- Make new homes accessible and affordable to local people, including key workers.
- Encourage/require sustainable design and construction methods.

4.10 Transport and Connectivity

4.10.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document explained Oxfordshire’s position in relation to the strategic cross-country road and rail network. It focussed on existing issues of network constraints and public transport coverage as well as digital connectivity and planned infrastructure investment. The aspiration for improved connectivity and movement focussed on reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.
Oxfordshire’s Existing Travel Network

4.10.2 It was widely recognised that Oxfordshire’s existing road network is at or beyond capacity on many routes. The condition of the existing road network was also regarded as unacceptable in many parts of Oxfordshire. Some respondents considered that the consultation document did not adequately recognise existing problems related to the A420 and other major routes, particularly in terms of congestion, road safety (including unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users), high usage by HGVs and negative impacts on settlements such as poor air quality.

4.10.3 Oxfordshire’s existing cycle network was viewed as disjointed and of poor quality in places. It was felt that this discourages many people from cycling. Whilst the consultation material identifies high levels of cycling in Oxford as a strength, it was felt by some that cycle usage in Oxford could be much higher.

4.10.4 There was a suggestion that there are excessive numbers of buses on some routes and that bus timetables are unreliable. Many respondents were concerned about cuts to rural bus services and the impacts this has had in terms of isolating rural communities and increasing car dependency.

Future Travel Trends

4.10.5 In thinking about future travel trends, many respondents predicted a shift from petrol/diesel vehicles to electric vehicles, as well as a shift towards autonomous vehicle usage. However, others were sceptical of this idea. A number of respondents suggested that over reliance on autonomous and electric vehicles could result in congestion problems.

4.10.6 A trend in recent years of more people using longer distance, inter-urban public transport services such as the Oxford to Swindon bus route and coaches from Oxford to London and Milton Keynes was identified.

4.10.7 Many respondents emphasised that future transport and lifestyle trends are uncertain and are likely to change rapidly. It is important that sufficient flexibility is built into the Oxfordshire Plan to respond to this.

Movement in the Oxfordshire Plan

4.10.8 Respondents were clear that movement should be a key consideration in the Oxfordshire Plan and that land use planning and transport planning in Oxfordshire needs to be more joined up. The consideration of movement and connectivity at the strategic level was supported.

4.10.9 There was concern however that the Oxfordshire Plan might be too Oxford focused and the need to consider connectivity throughout Oxfordshire’s towns, villages and rural areas was emphasised.

4.10.10 It was suggested that different strategies may be appropriate in different areas and the Oxfordshire Plan needs to be responsive to challenges and opportunities that arise in different parts of the county. It was also suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should look beyond the Oxfordshire boundary, to consider transport connections with the wider region and country, recognising that due to Oxfordshire’s central location, a number of vehicles will be passing through Oxfordshire rather than Oxfordshire being a final destination for all vehicle movements.

4.10.11 Many respondents considered that the Oxfordshire Plan should be aim to reduce the need to travel and to reduce car dependency. Building new or larger roads was not considered to be the answer and cars should not be prioritised over other means of travel. However, there were also respondents who wanted to see greater investment in roads and (free) car parking.
4.10.12 Many respondents felt that there should be a much stronger focus on sustainable travel in the Oxfordshire Plan, backed up by increased funding for improved public transport provision and cycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Efforts should be focused on making sustainable modes of travel more feasible and desirable options across the county, with Science Vale and Oxford City identified as having particularly high levels of untapped potential for increasing walking and cycling.

4.10.13 Opportunities for enhanced public transport should be complemented by improved walking and cycling provision, enabling people to change between modes of sustainable travel more smoothly. There was a feeling that the Oxfordshire Plan could be bolder in its approach to sustainable travel with better recognition of the health and environmental benefits this would deliver. The needs of vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and disability vehicles should be prioritised over other users.

4.10.14 In thinking about resolving travel issues and improving future provision, there were a wide range of suggestions:

**Improving access to sustainable transport.**
- Encouraging/enabling behavioural changes that increase travel by sustainable modes.
- Oxfordshire being a trailblazer for walking and cycling connectivity – walking and cycling should be the first choice for short journeys for people of all ages and abilities.
- Incorporating improved walking and cycling infrastructure as part of a green infrastructure strategy.
- Continuous, dedicated cycle routes separated from other road users on all new roads and added retrospectively alongside all of Oxfordshire’s existing main routes.
- Taking road space away from cars and dedicating it to walking and cycling.
- Being able to move between different forms of public transport easily and transparently, with dedicated interchanges and payments reconciled immediately and seamlessly to operators.
- Increased/reintroduction of bus subsidies.
- Developer funding of bus services in perpetuity.
- Lower bus fares to make services more accessible to those on low incomes.

**Improving environmental quality**
- Cycle freight should be utilised within Oxfordshire’s city and towns.
- More actively encouraging and enabling the transition to zero emissions vehicles.
- Separating national/regional traffic from local traffic.
- Compulsory green travel plans.

**Enforcement**
- Cameras on roads and enforcement action taken against dangerous drivers that put cyclists at risk.

**Changing attitudes**
- Utilisation of demand management techniques to disincentivise car use.
- Moving away from single ownership vehicles to shared use vehicles.

**Innovation**
- Intelligent roads.
- More responsive public transport, bookable on request, in the rural hinterlands.

**Improved connectivity**
- Additional park and rides, including park and ride facilities at Lewknor for those travelling by coach to London.
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- Trams/monorail/local trains/guided rapid transport – high frequency, dedicated lanes with fast journey times.
- Opportunities for water transport.
- Protecting/expanding public rights of way and bridleways.
- Making better use of large surface level car parks (intensification or diversification on multiple levels).
- Encouraging more home and distance-based working to ease congestion.
- Reviewing the spatial distribution of employment uses to reduce the need to travel.

A number of specific rail improvements were suggested, including:
- Opening of the Cowley branch line and stations serving the Oxford Business and Science Parks.
- Double tracking of the Cotswold line.
- Improvements to Hanborough station, including park and ride facilities.
- Delivery of east-west rail.
- Four tracking between Didcot and Oxford.
- Four tracking between Didcot and Swindon.
- Reopening of Grove train station.
- Upgrading Culham, Appleford and Radley stations and have more frequent train services from these stations.
- Complete electrification of railway lines.
- Rail or light rail/tram to Witney.
- Reopening of the Didcot to Southampton railway line.
- Improvements to Oxford’s central train station.
- Either increase the number of major businesses with private rail freight facilities or open a public general container terminal within Oxfordshire which could reduce long-distance HGV traffic.

4.10.15 A comment was made in support of a new Thames road crossing east of Reading.

**Oxford-Cambridge Expressway**

4.10.16 A large number of respondents stated that they do not support the idea of an Expressway. There were concerns about the impacts of an Expressway in terms of congestion, pollution, climate change, noise and landscape harm. It was suggested that the need for the Expressway has not been demonstrated, that there has been insufficient public engagement and that the delivery of an Expressway conflicts with the principles of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Oxfordshire Plan. It was suggested that the focus should instead be on Oxford-Cambridge rail connections and/or other sustainable travel options rather than a road connection.

4.10.17 There were a range of views about the relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan and the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway:
- The Oxfordshire Plan should not take the Expressway as given.
- The route of the Expressway should be guided by the Oxfordshire Plan, not the Oxfordshire Plan being guided by the Expressway.
- Work on the Oxfordshire Plan should be paused until the Expressway route is known.
- The Oxfordshire Plan should be flexible to respond to whichever route the Expressway follows.

4.10.18 A number of people also wanted more clarity about the aspirations for the ‘growth arc’ associated with the Expressway. Natural England suggested that the opportunity should be taken to produce an Oxford Cambridge Growth Arc local natural capital plan.

4.10.19 Many respondents considered east-west rail to be a better investment and that this should be completed before any plans for the Expressway are considered.
**Digital Connectivity**

4.10.20 It was suggested that home-based working and local working hubs could help to reduce commuting and that employers should be encouraged to support this.

4.10.21 However, it was stated that broadband connectivity and mobile phone services are currently poor in some parts of Oxfordshire, even in areas within/adjoining some of the main settlements. There were also concerns about cyber security. It was suggested that whilst digital connections are likely to increase in importance, the risks of loneliness, isolation and obesity need to be considered and addressed.

4.10.22 There was also significant scepticism in relation to the extent to which digital connectivity will change travel behaviours. It was suggested that there will still be a need for workers to have face to face meetings and for team working. It was also suggested that flexible working is not an option available to all workers, particularly lower income workers in the retail, service and manufacturing industries. Many of these workers are also likely to have less opportunity to be flexible to travel outside of peak times, as are parents/carers taking children to/from school.

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<th>Key Themes – Movement and Connectivity:</th>
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<td>The Oxfordshire Plan should:</td>
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<td>• Recognise that Oxfordshire’s existing travel network is under strain.</td>
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<td>• Not be too Oxford-focussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider the challenges experienced by rural communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be flexible to respond to the fast pace of lifestyle and technology change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage/enable a shift towards sustainable modes of travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be clearer on the relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan and the Expressway project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.11 Infrastructure**

4.11.1 The Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document included a specific section on infrastructure considerations. Discussion Point 5 asked two questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you agree with the commentary relating to the main infrastructure issues?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any changes or other issues that you would like to see referred to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.11.2 Detailed comments related to transport and digital infrastructure are included in Section 4.10 above. Detailed comments received in relation to other types of infrastructure are summarised below.
Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan – Consultation Report

Utilities Infrastructure

4.11.3 It was suggested that there should be more engagement and joint working with utilities companies. It was also suggested that we should be futureproofing provision, by providing more capacity than is currently needed to help future generations.

4.11.4 A number of respondents felt that the Oxfordshire Plan should say more about water resources. There were concerns about the ability to ensure a long-term water supply and sufficient sewerage infrastructure. Some respondents questioned proposals for a reservoir.

4.11.5 Thames Water recommended that, given the scale of development proposed for the growth arc, a strategic approach to new water and wastewater infrastructure is required. Engagement with Water Resources in the South East (WRSE) was suggested. Thames Water stated that it is important to consider the net increase in water and wastewater demand to serve development and also any impact that developments may have off site, further down the network. The Oxfordshire Plan should therefore seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Thames Water will work with developers and local authorities to ensure that any necessary infrastructure reinforcement is delivered ahead of the occupation of development. Where there are infrastructure constraints, it is important not to under estimate the time required to deliver necessary infrastructure. For example: local network upgrades take around 18 months and Sewage Treatment & Water Treatment Works upgrades can take 3-5 years.

4.11.6 Anglian Water, a sewerage company which serves part of Cherwell District, requested some specific explanatory text about the roles of water and sewerage companies and developers in funding infrastructure improvements.

4.11.7 A number of respondents suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should place greater emphasis on reducing energy consumption and increasing the use of renewable energy sources. It was suggested that future energy networks will be based around decentralised and community energy provision.

Health Infrastructure

4.11.8 A number of respondents raised concerns about difficulties accessing healthcare services and the loss of locally based services which can particularly disadvantage the most vulnerable service users. It was felt that new development will further stretch healthcare services. It was suggested that there needs to be a clear vision for the future of healthcare provision in Oxfordshire.

4.11.9 Some respondents highlighted a need to support the elderly in living at home for as long as they wish to, supported by appropriate care in the community. The need for more assisted living and extra care developments was highlighted by some. It was also suggested that more information is needed on how best to meet the housing needs of older residents. It was suggested that joint assisted living and university accommodation (as used in some European counties) could aid social inclusion and make young people more aware of the impact of their choices in later life.

4.11.10 Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust commented that it continues to manage a large number of complaints about access to, and parking on, its sites and the queuing traffic that this creates. The Trust considers it unrealistic to expect private travel to reduce by simply removing parking provision without complimentary transport strategies.
**Green Infrastructure**

4.11.1 A number of respondents highlighted the need for the Oxfordshire Plan to consider green infrastructure and natural capital. It was suggested that a comprehensive, strategic green and blue infrastructure audit should be undertaken and that from this work, a proactive and progressive strategy identified, where detail can be added and potential sites allocated through the subsequent local and neighbourhood plans.

4.11.12 It was suggested that better use could be made of the Thames Path as it has good links between settlements. This could be enhanced with potential for use as a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists. Similar improvements could also be made to the Oxford Canal.

**Education**

4.11.13 A number of comments highlighted the need to consider education capacity and the need to ensure opportunities for young people.

**Funding and Delivery of Infrastructure Improvements**

4.11.14 Many respondents felt that infrastructure should be delivered before new homes. It was suggested that funding should be identified to cover the whole of the plan period and that schemes should be identified that maximise the return on investment. Some respondents highlighted the need for an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, a risk management strategy and engagement with key stakeholders with responsibilities for infrastructure provision.

4.11.15 Many respondents were concerned that insufficient funding has been identified to meet infrastructure needs. A number of respondents considered Growth Deal funding to be insufficient. There were concerns that a lack of funding could put plan deliverability at risk.

4.11.16 Funding solutions proposed by respondents included:

- Sufficient developer funding should be secured to meet all infrastructure needs.
- Consider opportunities to increase developer funding, particularly on greenfield and/or allocated sites.
- Do not rely purely on developer funding, consider alternative funding sources.
- Prioritisation of developments that would deliver significant infrastructure benefits.
- Local authorities should borrow so that infrastructure can be delivered upfront, with the money being repaid from subsequent s106 or CIL contributions.
- The Oxfordshire Plan should make up funding gaps of Local Plans.
- The Oxfordshire Plan’s aspirations should be reduced in line with available funding.
- Introduce a Strategic Infrastructure Tariff for Oxfordshire (However there was concern that whilst Strategic Infrastructure Tariffs may make administration easier, it is unlikely to increase the overall developer contribution to infrastructure.)

**Key Themes – Infrastructure:**

The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Take a strategic approach to managing water resources.
- Place greater emphasis on reducing energy consumption.
- Place greater emphasis on renewable energy.
- Consider access to healthcare services.
- Place greater emphasis on Green Infrastructure.
- Ensure that infrastructure delivery is properly phased and funded.
4.12 Spatial scenarios

4.12.1 The consultation document included a series of conceptual illustrations for potential spatial options for the location of new development in Oxfordshire to 2050. Each of the options included a description of the potential risks and benefits associated with different patterns of development.

4.12.2 Three questions were asked about the suitability of the spatial scenarios and whether there were other additional options that hadn’t been identified (Discussion Point 4):

Do you agree with the commentary relating to the spatial scenarios illustrated, or do you think there are important considerations we have missed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you consider there are any other potential spatial scenarios we should consider?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are there any spatial scenarios you think we should avoid (please provide reasons if you can)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Settlement/s</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification of city, town and district centres</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification of development within existing suburbs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification around the edges of larger settlements and strategic extensions</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke and Hub</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'String' settlement / settlement cluster</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Wheeler' settlement cluster</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispersal</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.12.3 The consultation responses showed that there was no clear consensus on the preferred spatial strategy for Oxfordshire to 2050. Many respondents felt that a combination of different scenarios was likely to be most appropriate, with some variation across Oxfordshire to take account of different opportunities and constraints. It was suggested that a range of different spatial scenarios should be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal and plan-making processes.

4.12.4 Some respondents felt that the level of growth needs to be known before an appropriate scenario can be selected.

4.12.5 Some respondents noted that the range of approaches presented in the consultation document had not been looked at before and this consideration was welcomed. Respondents also commented that the diagrams shown in the consultation document did not reflect Oxfordshire’s geography.

4.12.6 In considering potential locations for future growth, it was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should identify a mix of both broad growth locations and specific development sites. Many respondents supported the location of new homes close to employment uses to reduce the need to travel. It was also suggested that regard should be had to the effects of improved digital connectivity (including broadband infrastructure), which will enable people to work at home or remotely further reducing the need to travel.

**Intensification of City, Town and District Centres**

4.12.7 The intensification of city, town and district centres was seen by many as an opportunity to promote a brownfield first approach to development. This was welcomed as a means of limiting the loss of greenfield land. However, many respondents noted that there is limited capacity within existing centres to accommodate significant levels of development.

4.12.8 It was suggested that changes in the retail sector could result in retail parks becoming available for redevelopment in the future. It was suggested that the Oxfordshire Plan should consider such opportunities for accommodating new homes.

4.12.9 A number of respondents suggested that land within Oxford should be utilised for housing rather than employment development.

**New Settlements**

4.12.10 It was suggested that determining the location of new settlements would require careful consideration.

4.12.11 New settlements were viewed as an opportunity to build new communities with a clear focus on environmental sustainability and good design principles (such as garden town principles) from the outset. The timely delivery of infrastructure and an appropriate mix of land uses were viewed as key to their success.

4.12.12 However, new settlements were also viewed as being likely to require substantial areas of greenfield land, which many respondents opposed. There was concern that whilst new settlements provide some unique opportunities, they should not be viewed as the only option. There were also concerns that new settlements could take a long time to deliver, could result in high levels of environmental harm and could incur high infrastructure needs/costs.
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Dispersal

4.12.13 Dispersal would involve spreading new development evenly across the county, including smaller settlements.

4.12.14 Respondents highlighted risks of pursuing a dispersed spatial strategy:
   i. Potential negative effects on settlement character and heritage assets;
   ii. Risk that a sufficient number of new homes may not be delivered;
   iii. Risk that a critical mass of development may not be achieved to deliver the infrastructure required to mitigate the effects of development;
   iv. Risk of maintaining/increasing car dependency; and
   v. Risk that new homes are not well related to economic hubs.

4.12.15 Respondents also highlighted opportunities of pursuing a dispersed spatial strategy:
   i. Potential to minimise the environmental impacts of development;
   ii. Potential to encourage investment and support local economies;
   iii. Potential to improve the viability of public transport services;
   iv. Potential to support a mixed population, enabling families to live in rural locations; and
   v. A dispersed spatial strategy is less complex than delivering large scale strategic sites.

'Wheel' Settlement Cluster

4.12.16 The 'wheel' settlement cluster would focus growth at Oxford, the existing larger towns and the key corridors into Oxford and between towns.

4.12.17 There were mixed views as to whether this approach would help to alleviate pressure on existing corridors into Oxford which are currently under strain.

4.12.18 Some respondents felt that improved connectivity between Oxfordshire’s towns would help to support economic growth outside of Oxford. It was also suggested that this approach could help to support improved public transport connectivity and facilitate a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport. However, some respondents felt that although existing larger settlements provide a range of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of communities, they remain linked to higher order settlements such as Oxford for other services and facilities.

Intensification of Development within Existing Suburbs

4.12.19 Respondents considered that there may be some opportunities for intensification within existing suburbs:
   • Redevelopment of areas of low-density development.
   • Redevelopment of vacant sites.
   • More efficient use of the existing housing stock (not having people living in homes with a number of unused bedrooms).
   • Bringing empty homes back into use.
   • Restricting second home ownership.

4.12.20 However, there were concerns about the impacts of intensification on heritage assets, ensuring a sustainable mix of uses and infrastructure capacity.
4.12.21 The intensification of development within existing suburbs was considered problematic from a public transport point of view, because these tend to be very awkward to extend bus networks into. Most of the other spatial scenarios were viewed as providing opportunities to create high quality bus routes, so long as these are envisaged at the earliest stage of planning.

Intensification around the Edges of Larger Settlements and Strategic Extensions
4.12.22 It was felt that focussing development around the edges of larger settlements could help to ensure that the infrastructure required to support growth was already in place. However, it was suggested that investment in infrastructure capacity may be required, particularly as many of Oxfordshire’s towns and villages are viewed as having traffic congestion issues.

4.12.23 It was suggested that there may be further capacity to accommodate growth at Banbury and Bicester through intensification.

4.12.24 There was some concern about development within the Green Belt due to potential environmental impacts, including the impacts on the landscape setting of historic settlements. It was felt by some that further expansion beyond Oxford’s limits should be avoided as this will place pressure on transport infrastructure.

4.12.25 It was suggested that in seeking to deliver new development through intensification, brownfield sites should be prioritised to prevent urban sprawl. Sprawl could also be limited by increasing the density of new developments.

4.12.26 It was suggested that this approach is largely consistent with the hierarchical approach to guiding development which has previously delivered significant levels of housing through Local Plans. However, it was also suggested that whilst the delivery of strategic scale urban extensions has potential to deliver new homes, services and facilities, it would not necessarily generate the mass of development and infrastructure investment that a new settlement would bring.

Spoke and Hub
4.12.27 Spoke and hub development would involve a continued focus on Oxford and key corridors into Oxford.

4.12.28 It was suggested that this approach would require significant transport infrastructure improvements, as roads into and around Oxford are already operating above capacity and are heavily congested. It was suggested that opportunities to improve rail connectivity and enhance rail services along key corridors should be considered.

4.12.29 Some respondents were concerned that this approach puts too much focus on Oxford and that key towns (such as Bicester and Didcot) and employment locations across Oxfordshire which would risk being neglected as a result. It was suggested that improved connectivity between larger settlements and employment locations outside of Oxford may help them to realise their full potential.

‘String’ Settlement/Settlement Clusters
4.12.30 A ‘string’ settlement/settlement cluster would see development focused on a number of linked settlements. It could involve new and/or existing/expanded settlements.
4.12.31 Some respondents felt that this approach would only be possible in a few locations, but that there was some potential:

- Along the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, in combination with new settlements.
- Along rail corridors, to encourage more sustainable travel patterns.
- In combination with dispersal, to support the viability of local services and facilities.

**Other Potential Spatial Scenarios**

4.12.32 The following additional spatial scenarios were suggested for consideration through the Oxfordshire Plan process:

- Development related to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
- Focusing on environmental factors to determine whether there is capacity to provide development in a way which avoids/minimises harm.
- Working with local planning authorities outside of Oxfordshire to consider cross-border development.
- Community-led development (prioritising areas for growth that will provide benefits for communities).

**Key Themes – Spatial Scenarios:**

- There was no clear consensus on the preferred spatial strategy for Oxfordshire to 2050.
- A combination of different scenarios is likely to be most appropriate, with some variation across Oxfordshire to take account of different opportunities and constraints.
- A range of different spatial scenarios should be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal and plan-making processes.
## 5 Summary and Next Steps

5.1.1 Table 2 summaries the key messages from the ‘Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan’ consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section:</th>
<th>Key themes raised through the ‘Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan’ consultation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **General Introduction**     | • Need to ensure that opportunities associated with creating a long-term, cross-boundary plan for Oxfordshire are realised.  
• Growth requirements for Oxfordshire to 2050 need to be understood.  
• Oxfordshire’s role and position within a wider context, particularly the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, needs to be considered.  
• The relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans needs to be clarified.                                                                                                               |
| **Vision**                   | The vision for Oxfordshire in 2050 should:  
• Be more ambitious, powerful, radical, creative and/or innovative.  
• Be more Oxfordshire-specific.  
• Be more reflective of local people’s views.  
• Focus on ensuring social and environmental wellbeing, not just growth.  
• Prioritise the need to address climate change.  
• Recognise the importance of Oxfordshire’s rural areas.  
• Refer to Oxfordshire’s role and position within a wider context.                                                                                                                                   |
| **Aspirations**              | Responses were mixed on whether the right aspirations for Oxfordshire had been identified. Comments in other sections indicate that the aspirations could be refined.                                                                                                                        |
| **Objectives**               | The objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan should:  
• Be bolder.  
• Give greater emphasis to climate change.  
• Give greater emphasis to human health and wellbeing.  
• Give greater emphasis to sustainable travel.                                                                                                                                                    |
| **Natural and Built Environment** | The Oxfordshire Plan should:  
• Recognise that the natural environment does not have unlimited capacity to accommodate growth.  
• Make addressing climate change a key priority.  
• Recognise the relationship between the natural environment and human health and wellbeing.  
• Recognise the importance of Oxfordshire’s rural characteristics.  
• Help to address air quality issues.  
• Encourage sustainable design and construction.  
• Be informed by robust environmental evidence.                                                                                                                                                    |
| **Strong and Healthy Communities** | The Oxfordshire Plan should:  
• Seek to maintain/enhance the quality of life of Oxfordshire’s residents.  
• Recognise and seek to address different types of inequality.  
• Recognise the relationship between the natural environment and human health and wellbeing.  
• Help to improve access to healthcare services.  
• Support healthy place shaping principles.  
• Help to address air quality issues.                                                                                                                                                                      |
Economic Growth

There were mixed views as to whether we should be planning for further economic growth. The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Focus more broadly on economic wellbeing rather than just economic growth.
- Consider the social and environmental impacts of economic growth.
- Consider economic connections at different scales, beyond the Oxfordshire boundary.
- Ensure new homes are well related to key employment locations.
- Support economic diversity.
- Support economic resilience.

Housing

The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Be based upon an up-to-date assessment of Oxfordshire’s housing needs.
- Make better use of the existing housing stock before committing to building new homes.
- Take a brownfield first approach.
- Value the Green Belt.
- Locate new homes near to jobs and where there is most potential for travel by sustainable modes.
- Make new homes accessible and affordable to local people, including key workers.
- Encourage/require sustainable design and construction methods.

Transport and Connectivity

The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Recognise that Oxfordshire’s existing travel network is under strain.
- Not be too Oxford-focused.
- Consider the challenges experienced by rural communities.
- Be flexible to respond to the fast pace of lifestyle and technology change.
- Encourage/enable a shift towards sustainable modes of travel.
- Be clearer on the relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan and the Expressway project.

Infrastructure

The Oxfordshire Plan should:

- Take a strategic approach to managing water resources.
- Place greater emphasis on reducing energy consumption.
- Place greater emphasis on renewable energy.
- Consider access to healthcare services.
- Place greater emphasis on Green Infrastructure.
- Ensure that infrastructure delivery is properly phased and funded.

Spatial Scenarios

- There was no clear consensus on the preferred spatial strategy for Oxfordshire to 2050.
- A combination of different scenarios is likely to be most appropriate, with some variation across Oxfordshire to take account of different opportunities and constraints.
- A range of different spatial scenarios should be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal and plan-making processes.

Table 2: Key themes raised through the ‘Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan’ consultation
5.1.2 The responses received through the ‘Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan’ consultation will be used to inform the next stage of the plan making process. Specifically, the responses received will be used to:
   • Refine the vision, aspirations and objectives for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050;
   • Inform the development of reasonable alternatives to be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process;
   • Shape the Oxfordshire Plan’s spatial strategy; and
   • Inform the selection of preferred options.

5.1.3 Once this work has been completed, and additional evidence has been gathered, a Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation will take place.
### Appendix A: Introducing the Oxfordshire Plan Deposit Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deposit Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banbury Library</td>
<td>Marlborough Road, Banbury, OX16 5DB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury LinkPoint</td>
<td>43 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX15 5UW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury Town Council</td>
<td>Town Hall, Bridge Street, Banbury, OX16 5QB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicester Library</td>
<td>Franklins House, Wesley Lane Bicester, OX26 6JU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicester LinkPoint</td>
<td>Franklins House, Wesley Lane Bicester, OX26 6JU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicester Town Council</td>
<td>The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, OX26 6PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherwell District Council Offices</td>
<td>Bodicote House, Bodicote Banbury, OX15 4AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deddington Library</td>
<td>The Old Court House, Horse Fair, Deddington OX15 0SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook Norton Library</td>
<td>High Street, Hook Norton, Banbury, OX15 5NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidlington Library</td>
<td>Ron Groves House, 23 Oxford Road, Kidlington, OX5 2BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidlington LinkPoint</td>
<td>Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, OX5 1AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodgreen Library</td>
<td>Woodgreen Leisure Centre, Woodgreen Avenue, Banbury, OX16 0AT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barton Leisure Centre</td>
<td>Waynflete Road, Oxford, OX3 8GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leys Pools and Leisure Centre</td>
<td>Blackbird Leys, Pegasus Road, Oxford, OX4 6JL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford City Council</td>
<td>St Aldates Chambers, Oxford, OX1 1DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
<td>County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Sports Centre</td>
<td>Green Furlong, Berinsfield, OX10 7NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson Library</td>
<td>Castle Square, Benson, OX10 6SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berinsfield Library</td>
<td>Green Furlong, Berinsfield, OX10 7NR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalgrove Post Office</td>
<td>105 High St, Chalgrove, OX44 7SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinnor Library</td>
<td>Station Road, Chinnor, OX39 4PU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clifton Hampden Post Office</td>
<td>High Street, Clifton Hampden, Abingdon, OX14 3EE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornerstone, Didcot</td>
<td>25 Station Rd, Didcot,OX11 7NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>via Culham Parish Council</td>
<td>Please contact Councillor Gibbs at <a href="mailto:grgibbs@btinternet.com">grgibbs@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didcot Library</td>
<td>197 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8RU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didcot Wave and Leisure Centre</td>
<td>Newlands Ave, Didcot, OX11 8AY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goring Library</td>
<td>16A Mulberry Lane, Worthing, BN12 4JL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henley Library</td>
<td>Ravenscroft Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2DH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Inn, Grenoble Road</td>
<td>Grenoble Rd, Oxford, OX4 4XP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandford on Thames Talking Shop</td>
<td>The Village Hall, Sandford-on-Thames, OX4 4YN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café</td>
<td>Grove Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9RH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonning Common Library</td>
<td>3 North Street, Thame, OX9 3BH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thame Library</td>
<td>51 High Street, Wallingford, OX10 0DB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallingford Library</td>
<td>35 High Street, Watlington, OX49 5PZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watlington Library</td>
<td>The Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1XP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatley Library</td>
<td>Reading Road, Woodcote, RG8 0QY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcote Library</td>
<td>135 Eastern Ave Milton, OX14 4SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Oxfordshire District Council</td>
<td>Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey House</td>
<td>The Charter, Abingdon, OX14 3LY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon Library</td>
<td>Elms Court Elms Parade, Oxford, OX2 9LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botley Library</td>
<td>The Elms, Gloucester St Faringdon, SN7 7HY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faringdon Library</td>
<td>Millbrook Square, Grove, OX12 7LB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove Library</td>
<td>Kennington Village Centre, Kennington Rd, Kennington, OX1 5PG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennington Library</td>
<td>Vale of White Horse District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wantage Library</td>
<td>135 Eastern Ave, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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West Oxfordshire District Council
Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB
Oxford Central Library Information services
2nd Floor, Central Library, Queen Street, Oxford, OX1 1DJ

Summertown Library
South Parade, Oxford, OX2 7JN
Blackbird Leys Library
Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6HT
Headington Library
Bury Knowle Park, North Place, Headington, Oxford
Old Marston Library
Mortimer Hall, Oxford Road, Old Marston, Oxford
Littlemore Library
Oxford Academy Campus, Sandy Lane, West Littlemore, Oxford
Cowley Library
Temple Road, Oxford, OX4 2EZ
Witney Town Council
Town Hall, 51B Market Square, Witney, OX28 6AG
Carterton Town Council
19 Alvescot Road, Carterton, OX18 3JL
Chipping Norton Town Council
The Guildhall, Chipping Norton, OX7 5NJ
Burford Visitor Information Centre
33 High Street, Burford, OX18 4QA
Bampton Library
Old Grammar School, Church View, Bampton, OX18 2NE
Burford Library
86A High Street, Burford, OX18 4QF
Carterton Library
6 Alvescot Road, Carterton, OX18 3JH
Charlbury Library
Charlbury Community Centre, Enstone Road, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, OX7 3PQ

Chipping Norton Library
Goddards Lane, Chipping Norton, Ox7 5NP
Eynsham Library
30 Mill Street, Witney, OX29 4JS
North Leigh Library
Memorial Hall, Park Road, North Leigh, OX29 6SA
Stonesfield Library
Village Hall, Longore Stonesfield, OX29 8EF
Witney Library
Welch Way, Witney, OX28 6JH
Woodstock Library
Fletchers House, Park St, Woodstock, OX20 1SN
Wychwood Library
29 High Street, Milton-under-Wychwood, Chipping Norton, OX7 6LD