

Statement of Common Ground between Oxford City Council and Cherwell District Council

Submission Draft (Regulation 19) Oxford Local Plan 2040

March 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Oxford City Council and Cherwell District Council. It documents those matters agreed by the parties with regard to the Oxford Local Plan 2040.

1.2 This SoCG reflects and confirms the current position on matters agreed or not agreed by both parties, with regard to the Duty to Cooperate.

1.3 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that Cherwell District Council may wish to raise during the Oxford Local Plan examination.

2.0 Background and governance arrangements

2.1 Oxford City and Cherwell District Council have a long history of working effectively together and have been working closely together on a number of matters of strategic cross boundary importance in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.

2.2 Various mechanisms for cooperation exist, as set out in Table 1 of the City Council's General Statement of Common Ground ¹. This includes the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), which has replaced the Oxfordshire Growth Board. At the strategic level, the authorities collaborate on economic matters through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), which prepares the Strategic Economic Plan. At a strategic level the Councils are also members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) and its supporting Executive Officers Group

2.3 A particular focus of recent joint working between both authorities has been on housing matters including the commissioning of a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) 2022.

3.0 Matters on which the parties agree

Duty to Cooperate

3.1 Oxford City Council has proactively engaged with Cherwell District Council through the preparation of the Oxford City Local Plan 2040 on a number of cross boundary issues. More information and details of this engagement can be found in Oxford City's Duty to Cooperate Statement.

¹ [general-statement-of-common-ground-august-2023 \(oxford.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/general-statement-of-common-ground-august-2023)

3.2 The parties agree that Oxford City and Cherwell District Councils have engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to secure effective cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters in relation to the preparation of their respective Plans.

Oxford City and CDC Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)

3.3 Between Spring 2018 and August 2022 the six local authorities in Oxfordshire (Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council) were collaborating on a Joint strategic spatial strategy (the Oxfordshire Plan 2050) To inform this Plan a range of supporting evidence was produced including an Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA).

3.4 Following cessation of the Oxfordshire Plan in August 2022, Cherwell and Oxford City both considered that further housing and employment needs evidence was needed to inform their respective emerging local plans. They subsequently jointly commissioned a new Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) 2022.

3.5 The parties agree that:

- The HENA is an objective assessment of housing and employment needs which accords with the NPPF and PPG requirements for identifying housing and economic needs.
- The parties have worked jointly and effectively on the preparation of the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, published in December 2022.
- The HENA methodology continues to recognise that there is a countywide Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and an assessment of housing needs are identified in full for this area for the period 2020 to 2040.
- The rationale for the HENA was to fully assess the potential housing needs, the potential jobs needs and the combination and interrelationship between the two, to inform local plan needs.
- The study considers four scenarios for identifying housing needs and does not conclude on one preferred scenario. These are 1. Standard method, 2. 2021 Census Adjusted, 3. Cambridge Econometrics baseline, 4. Economic Led. The results of these scenarios are identified in the table below.
- The evidence in the HENA helps to identify whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify an alternative approach to the standard method for assessing housing needs.
- The Oxford Regulation 19 submission draft Local Plan (November 2023) identifies an objectively assessed housing need figure for Oxford of 1,322 dwellings per annum (compared to 762 dwellings per annum under the standard method) based on the Economic Baseline scenario of the HENA.
- On the same basis, the most recent Regulation 18 consultation document for the emerging Cherwell Local Plan (September 2023) assumed as a working figure an objectively assessed housing need figure for Cherwell of 1,009 dwellings per annum (compared to 742 dwellings per annum under the standard method).

CE Baseline Trend Employment Based Distribution Projected (2040) Distribution		SM Scenario 1	CA-SM Scenario 2	CE-B Scenario 3	ED Scenario 4
Oxfordshire	100%	3388	4721	4406	5830
Cherwell	22.9%	776	1081	1009	1335
Oxford City	30%	1016	1416	1322	1749
South Oxfordshire	18%	610	850	793	1049
Vale of White Horse	16.2%	549	765	714	944
West Oxfordshire	12.8%	434	604	564	746

Housing capacity

3.6 The parties agree:

- That Oxford, based on the economic baseline scenario, does not have the capacity to meet in full its identified needs from 2020-2040.
- In their most recent Regulation 18 consultation document (September 2023) Cherwell District Council identified a total housing capacity of 24,206 dwellings over the period 2020 – 2040 based on circumstances at that time.
- Before committing to taking any additional unmet housing need [above that already agreed to meet the needs to 2031] Cherwell District would want to explore further through the Duty to Cooperate process whether Oxford City can accommodate all or part of this additional need within its own boundaries.
- Cherwell considers that there may be more opportunities to increase capacity, including, but not limited to, assessing residential capacity of employment sites.
- That the update to capacity and inclusion of the trajectory in Policy H1 would provide an adequate basis for discussions about unmet need, although Cherwell also consider that they cannot accept any assessment of capacity at this time
- Cherwell District Council consider that there may be greater capacity than that calculated in the Oxford City HELAA.

Unmet housing need

3.7 The parties agree that:

- Oxford City Council has made a formal request to all Oxfordshire district councils to meet a proportion of its unmet housing needs.
- Oxford City Council's preferred options (Regulation 18 part 1) consultation October 2022, first highlighted that the City Council is unlikely to be able to meet its objectively assessed housing needs within its boundaries.
- The approximate scale of the unmet need was set out in the City's Regulation 18 part 2 (Housing Needs) consultation, February 2023.

- Cherwell District has already made provision for 4,400 homes for Oxford's unmet need in its Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Partial Review (adopted 2020).
- In their most recent Regulation 18 consultation (September 2023) Cherwell District Council recognised that it could be necessary to accommodate limited additional unmet need from Oxford City in the period to 2040 in addition to the 4,400 it has already committed to delivering as part of its adopted development plan. It stated that it would keep this under review as its Plan process continued and that it would continue to discuss the strategic priority of housing need across Oxfordshire with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities.
- Cherwell wishes to retain the flexibility to accommodate any genuine additional unmet need according to its own spatial strategy.
- Cherwell District will meet all of its identified housing needs and does not require Oxford to meet any of its housing needs.

Employment need

3.8 The parties agree that

- Oxford City does not require Cherwell District to accommodate any of its employment needs to 2040.
- Cherwell District does not at this stage require the city to accommodate any of its employment needs to 2040.

Other strategic matters

3.9 The parties agree that

- Part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies in the south-west of Cherwell District and within Oxford City. Air quality and recreation are the key issues affecting the quality of the SAC.
- The cumulative impact of growth on the local and wider transport network is a strategic matter and the Councils will work constructively with Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways and other stakeholders to plan for future highway infrastructure improvements and to support the delivery of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan.
- The parties will continue to work collaboratively with the other Oxfordshire authorities, on a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs Assessment to inform their respective Local Plans.
- There are currently no outstanding Duty to Cooperate concerns between the two parties in relation to the issue of provision of health infrastructure and local facilities
- There are currently no outstanding Duty to Cooperate concerns between the two parties in relation to the issue of climate change mitigation and adaptation including flood risk.
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape: there are currently no outstanding duty to cooperate issues regarding this issue between the parties.
- There are currently no unresolved duty to cooperate issues relating to the provision of retail, and other commercial development.

Signed on behalf of Cherwell District Council



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Date: 27 March 2024

Signed on behalf of Oxford City Council



David Butler

Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

Date: 27 March 2024