

CPRE West Oxfordshire – response to Housing Scenarios, WOLP Consultation, Oct 2023

The Future pattern of development in West Oxfordshire

No new housing numbers are given in this consultation, but existing numbers which would be taken into account are listed:

Current Local Plan has allocated sites (see page 49)

- REEMA North, Carterton (300 homes)
- Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock (120 homes)
- Land at Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough (50 homes)
- Woodford Way Car Park, Witney (50 homes)
- Land to the east of Witney (450 homes)
- Land to the north of Witney (1,400 homes)
- Land to the east of Chipping Norton (1,200 homes plus 5 hectares of business land)
- Land to the west of Eynsham (763 homes²⁴)
- Salt Cross Garden Village (2,200 homes plus 40 hectares of business land)

This is 6,533 homes.

And sites under construction at April 2022:

- North Curbridge (West Witney) – under construction with around 362 homes still to be built;
- • Brize Meadows (Brize Norton) – under construction with around 466 homes still to be built;
- • Land east of Woodstock – under construction with around 224 homes still to be built;
- • Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton – under construction with around 107 homes still to be built;
- • Shilton Road, Burford – under construction with around 70 homes still to be built;
- • Land north of Burford Road, Witney – under construction with around 88 homes still to be built; and
- • Land at Downs Road, Curbridge – under construction with around 68 homes still to be built.

This 1,385 homes

Also, permission granted, will be counted.

This equates to a total of 7,918 homes, excluding those for whom permission may be granted. The total requirement for homes in the new plan is not specified and it is not possible to comment constructively until the deficit (if any) is understood.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan does not seem to give any specific housing numbers – but asks for comment and support/ objection to 8 different housing scenarios:

Scenario 1 : Hierarchical approach – housing numbers spilt in descending scale :Significant proportion in 3 main centres of Whitney , Carterton and Chipping Norton; Rural service centres of Eynsham, Salt Cross. Woodstock Modest development in Burford, Charlbury, Bampton and Long Hanborough; then limited development of villages and less again in small villages as needed.

This is the current approach, the approach which received the most support in previous consultations and is, on balance , our preferred approach notwithstanding the caveats that we raise in further comments, that there should be

a brownfield sites first policy, no development on the Greenbelt or in AONS and a general protection of the countryside, with village development being led by need and within the settlement boundary.

Scenario 2 : Main service centre focus (Whitney, Carterton and Chipping Norton).. with less in villages

We would oppose development only in main areas as many people want to remain within their communities, such as first time buyers and down sizers and don't want to be forced into large developments, which will put pressure on already stretched facilities and encroach on the surrounding countryside .

Scenario 3 : Whitney focus

As 2

Scenario 4 : Carterton focus

As 2

Scenario 5 : Dispersed Growth... small to medium development in many villages

Strongly oppose this option, which is likely to cause one of the highest impacts on the countryside of all the options as the new development would erode the countryside surrounding these villages. Also, a village focus would be the least beneficial in tackling the climate emergency as it would encourage more car use to reach employment and facilities.

Scenario 6 : Village "clusters"... similar to 5 , but small groups of villages being considered as clusters

Strongly oppose this option, which would erode the countryside between the villages and the identity of individual villages. As scenario 5 this option would also encourage more car use to reach employment and facilities.

Scenario 7 : New settlement.. large purpose built development "somewhere"

Too little is known about this option for constructive comment other than to say that a large development *anywhere* in the district is likely to have a significant impact on the environment and countryside and force people to leave communities where they would prefer to remain. Any new development would need to be located near to good transportation links.

Scenario 8 : Public transport focus.. along A40 and A44 corridor where better service would be needed

In principle we support an approach where new housing is based where there is good public transport provision, but currently the provision within the district would be inadequate to support this option and huge investment would be required **prior** to the new houses as it is hard to encourage mode shift from car to public transport once established. Given the investment required, is this a financially viable scenario? The timescales involved to improve public transport will be lengthy and the need for housing pressing, so we consider this an unviable solution for this Local Plan, although would encourage public transport improvements to move forward to enable consideration of this focus in the long term future. It would make sense however that any planned expansions of the main service centres are located between the existing settlement and the A40, as opposed to away from.

General Comments:

It is difficult to constructively comment when no indication of actual numbers is given.

Whichever scenario is favoured, a brownfield sites first policy should be adopted.

Whichever scenario is favoured, there should be **No development in the Oxford Green belt or AONB**. In addition , there is a need to protect the countryside generally. The amount and environmental value of land taken for developments should be minimised; and where development occurs it should sensitively located, sustainable, appropriate to need, and the land take proportionate.

Housing development to come forward at the highest realistic density in each location, with a yardstick target of at least 70 houses per hectare.

West Oxfordshire should base housing numbers on the ONS (Office for National Statistics) latest housing projections uplifted in line with the **Government's current standard method** requirements to produce the minimum realistic housing trajectory, and not be influenced by the HENA report, which is unrealistically inflated and highly criticised.

It is our view WODC should resist numbers in the Oxford City HENA report strongly and put pressure on the City to allocate their brownfield sites within the city to homes rather than employment. See :

<https://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/oxford-citys-growth-agenda-threatens-countryside/>

All new build should as a mandatory requirement include latest energy and water efficiencies as standard ; solar, air pumps and water storage as standard

All new developments should include hedgerow and green spaces which the developer **MUST** maintain for a minimum of 5 years.

Only 1 and 2 bed properties are needed. That will use less land and naturally free up the large number of family houses that already exist in the District. Flats with share green spaces are ideal and the most efficient.

There should be a positive policy for Annexes and accommodation for the elderly and these properties should be counted in the figures.

Extensions make a contribution and should be counted.

Sub-division of large houses should be encouraged.

New housing should use loft spaces to limit land take and parking should be directly below the building.

Call for sites, Ideas and opportunities

This section is largely about call for sites for new housing , but it is also looking for new ideas and opportunities

