

Note on the changes between the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the South East Plan (SoS Proposed Changes; CD10/2) and the final South East Plan (Final SEP; CD10/1)

N.B. Minor changes are denoted through the use of underlining (new text) and strike-throughs (deleted text); larger changes are shown by including the appropriate paragraph of each document. Only the Central Oxfordshire chapter of Section C is included.

Policy CC1: Sustainable Development

SoS Proposed Changes:

The principal objective of the Plan is to achieve and to maintain sustainable development in the region. Sustainable development priorities for the South East are identified as:

- i. Achieving sustainable levels of resource use
- ii. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the region
- iii. Ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- iv. Ensuring that the most deprived people also have an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to a better quality of life

Final SEP:

The principal objective of the Plan is to achieve and to maintain sustainable development in the region. Sustainable development priorities for the South East are identified as:

- i. achieving sustainable levels of resource use
- ii. ensuring the physical and natural environment of the South East is conserved and enhanced
- iii. reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the region
- iv. ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- v. achieving safe, secure and socially inclusive communities across the region, and ensuring that the most deprived people also have an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to a better quality of life.

Policy CC8: Green Infrastructure

SoS Proposed Changes:

Local authorities and partners should work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space. Networks should be planned to include both existing and new green infrastructure. They should be managed with the primary aim of maintaining and improving biodiversity, but should also deliver recreational and cultural benefits and ensure that an improved and healthy environment is available for the benefit of present and future communities.

The provisions of this policy apply region-wide. However, the successful designation and management of Green Infrastructure will be particularly important in areas designated as regional hubs, in areas close to sites of international ecological importance and in areas identified for significant growth (Strategic Development Areas).

Final SEP:

Local authorities and partners will work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space. Networks should be planned to include both existing and new green infrastructure. They need to be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits including conserving

and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual and community health and 'well being'. They will be created and managed as a framework of green spaces and other natural features that will boost the sustainable development of settlements and increase the environmental capacity of the locality and region as a whole, helping communities to be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

The provisions of this policy apply region-wide. However, the successful designation and management of green infrastructure will be particularly important in areas designated as regional hubs, where growth may impact on sites of international nature conservation importance or where there is a need to enhance the existing environmental capacity of an area.

Paragraph 7.4 (Housing)

Final SEP:

Housing provision in the region needs to be considered against this policy background.

The South East is a high demand housing area that has to manage the needs arising from and implications of considerable levels of demographic and economic growth whilst respecting environmental constraints. The previous (2004-revised) official projections indicated a population growth of 44,200 and a household growth of about 35,900 per year. The latest sub-national population projections (2006-based) project an annual population growth of about 64,300 and indicate that the recent demographic trends may lead to substantially higher household numbers in the South East than previously understood. Historically, the supply of housing in the South East has not matched demographic-based need and demand, although since 2003 the level of supply began to increase reaching nearly 34,600 in 2006/07. However, the supply of housing still falls short of the demand, and the affordability of housing across the region has been worsening over the years. Although current market conditions indicate that housing completion rates may fall in the short term, there remains a risk that the supply/demand mismatch will increase in the longer time frame that this Plan covers. Both additional market and affordable housing is needed in the South East to meet the demand created by the increase in households. The latest national household projections for England suggest an increase of around 250,000 additional households a year until 2031. The South East's share of this is 39,100 a year.

Policy H1: Regional Housing Provision 2006-2026

Final SEP:

Local planning authorities will allocate sufficient land and facilitate the delivery of 654,000 (~~662,500~~) net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026.

(N.B. The figure for Central Oxfordshire is unchanged at 2,034 annually and 40,680 in total)

Policy NRM1: Sustainable water resources and groundwater

SoS Proposed Changes:

In preparing Local Development Documents, and determining planning applications, local authorities will:

- i. ensure compatibility with River Basin Management Plans and take account of other plans and strategies including water company asset management plans, the Environment Agency's Regional Water Resources Strategy and Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies, groundwater vulnerability maps and groundwater source protection zone maps

v. direct new development to areas where adequate water supply can be guaranteed from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. Where this is not possible, development should be phased so that sustainable new capacity can be provided ahead of new development

Final SEP:

In preparing local development documents, and determining planning applications, local authorities will:

i. assist the UK in achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive by delivering appropriate actions set out in River Basin Management plans. (2)

v. direct new development to areas where adequate water supply can be provided from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. In addition ensure, where appropriate, that development is phased to allow time for the relevant water infrastructure to be put in place in areas where it is currently lacking but is essential for the development to happen.

Policy NRM2: Water Quality

SoS Proposed Changes:

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced through avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment. In preparing Local Development Documents, and determining planning applications, local authorities should:

i. take account of water cycle studies, groundwater vulnerability maps and groundwater source protection zone maps prepared by the Environment Agency, and water and sewerage company asset management plans

ii. ensure that the rate and location of development does not lead to an unacceptable deterioration of water quality, and

iii. not permit development that presents a risk of pollution or where satisfactory pollution prevention measures are not provided in areas of high groundwater vulnerability (in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England)

Local authorities will work with water and sewerage companies and the Environment Agency to:

i. identify infrastructure needs, allocate areas and safeguard these for infrastructure development

ii. ensure that adequate wastewater and sewerage capacity is provided to meet planned demand, and

iii. take full account of the cumulative impacts of wastewater discharges on groundwater, inland and marine receiving waters

Local authorities should promote land management initiatives to reduce diffuse agricultural pollution.

Final SEP:

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced through avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

In preparing local development documents, and determining planning applications, local authorities will:

i. take account of water cycle studies, groundwater vulnerability maps, groundwater source protection zone maps and asset management plans as prepared by the Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, and local authorities

ii. ensure that the environmental water quality standards and objectives as required by European Directives are met

iii. ensure that the rate and location of development does not breach either relevant 'no deterioration' objectives or environmental quality standards

iv. not permit development that presents a risk of pollution or where satisfactory pollution prevention measures are not provided in areas of high groundwater vulnerability (in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England).

Local authorities will work with water and sewerage companies and the Environment Agency to:

- i. identify infrastructure needs, allocate areas and safeguard these for infrastructure development
- ii. ensure that adequate wastewater and sewerage capacity is provided to meet planned demand
- iii. ensure that impacts of treated sewage discharges on groundwater, inland and marine receiving waters do not breach environmental quality standards or 'no deterioration' objectives
- iv. ensure that plans and policies are consistent with River Basin Management Plans
- v. ensure that water cycle studies are carried out, prior to development sites being given planning permission, where investigations by the Environment Agency indicate that water quality constraints exist
- vi. ensure that Sustainable Drainage Systems are incorporated in a manner to reduce diffuse pollution.

Local authorities should promote land management initiatives to reduce diffuse agricultural pollution.

Policy NRM3: Strategic Water Resources Development

Final SEP:

- i. Upper Thames reservoir, Oxfordshire ~~by 2019/20~~

Policy NRM5: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

SoS Proposed Changes:

In the development and implementation of plans and strategies, local authorities and other bodies shall avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region by:

- i. providing the highest level of protection for internationally designated sites and ensuring that nationally designated sites are given a high degree of protection (Diagram NRM2)
- ii. seeking to ensure that damage to county wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided, including areas outside the boundaries of Natura 2000 sites where these support the species for which that site has been designated
- iii. ensuring that unavoidable damage to wildlife interest is minimised through mitigation, that any damage is compensated for, and that such measures are monitored
- iv. ensuring appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance, identifying areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvement and setting targets reflecting those in Box NRM3. Opportunities for biodiversity improvement, including connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation in the areas of strategic opportunity for biodiversity improvement (Diagram NRM3) should be pursued
- v. influencing and applying agri-environment schemes, forestry, flood defence, restoration of mineral extraction sites and other land management practices to
 - deliver biodiversity targets
 - increase the wildlife value of land
 - reduce diffuse pollution
 - protect soil resources
- vi. promoting policies that integrate the need to accommodate the changes taking place in agriculture with the potential implications of resultant development in the countryside
- vii. requiring green infrastructure to be identified, developed and implemented in conjunction with new development
- viii. identifying sites of international nature conservation interest (Natura Sites and Ramsar wetlands – see Diagram NRM2) sensitive to the pressures of recreation or urbanisation and, as appropriate, working with Natural England and other stakeholders to: set buffer zones around sensitive sites provide alternative recreation land as mitigation for any possible

adverse impact, in accordance with (vii) above; and implement access management measures and work to secure improved habitat management

Final SEP:

Local planning authorities and other bodies shall avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region.

- i. They must give the highest level of protection to sites of international nature conservation importance (European sites (6)). Plans or projects implementing policies in this RSS are subject to the Habitats Directive. Where a likely significant effect of a plan or project on European sites cannot be excluded, an appropriate assessment in line with the Habitats Directive and associated regulations will be required.
- ii. If after completing an appropriate assessment of a plan or project local planning authorities and other bodies are unable to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, the plan or project will not be approved, irrespective of conformity with other policies in the RSS, unless otherwise in compliance with 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.
- iii. For example when deciding on the distribution of housing allocations, local planning authorities should consider a range of alternative distributions within their area and should distribute an allocation in such a way that it avoids adversely affecting the integrity of European sites. In the event that a local planning authority concludes that it cannot distribute an allocation accordingly, or otherwise avoid or adequately mitigate any adverse effect, it should make provision up to the level closest to its original allocation for which it can be concluded that it can be distributed without adversely affecting the integrity of any European sites.
- iv. They shall avoid damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest and seek to ensure that damage to county wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided, including additional areas outside the boundaries of European sites where these support the species for which that site has been selected.
- v. They shall ensure appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance, identifying areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvement and setting targets reflecting those in the table headed 'Regional Biodiversity Targets - Summary for 2010 and 2026' below. Opportunities for biodiversity improvement, including connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation in the areas of strategic opportunity for biodiversity improvement (Diagram NRM3) should be pursued
- vi. They shall influence and applying agri-environment schemes, forestry, flood defence, restoration of mineral extraction sites and other land management practices to:
 - deliver biodiversity targets
 - increase the wildlife value of land
 - reduce diffuse pollution
 - protect soil resources.
- vi. They shall promote policies that integrate the need to accommodate the changes taking place in agriculture with the potential implications of resultant development in the countryside.
- vii. They shall require green infrastructure to be identified, developed and implemented in conjunction with new development.

Policy BE6: Management of the Historic Environment

SoS Proposed Changes:

When developing planning frameworks and considering applications for development consent local authorities and other bodies will adopt policies and support proposals which support the conservation and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place. Regionally significant historic features and sites are listed in paragraph 12.18 Proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate use should be encouraged.

Final SEP:

When developing and implementing plans and strategies, local authorities and other bodies will adopt policies and support proposals which protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place. The region's internationally and nationally designated historic assets should receive the highest level of protection. Proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate use should be encouraged.

Paragraph 22.3: Central Oxfordshire**Final SEP:**

- nurture the future success of Oxford while protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing its historic and environmental character and setting

Paragraph 22.4: Central Oxfordshire**Final SEP:**

Policy CO1 will enable Central Oxfordshire to make the most of the opportunities provided by its location and relationships with other sub-regions. Potential opportunities that could be pursued are the Oxford to Cambridge Arc initiative, East-West rail link reinstatement and existing or new employment clusters based upon university spin-off or other innovative industries (see also Policy RE2: Supporting Nationally and Regionally Important Sectors and Clusters). A range of other factors will also influence the distribution of development within the sub-region over the Plan period. Plan users should ensure they are acquainted with national policy and the general policies of this Plan (for example CC1-4, 6-8 and NRM1-5 & 11) when making use of this chapter.

Paragraph 22.5: Central Oxfordshire**Final SEP:**

The settlement pattern of the sub-region will change over the Plan period. Oxford itself will be allowed to grow physically and economically in order to accommodate its own needs, contribute to those in the wider region and help maintain its world-class status. Greater emphasis will be given to increasing social and economic self-containment at Bicester, Didcot, Wantage/Grove, to a lesser extent Witney and, outside the sub-region, Banbury. Bicester should seek to maximise the benefits accruing from its location, for example, on the evolving Oxford to Cambridge Arc and railway network. At the southern end of the sub-region, a development corridor encompassing Didcot and Wantage/Grove (known as Science Vale UK), utilising its economic strengths and delivering improved transport links between homes and jobs, is being pursued by the local authorities and others.

Paragraph 22.9: Central Oxfordshire Economy**Final SEP:**

Spatially, economic growth will need to be delivered alongside other housing, social and environmental development throughout the sub-region. In particular, regard will be had to the following considerations. Within Oxford the overall aim will be to achieve a broad balance between housing and jobs by protecting, as appropriate, existing sites and allocating new land suited to providing for a range of opportunities in accordance with Policy RE3. Options regarding the location, level and form of employment or other development, including the possible use of land at and in the immediate vicinity of the currently safeguarded land at

Peartree, will be a matter for local determination. Land should not be released for employment to the north of Oxford that could adversely affect the future economic buoyancy of Bicester, Kidlington or Witney or undermine opportunities to integrate the south of Oxford urban extension into the wider southern urban area. Opportunities should be taken for new mixed-use development delivered through redevelopment and intensification of the west end of the city following redevelopment of the Westgate shopping centre and conversion of the prison and castle mound for hotel and cultural activity.

Paragraph 22.11: Central Oxfordshire Economy

Final SEP:

The southern part of the county encompassing Didcot, Wantage/Grove area should similarly be promoted, *inter alia*, based upon the designation of Didcot as a New Growth Point, the potential the established research and business parks have for further growth and/or intensification, and/or in association with the local ~~Quadrant Partnership~~ Science Vale UK initiative.

Policy CO3: Scale and Distribution of Housing

SoS Proposed Changes:

Oxford South SDA 200 4,000

and:

Development at the Oxford SDA should ensure that the national air quality standards are not breached.

Final SEP:

South of Oxford SDA 200 4,000

and:

Development at Cherwell, Oxford and South Oxfordshire should ensure that the national air and water quality standards are not breached.

Additional footnote to Policy CO3: Scale and Distribution of Housing

Final SEP:

Housing provision figures and distributions within districts will be informed by strategic flood risk assessments, water cycle studies and all other material considerations as appropriate. The results of these studies will need to be reflected in local development frameworks and future reviews of the RSS.

Footnote to Policy CO3: Scale and Distribution of Housing

Final SEP:

This represents an allocation for a southern extension to Oxford ~~in the longer term for the period to 2026~~. The apportionment between South Oxfordshire and Oxford City will be determined through subsequent studies.

Paragraph 22.12: Scale and Distribution of Housing

Final SEP:

In accordance with Policy CO3, the Central Oxfordshire sub-region will make provision for at least 40,680 net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026; an average of 2,034 dwellings per annum. These ~~minimum levels~~ figures recognise and reflect regional, economic, demographic and other local imperatives, the ability of the sub-region to accommodate at

least the numbers proposed, the heritage importance of Oxford, the extent of the Wessex Downs and Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the existing pattern/ future delivery of infrastructure. While contributing in due part to the regional reuse of previously developed land target of 60%, some greenfield development that includes housing, will be necessary. A selective review of the Oxford Green Belt will be carried out in accordance with Policy CO4.

Paragraph 22.14: Scale and Distribution of Housing

SoS Proposed Changes:

Pending the completion of more detailed work, signalled in the supporting text of Policy CO4, an allowance of 4,000 is included for a South Oxford Strategic Development Area (SDA) to be apportioned between Oxford City and South Oxfordshire.

Final SEP:

An allocation of 4,000 dwellings for the period up to 2026 is included as part of the mixed use South of Oxford SDA. The exact location and apportionment will be determined following more detailed work by South Oxfordshire and Oxford City.

Paragraph 22.12: Scale and Distribution of Housing

Final SEP:

In accordance with Policy CO4, the approximate area of search for the review is indicated on Diagram COX1. The review and any subsequent plan-making will be carried out collaboratively by ~~Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire District Council~~ Oxford City Council to a timetable and in a form to be agreed by the Government Office for the South East. The agreement will also cover evidence base compilation, including a transport assessment. Consultation will take place in accordance with, or to standard exceeding, adopted statements of community involvement. The lead Councils will involve other relevant parties in the process as appropriate. The boundaries of the revised Green Belt, Strategic Development Area, and any additional safeguarded land necessary to ensure the new boundaries endure over the long term, will be shown in the relevant parts of the ~~Oxford City and South Oxfordshire District Council~~ Oxford City LDFs. They will contain such detail as is necessary to show where, how and when the component parts of the SDA, including the housing, will be delivered. The relevant plans will also take account of the opportunities the urban extension may present as a catalyst for regeneration in The Leys area, and how best to integrate the new development into the wider city. If overwhelming evidence demonstrates the unsuitability of the initial area of search, the Central Oxfordshire authorities will ensure that a wider review (the form and extent of which will be agreed with GOSE) takes place in order to identify and deliver one or more alternative suitable locations by 2026.

Paragraph 22.30: Implementation

Final SEP:

The success of the sub-regional strategy will ultimately depend upon the commitment of national, regional and local agencies, in conjunction with the public, private and voluntary sectors, to its implementation. For example, the Environment Agency will work with individual or groups of authorities in order to ensure the preparation and implementation of LDFs in accordance with agreed local development scheme (LDS) timetables. The strategic policies need to be translated into more detailed policies, action plans and, crucially, investment programmes. Examples of the range of formal and other partnerships that will be needed to deliver the strategy include the:

- Didcot New Growth Point partnership between central, regional and local government
- recently formed County/Highways Agency Management Board

- ~~Quadrant Partnership~~ Science Vale UK initiative linking Didcot and Wantage/Grove
- Oxford West End regeneration partnership
- Bicester business-led group.

Paragraph 22.31: Implementation

Final SEP:

In particular, all local authorities will work together as necessary and appropriate in order to deliver development that will straddle or influence across administrative boundaries. For example, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will continue to work together to deliver growth at Didcot while South Oxfordshire, Oxford City and any other affected authority will work together to deliver the South of Oxford urban extension. In any joint working, the council administering the largest area to be planned for would normally be expected to act as lead authority. The more detailed mechanisms and arrangements, focused on delivering the required outcomes, will be set out in LDSs, sustainable community strategies and/or LAAs. By these and other means the Plan, Implement, Monitor, Manage regime will be proactively pursued within Central Oxfordshire and hence the aims and objectives of national, regional and sub-regional policy achieved.