

This topic addresses: Building densities and layout, Greenfield land and the Green Belt.

SA objective: 4. To **meet local housing needs** by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent affordable home.

SEA theme: Material assets and population.

Introduction

Oxford has acute housing pressures that need to be addressed. The city has an urgent need for more housing, and it is widely recognised that demand continues to outstrip supply. Oxford is an international city with a world renowned university and hospitals and an important part of the knowledge economy; increasing the supply of available and affordable housing is a priority in supporting the economy, including healthcare and education needed for the city, because it means that staff can be both attracted and retained more readily. Meeting the needs of those in high housing need, or those who may struggle to afford to remain in the city, is also important to meet social objectives such as overcoming inequalities and improving health and wellbeing.

This topic paper begins with a review of the national, regional and local policy context relating to housing. It then goes on to look at the current situation in Oxford and includes a discussion on housing (and affordable housing) need, Oxford's housing target and it also looks at the accommodation needs of other parts of the community including the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers. The "current situation" section then moves on to discuss housing supply (permissions). The next section talks about the likely future without a new local plan. This section begins with a discussion about housing supply and the competing pressures for limited land available in the city. It then moves on to talk about completions including a section on affordable housing delivery and then accommodation provision for other parts of the community. The last part of this section briefly discusses some of the implications and uncertainties associated with Covid and Brexit. Finally some key sustainability and plan issues are drawn out the paper.

Historically Oxford has been unable to meet its calculated housing need. The 2014 Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment, updated for Oxford in 2018, is the most recent work to assess housing need. The last round of Local Plan's in Oxfordshire aimed to meet the needs assessed here. Oxford's total capacity for housing was less than its calculated need. Unmet need was taken by the other districts' local plans (full details are set out within this paper). As part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work an Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment is being carried out. The Oxfordshire Plan will determine the overall housing need for Oxfordshire, and assign this between the districts. Further capacity work will be undertaken for Oxford this year, to identify its current capacity.

Plans Policies and Programmes

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ states the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and stresses the importance of bringing forward a sufficient amount and variety of land where needed (paragraph 59). At paragraph 60 the NPPF sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. The NPPF also considers that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. Paragraph 61 provides an indication of those groups which includes, older persons, students and gypsies and travellers.

Paragraphs 65 sets out that a housing figure for the whole local authority area should be included by strategic policy making authorities and Paragraphs 67-72 provide the national policy position on identifying land for homes. Paragraphs 73-76 discuss how strategic policy making authorities should maintain the supply and delivery of new homes.

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) includes additional guidance on the following housing topics relevant to housing need and supply:

- Housing and economic land availability assessment;
- Housing and economic needs assessment;
- Housing needs of different groups;
- Housing needs for older and disabled people;
- Housing supply and delivery.

The PPG re-iterates the expectation for strategic policy-making authorities to follow the standard method for calculating housing need and that “any other method will only be used in exceptional circumstances” (paragraph 003 Reference ID: 2a-003-20190220).

The NPPG also highlights the difference between the calculating housing need which should be “an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area” and assessing land availability and establishing a housing requirement figure, which is a separate process.

The NPPG also provides advice about assessing land availability within the boundaries of a plan-making authority including setting out the purpose of this assessment. Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 3-001-20190722 of the NPPG sets out that “an assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period.” In relation to whether or not a site should be allocated, the NPPG sets out that the role of the land availability assessment is to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority's requirements but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Planning White Paper: Planning for the Future (2020)

The government has engaged in a couple of notable consultations on changes to national policy. In its white paper, 'Planning for the future'², there was a significant focus on house building, in line with the government's long term aspirations to increase the number of homes built across the country. The paper set out proposals that government intends would introduce simpler, faster and more predictable planning system and that could facilitate a more diverse and competitive housing industry, in which smaller builders can thrive alongside the bigger developers.

Under the new proposals, housing need for each local authority would be assigned by central government using a new standard methodology. It is stated that the intention would be for this methodology to factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met. It would then be for the local authority to allocate the land required to meet this assigned housing need figure, via zoning categories.

First Homes Summary of Responses and Government's Written Ministerial Statement

A consultation looking at "First Homes" was undertaken by Government in 2020. The First Homes consultation suggested proposals for a scheme which provided homes for first-time buyers with a 30% discount against market value. In April 2021, a document was published by Government which summarised the consultation responses and provided the Government's response³.

This consultation response sets out how government will structure the First Homes scheme to support first-time buyers to purchase a home in their local area, including affordability, eligibility, administration and delivery details.

On 24 May 2021, a Written Ministerial Statement by the Minister of State for Housing was published. It set out the Government's plans for the delivery of First Homes and the new model for Shared Ownership through the planning system.

The statement explained the substantial changes to planning policy which came into effect on 28 June 2021 as well as setting out the transitional arrangements. The issues covered in the statement include:

- Eligibility criteria for First Homes
- Setting developer contributions for First Homes
- The remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions
- Plans, development management and transitional arrangements
- Level of discount

As per the consultation proposal, the statement confirms that in order to qualify as a First Home, a property must be sold at least 30% below the open market value. First Homes are also expected to

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/first-homes>

account for a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions.

The PPG has been updated⁴ to support the Written Ministerial Statement and contains more detailed guidance including when the transitional arrangements apply. However, the statement sets out that where local and neighbourhood plans do not benefit from the aforementioned transitional arrangements, local planning authorities should make clear how existing policies should be interpreted in the light of First Homes requirements using the most appropriate tool available to them. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 does not benefit from transitional arrangements, so a statement will be prepared to explain how the policies of that plan should be interpreted in light of the First Homes expectation. The requirement will need to be reflected in the Local Plan 2040.

Regional and Local Context

Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework

The Government's intention is to develop a long-term spatial framework that will support better planning, provide a blueprint for better-targeted public investment, give investors and businesses greater long-term certainty over growth plans, and allow communities to shape the long term future of places across the region. What this means for housing is that the spatial framework will identify the most sustainable locations for new homes, including the identification of "opportunity areas" to support local planning authorities plan for this growth. This government-led approach to strategic planning is being supported by the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal

The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal supports the delivery of 100,000 homes in Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031 and secured £215million of funding including £60million for affordable housing and £150million for infrastructure improvements including for road and rail. Part of the commitment in the growth deal was the production of a statutory plan for Oxfordshire to help Oxfordshire maintain strong growth going forward to 2050.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

The Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities (including Oxford City Council), working together as the Oxfordshire Growth Board, are working towards the development of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, which will set out strategic policies for the county to 2050. An initial consultation was launched on the Plan in February 2019 and a further consultation is being launched in the summer of 2021.

The summer 2021 consultation is likely to include a number of spatial options looking at where future housing and jobs growth could be located across the county to 2050. The Plan will be underpinned by

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

key evidence to support numbers of new homes and jobs proposed across the county as well as taking a look at any likely infrastructure needs that this growth could bring about.

Following the completion of the consultation in this summer, the Oxfordshire Plan team will move towards the submission of their plan to the Secretary of State in September 2022, with further consultation on the draft plan proposed for May/ June 2022.

Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment

The purpose of the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA) is to provide a robust basis for understanding housing and employment land needs for Oxfordshire to 2050 using the most up-to-date government guidance. It also seeks to provide an appraisal of the housing market and economic dynamics across Oxfordshire.

It is expected that the OGNA will be published alongside the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 summer consultation and will underpin the options for levels of housing growth in that consultation document. Both the OGNA and Oxfordshire Plan 2050 summer consultation document are currently unpublished, but given the strategic nature of the Oxfordshire Plan, any decisions on housing needs arising from it will ultimately inform the next round of Local Plans that are being produced.

Neighbouring Local Plans

In 2016 the Oxfordshire Growth Board confirmed that Oxford was unable to meet its proportion of housing need identified in the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) due to the constrained nature of Oxford. Oxford's need was assessed as a range of between 24,000 to 32,000 additional new homes required for the period 2011 to 2031 (or 1200 to 1600 per year). The approach taken by the Oxfordshire Growth Board was that the mid-point of this range should be taken as the starting point for assessing the level of need and unmet need (i.e. 28,000). Based upon extensive evidence, the Oxfordshire Growth Board agreed an apportionment of homes to be provided within each of the districts. The assumed capacity for Oxford was 10,000 dwellings.

The Local Plans for the other Oxfordshire districts are delivering 14,300 dwellings to meet Oxford's unmet need, as follows:

Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review	4,400 Oxford's unmet needs (Plan submitted March 2018 Examination Autumn 2018)
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034	4,950 Plan submitted March 2019)
Vale of White Horse	(2,200 Plan Part 2 (Examination July 2018)
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	2,750 (Adopted September 2018)

Oxford City Local Plan 2036

Oxford City's Local Plan contains a number of policies relating to housing need and supply. In particular Policy H1 sets the housing requirement for the plan period. The housing requirement for the plan period from 2016-2036 is 10,884 homes, which to reflect the anticipated delivery of housing over the plan period reflects a stepped trajectory which assumes the following rates of delivery:

- 2016/17 to 2020/21: 475 dwellings per annum
- 2021/22 to 2035/36: 567 dwellings per annum

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

This is a constraint-based assessment that seeks to identify sites and broad locations and assesses their development potential. The assessment looks at whether sites and broad locations for development have the potential to come forward as part of the development plan process. (i.e., are sites or broad locations for development available and achievable?) The most recent one carried out for Oxford is 2019. A new assessment will be carried out for the Local Plan 2040.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people Accommodation Needs

A Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people Accommodation Assessment was undertaken to support Oxford City, Cherwell District Council and South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse Councils. This study considered the accommodation needs for those specific groups, for Oxford City, for the period to 2036. This is supplemented by bi-annual caravan counts. New work is also being produced on this as part of the Oxfordshire Plan. This found no need for sites within Oxford.

Oxford Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment

A Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2018) was undertaken to support the Oxford Local Plan. The purpose of the assessment was to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of boat dwellers in Oxford City up to 2036. The study consisted of a review of secondary information; extensive consultation with key stakeholders; and face-to-face interviews with boat dwellers. This provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs in Oxford. The study showed that there is a demand/need for 41 new residential moorings in Oxford. This demand relates to the numbers of people already using unauthorised moorings as residential moorings. Efforts to meet this need will include creation of new residential moorings with access to adequate services, but also by providing social housing accommodation suitable for those currently living in unauthorised moorings. There are not many potentially suitable new sites for moorings within Oxford, because of constraints such as the need to maintain safe navigation on the main channel of the Thames and Cherwell. However, by multi-agency working with navigation authorities and landowners, there is potential to increase the number of residential moorings. New work is also being produced on this as part of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Oxford City Council “Our Strategy” 2020-2024

One of the four main priorities of the City Council’s strategy to 2024 is to “Deliver more, affordable housing”. The strategy sets out “intervention is necessary to address Oxford’s housing crisis where existing homes are unaffordable for many and demand for good quality homes outstrips what is available”. Our Strategy commits to increasing the supply of high quality, energy efficient accessible and affordable housing, including new council housing as well as other types of home for rent and for sale at different prices.

Current situation

Housing Need

In national planning policy, an area's housing need is different from the housing requirement. The NPPG makes it clear that the assessment of housing need should be unconstrained and should be generated using the Government's Standard Method. According to the PPG, the "standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for, in a way which addresses projected household growth and historic undersupply". The standard method is used to identify an annual housing need figure. Although the NPPG is clear that using the standard method is not mandatory, it is clear that the expectation is that the standard method will be used to calculate housing need and that "any other method will only be used in exceptional circumstances". The standard method calculation for Oxford City (calculated in 2021 according to the 2014-based predictions as currently supported by the NPPG) is 729 dwellings per year.

Paragraph 60 of the NPPF states that an alternative approach would also have to reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. This is reflected in the PPG which also advises that if these trends and signals are accounted for where an alternative approach identifies a need higher than using the standard method, the approach can be considered sound as it will have exceeded the minimum starting point.

For the currently adopted Local Plan 2036, it was successfully argued at examination that exceptional circumstances existed to use an alternative methodology for calculating housing need than the standard method. The Inspector cited at paragraph 22 of his report⁵ that "Oxford stands out among cities as having unusual housing problems which point towards a higher level of housing need than that derived from the standard method calculation". This, coupled with the acknowledgement in paragraph 31 of the Inspector's Report of a growth deal as a "circumstance where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates" culminated in the Inspector deciding at paragraph 33 of his report that it was "clear that there are favourable circumstances in Oxfordshire which enable the delivery of homes needed to address the serious problem of housing affordability".

At the time of writing, the evidence base to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is unpublished, as is the consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. There is an expectation that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 summer 2021 consultation document will contain a number of options for housing need and that these options will be supported by evidence in the form of the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment. If there is ambition for growth beyond that as set out in the government's standard method, then exceptional circumstances will need to be demonstrated as set out in national policy.

Affordable Housing Need

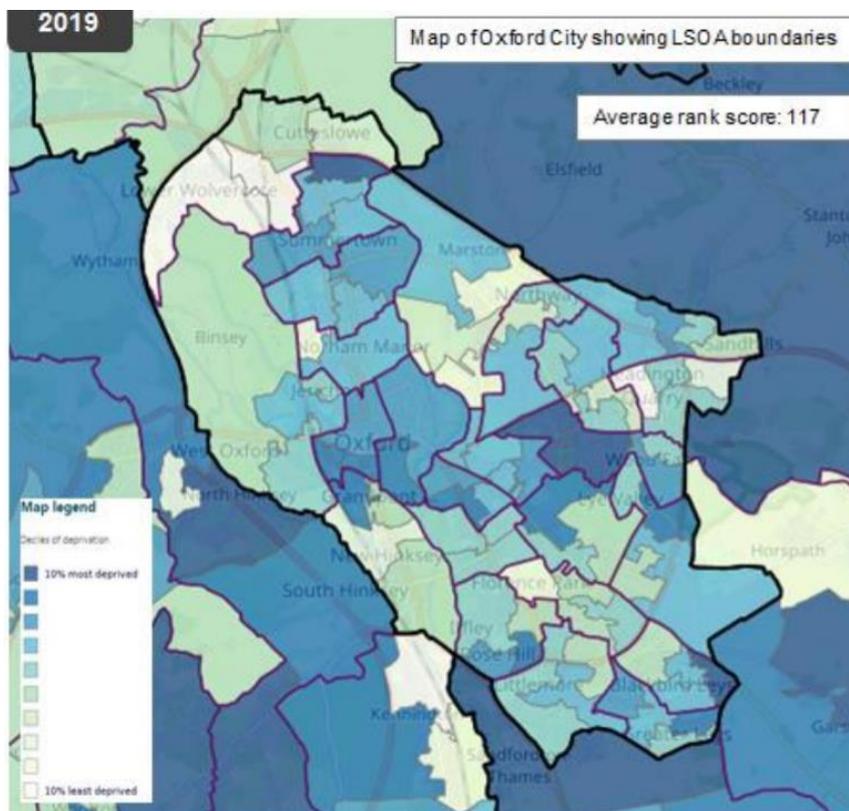
In the past, Oxfordshire's housing need was calculated based on a range of factors including demographic trends, committed economic growth as well as addressing affordable housing need. Current planning policies in Oxford are designed to address the high levels of affordable housing need

⁵ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1175/oxford_local_plan_2036_inspectors_report

and Policy H2 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 seeks to deliver at least 50% affordable housing from qualifying housing developments, of which 80% should be socially rented and up to 20% can be intermediate housing tenures. There are currently 2,852 households on the housing register (Jan 2021). To address this imbalance of supply of affordable housing in the Oxford, the City Council has set up a housing company (Oxford City Housing Limited) which is hoping to deliver nearly 1,900 new homes in the next ten years⁶. Through the delivery of new homes, many of which will be affordable, it is hoped that the number of households on the housing register will reduce over the coming years.

Current planning policies in Oxford prioritise the delivery of social rent affordable housing on the basis that even intermediate forms of affordable housing are still beyond the reaches of many households. The Barriers to Housing and Services indicator in the 2019 Indices of Deprivation looks at physical and ‘wider barriers’, including issues relating to access to housing i.e. affordability, household crowding and homelessness. This shows significant variation across the city (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Barriers to Housing and Services, Indices of Deprivation (Oxford City Council, 2019)⁷



Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs

Oxford currently has no Gypsy and Traveller sites, and the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment⁸ 2017 (GTAA) suggests that there is no current or future need for additional pitches in the period to 2036. There was one Travelling Showperson household identified in Oxford city, living in bricks and mortar accommodation. There are several sites close to Oxford's

⁶ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20010/housing/1449/oxford_needs_homes/3

⁷ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20131/population/497/poverty_and_deprivation

⁸ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5605/hou6_-_gypsy_traveller_and_travelling_showpeople_accommodation_assessment

boundary including at Redbridge Hollow, Middle Ground, Wheatley and Ten Acre Park, Sandford. When the new assessment is published, any more up to date data will be used to inform the Local Plan 2040.

Boat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment

The Accommodation Assessment found that there was a need for 41 additional permanent moorings throughout the plan-period to 2036. In relation to transit provision, the report found that there was a need for relevant agencies to consider a more flexible approach in relation to temporary moorings, particularly during the winter months, and to consider increasing the number of temporary moorings⁹. When the new assessment is published, any more up to date data will be used to inform the Local Plan 2040.

Housing Target

The housing target (or requirement) is different from an area's housing need. There are very significant constraints on the capacity of the city – physically with the city's tight administrative boundary and Green Belt, and environmentally with large areas of national and international biodiversity interests and areas within flood zone 3b functional flood zone as well as heritage and townscape considerations. Oxford's housing requirement is therefore a constrained and capacity-based target. The Inspector for the Oxford Local Plan 2036 acknowledged in his report that Oxford's housing requirement was only a proportion of the total number of homes that made up the total housing need.

The current housing target is set in the adopted Local Plan 2036 at 10,884 homes for the period 2016-2036. Policy H1 provides a stepped trajectory to reflect changes in anticipated delivery over the plan period:

- 2016/17 to 2020/21: 475 dwellings per annum
- 2021/22 to 2035/36: 567 dwellings per annum

Oxford's physical and environmental constraints on its capacity for growth are not new issues and through the joint working undertaken as part of the Growth Board, an element of Oxford's unmet need was apportioned to the surrounding Oxfordshire district councils to accommodate within their administrative areas as part of the Duty to Cooperate process. This led to strategic allocations for growth in plans for all of the Oxfordshire district authorities most recent Local Plans.

⁹ <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5612/hou7 - oxford boat dwellers accomodation needs assessment>

Housing Supply

Housing permissions and housing land supply

Figure 2 shows dwellings permitted (net) since 2006, and dwellings permitted since the start of the new Local Plan period from 2016. This takes into account dwellings gained and lost through new build completions, demolitions, changes of use and conversions. It includes outline permissions but excludes those where reserve matters have subsequently been permitted to avoid double counting.

Figure 2: Net Dwellings permitted since 2006/07 (Oxford City Council, 2020)¹⁰

Year	Number of dwellings planning permission granted for (net)
2006/07	501
2007/08	653
2008/09	348
2009/10	283
2010/11	148
2011/12	235
2012/13	102
2013/14	1,113
2014/15	184
2015/16	855
2016/17	304
2017/18	524
2018/19	504
2019/20	277
TOTAL (since 2006/07)*	6,031
TOTAL (since 2016/17)**	1,609

* Oxford Core Strategy 2026 permissions; ** Oxford Local Plan 2036 permissions

Figure 2 shows that there have been a reasonable number of permissions granted since the start of the new Local Plan period. Barton Park, although granted outline consent in the 2013/14 monitoring year, is still continuing to deliver homes. Another major scheme, Oxford North, was granted permission in March 2021 and includes 480 residential units as well as up to 87,300m² of employment floorspace. This is likely to boost permissions significantly for the current monitoring year which will result in a steady flow of completions in future monitoring years.

Windfall Supply

Windfall sites are defined in national planning policy as “sites not specifically identified in the development plan”. In an urban setting such as Oxford, windfall sites are often small sites or can be

¹⁰ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7416/annual_monitoring_report_2019-2020

sites on previously developed land that have unexpectedly become available. Windfall sites may be justified as part of the housing land supply if there is “compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply” (paragraph 70, NPPF).

Figure 3 below displays the past windfall housing completion trends from 2011-2019 and indicates an average windfall of 136 dwellings per year. These figures include garden land and only sites under 10 units.

Figure 3: Windfall housing completion trends (Oxford City Council, 2019)¹¹

Site size – no. units	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Average per year
1-4	139	83	57	96	93	215	31	69	98
5-9	43	53	13	34	37	62	21	41	38
Total windfall over 8 years: 1,087									
Average windfall per year: 136									

Oxford has a strong housing market with a high demand for new homes and a high proportion of previously-developed sites and conversions. The Inspector for the recently adopted Oxford Local Plan (June, 2020) in his report¹² set out that:

The method of identifying housing sites and delivery rates, and the quantification of the windfall rate, are sound and in accordance with national policy and guidance. Whilst it is arguable that the supply of windfall sites is finite, there is no indication at the present time that the rate is likely to fall.

The windfall figures coming forward will be closely monitored and if they fall short of or exceed the estimates provided in this HELAA, they will be revised in future land assessments.

Likely Trends without a New Plan

Housing Supply

Oxford’s constrained capacity for housing land has traditionally meant that there is strong competition for land for housing, student accommodation, employment and other uses. In order to help address the supply of housing, the strategy for the Oxford Local Plan 2036 was housing-focussed. The strategy sought to allocate no new employment sites instead prioritising the loss of certain low quality, poorly located employment sites (category 3 employment sites) for housing. Notwithstanding this approach, there is continued pressure on infrastructure as large proportion of housing developments are on small-scale infill sites and offer limited opportunities to deliver new on-site strategic infrastructure. This has been exacerbated by changes to national policy in recent years which include permitted development for residential conversions from other uses including offices and shops. Such changes

¹¹ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6753/2019_helaa_main_report

¹² https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7288/inspectors_report_-_oxford_local_plan_2036

of use are not subject to the same planning considerations in relation to supporting infrastructure to support the new homes formed.

Work with the other Oxfordshire authorities has resulted in a number of strategic allocations being made in the plans of our neighbours to help meet housing need. Housing supply will also be addressed as an outcome of the Oxfordshire Plan – a joint plan being produced by all the Oxfordshire Councils – which is looking to provide a steer on broad locations of growth for both housing and employment land to 2050.

Housing Completions

Since 2006, the majority of new homes have been delivered on small-scale, dispersed brownfield sites, either re-developing existing units or converting existing buildings. The city’s last remaining strategic greenfield sites (Barton Park and Oxford North) have already started to change the shift in focus in housing delivery with the first residential completions at Barton Park recorded in the 2017/18 monitoring year. The planning permission for Oxford North was issued in March 2021 and includes 480 residential units which are anticipated to start being delivered in the 2024/25 monitoring year.

Figure 4 shows the net additional completions from 2006/7 which is taken from the 2019/20 Annual Monitoring Report¹³ published in December 2020. Figure 4 includes both completions for the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (from 2016/17 to 2019/20) and shows contextually the historic completions delivered as part of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 (from 2006/07 to 2019/20). This takes into account dwellings gained and lost through new build completions, demolitions, changes of use and conversions.

Figure 4 showing net additional completions since 2006 (Oxford City Council 2020)¹⁴

Year	Dwellings (net) completed (built)
2006/07	821
2007/08	529
2008/09	665
2009/10	257
2010/11	200
2011/12	228
2012/13	213
2013/14	215*
2014/15	332*
2015/16	440**
2016/17	435**
2017/18	373**
2018/19	356**
2019/20	784**
TOTAL (since 2006/07)	5,848
TOTAL (since 2016/17)	1,918

¹³ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7416/annual_monitoring_report_2019-2020

¹⁴ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7416/annual_monitoring_report_2019-2020

* These figures for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 include C3 residential dwellings plus a dwelling equivalent figure for C2 student accommodation and care home rooms using the ratio 5:1 and 1:1 respectively.

** These figures include a ratio of 2.5:1(student accommodation) and 1.8:1 (care home) to reflect changes for how to treat communal accommodation introduced in the Housing Delivery Test measurement rule book¹⁵.

In the 19/20 monitoring year there were 784 recorded completions which represents a positive increase compared to recent years. This change takes into account dwellings gained and lost through new build completions, demolitions, changes of use and conversions and includes the completions for purpose built student accommodation.

Likely trends without the plan include continued residential completions from a variety of sources including from Oxford City Housing Limited.

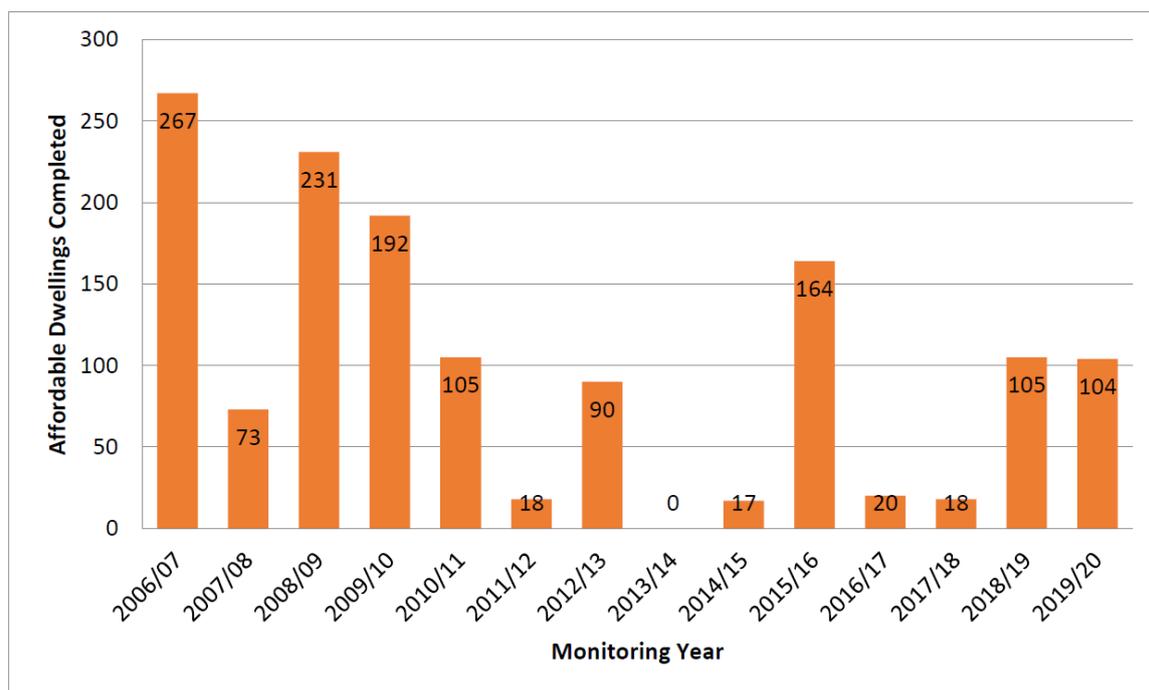
As required by the Self Build and Custom House Building Act 2015, Oxford City Council keeps a register of individuals and associations who have expressed an interest in acquiring serviced plots for self-build and custom housing. As at 30 October 2020 there were 97 entries on the register. This is an increase from 52 in May 2018. The intention of the Act is the Local Planning Authorities grant suitable development permission for serviced plots to match demand on the register. Oxford City's Local Plan 2036 therefore includes a policy requirement to make self-build plots available on residential sites of 50 units or more. On such sites 5% of the site area developed for residential development should be made available as self-build plots. In the absence of a new Local Plan it is likely that this policy would continue to assist in the provision of self-build plots until the end of the plan period.

Affordable Housing Delivery

Since 2006, there has been a downward trend in the overall number of affordable units completed each year from 267 in the 2006/07 monitoring year down to 104 affordable housing completions in the 2019/20 monitoring year. Since 2006/07 there have been a total of 1,413 affordable homes completed. Since 2016/17 (the start of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 period), there have been 247 homes delivered. These homes have mainly been delivered through a combination of developer contributions from qualifying developments (either provision on-site or financial contributions towards off-site provision), and the City Council's own housebuilding programme. The supply of affordable housing is expected to increase in future monitoring years as a number of major schemes are built out. Major schemes that are set to contribute to the city's affordable housing stock include Barton Park phases 2, 3, and 4; land north of Littlemore Healthcare Trust and Littlemore Park. In total these schemes are expected to deliver 600 affordable homes.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>

Figure 5: Affordable housing completions 2006/07 – 2019/20 (Oxford City Council 2020)¹⁶



With the introduction of the Government’s new affordable housing tenure “First Homes” it is likely that the type of affordable housing delivered in the city would also include an element of this new type of affordable housing. More information about First Homes and their implications can be found in the Housing Affordability and Affordable Housing Topic Paper¹⁷.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation provision

It is not anticipated that there will be much change in the provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in Oxford during the Plan period because no need has been identified from the assessment undertaken in 2017. There are no indications that this situation is likely to change but will continue to be monitored. The Oxfordshire Plan is providing an update to the accommodation needs assessment for the above groups which will be published to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 at the appropriate consultation stage.

Boat Dwellers Accommodation provision

There is no evidence to suggest that further moorings are needed. It is worth noting that some of the current need will be met through the delivery of sites in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, for instance the policy text to Policy SP29 Land East of Redbridge Park and Ride includes a requirement that proposals “should include residential moorings and associated servicing facilities”. The Oxfordshire Plan is

¹⁶ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7416/annual_monitoring_report_2019-2020

¹⁷ www.oxford.gov.uk/2040/Housingaffordabilityandaffordablehousing

providing an update to the accommodation needs assessment for boat dwellers which will be published to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 at the appropriate consultation stage.

Impacts of Covid and Brexit

The main impact of Covid is most likely to be increased uncertainty for housing delivery over and above the existing uncertainties and unknown impacts posed by Brexit, particularly in relation to the potential shortage of workers and construction materials and subsequent rise in costs. International in-migration has been a significant component of Oxford's population growth. ONS figures already assume a lower rate than has been present. Furthermore, the international in-migration to Oxford, although including many EU citizens, also includes a large number of non-EU citizens. The Covid uncertainties on housing delivery are more related to restrictions on movement and individuals' ability to work during periods of lockdown imposition or due to illness. At the start of the pandemic in 2020, it was reported by Savills that some housebuilders announced suspensions at their construction sites¹⁸. While these suspensions are likely to be relatively short-term in nature, there will no doubt be potential knock-on effects for local authority housing completions reporting due to sites which were paused in the 2020/21 monitoring year. As the vaccination programme continues to be rolled out across the UK, it is likely that the construction sector will be able to pick up again and continue the delivery of existing sites until their completion. However, the appetite of the industry to commence new large-scale schemes remains to be seen.

What could a new plan achieve?

Oxford's constraints are what limit its growth and why choices need to be made between whether housing or employment land is prioritised. In the Oxford Local Plan 2036, housing land was prioritised for a number of reasons, including the ability to deliver much needed affordable housing and to reduce the barriers to economic growth that a lack of housing in the city close to where the jobs are located. The medium- to long-term implications of the pandemic are difficult to predict at the moment but it is likely that over the course of the production of the plan, more economic certainty and consumer confidence are likely to occur and the positive implications of this on the housing market and construction industry are likely to return.

Given that large numbers of office-based workers are currently working from home, consumer demand for the type of houses that are delivered remains to be seen. What is clear from the pandemic is that those workers who have been able to work from home have benefitted from some kind of dedicated office-space as well as private outdoor amenity space.

Conclusion

In Oxford, the high cost of housing and limited availability of housing has a big social and economic impact. As of 2018/19, it was reported that **26% of children** in the city live in poverty, once housing costs have been taken into account. Availability of affordable housing can help reduce poverty and is

¹⁸ https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/298265-0/coronavirus-and-the-uk-housing-market

important to overcoming inequalities in the city. Availability of affordable housing is also important to employers, enabling them to attract and retain staff. Businesses may struggle if they cannot attract or retain staff, and other employers and services such as education, public transport and healthcare may struggle to run without sufficient staff, which would also have negative social and economic impacts.

Sustainability/Plan issues

- Lack of sufficient affordable housing has negative social and economic impacts, exacerbating inequalities
- Oxford has limited capacity to deliver new homes within its boundary and has often been unable to meet housing need in full without support from neighbouring authorities
- A continued reliance on smaller sites is likely to increase pressure on existing infrastructure
- Housing need for the Oxfordshire is in the process of being determined through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050
- The type of affordable housing delivered in Oxford is likely to be impacted upon by changes made through national policy, i.e., requirements for First Homes.
- Implications of uncertainty of the pandemic on housing delivery in the medium- to longer term remains to be seen.