

Oxford Local Plan 2042

Interim Sustainability Appraisal report – non-technical summary

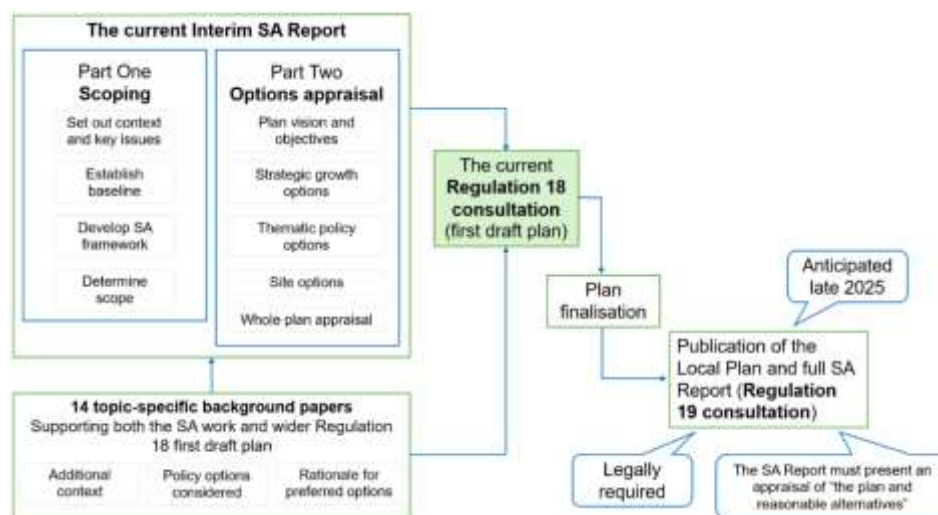
1. Introduction

1.1 The Oxford Local Plan 2042 will update the Oxford Local Plan 2036. It will allocate sites for housing, employment and other uses, and provide policies to manage development in the city. It will need to include measures to improve public transport, protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, reduce carbon emissions, and protect against flooding. It will be used to make decisions about planning applications.

1.2 The environmental, social and economic impacts of Local Plans must be assessed through Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SA/SEA aims to ensure that the decisions taken in the context of the Local Plan's preparation are made in the knowledge of all likely sustainability effects of the proposed policies and reasonable alternatives, seeking to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones. The Oxford Local Plan 2042 SA process incorporates the requirements of SEA within them, and any reference to the Sustainability Appraisal/SA should be taken as also including the Strategic Environmental Assessment/SEA where relevant.

1.3 Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process that aligns with the various stages of the Local Plan's development. This interim report, accompanying the Regulation 18 consultation, is divided into two parts, (as per Figure 1.1), which cover the scoping stages (Part 1) and the development and testing of emerging options/alternatives for the Local Plan 2042 (Part 2). They are supported by a range of topic-specific background papers.

Figure 1.1. The interim Sustainability Appraisal and the wider Local Plan preparation process



1.4 Together, parts 1 and 2—collectively referred to as the ‘interim Sustainability Appraisal report’—set out how the Council has undertaken work associated with the formal SA process stages A and B (Tasks A1-A5 and B1-B3), as set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process and expected stages of Local Plan 2042 preparation

Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process	Relevant consultation
<u>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</u> Task A1: Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives Task A2: Collect baseline information Task A3: Identify key sustainability issues and problems Task A4: Develop the SA framework Task A5: Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the SA report	Relevant bodies* were consulted on early draft to agree scope (Feb-March 2025) Complete Updated version published as Interim SA Report Part 1 for Summer 2025 Reg 18 consultation Current stage
<u>Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects</u> Task B1: Test the Local Plan objectives against the SA framework Task B2: Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives Task B3: Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives	Published as Interim SA Report Part 2 for Summer 2025 Reg 18 consultation Current stage
Task B4: Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects Task B5: Propose measures to monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan <u>Stage C: Prepare the SA report</u> <u>Stage D: Seek representations on the SA report from consultations and the public</u>	Will be published as part of late autumn 2025 Reg 19 consultation, also including updated information related to earlier stages where necessary
<u>Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring</u> Task E1: Prepare and publish post-adoption statement Task E2: Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan Task E3: Respond to adverse effects	To be published post examination

* The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

2. Methodology

2.1. Process for undertaking and structuring the Reg 18 Sustainability Appraisal

2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process has been carried out throughout the preparation of the Regulation 18 consultation document and has been integral to

developing the preferred approaches set out in the Regulation 18 consultation first draft Local Plan 2042.

2.2 As per Figure 1.1 and set out in the introduction, the interim Sustainability Appraisal report is divided into two parts, which cover the following stages:

- **Part one** - comprises the scoping stages including: a review of relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives; collection of baseline information informing the sustainability context; identification of key issues and problems; and development of the SA/SEA framework.
- **Part two** – comprises the appraisal of options for the Local Plan and the testing of the approaches that are set out in the Regulation 18 document, including: the themes/objectives which support the wider vision; the overarching growth strategy preferred option and alternatives; options for policies with likely significant effects; as well as detailing the process being carried out for identifying site allocations. Some high-level testing of the overall Local Plan, based upon preferred approaches presented in the consultation, is also carried out.

2.2. Scoping and evidence gathering including relationship with background papers

2.3 Scoping and evidence gathering of the existing situation in the city, key sustainability issues and wider challenges has been undertaken and will be kept under review. The Council has sought to confirm the scope was appropriate through early engagement, including sharing the draft scoping report, with the statutory national bodies Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. This has helped to inform the context which the emerging policy framework must respond to, including the vision/themes/objectives for the Local Plan and the range of policies being proposed. It has also helped to establish the assessment framework (made up of 12 SA criteria) that will be used throughout the SA testing on the Local Plan as it emerges.

2.4 Alongside the main SA report, a series of background papers have been prepared, covering a range of specific topics such as housing need; flood risk; green infrastructure; and transport. These papers play a dual role that integrates with the SA work by:

- Expanding on and providing additional detailed information supporting the analysis for each of the SA scoping stages, with the background papers all following a consistent structure, with sections including relevant policy context; current situation; and likely future without a new Local Plan, that align with the scoping tasks in the SA report part 1.

- Helping to detail the rationale for coming to the preferred options presented in the Regulation 18 consultation document for each topic. This includes a section setting out particular alternative options for Local Plan policies that were considered, alongside the pros and cons that were weighed up before selecting the preferred option (which is then detailed in the main consultation document).
 - Some of the options sets were also appraised through the SA report part 2, and the findings from these appraisals feed back into the rationale presented in the background paper for coming to a preferred option.

2.5 Additionally, preparation of the Local Plan requires various pieces of evidence addressing topics such as housing need, water cycle, green belt and employment land, with additional evidence being gathered as the city moves forward towards preparing a submission draft Local Plan (the subject of the Regulation 19 consultation later in 2025). Where relevant, the findings from this work are incorporated into relevant parts of the sustainability appraisal's scoping work.

2.3. Appraising different elements of the Local Plan 2042 as it emerges

2.6 With the scoping work forming the fundamental basis for informing the assessment process, the Interim Sustainability Appraisal has then helped influence the many choices which need to be taken around particular options that the Local Plan could take. The Part two report presents the testing that has influenced overarching approaches to growth which the Local Plan 2042 strategy could pursue (e.g. focus on boosting housing or growing the economy), as well as testing of options for particular policies which could result in significant effects. Whilst the SA process and the results of the various testing undertaken within it is not the only factor determining the preferred approaches for the Local Plan, it does identify the key sustainability impacts of particular decisions which need to be weighed up in coming to a preferred approach.

2.7 The Regulation 18 consultation presents an early picture of what the Oxford Local Plan 2042 could look like, including preferred approaches for policies, however, there are areas where the detail is still emerging, such as for site allocations, and some specific elements of other policies. As an example, the potential site allocations have been subject to an early appraisal using the site-specific SA framework, with proformas created for each site that begin to identify particular sustainability impacts or concerns that could arise from an allocation. The process for this is documented in part 2 also. As the detail of site allocation policies emerges going forwards, these assessments will need to be reviewed, and equally, the findings from the assessments will need to feed into the specific detail of the allocations (e.g. where particular mitigations are identified as necessary to address

identified impacts). Feedback from the regulation 18 consultation may also indicate areas where the SA work needs to be reviewed and updated.

2.8 As such, the Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken based on available information. The SA/SEA process will continue alongside the development of the Local Plan and a fuller report will be published as part of the Regulation 19 consultation (as shown in Figure 1.1). This will also fulfil later stages of the SA process, such as identifying in greater detail any necessary measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects; as well as setting out a monitoring framework.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Report - Part one

3.1 The following sections summarise the key elements of part one of the Sustainability Appraisal, which encompasses the scoping stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process (Stage A, tasks A1-A5 as set out in Table 1.1).

3.1. Policy context

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to deliver enough homes, build a strong economy, support non-car travel, protect the Green Belt, support good design, deal with climate change, and protect nature and heritage. This is underpinned by various pieces of online guidance in the Planning Practice Guidance, as well as specific guidance in relation to design via the National Design Guide and Model Design Code. The Environment Act 2021 will require development to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain.

3.3 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act came into law in October of 2023 and is set to impose far-reaching changes to the planning and SA/SEA processes. Many of the changes provided for in the legislation are dependent on subsequent regulations, including replacing SA/SEA with “environmental outcomes reports”, setting up national development management policies that would apply to all local authorities, and removing local authorities’ duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities.

3.2. Sustainability context and existing problems

3.4 The city of Oxford is a compact one, with areas of dense urban development, interspersed by areas of natural green space and various blue corridors such as the rivers, streams and canal that interweave them. The city has arisen from a long history of settlement that has given rise to a wealth of historic assets, and the city also hosts a hierarchy of important ecological habitats of varying designations including the Oxford

Meadows Special Area of Conservation, numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other locally important sites. These natural and historic features play an important role in supporting tourism in the city, drawing many visitors. The presence of the rivers and urbanisation in many areas makes flood risk a particular concern in many areas of the city; the impacts of climate change are likely to exacerbate this as well as other risks such as overheating.

3.5 The population of the city skews particularly to younger age groups and hosts a significant student population due to the two universities. Whilst there are areas of wealth, there are also areas characterised by high levels of deprivation and inequalities are a significant challenge in relation to health and wellbeing, as well as skills and access to jobs for some residents. Constraints on the city make space for new development limited, this has various knock-on-effects, particularly for access to housing and housing affordability.

3.6 The adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036 preceded various societal and national policy changes of recent years such as Brexit and Covid-19, the Environment Bill, and the changes to permitted development, as well as new local aspirations such as the target of being a net zero carbon city by 2040. Also, there are ongoing challenges such as the continued housing crisis, the changing picture of retail, pressures on biodiversity and impacts of pollution on the environment from various activities which a new Local Plan needs to respond to.

3.7 Key problems in Oxford include:

- Oxford has very high housing costs, limited land available for housing, and difficulty in providing affordable housing.
- There are high levels of inequality across the city which particularly affect economic advantages for certain residents as well as health and wellbeing.
- Much of Oxford is prone to flooding: this is likely to increase with climate change.
- Oxford is still far from achieving its 2040 target of net zero carbon emissions.
- All of Oxford is an Air Quality Management Area because of transport pollution.
- Nature in Oxford, and nationally, is under pressure from climate change, air pollution, and development.
- Oxford is in an area of serious water stress and experiences ongoing challenges around water quality in its watercourses due to various sources of pollutants, although good progress is being made working with Thames Water and the EA on the issue of wastewater treatment, which is a key contributor.

3.3. SA/SEA Framework

3.8 This SA/SEA will use the framework at Table 1.2 to assess the impacts of the Local Plan 2042 policies. An adapted framework, with more site-specific criteria underlying each objective, is used for development sites.

Table 1.2: The SA/SEA framework used to assess the impacts of the new Local Plan policies.

SA/SEA Framework
1. To achieve the city's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040
2. To build resilience to climate change , including reducing risks from overheating, flooding and the resulting detriment to well-being, the economy and the environment.
3. To encourage the efficient use of land through good design and layout, and minimise the use of greenfield and Green Belt land.
4. To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent affordable home.
5. To reduce poverty, social exclusion, and health inequalities .
6. To provide accessible essential services and facilities .
7. To provide adequate green infrastructure, leisure and recreation opportunities and make these readily accessible for all.
8. To reduce traffic and associated air pollution by improving travel choice, shortening journeys and reducing the need to travel by car/ lorry.
9. To achieve water quality targets and manage water resources.
10. To conserve and enhance Oxford's biodiversity .
11. To promote good urban design through the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets while respecting local character and context and promoting innovation.
12. To achieve sustainable inclusive economic growth , including the development and expansion of a diverse and knowledge- based economy and the culture/leisure/ visitor sector.

3.9 The scoring matrix set out in Table 1.3 will be used for assessing various impacts throughout this report. The scoring highlights whether a positive, negative, neutral or unclear impact could arise as compared to the current baseline for the city and is as follows:

Table 1.3: Colour coding used throughout this report as assigned to varying levels of impact resulting from appraisals

Description of impact	Scoring symbol
Very positive impacts (compared to the current situation)	++
Positive impacts (compared to the current situation)	+
Neutral / none	0

Description of impact	Scoring symbol
Some positive and some negative impacts	+/-
Negative impacts (compared to the current situation)	-
Very negative impacts (compared to the current situation)	--
Unclear	?

3.4. Early engagement with statutory bodies

3.10 The statutory bodies, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency have reviewed and provided feedback on the early draft of the Part 1 report to help ensure that the scoping information and proposed SA/SEA assessment framework is appropriate. Amendments have been carried out to the main report as well as associated background papers in response to this feedback and a summary of how the Council has responded are documented towards the end of the Part one report.

4. Sustainability Appraisal Report - Part two

4.1 The following sections summarise what is covered in the Sustainability Appraisal report part two document, which addresses the development of options and alternatives for the Local Plan 2042. The Part two report is broken down into a number of sections that address different elements of the emerging Plan and respond to Stage B (tasks B1-B3) of the Sustainability Appraisal process as outlined in Table 1.1. The three key sections are as follows:

- Testing themes/objectives which support the wider vision
- Developing and testing local plan options
- Testing the emerging plan as a whole (preferred approaches as set out in the Regulation 18 first draft Local Plan)

4.1. Testing themes/objectives which support the wider vision

4.2 Informed by the scoping and evidence gathering across a wide range of topics, which are highlighted in the various background papers, the Oxford Local Plan 2042 is guided by the following vision:

In 2042 Oxford will be a healthy and inclusive city, with strong communities that benefit from equal opportunities for everyone, not only in access to housing, but to nature, employment, social and leisure opportunities and to healthcare. Oxford will be a city with a strong cultural identity, that respects and values our heritage, whilst maximising opportunities to look forwards to innovate, learn and enable businesses to prosper. The vision is one which supports research and development in the life sciences and health sectors which are and will provide solutions to global challenges. The environment will be central to everything we do; it will be more biodiverse, better connected and more resilient. We will utilise resources prudently whilst mitigating our impacts on the soil, water, and air. The city will be net zero carbon, whilst our communities, buildings and infrastructure will be resilient to the impacts of climate change and other emergencies.

4.3 This vision is underpinned by 6 themes which have been adapted from the three pillars of sustainability (society, economy and environment) and the areas of overlap between them. These 6 themes are then supported by a number of more specific Local Plan objectives which respond to key aspirations, issues and challenges in the city as is highlighted in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: The six Local Plan 2042 themes and underlying objectives

Local Plan 2042 theme	Underlying Local Plan 2042 objectives
A healthy and inclusive city to live in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise capacity for delivering homes across the city and set a housing requirement that seeks to meet the needs of different groups as far as possible. • Provide access to affordable, high-quality and suitable accommodation for all.
A green and biodiverse city that is resilient to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure strong, well-connected ecological networks and net gains in biodiversity. • Be resilient and adaptable to climate change and resistant to flood risk and its impacts on people and property. • Protect and enhance Oxford's green and blue network. • Provide opportunities for sport, food growing, recreation, relaxation and socialising on its open spaces.
A fair and prosperous city with a globally important role in learning, knowledge and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the benefits of the city's strengths in knowledge, healthcare and education while supporting economic growth in key sectors including science and innovation. • Recognise the valuable contribution that supporting a range of businesses (including SMEs) can make to innovation and economic diversity. Help to create the conditions in which all businesses can prosper. • Create opportunities for everyone in the city to access employment. Support local people giving them access to training, education and

Local Plan 2042 theme	Underlying Local Plan 2042 objectives
	<p>apprenticeships to make the most out of new job opportunities created in the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Oxford to continue in its role as a national and international destination and support the visitor economy by encouraging longer stays and higher spend in Oxford.
<p>A liveable city with strong communities and opportunities for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide neighbourhoods facilities needed to support our daily lives within a short walk from our homes, to support a liveable city. • Develop thriving local centres that support a variety of uses and foster activity throughout the day and night. • Demonstrate we value diversity whilst fostering greater inclusivity within our communities. • Create opportunities for supporting the transition to more sustainable/active forms of transport, including by reducing the need to travel, supporting good bicycle parking facilities and avoiding on and off-street car parking where possible across the city.
<p>A city that respects its heritage and fosters design of the highest quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit well-designed buildings and public spaces that feel safe, that are sustainable, and that are attractive to be in and travel to. • Protect and enhance our valued and important heritage. • Curate a built environment that supports and enables people to be physically and mentally healthy.
<p>A city that utilises its resources with care, protects the air, water and soil, and aims for net zero carbon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Oxford is ready for a net zero carbon future. • Our resources, including land, soil, and raw materials, will be protected and used prudently, with consideration for replenishment and renewal. • Contribute towards continued improvement in the city's air quality and its further limit impacts upon public health. • The city's water resources are utilised efficiently with consideration for the future, whilst water quality is protected and enhanced for the benefit of the wider environment.

4.4 The six themes and the underlying objectives within them, are central to achieving the overall Local Plan vision. To help understand how these perform against the SA framework and identify where there could be potential conflicts, these have been assessed against the twelve Sustainability Appraisal Objectives to identify where there is potential for positive/negative/neutral or uncertain impacts.

4.5 There are a significant number of areas where the themes represent positive or significant positive impacts in relation to the SA objectives suggesting good compatibility, whilst in other instances, the themes could produce negative or less certain impacts against particular SA objectives and potentially suggest conflicts which may need to be managed.

4.6 The six themes will work together as a whole, and identified positive or negative impacts in one theme need to be considered in the balance with the impacts arising from other themes. The benefit of the testing is in helping to understand where there is potential for impacts that may need to be explored further as the additional detail of the Local plan strategy and its policies emerges, as is the focus of the following sections.

4.2. Developing and testing Local Plan options

4.7 The Part two report then explores options / alternative approaches in respect of policy responses to the objectives set out above, with a focus on key policy areas in order to ensure that the SA focuses only on ‘significant effects’, which are as follows:

- The Local Plan growth strategy
- Select thematic policy areas
- Site allocations

4.2.1. The Local Plan growth strategy

4.8 Oxford has many constraints such as flood plain, designated sites of ecological importance, and designated heritage assets which limit the amount of available land over which growth can occur within the city’s tight administrative boundaries.

4.9 Six growth strategy alternatives have been identified and appraised (Table 1.5), each involving a different approach to balancing housing and employment, as well as wider development needs alongside other Local Plan objectives. Specifically, the growth strategy alternatives are framed around two key questions: 1) should the focus be on balancing development needs with wider Local Plan objectives or, alternatively, fully maximising the development capacity of sites whilst minimising requirements for other provisions like open space or greening (with a distinction between brownfield and greenfield sites); and 2) should the focus first be on meeting housing needs or employment land needs. The preferred approach in the emerging Local Plan is a balanced one that has a focus on providing for housing.

Table 1.5: Growth strategy alternatives considered for Local Plan 2042.

	Balanced development	Boost brownfield supply	Boost greenfield supply
Prioritise housing	Option 1a (Preferred option)	Option 2a	Option 3a
Prioritise employment	Option 1b	Option 2b	Option 3b

4.10 The growth strategy alternatives have been appraised using the SA framework as discussed earlier (Table 1.2). The results of the appraisal are set out in Table 1.6 and serve to indicate that Option 1a, (the preferred approach for the Local Plan 2042), potentially performs most sustainably, in that it is associated with the most positives and fewest negatives. However, it is recognised that a case could be made for options 2b, 3a and 3b from either a housing (option 3a), or an economic growth perspective (options 2b and 3b), were it to be the case that particular ‘weight’ is placed on one or both of these objectives, and were the Council to accept a considerable cost in terms of wider objectives.

Table 1.6: Summary of appraisal results for Local Plan 2042 growth strategy alternatives

SA Objective	Option 1A	Option 1B	Option 2A	Option 2B	Option 3A	Option 3B
1. Carbon emissions	-	--	-	--	--	--
2. Resilience to climate change	+	+	+/-	+/-	--	--
3. Efficient use of land	+	+	+/-	+/-	--	--
4. Local housing needs	+	+/-	+	-	++	-
5. Inequalities	?	?	?	?	?	?
6. Services and facilities	+/-	+	+/-	+	-	-
7. Green infrastructure, leisure and recreation	+	+	+/-	+/-	--	--
8. Traffic and associated air pollution	+/-	-	+/-	-	-	--
9. Water	+/-	+/-	-	-	--	-
10. Biodiversity	0	0	0	0	-	-
11. Good urban design / the historic environment	+	+	--	--	--	--
12. Economic growth	+	+	+	++	+	++

4.11 Overall, at the current time, the Council is of the clear view that Scenario 1a best represents sustainable development on balance, but there will be the potential to revisit this conclusion in light of consultation responses and ongoing evidence gathering.

4.2.2. Testing select thematic policy options with likely significant effects

4.12 The identification of various policy options has been undertaken to help inform the preferred approaches to the 40+ draft policies set out as part of the Regulation 18 first draft Local Plan. Background papers document the options and alternatives considered for each of the draft policies set out in the consultation.

4.13 During the process of considering options for the policies, officers have considered various factors which might arise from taking forward a particular option, these have been illustrated as pros and cons and presented in the background papers.

4.14 Part of officers' considerations for which approach to take forward were the sustainability impacts of the options, which were considered at a high level using the 12 SA objectives to guide thinking. Some of the options sets were considered to have likely significant effects against one or more of the SA objectives and these were scoped into the Sustainability Appraisal and subject to a detailed appraisal to more fully understand how the options performed in sustainability terms.

4.15 These appraisals are presented in the part two report in a summarised form and more fully in the Appendix. The 'scoped in' options sets are as follows:

- Policy Options set 001a: Housing requirement for the plan period
- Policy Options set 002e: Employer-linked affordable housing
- Policy Options set 003a: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Policy Options set 003b: Location of new student accommodation
- Policy Options set 008c: Retrofitting existing buildings including heritage assets
- Policy Options set 012d: Motor vehicle parking design standard

4.16 The findings from these appraisals contributed to the decision about preferred approach for these policies and were helpful in informing where potential mitigations might be needed to ensure the overall strategy was as sustainable as possible. The background papers each set out in their conclusions section how the Council came to identify its preferred options for policies and, for the 'scoped in' policies above, this draws on the testing that was undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (though it may not have been the only factor).

4.2.3. Developing site allocations

4.17 The Regulation 18 consultation does not set out policies for site allocations or areas of focus (which are broader areas where change is anticipated over the Plan period resulting from new development), however, these will be included as part of the Regulation

19 stage. The Regulation 18 consultation does identify at a high-level the potential allocations/areas of focus which the Council is considering.

4.18 Identifying and developing site allocations is an iterative process that draws from multiple areas of work. Housing/mixed use sites for development in the city are informed by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process, meanwhile the Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) helps to inform the approach to employment allocations.

4.19 The Council is following a ‘no stone left unturned’ approach as it seeks to identify as many allocations for development as possible in order to meet identified need for the city. This includes initially identifying a large list of potential sites from a wide range of sources. These potential sites are then assessed and filtered with consideration of their availability for development (e.g. landowner intent) and suitability for development (bearing in mind fundamental environmental constraints) which results in a refined list of potential allocations.

4.20 This refined list is assessed against a modified version of Sustainability Appraisal Framework Draft which considers sustainability impacts against the 12 SA objectives. An individual SA site assessment proforma has been completed for all potential allocations referenced in the Regulation 18 consultation and these are published separately. The SA proforma helps to identify where an allocation could have particular sustainability concerns (e.g. proximity to a watercourse, or sensitive heritage asset) and will help to ensure that allocations incorporate sufficient mitigation expectations within the policy, if this will be necessary to avoid likely significant effects in relation to the SA objectives.

4.21 As subsequent detail about site allocations continues to be developed in preparation for the Regulation 19 consultation, the SA site assessment proformas will be revisited and updated to reflect new information or changes in context. These will be republished at Regulation 19 stage.

4.3 Testing the emerging plan as a whole (preferred approaches as set out in the Regulation 18 first draft Local Plan)

4.22 The final element of the Part two report draws together the findings from the preceding sections and looks at the wider list of preferred options for policies included in the Regulation 18 first draft Local Plan.

4.23 A high-level interim appraisal against the 12 Sustainability Appraisal objectives is presented for the emerging whole plan. Discussion is presented against each of the 12 objectives including some initial commentary around where particular mitigation

measures are being incorporated to address potential negative effects, such as policy mitigation like net zero carbon policy to address carbon emissions impacts.

4.24 As the Local Plan continues to emerge and move towards a full submission draft Plan later in 2025, the whole plan appraisal will need to be kept under review and updated to reflect new information coming forward (particularly in relation to sites). The appraisal, as with the rest of the report, will need to be reviewed in light of the feedback from the Regulation 18 consultation also.

5. Next steps

5.1 The Sustainability Appraisal including scoping work will be reviewed as the full submission draft Local Plan is prepared. A full Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal will be published alongside the submission draft Local Plan, which will include additional information including in relation to required mitigations to address likely significant effects as well as proposed monitoring mechanisms. Feedback from the current consultation will help to inform the Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal stage.