



ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
VOLUME 2
APPENDIX 5.1 - SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY

APPENDIX 5.1

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 5.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (**Ref. 5.1**) was adopted in February 2019, incorporating policy proposals previously consulted on in the Housing White paper and the 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' consultation. The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. These policies outline the Government's vision of sustainable development, and *"a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced"*.
- 5.2. *"At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development"* (Paragraph 11). The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to be plan led (Paragraph 15), with plans providing *"a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings"*.
- 5.3. Chapter 6: 'Building a strong, competitive economy' outlines that planning policies should *"set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth"* (Paragraph 81a).
- 5.4. Chapter 8 of the NPPF outlines how planning policy *"should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places"*. Much of this guidance is relevant to socio-economics, including the need for local authorities to:
 - *"Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services"* (Paragraph 92a); and
 - *"Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services"* (Paragraph 92e).

Regional Planning Policy

Oxfordshire County Council

- 5.5. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for certain services including education, and highways and transport infrastructure, which have direct or indirect relevance to socio-economics in terms of education and skills, and the catchment of the Proposed Development. Cherwell District Council is the relevant planning authority for other services (**Ref. 5.2**), which are more relevant in a socio-economic context (see local planning policy below).

Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (**Ref. 5.3**)

- 5.6. The strategy outlines five foundations of productivity, where one is particularly relevant to the Proposed Development:
 - *"People: Develop a more responsive skills ecosystem creating better opportunities for all"*.
- 5.7. Regarding this foundation, the strategy reports that the evidence *"paints a picture of a highly effective, skills-led economy in Oxfordshire. However, it is one that is at risk as the population ages, and which does not distribute opportunity equally."* Additionally, there are apparently *"wide income disparities and pockets of deprivation. Fifteen of the county's*

neighbourhoods are in the 20 per cent most deprived in England, with these residents increasingly marginalised from the economy. This lack of inclusive growth in Oxfordshire is a key challenge that needs to be addressed if Oxfordshire's future growth is to be truly inclusive."

5.8. Therefore, to deliver the 'People' vision, the strategy prioritises:

- Getting the fundamentals right – building a skills system that better responds to local demand; and
- Making the most of all our people – with longer and more flexible careers for older workers, and improved access to emerging jobs for younger people.

5.9. Where some key points are:

- To maximise use of Apprenticeship Levy;
- Create pathways and social mobility for young people; and
- Support reskilling through OxLife (a programme to reskill and upskill Oxfordshire workers).

5.10. The Skills Priority Statement refers to a Social Contract where, amongst other things, Oxfordshire *"will work with the Careers and Enterprise Company, local colleges and Oxfordshire County Council to **improve social mobility for young people** by ensuring they will have **greater access to career pathways within Oxfordshire**, to **promote opportunities to access coaching and mentoring with world-leading businesses across the ecosystem**. This will [...] **enable skills development to align to business need and promote more tailored skills that will release pressure on the tight labour market.**"*

Oxford-Cambridge Arc

5.11. Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, South East Midlands and Buckinghamshire offer four strategies which cover the Arc. The strategic objectives of the Arc include (see p11 of the document):

- *"Bringing employers and skills providers together to understand the current and future skills needs, and planning provision to meet them."*

5.12. Across the Arc, through Skills Advisory Panels, the LEPs will work with government to:

- Work with local employers to increase apprenticeship uptake across the Arc, supporting employers to maximise their Apprenticeship Levy contributions and drive social mobility
- ... bring together training providers from across the Arc, with a view to establishing an Arc-wide skills marketplace [...] connecting businesses with regional and national skills providers and people with targeted support including apprenticeships, STEM skills, T levels, technical and degree apprenticeships.

Local Planning Policy

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Ref. 5.4)

5.13. The vision for Cherwell District is that, *"By 2031, Cherwell District will be an area where all residents enjoy a good quality of life. It will be more prosperous than it is today. Those who live and work here will be happier, healthier and feel safer"*. For this to happen:

- *"We will develop a sustainable economy that is vibrant and diverse with good transport links and sound infrastructure, supported by excellent **educational facilities**. Our*

*economy will grow to provide more **diverse employment** for our increasing population and **reduce the need for our residents to travel outside the District for work.***

- 5.14. The Cherwell Economic Development Strategy (2011-2016) (**Ref. 5.5**) aimed to create 'economic resilience', and identified the following:
- Levels of employment are relatively high but not everyone is benefiting from these jobs;
 - The skill base of the District needs to be widened;
 - There remain pockets of deprivation within our overall prosperity; and
 - The average weekly wage is lower than the South East average.
- 5.15. These outline key challenges faced by the local area, including improving resident qualifications and education levels and raising the weekly wage to be on par with the South East. These informed the following strategic objectives within the Local Plan, with the aim of developing a sustainable economy:
- **“SO 1 To facilitate economic growth and employment and a more diverse local economy with an emphasis on attracting and developing higher technology industries”.**
 - **“SO 3 To help disadvantaged areas, support an increase in skills and innovation, improve the built environment and make Cherwell more attractive to business by supporting regeneration.”**
 - **“SO 5 To encourage sustainable tourism.”**
- 5.16. Policies for developing a sustainable local economy relevant to the Proposed Development include:
- **Policy SLE 1: Employment Development;** and
 - **Policy SLE 3: Supporting Tourism Growth.** The Council will support proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, where they accord with other policies in the plan, to increase overnight stays and visitor numbers within the District.