Oxfordshire Partnership

Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy

A long term vision for the county

Briefing paper 3: Economy

FINAL DRAFT (version 3)

This paper is number 3 in a series of 12 briefing papers prepared to inform the development of the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by the Oxfordshire Partnership – a strategy we are calling "Our Future, Our County".

The briefing papers are designed for any individual or organisation interested in finding out more about Oxfordshire. Specifically they have been developed for representatives of organisations in the Oxfordshire Partnership who will be attending workshops and discussions on the priorities for the strategy during 2007.

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	13th August 2007:	Amendments to paras 5, 8, 14, 18, 48 & 51. Amendments to section 3.
	3rd September 2007:	Minor change - addition of footnote to para 14 noting data source.

1 Introduction

1. Oxfordshire has one of the strongest economies in the South East, which is itself, the powerhouse of the national economy. Indeed, a recent GOSE publication suggests that it has the greatest concentration of research and development in Western Europe. Oxfordshire is globally competitive in areas such as high performance engineering, bioscience, medical instruments and publishing. Maintaining that competitiveness is central to the long-term prosperity of the county. At the same time, it is an attractive county, much of it rural, with an outstanding built environment.

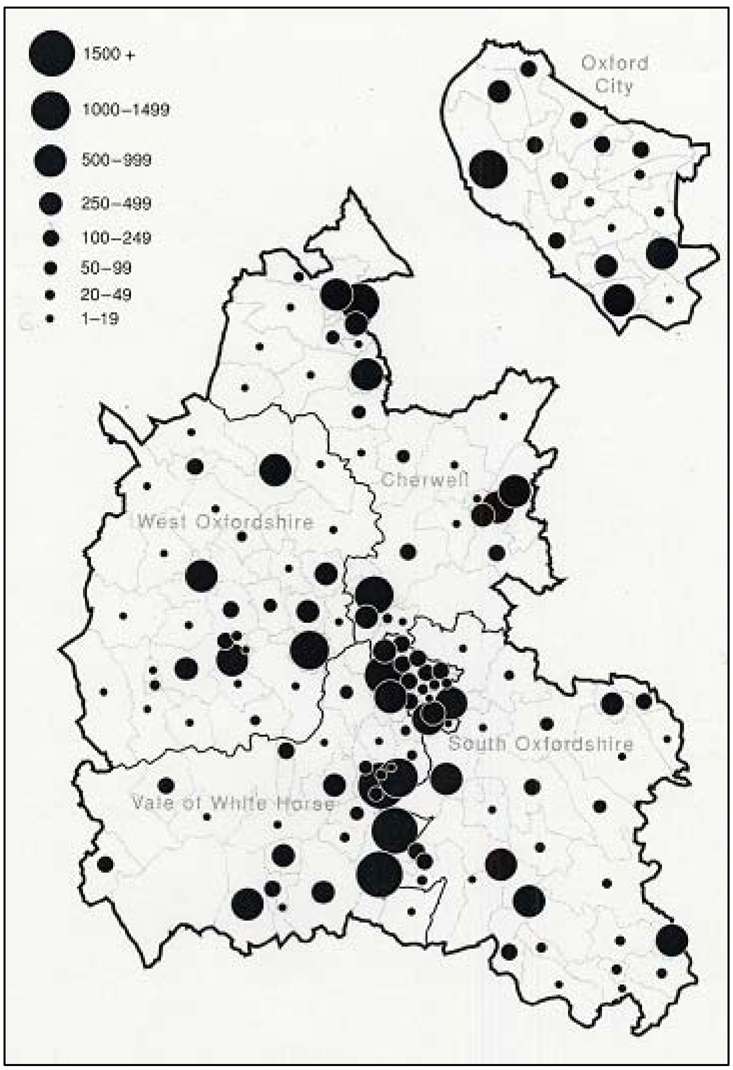
2. The combination of a good environment and a thriving economy should not be a surprise: many employers cite the quality of Oxfordshire's environment as a key factor in the success of their businesses. It also suggests that maintaining a very high quality environment will be key to Oxfordshire's future success. Our aspiration is to foster further economic growth whilst sustaining Oxfordshire's attractive environment. More broadly we want to see the SE region amongst the top 10 high performing regions in the world.

3. The county contains parts of three nationally designated areas of outstanding natural beauty: the Cotswolds, the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns. Oxford is surrounded by a green belt, part of the purpose of which is to protect the city's special character and landscape setting. The **figure below** shows these designations, together with the main transport networks.

4. Oxfordshire's economy has been one of the fastest growing in the country, particularly in terms of gross value added. Employment structure has changed significantly, notably in the dramatic decline in the numbers employed in the motor industry over the last 25 years, although the number of cars produced by BMW at the Cowley plant is greater than was achieved by BL when employment was much higher.

5. Tourism is a major sector of the local economy, and there remain further opportunities to fully exploit the potential of this sector by increasing the average length and spend associated with each visit. While Oxford is understandably the main magnet for visitors, many tourists are also drawn to the Oxfordshire gateway to the Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty.

6. The growth of hi-tech companies and employment has been one of the most marked features of the Oxfordshire economy. Their distribution is shown in the **figure below**



Source: 'Enterprising Oxford', Oxfordshire Economic Observatory

7. A feature of the hi-tech economy is its distribution: in addition to a significant concentration within Oxford, there are substantial concentrations elsewhere in Oxfordshire, notably in the corridor running south from Oxford to the county boundary, an area which includes centres such as Harwell, Milton Park and the Rutherford Appleton laboratory. This illustrates the point that there is a high degree of interdependence within Oxfordshire. While Oxford acts as the hub for a number of activities (e.g. comparison shopping), the county in many ways shows a "polycentric" pattern of development.

8. Despite Oxfordshire's overall prosperity and strong economic performance, there are concerns about under performance in a number of areas as well as opportunities that need to be seized.

- The economy and general, and the hi-tech end of it in particular, needs to do more to remain globally competitive.
- There are variations in performance in different parts of the county, including severe pockets of deprivation and under-performance affecting about 15% of people in Oxford and Banbury.
- Market towns are struggling to maintain their viability as service and retail centres in the face of competition from larger retail centres and the internet

9. This paper sets out evidence on the Oxfordshire economy, highlights major issues facing it, and points towards ways in which the Sustainable Community Strategy may help to address these.

2 The performance of the Oxfordshire Economy

2.1 Key Employment Statistics

9. In 2005, the 30,800 businesses in the county employed around 309,000 people. Three-quarters of that work force are in the private sector and the remaining 25% in the public sector.

10. 99% of Oxfordshire businesses employ less then 50 employees; the remaining 1% of organisations, those with more than 50 employees, accounted for 52% of the workforce[1]. This is typical of the structure nationally. Oxford has the largest concentration of large companies in the county including iconic brands such as BMW

11. Of the total workforce of around 3009,000 people:

- 206,000 are employed in urban areas with the most significant concentration being 85,000[2] in Oxford City
- Almost exactly 100,000 people are employed in Oxfordshire's rural areas (i.e. in settlements of less than 10,000 people – this includes Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park and other rural business parks). 23% of employees in rural areas are home based[3] compared with 11% in urban areas.

12. Oxfordshire has performed well over the last six years across a range of headline economic indicators and, on many measures of enterprise and innovation, compares favourably with South East and national averages:

- GVA per capita (2004) was 16% above the regional average (up from 14% above in 2003) and was increasing at a faster rate than both the region and the UK;
- A claimant count unemployment rate (April 2007) of 1.1% was well below the regional and national averages and one of the lowest in the EU; but see concerns below about real unemployment rates
- The number of VAT-registered businesses in the county increased by over 9.4% in the five years to 2006, again well above regional and national averages; only Milton Keynes has a faster growth in business stock
- Compared with the counties that surround it[4], Oxfordshire performs well on variables such as economic activity rates[5], growth of VAT-registered enterprises, percentage growth in GVA per head[6], Level 4[7] or above qualifications and lower than average numbers of people with no qualifications

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[1] Annual Population Survey 2005, ONS; downloaded from www.nomisweb.co.uk

[2] Annual Business Inquiry (ONS) analysed using ONS urban/rural definition – from Rural Economy paper January 2007

[3] 'Home based' includes not only those who work at home but also those who work from home such as sole trader service providers

[4] Berkshire, Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes), Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (including Swindon)

[5] Proportion of working age residents in work

[6] GVA: Gross Value Added. GVA measure the total monetary value of the economy's output and is considered one of the most useful measures of economic performance

2.2 Concerns about Oxfordshire's Economic Performance

13. Set against the strengths listed above, there are concerns about the county's recent economic performance, including:

- The scale of the challenge in competing globally is shown clearly by the figures describing the expected rise of Chinese and Indian production (from 22% to 27% over the period 2005 to 2015) and the relative decline of the UK and the G7 countries over the same period (from 42% to 35%)[8].
- At the regional scale, the South East, East of England and London all fell dramatically (10 or more places) during 2004 – 2005 in a ranked list of 125 regions world wide measuring overall economic competitiveness and knowledge economy capacity and capability known as the World Competitiveness Rankings with the South East itself falling 15 places to number 55 in the list[9].
- There have been below average rates of employment growth in recent years. At 3.3% for the period 1998-2005, Oxfordshire's growth rate is well below that of any of the counties that surround it and compares with about 8% growth over the same period nationally and in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire and over 10% as the average in the South East[10].
- Recent employment growth has been relatively low in high-tech and knowledge-based sectors; 2.1% growth 1998-2005 compares with a national figure of 6.4% and 8.5% for the South East[11].
- Oxfordshire workplace-based earnings (i.e. earnings gained from work within Oxfordshire) are relatively low compared with Berkshire and Buckinghamshire but above those of other neighbouring counties to the north and west, Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire.
- While there is a highly skilled workforce, the below average levels of educational attainment are a major issue for the long term health of the economy and of communities more generally
- High house prices are affecting staff recruitment and retention.

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[7] Level 2 is five good GCSEs, Level 3 is A-levels, Level 4 is first degree level and level 5 is post graduate degree level

[8] HMT/DTI 2006 see page 10 in Economic Development Strategy for Oxfordshire evidence insert 2007

[9] Robert Huggins Associates 2004-2005 see page 8 in Economic Development Strategy for Oxfordshire evidence insert 2007

[10] ONS annual business Inquiry ABI 1998 & 2005

[11] Office of National Statistics 1998 & 2005 Annual Business Inquiry

2.3 Variations in the Economy across the County

14. With 85,700[12] people or 28% of the county's employment, Oxford is the centre of a city-region that attracts business activity and inward investment as well as inward commuting from across the county. The four surrounding districts all provide employees who work in Oxford and, as a result, have average work-based earnings that are above their residence-based earnings ie residents can earn more by commuting out of the district than working within it. This city–region model reflects the importance of Oxford to the county's economy and is complemented by important areas of employment, including significant high tech employment arranged within easy reach of good transport links in centres from Harwell, Milton Park, Didcot and Abingdon in the south to Bicester and Banbury in the north. As a result there are also significant levels of commuting out of Oxford as well as into it.

15. With less than 1% of the County's employment related to land based industries Oxfordshire does not have a significant 'rural economy': what it does have is an economy that is closely linked into and dependent on the global, national and London economies. Access to these economies is different in different parts of the county and underpins the variations in economic performance between different districts.

16. At more local levels, the disparities between prosperity and deprivation become more acute. Concentrated pockets of multiple deprivation are to be found in urban centres – in general, the larger the centre, the larger the pocket of deprivation. Only in Oxford and Banbury are the pockets of multiple deprivation in the most deprived 20% nationally but all districts have at least one area in the most deprived 20% on the education and skills domain. In rural areas, there is widespread deprivation in the form of poor access to services

17. Deprivation in Oxfordshire is either very locationally specific (as in the major urban centres) or very diffuse (as in rural areas or for disadvantaged groups).

2.4 Urban deprivation

18. The most acute deprivation in the county is clustered in ten super output areas on the eastern fringe of Oxford City and in three more in Banbury which are in the most deprived 20% nationally. These 13 Super Output Areas, out of a total of 404 in Oxfordshire, are home to a total of just over 20,000 people. These communities have relatively high levels of economic inactivity (twice the county average), low rates of self employment and levels of educational attainment and adult skills which are about half the county average.

19. All districts have at least one community that shows up as being in the most deprived 20% on the education and skills composite indicator and most of these are urban.

[12] ONS 2001 Census data, table ST129 (SEX AND DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO WORK BY METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK -WORKPLACE POPULATION)

2.5 Rural deprivation

20. Rural deprivation is more scattered than urban so that it remains hidden when undertaking small area analysis of the kind applied to urban areas. Aggregating up all the deprivation in rural areas confirms that, while – overall - rural Oxfordshire is prosperous, there are almost as many people living with some sort of deprivation (particularly problems in accessing services) in rural areas as there are in the county's urban areas. The data suggests, however, that there are fewer people suffering *multiple* deprivation than in urban areas.

21. The issue of access to services in rural areas is closely related to the economic health of Oxfordshire's 18 market towns where the combined effects of the internet and new shopping centres in Oxford, Banbury, Bicester and Didcot risk undermining their role as retail centres.

2.6 Disadvantaged Groups

22. A number of groups are over-represented in the lower income groups. About 5% of Oxfordshire's population is from non-white ethnic origins with a strong concentration in Oxford City (13%) and lower rates in the surrounding districts. In recent years, there has been a considerable influx of migrants from EU accession countries, many employed in the hospitality and social care sectors of the economy.

23. Other groups facing problems within the general economy include people with disabilities, including mental illness, gypsies and travellers and asylum seekers and refugees.

3 Performance of different sectors of the economy

24. Oxfordshire's economy has a significant number of diverse sectors in which it has particular specialisations. These range from high tech manufacturing and services to retail, tourism and publishing.

25. Of these sectors the most significant growth is forecast in:

- Education, including higher education
- Knowledge-intensive business services
- Health
- Visitor economy

26. Oxfordshire has a number of strong sector-specific networks, for example in bio-science, IT and motor sports. It has networks supporting small businesses and it has the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership.

3.1 The High Tech or Knowledge Economy[13]

27. Through the exploitation of the knowledge generated by the universities and research laboratories, Oxfordshire has the potential to maintain a comparative advantage that keeps it globally competitive. The county currently has above average levels of employment in high-tech and knowledge-based sectors but employment growth in these sectors has been relatively slow in recent years compared with some of Oxfordshire's immediate neighbours and compared with regional and national averages. Oxfordshire will need to address the skills, infrastructure and other issues identified in this paper if it is to remain globally competitive.

3.2 Tourism, the 'Visitor Economy' and the economy of Oxfordshire

28. Just under 10% of employment in Oxfordshire is supported by the domestic and international visitor economy. This generates direct benefits to the retail, accommodation, attractions and transport sectors of £1.2 billion p.a. and indirect benefits of another £0.5 billion p.a..

29. Tourism businesses across the county work with Oxford City and West Oxfordshire Councils to promote their services under the strong *Visit Oxford* and *Oxfordshire Cotswolds* brands. The Oxfordshire Economic Partnership has established a special interest group involving business and the public sector to focus on tourism.

30. 90% of visitors to Oxfordshire come for day trips. Day-trippers place high demands on the transport infrastructure but, in general, generate relatively low income per head for the local economy. Those that stay overnight stay on average 3.7 nights and spend almost 10 times as much as each day visitor[14]. One of the challenges, therefore, is to increase the average length of time that visitors stay in Oxfordshire in order to increase the value of tourism to the local economy.

3.3 Start Up, SME and Larger Employer[15] Sectors

31. The future health of the Oxfordshire economy is dependent on helping new businesses to start up, helping Small and Medium Enterprises, SMEs, to grow and helping large businesses to remain competitive. There are a large number of private and public sector organisations involved in providing a wide range of support to all sizes of businesses. There is a national programme of Business Support Simplification to make the publicly funded part of this support more accessible to those that need it.

[13] There are varying definitions of the High Tech and Knowledge economy that are considered in the Evidence Appendix to this paper.

[14] Tourism South East report on Visitors to Oxfordshire, 2006

[15] SME: Small and Medium sized Enterprises. Businesses with less than 50 employees are classed as Small, 50-249 employees as Medium and above 250 as Large. Micro businesses with less than 10 employees make up 85% of all businesses

32. The challenge for Oxfordshire is to make sure that we end up with a situation in which entrepreneurs are coming forward with successful ideas for new businesses and that businesses of all sizes are helped to prosper.

3.4 Skills Development

33. Oxford has worldwide recognition as a centre of excellence for learning and research, hosting both the internationally renowned, world class University of Oxford and what league tables list as the best new university in the country - Oxford Brookes University. Between them they have almost 43,000 students. In addition, Oxfordshire has the Royal Military College at Shrivenham, which also enjoys university status.

34. Beyond this university system, however, there are problems:

- Schools' performance is below what would be expected from such a prosperous county
- Children in care have low performance at school which affects their life chances
- There is considerable variation between the districts with Cherwell, in particular, having lower percentages of people with level 4 and above qualifications
- The school system is not producing enough people with science and technology skills
- The funding of skills development outside the school setting is in the midst of radical change

35. As a result of these issues the skills needs of the Oxfordshire economy overall are not being met and strategies need to address areas of poor performance at all stages of the learning and skills process. Further details are given in Theme Paper 5 on learning and skills and in Theme Paper 3 on the issues facing Children and Young People.

36. Responding to these challenges is a huge range of initiatives managed by the public sector with the active engagement of the business community. The OEP, for example, has established a special interest group to address how to improve links between schools and businesses. Despite this, there is evidence both anecdotal and statistical[16] that highlights the issue of aspirations and attitudes towards learning and personal development as a key determinant of whether people develop the skills necessary to prosper.

3.5 Infrastructure

37. The issues involved in improving accessibility are addressed further in Theme Paper 10 but, from the point of view of the economy, businesses cite the issue of transport

[16] LSC report 2003. Learning and Skills in Oxfordshire

infrastructure as a key barrier to current and future business activity. As part of the process of developing the Implementation Plan for the South East Plan £37 to £47 billion of infrastructure investment has been identified as necessary to facilitate the growth planned for the region.

38. Priorities for regional transport infrastructure are already defined through the regional transport planning process and the South East Plan. Decisions about this funding are not taken in the county but can potentially be influenced by clear arguments made by a wide range of county-based bodies.

3.6 The Environment and Climate Change

39. Oxfordshire's natural and built environments are significant drivers of the county's economy. They underpin the visitor economies of Oxford and the Cotswolds in particular. They also attract high value, highly skilled employees to work in the county in preference to other, less attractive areas.

40. This environment is potentially threatened by the pressures for new development - especially new housing – and by the effects of climate change.

41. The recent floods have reminded us of the potentially disruptive rather than incremental effects of future climate change. The uncertainty about particular aspects of the future climate has hindered the wholesale acceptance of the need for radical mitigation and adaptation responses to both the opportunities and threats that businesses will have to respond to if they wish to prosper in the future.

42. Those businesses who adjust their carbon consumption fastest, or who sell products helping others to do so, are likely to have a competitive edge.

4 Contribution of the voluntary sector to the economy

43. Numerous voluntary and community organisations support particular groups, in particular locations with issues such as skills, entry into employment and running small and/or social enterprises.

44. In addition to providing services to groups that might otherwise not be accessible to statutory service providers, the voluntary and community sector also provides considerable employment. Government policy is pushing for greater involvement of the voluntary and community sector both in service provision and in governance structures. In Oxfordshire, the Voluntary Sector Compact addresses how local authorities' and the voluntary sector's mutual commitments are agreed.

5 Policies on Spatial planning and Economic Development

45. Statutory responsibility for economic development sits with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). To fulfil this remit, SEEDA has developed a Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 2016.

46. The RES sits alongside the statutory spatial plan for the region (the South East Plan) which is currently being developed. The South East Plan specifies separate aims for economic development that are broadly aligned with the RES. The Central Oxfordshire Members Steering Group seeks to bring together the views of the District and County Councils and economic, social and environmental stakeholders on spatial planning issues for the design and implementation of the South East Plan in the Central Oxfordshire sub-region which stretches from Bicester in the north of the county, around Oxford City and down to Didcot, Harwell and Grove & Wantage in the south.

47. County and District councils also seek to promote economic development in their areas and collaborate to do so through the OEP, which is a network of public and private sector partners aiming to ensure long-term economic growth which can be sustained for future generations. District Councils are also developing Local Development Frameworks which, like the South East Plan, need to establish the policy framework for managing the trade-off between growth and the environment.

48. The OEP published an Economic Development Strategy for Oxfordshire (2006-2016) in 2006 and is now putting in place the mechanisms necessary for its implementation. This strategy is consistent with the RES and the draft South East Plan. Districts also have their own economic development strategies.

49. These different plans and strategies agree on most factors concerning the Oxfordshire economy but there are ongoing areas of uncertainty around the scale and distribution of economic development and housing. Recent announcements presage considerable changes to governance structures and pressure to accommodate higher rates of house building.

50. There are different views on the balance to be achieved between the strands that together contribute to achieving sustainable development:

- What level of economic growth is right to ensure the future health of the economy without destroying its environmental assets or increasing its effects on climate change?
- What level of environmental protection is necessary to preserve and enhance the environment as an economic asset but without stifling the economy?
- What level of housing and economic growth are necessary to increase the inclusion of disadvantaged groups without compromising the quality of the County's environment?

6 Issues for the Sustainable Community Strategy

51. This paper points to the following as key issues for the Oxfordshire economy:

- Sustaining and enhancing Oxfordshire's competitive position, particularly in the high-tech and knowledge-based sectors, in the face of increasing global competition and the move of manufacturing to Asia
- Improving the value achieved for Oxfordshire from the transfer of ideas and innovation out of universities into businesses that are then well managed, financed and supported.
- Improving the county's skills base, particularly amongst those of below degree level
- Motivating/involving/better engaging with young people 11 to 19 re enterprise and the world of work
- Finding creative and sustainable ways to address the needs of disadvantaged groups so that they can more fully benefit from and contribute to the county's prosperous economy
- Helping the tourist industry to realise its potential within the Oxfordshire economy, with an emphasis on increasing the length of individual stay and per capita spend
- Supporting market towns to sustain their viability as service and retail centres
- Seeking to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to support the growth in the economy and population
- Ensuring a mix of good-quality new homes are built to meet economic needs.
- Agreeing spatial plans for Oxfordshire that contribute to the continued success of its economy and to realising the economic potential of the different communities within it

52. Addressing these issues will mean ensuring that we have the right governance structures to enable effective delivery.

7 Finding out more

53. Oxfordshire Economic Partnership www.oep.org.uk The OEP web site contains a full list of organisations involved in activities related to economic development.

Oxfordshire Data Observatory www.oxfordshireobservatory.info

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) www.seeda.co.uk

South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – Community needs and aspirations

In May 2007, the Countryside & Community Research Unit at the University of Gloucestershire reviewed and summarised the 30 Oxfordshire parish and market towns plans completed in the past five years (see table below).

Table 1 Parish and town plans analysed

Benson Parish Plan	Goring Village Plan
Blewbury Parish Plan	An Action Plan for Harwell
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Plan	Henley on Thames Action Plan for Year Three
An Action Plan for Carterton	The Launton Village Plan
Chinnor Parish Plan	Minster Lovell Village Action Plan
Chipping Norton Town Appraisal	Sandford on Thames Parish Plan
The Cholsey Plan	South Hinksey Parish Plan
Crowmarsh Parish Appraisal	Steventon Parish Plan
Dorchester Parish Plan	Tetsworth Village Plan
Dorn Valley Parishes Plan	Thame in Trust: a vision and action plan
Duns Tew Village Plan	Upton Parish Plan
Enstone Action Plan	A Town Plan for Wallingford
Faringdon Action Plan	Suggestions for a Better Watlington
Fencott and Murcott Parish Plan Vision	West Hagbourne Parish Plan
Filkins and Broughton Poggs Parish Plan	Wheatley Parish Plan

Since the total number of plans available for this review was relatively small, any comparisons of the differences between districts or between types of settlements can only be indicative. However they still provide a useful snapshot of issues and perceived priorities of communities in Oxfordshire.

Note that comparisons by district are difficult as a result of the imbalance of plans between the four rural districts, particularly in the case of market towns (see following table).

Table 2 plans considered by district and type of settlement

District	Number of market towns	Number of rural settlements	Total number of plans
Cherwell	0	3	3
South Oxfordshire	7	8	15
Vale of White Horse	1	5	6
West Oxfordshire	2	4	6
Total	10	20	30

Recommendations and more detail on the background to community-led plans are available in the main report "Community-led plans in Oxfordshire: their potential contribution to strategic planning, May 2007" published as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base (supplementary paper 1).

Overall recommendations for the SCS are included in "Community Life" theme paper 1.

Actions points from parish and market town plans on housing

Community-led plans for parishes and towns rely on local volunteers identifying and agreeing shared needs and priorities as a basis for local action. Action points and concerns of direct relevance to the *Economy* theme from 30 completed plans across Oxfordshire are shown below.

***Economy* actions from parish and market town plans**

As might be expected, the economy was mostly an issue for market towns, being raised by eight out of ten market town plans and only seven out of twenty villages. A large number of actions were suggested, most of which concerned support for local businesses and local employment. Amongst these fifteen settlements, market towns tended to raise more economic issues than rural settlements, perhaps indicating that the economy is considered more central to market towns than it is to villages.

Four plans mentioned general support for local businesses, one of these specifically referring to the need for villagers to use their local shops. As regards specific types of business needing support, six plans referred to tourism and three to farming, indicating that these are seen as the industries most in need of support.

Specific actions to be taken in support of businesses were wide-ranging, with support for Broadband introduction and street markets and events being the most popular, mentioned in four settlements each. Three plans saw the need to promote the town to attract businesses and two to attract visitors. Two were intending to set up a business forum or partnership and two to produce a business directory. In addition, there were two references to the need to make banking easier and two to encouraging local businesses to employ local people. Other plans referred to the need to protect industrial land and office space and to supply start-up business units and workshops.

Other actions mentioned once each were:

- providing information to businesses about rate support;
- setting up a local employment trading scheme (LETS);
- setting up a credit union;
- becoming a Fairtrade town.

Although most of the plans that mentioned economic issues were in favour of business development, one village supported only light industry, considering other development to be inappropriate.

Specific actors were only mentioned in a minority of cases, but where they were mentioned, they tended to be local groups, such as the Chamber of Trade, who had the power to act directly in concert with others. This emphasis on direct action rather than lobbying others to act may have reflected the fact that a higher proportion of the settlements were market towns, which tend to have a wider range of more influential actors compared with smaller settlements.

Any differences between the four districts are masked by differences resulting from the number of market towns relative to other rural settlements completing plans in that district. However, six of the seven rural settlements mentioning the economy were in South Oxfordshire.

Examples of actions proposed in local plans

Seek to and establish small supported incubation units for start-up businesses   Led by: Chamber of Trade, TBAC, Business Link, WODC, OCC.   (An Action Plan for Carterton, 2003)

Set up a Goring business forum.   (Goring Village Plan)

Community-led plans in Oxfordshire: their potential contribution to strategic planning, May 2007 by Gloucestershire University

Economy priorities from Oxford Area Action plans

There are six Area Committees in Oxford:

- Central, South and West
- Cowley
- East
- North
- North East
- South East (formerly Iffley Leys)

Each Area Committee is made up of the ward councillors for its Area and, on a non-voting basis, the County Councillors for the Area and the parish councils. Partnerships are being developed with the Police, who are usually present at the Area Committees, and the Oxford City Primary Care Trust.

The Area Committees form part of the City Council's democratic structure and are responsible for the following services in their areas:

- parks, play areas and countryside
- off street car parking
- public toilets
- street cleaning and monitoring of street scene performance
- dog wardens
- abandoned vehicles
- community centres
- planning applications

Each Area has developed an Action Plan the purpose of which is to set out the key improvements needed in the area that local people, local groups, the Area Committee and other organisations through working together can bring about. They seek to embody local issues and activities and be a catalyst for greater local partnership working.

The development of Action Plans in Oxford City has involved substantial consultation with local communities and they are not defined by public sector agencies. In 2004, a survey of all local groups e.g. residents groups was carried out followed by workshops in each of the 6 areas with representatives from residents and tenant groups and community organisations. Overall 76 groups were represented at the workshops. This provided the basis for development of the area plans.

In 2005/06 the area committees facilitated further workshops in each area across the city to discuss priorities in greater detail and possible solutions. These workshops were then followed up with 633 on street interviews (approx 100 in each area). The analysis of the findings has been the basis of refreshing the area plans and the key issues identified for each of the areas and fed into the Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base.

More detail on the priorities from Area Action Plans are available in a supplementary report (2) published as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base.

The following box shows the priorities from the Area Committee Action plans relating to the *Economy* theme.

***Economy* priorities from Oxford Area Action plans (by area)**

Central, South & West

- West End renaissance
- Improve the public realm – public spaces, the welcome to the city, pedestrian improvements etc
- Improving Gloucester Green
- Promoting sustainability

Cowley

- Develop partnership with Templars Square shopping centre to provide more community links
- Continue to develop links with Oxford Business Park

East

- Seek to maintain and develop the local economy through marketing and seeking to preserve the diversity of local shops
- To develop and implement an economic development strategy for the area, particularly in support of small local businesses
- Maintain support for farmers and community markets in the area
- Continue to support the Cave Street enterprise centre

North

- Promoting and supporting small local shops and businesses

North East

- Concerns over district shopping centre at Headington and revitalisation to ensure continuation of mixed shops
- Development of community café as social enterprise in Barton
- Underhill Circus regeneration

South East

- Seek to regenerate Rose Hill as part of the housing development programme
- Support social enterprises in the area such as Leys News
- Support skills training in partnership with others
- Maintain contact with key local employers such as BMW to develop forward planning

Priorities from Oxford Area Action plans, Oxford City Council July 2007

APPENDIX 2 – list of briefing papers

	Theme	***Broad content***
	Oxfordshire Futures	Overview of economic, environmental and social trends and issues affecting the long term future of Oxfordshire
THEME PAPERS		
1	Community Life	Active communities, community-led planning, contribution of volunteers
2	Community Safety	Community safety, crime, fear of crime
3	Economy	Employment, income, businesses, change in key industry sectors
4	Children & Young People	Needs of children & young people
5	Learning and skills	Skills for the economy; skills for individuals
6	Environment	Climate change; resources (including waste, water, energy, air quality, countryside, land)
7	Health, care and wellbeing	Lifestyles, older people, long term conditions, vulnerable people
8	Housing	Affordability, housing for vulnerable groups, eco-homes
9	Population and migration	Ageing population, long term and short term migration trends
10	Access to services and travel	Road congestion, accessibility, safer roads, air quality, street environment
11	Recreation, leisure and culture	Participation in culture, sport, leisure activities, internet
12	Spatial Oxfordshire	South East plan, Local Development Frameworks, planning policy; rural, market towns, urban
SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS		
S1	Community-led plans and their potential contribution to strategic planning	by Gloucestershire University (May 2007) Analysis of the priorities from 30 community-led parish and market town plans completed in past 5 years in Oxfordshire
S2	Priorities from Oxford Area Action plans	by Oxford City Council (July 2007) Priorities from six Oxford City area action plans
S3	Oxfordshire Rural Framework (2007-2010)	by Oxfordshire Rural Forum (July 2007) Challenges and priorities for rural Oxfordshire