



Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy –
A long term vision for the county

Briefing paper 8: Housing

FINAL DRAFT

This paper is number 8 in a series of 12 briefing papers prepared to inform the development of the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by the Oxfordshire Partnership.

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 on the priorities for the strategy during 2007.

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I Introduction

This housing paper summarises evidence on key themes related to housing to inform the Sustainable Community Strategy. The focus of the paper is on affordability, the housing needs of vulnerable groups and the sustainability of the housing stock.

Housing is unaffordable for an increasing number of households, particularly first time buyers. There is an increasing need for 'affordable housing'. The need is most acute for social rented housing. Workers who are important to the local economy and public service provision need to be able to afford to live locally. Adequate provision of affordable housing is critical to a number of other policy themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy such as health, economy and skills.

Affordable housing and affordability of housing

Definition of affordable housing

This is housing provided with a subsidy so the asking price or rent can be substantially lower than prevailing local market prices and where mechanisms exist to ensure it stays affordable for those who cannot afford market housing.

Subsidy can come from the public sector through the Housing Corporation or from the private sector through planning obligations. It includes housing for social rent, shared ownership, sub-market rent and low cost home ownership such as discount market housing.

(Regional Housing Strategy)

Vulnerable groups have particular housing needs and housing-related support needs. Despite falling numbers of households in temporary accommodation, the problem of homelessness is of concern. The condition of the existing housing stock is also a concern. Unfit homes in the private sector often house vulnerable groups such as the elderly and those on low incomes.

Building houses is not enough. We need to ensure we create and maintain thriving and sustainable communities. Housing is a major source of green house gas emissions. Sustainable design including energy efficiency and renewable energy can reduce the emissions from new housing. The existing housing stock in poor condition requires retrofitting to improve living conditions, reduce energy use and reduce energy bills. The impacts of climate change will affect how and where new housing is developed.

2 How housing issues are currently being addressed

A number of projects and initiatives have been put in place to address these issues. For example:

- Local authorities in Oxfordshire are increasingly working together to realise common housing objectives through the Oxfordshire Housing Partnership and the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership.
- The Oxford Strategic Partnership is running an 'Affordable Housing Select Committee' later in 2007 to identify ways of increasing provision of truly affordable housing in Oxford City. The Chair and Panel members are Chief Officers from a range of organisations, including Oxford City, Oxfordshire County Council, South East England Development Agency and the Government Office for South East England.
- The development of an additional 256 affordable dwellings across the county is a Local Area Agreement stretch target.
- In July 2007, the Government published a Green Paper '*Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable*' which is now out for consultation until 15 October 2007. Local strategic policy assessments are also undertaking to address these concerns.
- During 2007 the Oxfordshire Members Affordable Housing Group commissioned consultants to carry out a county-wide Housing Market Assessment (HMA) which will be published later in 2007.

The recently established Oxfordshire Housing Partnership (OHP), which supersedes the Oxfordshire Members Affordable Housing Group, is tackling housing issues across the county. The OHP is in the process of setting up Working Groups looking at ways in which affordable housing provision can be increased. Oxfordshire authorities are aiming to provide 256 extra units from April 2006 to April 2009 in addition the normal programme under a Local Area Agreement stretch target.

The Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership (ORHP) was established in 2003 to maximise the opportunities for rural communities across Oxfordshire to benefit from new affordable housing and to assist people who cannot afford to buy or rent from the open market. All of the rural district councils are members. They work with four principal Registered Social Landlords and the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, who employs two Rural Housing Enablers that are jointly funded by the partners. The main objective of the ORHP is to increase the provision of affordable homes in the rural areas of the County, primarily by working on promotion of rural exception sites in villages where a housing need for local people has been identified.

3 How does new housing happen?

3.1 Local planning authorities

Oxfordshire's district councils are housing authorities for their areas and work with around 15 selected Housing Associations to enable the provision of affordable homes and to nominate applicants for accommodation. Only the City Council still has a housing stock, as the districts have transferred their stock to Registered Social Landlords by way of large scale voluntary transfer. There are, of course, many more Housing Associations operating in the county in addition to those that are the preferred partners of the local authorities.

There are a range of plans and strategies that have an impact on housing development. These include:

- The draft South East Plan which sets out the number of new homes to be built in Central Oxfordshire and the rest of Oxfordshire areas and contains a policy that 50% of all new housing to be built in the sub-region should be affordable.
- Local Development Frameworks (LDF) which will deliver the spatial planning strategy for a district council's area. The LDF consists of development plan documents on a range of themes (for example affordable housing) and are now being prepared by district councils.
- Local Plans are the current development plans for district councils while LDFs are being prepared. Each district has policies in their Local Plans that specify the amount of affordable housing that needs to be built on suitable sites. In Oxford City 50% affordable housing is sought on sites of 10 dwellings or more, whilst in Vale 40% is sought on sites of 10 or more dwellings.
- Housing Needs Surveys set out the annual need for affordable housing in local authority areas. Housing Needs Surveys tend to show a very high need for affordable housing which cannot be met by new house building alone. However, the high level of need expressed in the Surveys underpin affordable housing policies in Local Plans and emerging LDFs.
- Housing Market Assessments (HMA) are a new concept and identify the need for both affordable and Market housing in a sub-region.
- Local Housing Strategies set out policies for all housing in a district council's area, including bringing empty housing back into use.
- The Regional Housing Strategy provides the framework for allocating Housing Corporation funding from the Regional Housing Pot for affordable housing provided through public subsidy. The RHS' principal priorities are threefold: more affordable housing (especially for key workers and socially rented homes), improved housing stock and support for the principle of meeting housing need across a sub-regional housing market area.
- Community Strategies are wide ranging plans to ensure wellbeing for all residents in a local authority area.

3.2 Regional policy: the draft South East Plan

The draft South East Plan's 'Central Oxfordshire' section seeks to further economic growth while protecting the natural, historic and cultural environment of Oxford City and the surrounding countryside. It will do this by exploiting the economic potential of southern Central Oxfordshire; building thriving and balanced communities at Bicester, Didcot and at Wantage & Grove; and providing for economic development within Oxford. The aim is to grow a sustainable economy in transport terms as well as maintaining environmental heritage.

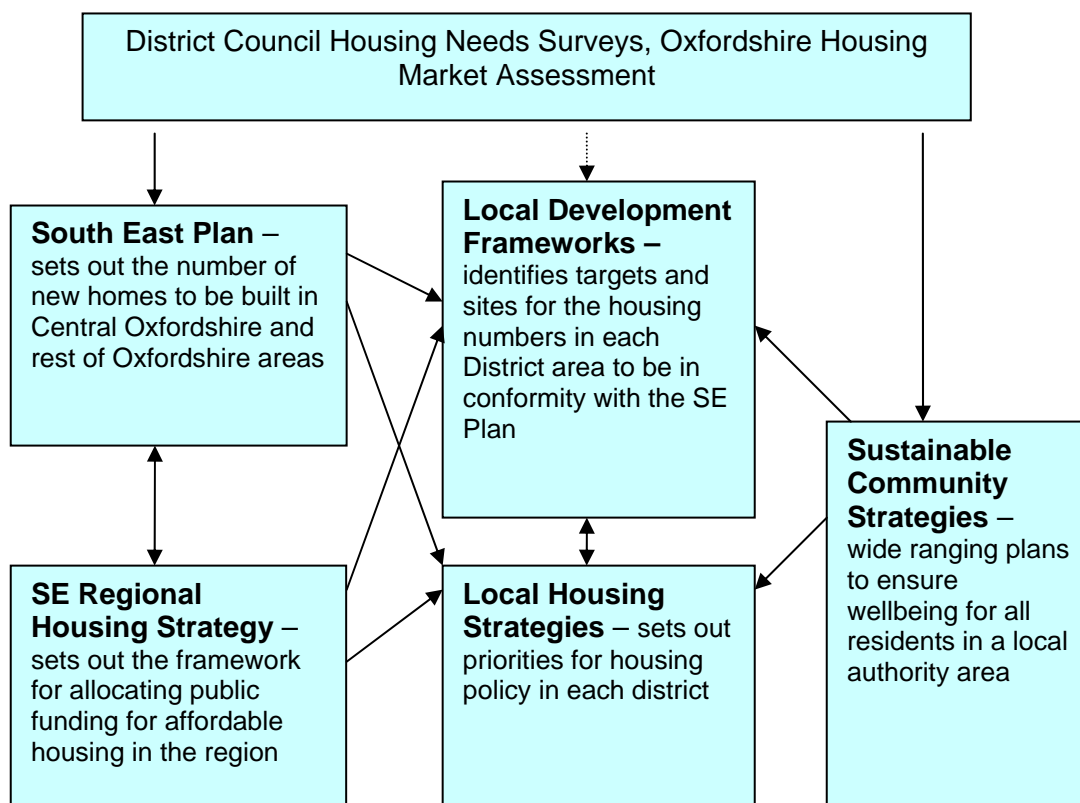
The new growth points identified by Communities and Local Government in October 2006 also identify Didcot and Oxford as key locations to provide new housing by 2016 (5,000 and 5,692 units respectively). The Government has allocated initial funding for infrastructure projects and essential studies for these growth points. The amount of housing to be built in each location remains to be finalised by the Government in the South East Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report (2006) of the South East Plan assesses the environmental and housing implications for the Plan in Oxfordshire. These included flood risks, limited amounts of brownfield land, transport congestion and the pressure on water supply.

The report stresses the importance of assessing the environmental impact of new housing schemes at specific locations. It concludes that it will be very difficult for the sub-regions to deliver the amount of affordable housing required by the draft South East Plan (let alone the levels suggested by Housing Needs Surveys and the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment) with implications for both the economy and sustainable communities.

Increasing the total supply of houses has to be balanced with the other factors that contribute to delivering sustainable communities, such as infrastructure and the impact on the environment and natural resources.

Figure 1 The inter-relationship of plans and strategies governing new housing development



4 Affordable Housing

4.1 The need for affordable housing

The need and demand for affordable housing (social rented and intermediate) is high in Oxfordshire as it is throughout the South East region and beyond. As Table 1 in the Appendix 1 shows, Housing Needs Surveys carried out by the five local housing authorities in Oxfordshire indicate an annual need of affordable housing of 4,625 dwellings a year. However, lack of land and the desire to protect the county's unique historical, environmental and cultural heritage means that the identified need cannot be met through new house building alone.

Oxford City's Housing Needs Survey shows an annual shortfall of 1,757 dwellings which is considerably higher than the annual shortfall in the rural districts. As a major employment, retail and cultural centre, housing need and demand in the City is not going to diminish. Addressing the pressing need for housing in Oxford City needs to be balanced with the need to protect the City's natural and built environment.

The South East England Regional Assembly's Rural Affordable Housing Need report (2006) identifies rural housing need in Oxfordshire as being 492 - 655 homes per year to meet the backlog need. This has serious implications for Oxfordshire's rural communities as the lack of affordable housing and employment-generating development can lead to the creation of commuter and dormitory towns. The 'Rural Framework for Oxfordshire 2007-2010' highlights affordable housing as a key issue for rural communities. Please see Annex 2 for information on Oxfordshire's community-led plans.

4.2 Supply of affordable housing

Table 2 in Appendix 1 shows house building rates in Oxfordshire between 2001 and 2006. Of the 11,829 new dwellings built in the county during this timescale 1,890, or 16%, were affordable. However there are variations between local authorities and in different years. For example in 2003/04, South Oxfordshire District achieved 45% affordable dwellings as a proportion of the total new dwellings that were built in that year. In 2005/06, Cherwell District achieved 6% (some affordable housing completions are to be recorded in 2006/07), Oxford City 18%, South Oxfordshire District 29%, Vale of White Horse District 31% and West Oxfordshire District 30%.

Table 3 in Appendix 1 shows the annual allocation of housing to be built (supplied) in each district over the next 20 years, as set out in the draft South East Plan. However, these targets could be amended following the publication of the South East Plan Examination in Public Panel report this summer, and changes that may be brought about by the recently published Housing Green Paper.

Most construction currently being undertaken is based on previous affordable housing planning policy based on lower targets in current Local Plans and for the future there is the issue of whether there will be sufficient subsidy, (whether public or private) to sustain achievement of the new higher targets set in planning policies for the provision of affordable housing. It is also necessary to bear in mind that rate of delivery of affordable homes is dependent on the rate at which private sector development takes place in respect of affordable housing on larger sites in particular.

Table 2 in Appendix 1 also shows completion of affordable housing in the period.

4.3 Affordability of housing for sale

The fact that many individuals, couples and households (particularly newly forming households) cannot afford housing for sale is well documented and is gaining increasing prominence on the political agenda. Figure 5 in Appendix 1 provides the ratio of lower quartile income to lower quartile house prices in Oxfordshire. It shows that a household with a lower quartile income would need 9.7 times its annual income to be able to buy a lower quartile house in Oxfordshire.

The government has brought in a range of initiatives to help people buy their first home. Termed 'intermediate' affordable housing, they can only be accessed by households in housing need or are a government defined key worker on a district council Housing Waiting List (see note 1 on page 4) and include:

- Open Market Homebuy – households are provided with a loan to help them purchase a home on the open market
- New Build Homebuy – a new home built by a housing association that can be purchased on a shared ownership basis – half rent, half buy.

These schemes are not appropriate for all needs, but it is often the only way that some households can access the housing market. Figures from Catalyst Housing Association show the number of government defined 'key workers' (teachers, nurses, social workers, planners, occupational therapists, etc, who are eligible for Key Worker Living) who have accessed affordable intermediate housing in the county between April 2006 and February 2007. 29 key workers accessed intermediate affordable housing in Oxford City, 14 in Cherwell, 12 in South Oxfordshire, 4 in West Oxfordshire and 6 in Vale of the White Horse District. The number of key workers accepted on the scheme and looking for an intermediate affordable property is 505 in Oxford City, 42 in Cherwell, 17 in South Oxfordshire, 11 in West Oxfordshire and 9 in Vale of White Horse.

Because increasing numbers of households are unable to afford housing for sale, they are turning to Housing Waiting Lists in order to access intermediate housing, therefore increasing the identified need for affordable housing.

Figure 2 and table 4 in Appendix 1 provide the typical monthly spend required for a lower quartile 2 bedroom house in terms of social renting, private renting, new build homebuy (shared ownership) with varying levels of equity, open market equity loan and the open market.

5 Vulnerable and minority groups

Individuals and families become homeless for a variety of reasons, including parents no longer being willing to accommodate young people, loss of privately rented accommodation, relationship breakdown, financial difficulty leading to mortgage or rent arrears, or through having multiple problems leading to chaotic lifestyles which makes maintaining a tenancy very difficult.

5.1 Distribution of support services

The majority of the county's support services are concentrated in Oxford and Banbury. Urban centres have areas of real deprivation, and the incidence of substance abuse and mental health problems is clearly linked to levels of deprivation.

Oxford has the majority of National Health Service mental health facilities in the county, and will continue to do so, as such services benefit from the economies of scale, concentration of expertise and links to the University. These services generate an inflow of people with mental health issues to the city's permanent population and it is appropriate that the majority of the support should also be located there. Services such as the Supporting People funded drug rehabilitation service in the city are open to clients from across the county. The need for a service of sufficient size to generate lowered unit costs dictates that services should be located where need is greatest.

5.2 Patterns of need

Homelessness rates are considerably higher than the regional average in Oxford, at just under 7 households per 1,000 households resident in the city being accepted as homeless in the most recent year for which figures are available, compared with just under 3 households per 1,000 for the region (and under 2 per 1,000 in South and West Oxfordshire and in the Vale of White Horse).

The number of households in temporary accommodation is falling overall, as Table 5 in Appendix I demonstrates. This is due to the adoption of a range of measures by all local authorities to prevent homelessness. However the ongoing success of such measures is in large part dependent on the need for affordable housing construction to be sustained at least at current levels of provision.

Just under a third (31.4%) of Oxford City's homeless households are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, proportionally higher than the total BME proportion in the city (13%). Oxfordshire's rural district's have relatively low BME populations and BME homeless households.

Oxfordshire's Supporting People Strategy 2004-2009 provides direction for the provision of housing and support for vulnerable groups across the county.

- Young people at risk and care leavers: most services for young people are located in Cherwell (60%) and to a lesser extent in Oxford (24%). There is a clear lack of direct access and emergency provision outside of Banbury and Oxford for this group.

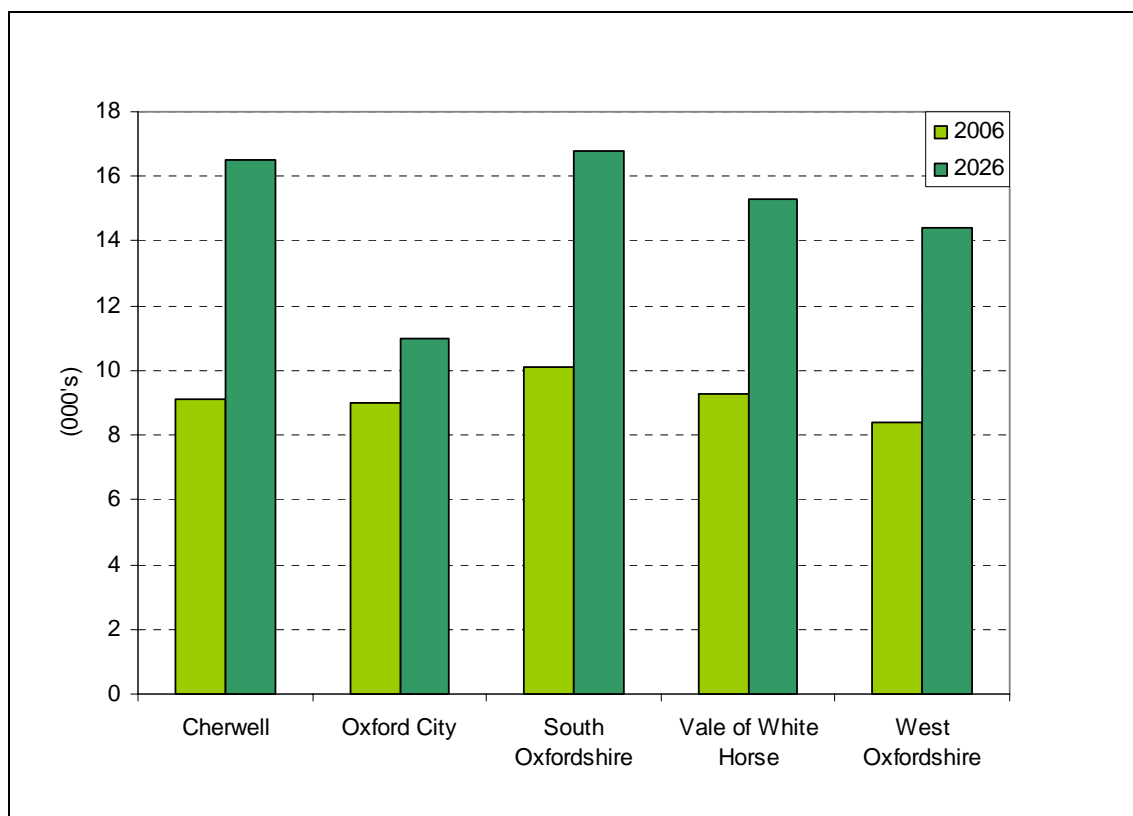
- People with learning disabilities: there are approximately 1,800 people within the county over the age of 18 with severe to moderate learning disabilities known to Social Health and Care. While people with learning disabilities live in a range of housing types and tenures, those in independent housing tend to live in social rent.
- People with physical disabilities: services are almost all in Cherwell, Oxford and South Oxfordshire. In addition, Home Improvement Agency services are also available to this group.
- People with mental ill health: 71% of the funding supports services are in Oxford, with very low levels of provision in the other districts. There is a lack of move-on accommodation available for this group.
- People who are substance users: over half of the funding supports services in Oxford. There are no services provided in West Oxfordshire or South Oxfordshire and very minimal services in Cherwell.
- People leaving prison: a potential source of housing need arises from people leaving prison. Just over a fifth were not released to permanent accommodation as Table 6 in Appendix 1 shows.

5.3 Older people

The older population is forecast to grow significantly in all districts, and growth rates are most substantial in the rural districts.

An average growth of 39% is forecast over the next 20 years for people in the 65 – 69 age groups while the 75 and over population is forecast to increase by more than 60% in each of the districts by 2026. The growth in Oxford is more modest, at just over 20% for the same time period.

Figure 2 (and Table 7 in Appendix 1) show changes in population of people aged 75+, 2006 – 2026

Figure 2 Changes in the population aged 75+, 2006 – 2026 (2004 baseline)

Source: Office of National Statistics, 2004-based population projections

It is crucial to ensure that appropriate housing and support are available for older people, to enable them to maintain independence, to remain in independent housing, and/or to stay in a homely environment as long as possible.

There is currently a poor fit between existing services for older people and the strategic objectives of the Supporting People programme, an issue that is currently being addressed by the development of a number of measures designed to improve targeting of existing services and the ability of services to support more vulnerable older people. This includes the development of extra care housing for older persons with support and/or care needs.

Particular groups of older people who need support are:

- Older people from BME groups. These numbers are comparatively small and concentrated in the larger urban areas such as Oxford City and Banbury. However, this number is increasing and this has implications for the type and kind of services provided, the most obvious being the recognition of the need to deliver services in a culturally sensitive way.
- People with dementia. Between 2001 and 2009, dementia figures for those aged 65 and over will rise by 12%, as Table 8 in Appendix I demonstrates.

There needs to be significant investment in registered nursing care homes for older people, particularly for dementia sufferers. There also needs to be substantial developments in telecare and assistive technology, improved day support and major changes to the provision of home support.

5.4 Housing and Council Tax benefit recipients

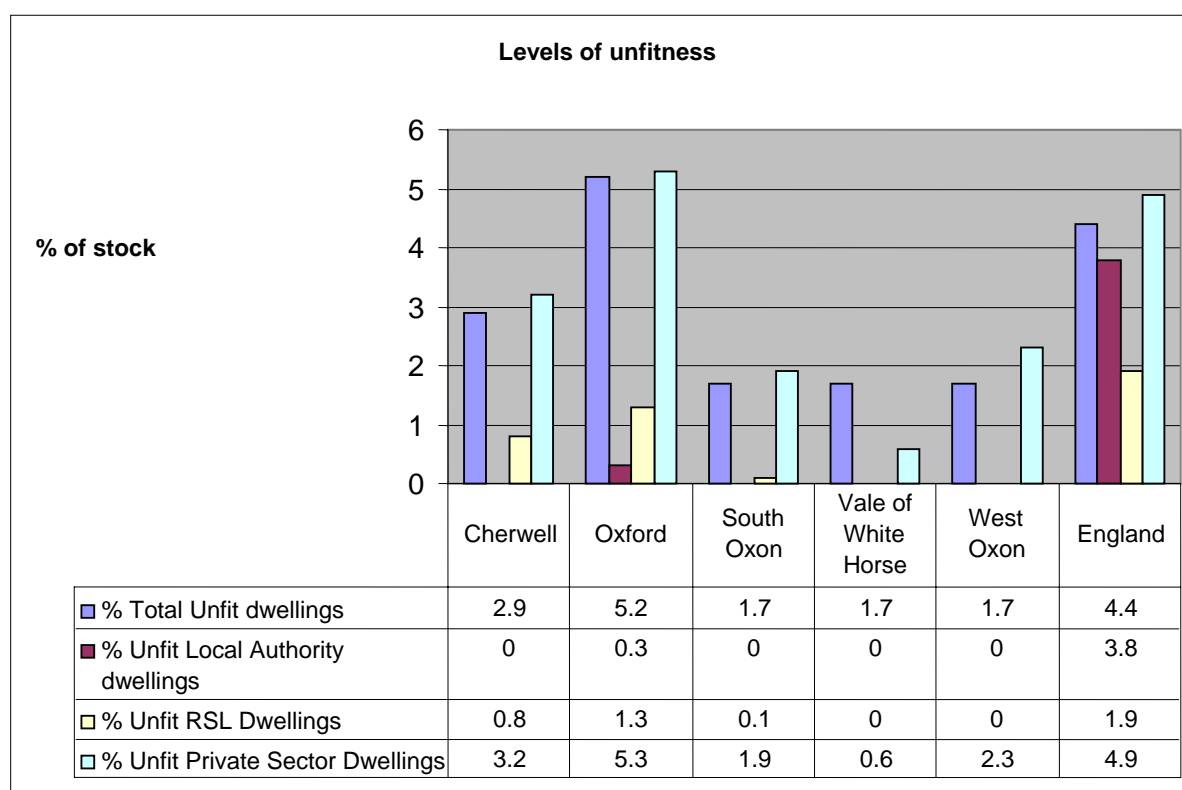
Looking at recipients of Housing Benefit is important as it is often the only way that those on work-related benefits can access housing in the private rented sector. Table 9 in Appendix I shows that South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have similar levels of Housing and Council Tax benefit recipients and these generally compare well with their comparator local authorities.

Cherwell district has slightly higher proportions of benefit recipients, but these are in line with comparable authorities. Oxford has relatively high proportions when compared to Cambridge but has lower results than Southampton and Bristol.

Compared to other areas in the South East, Oxfordshire, and particularly Oxford, has relatively high levels of unfitness to address. For example, the draft South East plan shows that Oxford has the highest number of properties in the South East (and the 5th highest in England and Wales) that have no access to a private bathroom. The highest levels of unfitness are in the private sector.

However, as the following chart shows, compared with the rest of England, unfitness levels in Oxfordshire are below average with the exception of Oxford.

Figure 3 Housing Conditions



Source: Office of National Statistics 2005 (cited in the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment)

6 Housing and climate change

6.1 Climate change and energy

Climate change is now high on the political agenda. According to the Energy Savings Trust, if everyone in the UK installed one energy saving light bulb, the country would save enough CO₂ to fill the Albert Hall nearly 2,000 times. There is much that can be done to existing dwellings to reduce a household's carbon footprint – fitting loft insulation and having a condensing boiler for example. With new house building there is an opportunity to construct homes that are carbon neutral, or close to it.

Paper 6: Environment provides details on domestic energy consumption, progress on meeting efficiency targets and forecast energy demand.

6.2 Sustainable design

Under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 (section 39), Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) “have a statutory duty when preparing the regional spatial strategy and local development documents to exercise their functions with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.” The role of LPAs is, however, not restricted to plan-making and development control, but involves facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development. Oxfordshire local authorities are conscious of the need to work towards achieving better standards of energy conservation and renewable energy, particularly in new and renovated building, but also in the existing building stock.

The Department for Community and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement 1 states that:

- “Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.”
- “Planning policies should promote high-quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.”
- “Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics. Key objectives should include ensuring that developments are sustainable, durable and adaptable (including taking account of natural hazards such as flooding) and make efficient and prudent use of resources”.

For further information, examples of policies and standards for sustainable design, please see table 15 in Appendix I.

6.3 Approach to sustainable building

Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities are addressing these national policy requirements in Local Development Frameworks.

An example of good practice is a development in Didcot. In 2003, Soha housing built 11 energy efficient homes which embraced the principle that cost effective, affordable homes can be built using sustainable construction methods. These homes have achieved a BRE rating of 'Very Good' and have an average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of over 100. Table 10 in Appendix 1 shows the percentage of savings the households have made to their household bills.

There is work being undertaken by the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership to ensure that all new affordable homes in rural areas will meet the Code for Sustainable Homes 'level 3' (energy efficiency and usage requirements) from April 2008. The work to assess the impact of this change is currently being undertaken by the ORHP and could even benefit urban developments. This new level 3 is considerably higher than anything likely to be achieved by speculative house builders and demonstrates the chasm between the commitment of the affordable sector and its private equivalent. For more information, please see http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/code_for_sust_homes.pdf

Oxfordshire chief planning officers have identified the need for common approaches to more robust policies on issues such as renewable energy and energy efficiency to set the minimum policy requirements that we need to contribute to the government's CO₂ targets.

Model policies such as those developed by the Local Government Association and the Planning Officers Society (Planning Policies for Sustainable Building) provide suggestions and guidance to help all local authorities to adopt planning policies that promote sustainable design and construction.

Having a common approach to adopting these would reduce the risk of going beyond building regulations in planning policy. It would help local authorities to have government backing for such policies (for example more robust building regulations or making the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory) in order to ensure that the necessary policies in local development frameworks are supported at public inquiry. The building regulations are minimum standards. The planning system can require a higher standard when there is a clear proven need based on sound local evidence.

A common approach to sustainable building in Oxfordshire would:

- Clarify what is cost effective and reasonable to expect in building construction
- Reduce uncertainty for planners and developers
- Support development control officers in the efficient use of their time and effort
- Increase the likelihood of a step change in the environmental performance of buildings being achieved
- Provide the critical mass for markets in materials, products and technologies to achieve a new economy of scale, reducing unit prices

7 Threats and opportunities for the future

Threats:

- Limited government funding and over reliance on achieving affordable housing through planning policy that is dependent on private sector development and willingness/ability to subsidise development costs
- The South East Regional Housing Strategy priorities do not enable sufficient public subsidy to be allocated to Oxfordshire affordable housing schemes
- The proposed reduction in Supporting People grant for Oxfordshire
- Climate change and flooding

Opportunities:

- Oxfordshire Housing Partnership
- Housing Corporation proposal to give long term commitment to fund strategic sites
- Development of the Local Area Agreement
- Development of countywide older persons housing strategies
- Development of new policy framework for promoting carbon-neutral housing development
- Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership affordable housing select committee

8 Issues

The Oxfordshire District Heads of Housing identified 5 key issues for the Sustainable Community Strategy in the process of commenting on this paper:

- Supply
- Affordability
- Older people's housing needs
- Younger people's housing needs
- Supported housing

Specific challenges that emerge from the evidence presented in this paper are:

- Affordability
 - Achievement of affordable housing targets set out in Local Plans and Local Development Frameworks.
- Vulnerable people
 - Prevent homelessness and improve provision of assistance and accommodation for those accepted as homeless
 - How to support existing work on tackling homelessness, particularly amongst 'vulnerable groups'.
- Older people's needs
 - The impact of an increasingly aging population on the housing situation in Oxfordshire.
- Sustainable housing
 - Improve housing standards, including condition, energy efficiency, and reducing the carbon footprint of Oxfordshire's existing housing stock.
 - Ensuring new homes, both market and affordable housing, are built to a high standard in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability.

APPENDIX I - Housing data

Table 1 Need for affordable housing

	Total backlog need	Annual Backlog Need	Newly Arising Need	Total Affordable Need	Supply of Affordable Units	Overall Annual Shortfall
Cherwell	450	45	969	1,014	328	686
Oxford City	1,570	157	2,252	2,409	652	1,757
South Oxfordshire	1,450	145	1,036	1,181	346	835
Vale of White Horse	580	58	1,065	1,123	278	845
West Oxfordshire	1,400	140	615	755	253	502
Total	5,450	545	5,937	6,482	1,857	4,625

Source: Cherwell Housing Needs Study 2004, Fordham Research; Oxford Housing Requirements Study 2004, Fordham Research; South Oxfordshire Housing Needs Study Update 2004, Fordham Research; Vale of White Horse Housing Needs Survey Update 2005, Fordham Research; West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Survey Update 2004, David Couttie Associates Ltd.

Table 2 Net additional dwellings completed 2001-2006 with proportions of affordable housing built in brackets

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06*
Cherwell	533 (21.4)	436 (11.7)	409 (17.1)	678 (14.2)	1068 (5.7)
Oxford	439 (16.6)	267 (28.1)	569 (15.1)	633 (16.6)	913 (18)
South Oxfordshire	325 (23.4)	297 (26.9)	172 (45.3)	161 (34.2)	193 (28.5)
Vale of WH	141 (13.5)	154 (15.6)	301 (6.6)	745 (4.6)	632 (30.5)
West Oxfordshire	392 (30.4)	449 (2.7)	564 (13.3)	629 (8.4)	729 (29.9)

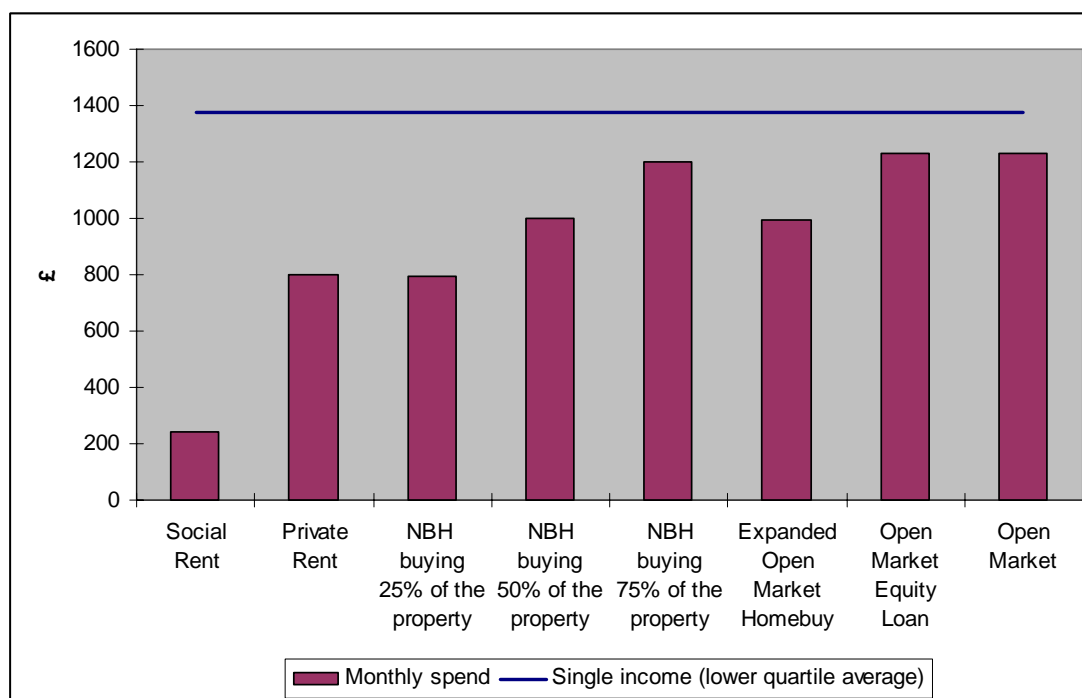
* 2005 / 2006 data is provisional

Source: Oxfordshire County Council, Land Development Progress System (LDPS)
Please note that LDPS information may not be consistent with district level Annual Monitoring Report data

Table 3 Oxfordshire's new build allocations

	Central Oxfordshire 2006 – 2026	Rest of Oxfordshire 2006 – 2026	County Total 2006 - 2026	Implied Annual Building Rate
Cherwell	5,800	6,000	11,800	590
Oxford	7,000	n/a	7,000	350
South Oxfordshire	7,500	2,700	10,200	510
Vale of WH	10,500	1,000	11,500	575
West Oxfordshire	3,200	3,500	6,700	335
Total	34,000	13,200	47,200	2,360

Source: Draft South East Plan

Figure 4 Average monthly spend on lower quartile 2 bed house in Oxfordshire, by housing scheme

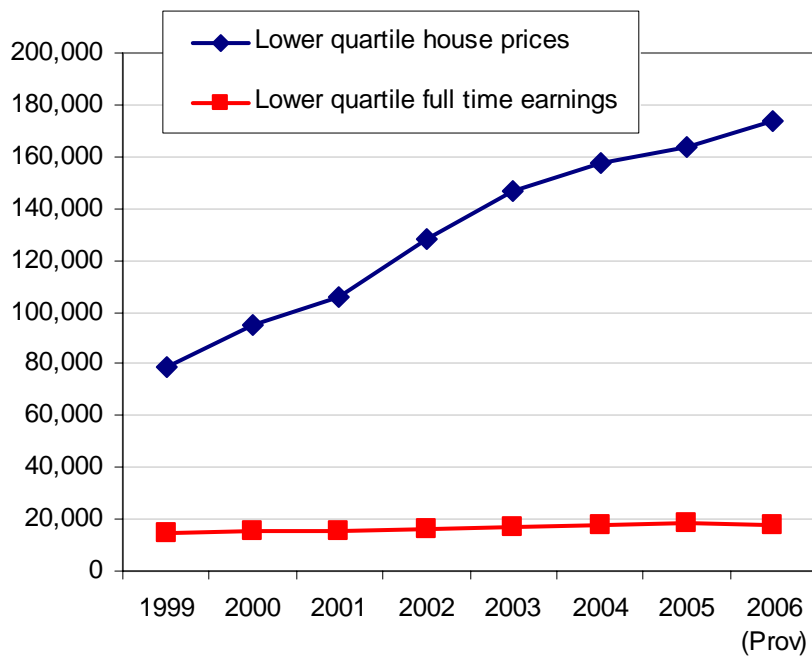
Source: Catalyst Housing Association 2007, ASHE NBH = New Build Homebuy (shared ownership)

Table 4 Average monthly spend and minimum monthly income required to access a lower quartile 2 bed house in Oxfordshire, by housing scheme

Housing option	Monthly spend	Minimum income required	
		Single	Joint
Social Rent	£240	£816	£816
Private Rent	£800	£2,720	£2,720
NBH buying 25% of the property	£793	£1,625	£1,818
NBH buying 50% of the property	£998	£2,663	£3,050
NBH buying 75% of the property	£1,203	£3,702	£4,282
Expanded Open Market Homebuy	£995	£4,640	£5,413
Open Market Equity Loan	£1,232	£5,413	£4,640
Open Market	£1,232	£5,413	£4,640
Average incomes			
Single income (lower quartile average)	n/a	£1,372	n/a
Joint income of people aged 20 - 39	n/a	n/a	£3,551

Source: Catalyst Housing Association 2007, ASHE and Wilcox 2006

Figure 5 Lower quartile house prices and full time earnings in Oxfordshire



Source: House price data – CLG, earnings data from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Table 5 Homeless acceptances and temporary accommodation placements, 2002/03 – 2005/06

District	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Homeless acceptances per 1,000 population				
Cherwell	4.9	3.8	5.6	3.3
Oxford City	10.4	6.8	6.7	6.8
South Oxfordshire	5.2	2.8	1.8	1.3
Vale of White Horse	3.1	3.5	2.4	1.9
West Oxfordshire	1.6	2.5	2.4	1.5
South East	4.3	4.5	3.7	2.7
No. accepted as homeless				
Cherwell	266	210	310	179
Oxford City	570	382	376	379
South Oxfordshire	273	149	98	69
Vale of White Horse	145	163	114	89
West Oxfordshire	61	98	94	59
No. in temporary accommodation				
Cherwell	223	262	353	394
Oxford City	944	1,109	924	861
South Oxfordshire	162	161	115	99
Vale of White Horse	313	224	186	162
West Oxfordshire	13	35	24	21

Source: Department of Communities and Local Government from RSR

Table 6 Discharges from Thames Valley prisons to Oxfordshire

Prison	No. released to Oxfordshire 2003-04	No. released to permanent accommodation
Bullington	190	144
Huntercombe	28	25
Reading	19	19
Grendon and Spring Hill	34	24
Woodhill	7	6
Total	278	218

Source: Supporting People Strategy, 2004-2009

Table 7 Changes in population of people aged 75+, 2006-2026 (2004 baseline)

(000s)	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	% increase 2006 -2026
Cherwell	9.1	10.1	11.4	13.6	16.5	81.3
Oxford	9.0	9.0	9.1	9.7	11.0	22.2
South Oxfordshire	10.1	11.1	12.3	14.3	16.8	66.3
Vale of White Horse	9.3	10.2	11.4	13.1	15.3	64.5
West Oxfordshire	8.4	9.2	10.3	12.1	14.4	71.4

Source: ONS

Table 8 Projected figures for dementia in Oxfordshire (IPC)

	2001	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
Dementia 4% at age 65-79	2,548	2,746	2,660	2,696	2,756	2,824
Dementia 25% at age 80+	5,900	6,350	6,425	6,500	6,575	6,625
Dementia total 65+	8,448	9,096	9,085	9,196	9,331	9,449

Source: Oxfordshire's Supporting People Strategy, 2004-2009

Table 9 Housing and Council Tax benefit recipients for Oxfordshire and comparator districts

Local Authority	All Housing Benefit recipients as a proportion of Local Authority households* (%)	All Council Tax Benefit recipients as a proportion of Local Authority households* (%)
Cherwell	9.8	12.0
<i>Huntingtonshire</i>	9.0	11.6
<i>Mid Bedfordshire</i>	9.4	12.7
<i>Basingstoke and Deane</i>	11.1	12.1
Oxford	17.0	16.9
<i>Cambridge</i>	14.5	14.3
<i>Southampton</i>	20.3	22.2
<i>Bristol</i>	23.6	26.3
South Oxfordshire	8.7	10.1
<i>Vale of White Horse</i>	8.5	10.6
<i>West Oxfordshire</i>	8.4	10.6
<i>West Berkshire</i>	9.8	11.2
Vale of White Horse	8.5	10.6
<i>South Oxfordshire</i>	8.7	10.1
<i>West Oxfordshire</i>	8.4	10.6
<i>East Hampshire</i>	8.4	10.7
West Oxfordshire	8.4	10.6
<i>Vale of White Horse</i>	8.5	10.6
<i>North Wiltshire</i>	9.3	12.2
<i>South Oxfordshire</i>	8.7	10.1

A Household is either one person living alone, or a group of people who share common housekeeping or a living room. Percentages are based on Mid 2003 Household data.

Source: DWP

Table 10 Savings in household bills in the 11 Energy Efficient Homes in Didcot

Energy results after the first 6 months of occupation

a) Use of photovoltaic panels

National average quarterly electric bill	Soha tenants average quarterly electric bill	Saving %
£60	£40	34%

Source: NPower

b) Use of solar water panels

	National average quarterly gas bill	Soha tenants average quarterly gas bill	Saving %
Four 1 bed flats	£75	£11.53	85%
One 2 bed house	£90	£29.97	67%

Source: NPower

c) Grey water recycling

	National average quarterly water bill	Soha tenants average quarterly water bill	Saving %
2 People	£47.50	£33.11	30%
3 People	£55	£42.28	23%

Source: Thames Water

d) Condensing boilers

	National average quarterly electric bill	Soha tenants average quarterly electric bill	Saving %
Four 1 bed flats	£45	£28.17	37%

(Above tables taken from 'Energy Efficient Homes' – published by Soha housing)

Table 11 Housing supply, 2005

Authority	Total number of dwellings
Cherwell	55,982
Oxford City	54,546
South Oxfordshire	54,999
Vale of White Horse	48,046
West Oxfordshire	41,937
Oxfordshire total	255,510

Source: ONS

Affordability of market housing

Property Prices

Oxfordshire house prices are generally higher than regional and national averages.

Smaller properties are more expensive in Oxford than in the rest of the county, whilst South Oxfordshire is the most expensive district for larger properties.

Table 12 Average house prices by property size (number of bedrooms) and type, 2006

	1 bed Prices (Flat)	2 bed Prices (Flat)	2 bed Prices (House)	3 bed Prices (Flat)	3 bed Prices (House)	4 bed Prices (House)
Cherwell	104,532	131,136	160,084	168,167	180,639	287,138
Oxford	149,150	192,184	214,475	225,824	240,279	391,281
South Oxfordshire	129,906	152,595	195,569	248,333	248,409	422,135
Vale of White Horse	125,787	152,459	185,466	206,385	219,586	346,261
West Oxfordshire	116,208	139,588	185,323	197,000	222,241	334,834

Source: Home track, December 2006

Property price and income ratios

Averages mask large local property price variations and the table below provides the lower quartile price for a terraced house (the sort of typical 'entry level' property sought by First Time Buyers).

There is a £56,800 difference in entry level prices between Cherwell and Oxford City.

Table 13 Average and lowest quartile house prices by district, 2005

District	Average (£)	Lowest quartile (all properties) (£)	Lowest quartile terraces only (£)
Cherwell	218,000	150,800	141,500
Oxford City	284,800	205,500	198,300
South Oxfordshire	301,400	178,800	158,800
Vale of White Horse	290,200	187,700	167,300
West Oxfordshire	268,400	173,300	163,300
Oxfordshire	272,560	179,220	165,840

Source: Hometrack, December 2006

First Time Buyers (FTB)¹

With the exception of Oxford city, FTB earnings in each district are above the regional and national average. However, First Time Buyer households with a 100% mortgage would still have to borrow at least 3.5 times their salaries to get onto the property ladder in the lowest quartile bracket in each district.

Table 14 Average earnings and FTB affordability ratios by district, 2006

	Number of Working Households	Average Earnings* per year	FTB income to lowest quartile property price ratio
Cherwell	15,292	42,300	3.6
Oxford City	13,541	37,626	5.5
South Oxfordshire	14,115	49,462	3.6
Vale of White Horse	11,257	44,656	4.2
West Oxfordshire	7,810	39,057	4.4
Oxfordshire average	n/a	42,620	4.2

Source: Wilcox, 2006

*Based on household earnings of people aged 20 -39

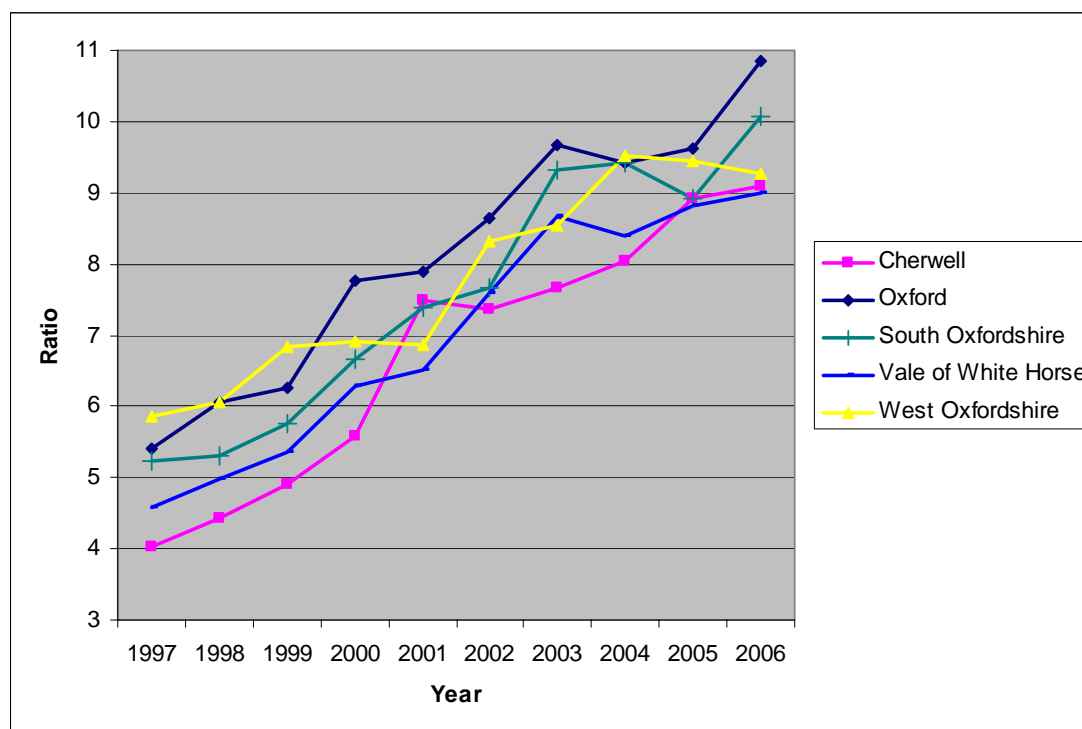
Government affordability measure

The Housing Market Information guidance note (DCLG, March 2007) proposes that affordability can be considered by comparing lower quartile earnings to lower quartile house prices.

The ratio between the lowest quartile house prices and lowest quartile annual incomes indicates affordability levels for people most likely to struggle with the rising property prices.

All districts have seen ratios double between 1997 and 2006. In 2006, someone in the lowest income quartile would have to borrow 10.86 times their salary to afford a lowest quartile property in Oxford.

¹ FTB households are typically people in the 20 – 39 age bracket.

Figure 6 Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile income by Oxfordshire District, 1997-2006

Source: CLG

Table 15 Further information, examples of policies and standards for sustainable building design

Reference	Source
Oxford City Council's Local Plan 2001-2016 contains policies CP.15-CP.18 and a Natural Resource Impact Analysis Supplementary Planning Document	http://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning/nria-spd.cfm
"Planning policies for sustainable building - guidance for Local Development Frameworks"	www.lga.gov.uk/OurWork.asp?lsection=59&ccat=199
SEEDA sustainability checklist	http://southeast.sustainability-checklist.co.uk/
UKCIP climate checklist	http://www.ukcip.org.uk/resources/publications/pub_dets.asp?ID=82
The forthcoming climate change supplement to Planning Policy Statement I (ref CLG website)	http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1505140
The draft South East Plan - Section D5 (p128): Policy ENI- 'Development Design for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy'	http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/march_2006/core_document/008_seera_sep_d05.pdf

APPENDIX 2 – 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 16 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 17 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 *Housing* theme from 30 completed plans across Oxfordshire are shown below.

Housing actions from parish and market town plans

Nineteen out of the thirty plans mentioned housing as an issue, all but one of these making some reference to affordable housing. The vast majority of these actions involved increasing the supply of affordable housing, although two intended to keep the situation under review and one hoped 'to find ways other than affordable housing of facilitating young and old locals living in the village'. Two plans mentioned the need for housing for key workers and one pointed out that high housing costs were hindering business. Four plans suggested methods other than new build for providing affordable housing. One advocated abandoning the right to buy social housing, one wanted to find a way of bringing empty homes back into use, another advocated using the planning system to retain small homes by opposing extensions and knocking houses together and one market town plan proposed to promote 'living over the shop'. Two plans for rural settlements also identified a need for sheltered housing and care homes for older residents.

Some plans wanted new housing to meet the needs of local people or to contribute to the growth of the settlement and make it more viable, others were opposed to any development, and at least one rural settlement was split between those residents who did not want any development and those who saw a need for affordable housing. There was a general concern that any new housing should meet the needs of local people, in one case this involved proposals for a mix of housing types including large ones. Four plans proposed actions to carry out or update housing needs assessments or similar investigations.

As regards the location of new housing development, four plans wanted any development to stay within the village/town footprint and two were actively looking for suitable sites for housing. There were also a number of site-specific actions concerned with a particular development and a request for developers to consult with the parish council early on in the process. One settlement also wanted

developers to contribute to local infrastructure and the local environment. In addition, there was one reference to parking standards, regarding the Government's advice on 1.5 places per dwelling as too low for a rural area.

Concern with housing, especially affordable housing, was prevalent in both market towns and rural settlements. Suggestions of ways other than new build to meet housing need tended to come from market towns, probably because they have more scope for other solutions such as flats over shops. There was some evidence that the larger settlements were more willing to accept new development but this was not conclusive. There were no obvious differences between districts on this issue.

Where a lead actor was mentioned, this was usually the parish or town council or less frequently, a parish plan steering group. District councils, housing associations and the Rural Community Council were also mentioned as potential partners.

Examples of actions proposed in local plans

Examine opportunities for encouraging the development of houses suitable for first-time buyers and the retired. (Fencott and Murcott Parish Plan, 2003)

Work with WODC and a housing association to see whether affordable housing can be built in the village. (Minster Lovell Village Action Plan, 2003)

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

Housing 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 *Housing* theme.

Housing priorities from Oxford Area Action plans (by area)

Central, South & West

- None identified

Cowley

- Density of housing especially houses in multiple occupation and houses being turned into flats – need more enforcement and imaginative solutions
- Lack of affordable housing

East

- None identified

North

- None identified

North East

- Planning intensification, many houses turned into flats creating more traffic/parking problems
- Need more licensing and enforcement action for Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Support more affordable housing, but concerned about over-development and loss of family housing and institutional development.

South East

- Seek to identify new sites for affordable housing in the area.

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

APPENDIX 3 – 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