Oxfordshire County Council

Neighbourhood Planning Guide

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Since 2012 local communities have had the legal power under the Localism Act 2011 to produce neighbourhood plans for their area. The county council is supportive of neighbourhood planning as a way for local people to have a greater say in shaping the places they live and work.

Many communities across the county have already embraced the opportunity to shape their development and future growth. Some of the earliest adopted neighbourhood plans in the country were produced in Oxfordshire.

To help those who want to produce or revise a neighbourhood plan, this guide provides information about what the county council does. It explains the county services relevant to neighbourhood planning, provides links to policy guidance and includes details of teams than can help you. The guide also signposts the district and city council contacts and other resources.

We encourage neighbourhood plan policies to be ambitious in their approach; it is an opportunity to build a positive vision of how your community will look in the future, including responding to the climate emergency, embedding healthy place shaping principles, and supporting thriving economies and communities.

At the time of producing this neighbourhood planning guide we are living through uncertain times due to the coronavirus pandemic. We have written this guide having regard to the future which will look different to the past.

We hope that you find this guide useful in helping you shape your neighbourhood plan.

Cllr Yvonne Constance,
Cabinet Member for
Environment

Cllr Mark Gray,
Cabinet Member for
Local Communities

March 2021

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1. Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council is supportive of local communities preparing neighbourhood development plans (referred to as neighbourhood plans throughout this document).

Oxfordshire operates under a two-tier system of local government, with five local councils (see Figure 1) each acting as a Local Planning Authority and the county council, which is responsible for some services across the whole county.

District councils (including the city council) in Oxfordshire have a legal duty to provide support to groups engaged in neighbourhood planning and should be the first port of call for initial enquiries from groups interested in neighbourhood planning. It is the role of district councils to take forward the submission neighbourhood plans, including consultation, examination, consideration of basic conditions and referendum.

Figure 1: Oxfordshire District and City Councils

District council	Information on neighbourhood planning	Contact for neighbourhood planning
Cherwell	**Cherwell Neighbourhood Planning**	**planning.policy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk**
Oxford City	**Oxford City Neighbourhood Planning**	**planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk**
South Oxfordshire	**South Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans**	**planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk**
Vale of White Horse	**Vale of White Horse Neighbourhood Plans**	**planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk**
West Oxfordshire	**West Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Planning**	**planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk**

In addition to district councils, advice on the processes of neighbourhood plans is available from government and community organisations offering support. Please see the following websites:

- **Neighbourhood Planning Support**
- **Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap**
- **Government guidance on neighbourhood planning**
- **Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance**
- **Community First Oxfordshire**
- **The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012**
- **Government guidance on Community Infrastructure Levy**
- **National Planning Policy Framework**

An additional list of neighbourhood planning resources can also be found at **Appendix 1.**

2. County Council Advice

We would ask that neighbourhood planning groups notify local county councillors that you are intending to prepare a neighbourhood plan and keep them advised of the preparation of your plan, as they may be able to help and provide advice. A full list of current county councillors can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council **website**.

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to supporting neighbourhood planning. We consider both pre-submission consultation draft neighbourhood plans (Regulation 14) and submission neighbourhood plans (Regulation 16) and prepare responses as appropriate, without charge. Additional time, or specialist services, can be agreed in advance where relevant, in accordance with current fees set by Cabinet.

We recommend including within neighbourhood plans a list of any proposals for additional infrastructure or improvements to infrastructure and how it might be funded.

Our key contact email address is:

PlanningInOxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

3. Oxfordshire County Council Service Areas

The following chapter of the guide is set out by service area to aid groups who are preparing, or are interested in preparing, a neighbourhood plan, to quickly identify what information, guidance, help and support can be provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

Figure 2: Oxfordshire County Council Service Areas

Areas for which we...	Oxfordshire County Council Service Area	Document reference
have a statutory responsibility	Education: Pupil Place Plan	**3.1.1**
	Flood Management	**3.1.2**
	Gypsy and Traveller Services	**3.1.3**
	Minerals and Waste Planning	**3.1.4**
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can provide information and/or guidance	Archaeology and Heritage	**3.2.1**
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	Trees and Woodland	**3.2.9**

3.1 Areas we have statutory responsibility

3.1.1 Education: Pupil Place Plan

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

As the Local Education Authority, the county council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one. Sufficiency of school places is outlined in the **Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Place Plan**, which is updated annually.

The county council has a statutory duty under Section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006, and extended by the Childcare Act 2016, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare and early education provision. **The Oxfordshire County Council Childcare Sufficiency Assessment** provides information on early years sufficiency.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

An appropriate scale of housing growth can be beneficial in helping to maintain the financial viability of schools, especially small schools and those in rural areas. However, the scale of development proposed in your plan may lead to a need to provide more places in existing schools to accommodate new pupils, or even for a new school to be built to accommodate the planned growth. This may include primary, secondary, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and early years education provision in your area. Therefore, the feasibility of expanding local schools, or the potential for new schools in the area, may need to be considered by the school planning team if your plan includes significant housing development.

Neighbourhood plans should reference the Pupil Place Plan in order to include comment on current and future demand for school places in the area. Catchment schools should be noted, with capacities, current pupil numbers, and any comments made in the Pupil Place Plan about expected changes in school capacity or demand for places in your area.

Your neighbourhood plan also has a role in sharing and promoting local aspirations relating to the provision of education in your area. However, the implementation of any changes is beyond the remit of the neighbourhood plan.

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
School.Planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.2 | Flood Management

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

As the Lead Local Flood Authority, the county council is required to lead the coordination of flood risk management for surface water, ground water and smaller watercourses in the county.

We are also the consenting authority for ordinary watercourses, although in Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire, the district council works on our behalf. In Cherwell this role is currently also undertaken by West Oxfordshire District Council.

District councils are the land drainage authority and we work closely with them on all land drainage and surface water issues.

Main river flooding remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency. The **flood map** available on the government's website enables you to see if you are in a flood zone and the **River Map** identifies the 'main rivers' in your area.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Neighbourhood plans must take flood risk and flood management into account and identify any flood risks in the local area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019), provides specific principles on flood risk (Section 14, paragraphs 155, 157 and 158). There is further related guidance available from the government's **website** about flood risk.

As stated in Paragraph 158 of the NPPF, we will expect a sequential approach to be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding. Therefore, any areas allocated for future development, should be outside of the areas identified as being at **risk of flooding** on the gov. uk website, not only for river flooding but also for surface water flooding.

We recommend that all development proposed by neighbourhood plans should follow the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), more information can be found at the link below.

We suggest that parishes are proactive in the maintenance of local ditches and consider making provision for this if necessary. We also would encourage all parishes to consider creating a flood group and flood plan to monitor local watercourses and report problems to the Environment Agency, the local district council or ourselves.

Further information:

- **Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit - Neighbourhood Planning and Flood Risk**
- **Oxfordshire County Council Flooding Management**
- **SuDS Advice for Developers**
- **Environment Agency website**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
floodmanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.3 | Gypsy and Traveller Services

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

Oxfordshire County Council has a duty of care to all Gypsies and Travellers within the county and will address their welfare, health and educational needs whether they live on one of the six county council owned Traveller sites, another authorised site, or are residing on an unauthorised encampment.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Oxfordshire County Council can provide advice on the management of existing county council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites. If there is a proposal in a neighbourhood plan to allocate land for new sites or make amendments to existing Gypsy and Traveller sites, we can provide advice if required.

Further Information:

- **List of authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites in Oxfordshire**
- **Legal information, policies and procedure**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:

travellers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.4 | Minerals and Waste Planning

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council is the planning authority responsible for planning matters related to the extraction of minerals and the management and disposal of waste. Oxfordshire's minerals and waste policy and plans are available on our website at the links below. Planning applications for minerals and waste are also available online on Oxfordshire County Council's planning application **webpage**.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Neighbourhood plans cannot include policies or proposals for, or affecting, minerals and waste development, as this is a County Matter, this is called excluded development. We can provide information on the location of existing and permitted minerals and waste sites. We can also provide information on proposed and other potential future minerals and waste sites and provide advice to groups working on neighbourhood plans in proximity to such sites.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste policy**
- **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
minerals.wasteplan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.5 | Public Rights of Way and Countryside Access

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council has a statutory duty to record, maintain and protect the public right of way network (public rights of way are footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways). We manage these rights of way in partnership with landowners, user groups and local communities. We also try to improve and extend the network to help it meet current and emerging needs.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

A good network of public rights of way and open space and a landscape rich in wildlife improves physical and mental health for walkers, cyclists and equestrians and supports the local economy through tourism and leisure spending. Paths can form an important part of an environmentally sustainable transport system when made suitable for journeys to school, work, shops and local facilities.

Local people have a real role in making a difference to countryside access and the natural environment and we actively work to encourage this approach. Many parish and town councils and meetings already do fantastic work on their public rights of way and the county council is very grateful for this - as are the countless local residents and visitors who use the Oxfordshire countryside.

The aim of county council engagement work with communities is to provide information and support to enable local people to carry out countryside access improvements and add value to our core work to define, protect and maintain public rights of way. We can provide limited advice to neighbourhood planning groups wishing to improve the accessibility of public rights of way in their areas, increase the connectivity of their local network, or to increase awareness and engagement in the use or management of the network. The first place to look should be on the 'improvements' section on our website noted below, as that contains the legal framework as well as guidance, ideas and resources.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Access**
- **Oxfordshire County Council guidance on improving access**
- The **Definitive Map and Statement** (DM&S) of Public Rights of Way, the legal record of public rights of way

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
countryside@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.6 | Social Care Housing Provisions

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

As the provider of adult social and health care services, we support and promote strong communities so that people can live their lives as successfully, independently and safely as possible.

We support the provision of a range of new housing, particularly specialist housing, to meet the needs of older people and to provide choice.

For people with learning and/or physical disabilities, or mental health needs we look to promote the development of small, independent living homes for three or four residents and single person flats with shared communal space. We also support the development of specialist services for people with autism and sensory needs.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

In planning for new housing, you should consider how the type and size of new homes would help meet the housing needs of local older people and those with disabilities.

Provision could include smaller market and affordable homes for retirement households and/or specialist housing such as extra care housing and purpose-built care villages.

Clusters of accessible shared houses with large en-suite bedrooms, and properties with self-contained spaces are ideal for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities.

If you are looking to allocate a site for specialist housing for older people and adults with disabilities, consider locating it as close as possible to local shops, GP surgeries, community facilities and bus stops to allow ease of access for older residents. Sites for extra care housing need to be large enough to offer a minimum of 40 flats. Provision for adults with disabilities is generally on single sites with a maximum of four people sharing a house.

Further information:

- **Adult social care**
- **Oxfordshire Market Position Statement**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
PlanningInOxfordshire@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.7 | Transport and Highways Management: Policy and Strategy

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council is the Local Highways Authority for Oxfordshire. We can provide guidance on proposals for transport policies in neighbourhood plans.

The following suites of policies and plans produced by Oxfordshire County Council should be considered as part of the development of neighbourhood plans:

- **Connecting Oxfordshire** – includes information on the county council's objectives, plans and strategies related to local transport, active and health travel, specific area strategies, and reducing transport emissions.
- **School travel plans** – almost every school in Oxfordshire has a document that sets out a plan of action to reduce car use, manage traffic-related issues, and encourage a mix of walking, cycling and bus journeys to school, as appropriate for that individual school.
- **Oxfordshire County Council Highway Infrastructure Policy** - this is a manual of policies for the maintenance and management of the highway network in Oxfordshire.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Many traffic matters fall outside the scope of neighbourhood plans. However, neighbourhood plans can highlight localised traffic capacity and safety issues, or infrastructure deficiencies that would need to be addressed when considering the impact of new developments on the existing road network.

Further information

- **Oxfordshire County Council Transport Policies and Plans**
- **Transport for new developments**
- **What transport matters can a neighbourhood plan address?**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
PlanningInOxfordshire@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
travelchoices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.8 | Transport and Highways Management: Development Control

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

Oxfordshire County Council is a statutory consultee of the planning application process and therefore gives advice to the district councils on the transport and highway implications of each development proposal.

The county council as the Highways Authority will assess development proposals submitted for planning permission and, if not objecting, recommend to the district council planning conditions or Section 106 obligations that we feel are necessary in order to make the development acceptable.

We provide guidance on policy and processes for transport and highway aspects of new developments which should help to ensure that development proposals are acceptable. The following link contains documents on a range of transport related issues, including cycling and walking. It also provides advice on layout, road standards, parking standards and covers procedures for the transfer of the responsibility of the roads from the developer to the highway authority.

- Oxfordshire County Council **Transport Development Control (TDC)**

  - ► Residential Road Design Guide
  - ► Cycling Design Standards
  - ► Walking Design Standards
  - ► Parking Standards

- **Oxfordshire County Council Highway Searches** – how to find out if land is part of the public highway

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

The county council's Transport Development Control (TDC) team will contribute to responses on draft neighbourhood plans. In order to comment on specific site allocation proposals, the following information should be provided:

- Scaled location plan(s)
- Scaled site plan(s)
- Scaled plan(s) showing proposed access arrangements (vision splays to design standards to be shown), for both vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists
- Brief description of development proposal(s)

Further advice from TDC officers may also be available but may be subject to a charge in accordance with the latest fees agreed by our Cabinet.

Further information

- **Oxfordshire County Council Transport Planning Application Advice**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
transport.development.control@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.1.9 | Waste Management and Disposal

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

In Oxfordshire responsibility for household waste management is shared between the county council, which is the Waste Disposal Authority responsible for household waste recycling centres and waste treatment and disposal sites, and the district councils which have responsibility for household recycling and waste collections.

Oxfordshire County Council works in partnership with the district councils to continuously improve waste management services within the county. Oxfordshire in 2019 recycled around 58% of its waste, one of the highest recycling rates in England and residents produced less waste per person than most other county councils in England. We also fund the Community Action Group Project to provide support and funding for community groups holding events and initiatives that help to reduce the amount of resources wasted and increase the amount reused and recycled in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire councils have ambitious targets to reduce the amount of household waste generated and increase the amount recycled as demonstrated in our **Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2018-2023**.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Waste reuse, reduction and recycling should be considered. You may also wish to consider how community spaces can be used to help reduce waste and build community cohesion though assets such as community fridges, space for the sharing economy (library of things), refill stations, space for local food growing etc.

Additionally, enabling the residents of new dwellings to fully participate in district council waste and recycling collections, for example through providing sufficient and convenient storage space for bins both inside properties and externally, will allow Oxfordshire's high recycling rates to be maintained and minimise an increase in residual waste.

Bin store provision is required. This should accommodate the correct number of mixed recycling, refuse and food recycling bins, be safe and easy to use for both residents and waste collection crews and meet the requirements of the waste collection authority.

We will comment on the waste management implications of development proposals. District councils can also advise town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums on the waste management implications of any development proposed.

Further information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Waste and Recycling**
- **Oxfordshire County Council role in waste management**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
wastemanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2 Areas we can provide information and/or guidance

3.2.1 | Archaeology and Heritage

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

We protect and conserve Oxfordshire's archaeological resources by providing detailed archaeological advice and information on planning applications and policies.

Where the district council has determined it appropriate, we may also provide advice on how to comply with Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Regulations.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

In the first instance neighbourhood planning groups should use the Heritage Gateway (link below) to identify heritage assets in their local area.

Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services can then provide specialist advice on a range of heritage-related subjects. Depending on the nature of the query, a charge may be incurred; please contact the Archaeological Service for more information.

We also suggest a Historic Environment policy is included in neighbourhood plans, along the following lines:

"The town or parish's designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground including archaeological sites, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)."

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology**
- **Heritage Gateway** – neighbourhood planning groups have free access to Heritage Gateway to identify local heritage assets. If groups would like more data or information on past archaeological work, they should contact the HER Officer to discuss whether charges will apply.
- Information on listed buildings or conservation areas can be provided by your local **district council**.

Oxfordshire County Council contact:

archaeologydc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.2 | Biodiversity, Landscape and Green Infrastructure

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The natural environment team provides specialist advice on biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure to county council's planning applications and helps to shape policies and county-wide strategies. Information on species and habitats is provided by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC).

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

It is important to consider biodiversity, landscape character, local views and green infrastructure when drawing up a neighbourhood plan with a view to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity, local character and distinctiveness.

Some areas and species are protected by law and local policies (see links below) and development could be delayed or stopped if biodiversity is not fully considered at an early stage of the plan.

The neighbourhood plan provides an opportunity to identify, protect and enhance locally valued landscapes, views and open spaces.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Environmental Policy and Planning**
- **Neighbourhood Planning Organisation's Environment toolkit**
- **Biodiversity and Planning Guide**
- **TVERC Protected species records**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
Communities.Ecology@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
Communities.Landscape@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.3 | Common Land and Village Greens

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council holds registers for both common land and town and village greens in Oxfordshire, which can be inspected free of charge. The county council maintains the registers and processes applications to register 'new' town or village greens, or to correct errors in the register.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Oxfordshire County Council can provide specific information on common land or village greens including how an existing designation may affect an emerging plan's policies. We can also offer guidance on how an emerging neighbourhood plan may seek to designate town or village greens.

This is quite different from the ability for neighbourhood plans to designate local green spaces. Please refer to the advice on the **neighbourhood planning website** in respect of that and contact the relevant district or city council.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council common land and village greens**
- **Oxfordshire County Council common land and village green register**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:

commonland@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.4 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council as Highways Authority for Oxfordshire has a role in the management of road safety and street furniture. This includes the licensing and installation of new apparatus installed in the public highway, such as EV charging and charging bays for EVs.

As well as its obligations as Highway Authority, Oxfordshire County Council also has a commitment to reduce carbon emissions in the county in all its areas of influence. The council has a dedicated EV Integration Team who work to deliver innovation projects in EV technology and transfer learning into business as usual for the council. The EV integration team is leading the development of an emerging cross-council Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (OEVIS) to be delivered in early 2021, which will include recommendations for EV charging in new developments to be implemented via the planning process.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

A neighbourhood plan presents an excellent opportunity to promote provision of EV charging infrastructure in new developments, and when the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy is adopted and published, those developing neighbourhood plans should refer to this document.

In the interim period the EV Integration team can provide some limited guidance on EV charging for groups considering making a neighbourhood plan. Groups should also refer to national government strategy and guidance on EV charging in new developments in the Road to Zero Strategy (2018) and the revised Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Energy and Climate Change**
- **The Road to Zero Strategy**
- **Section 9, National Planning Policy Framework** (Revised, Feb 2019)

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
ihub@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.5 | Energy Efficiency and Climate Action

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

Oxfordshire County Council has a commitment to reduce carbon emissions in the county in all its areas of influence. Our **Climate Action Framework** sets out our guiding principles and how we will mobilise to tackle this challenge through two connected roles: transforming our own organisation, and enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Neighbourhood plans offer an excellent opportunity for communities to consider renewable energy generation and energy efficiency opportunities, as well as low carbon transport and wider sustainability issues.

Groups undertaking neighbourhood plans may wish to liaise with local **Community Action Groups** (CAG) regarding their activities.

The **Low Carbon Hub** can help neighbourhood planning groups to consider developing renewable energy generation projects based on the natural resources of their local area. They can also advise on creating policies for promoting energy efficient building features and construction standards in development proposals.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Energy and Climate Change**
- **Low Carbon Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit.** This guidance helps communities consider carbon in their neighbourhood plans and may be able to provide support to groups.
- **Centre for Sustainable Energy**. CSE offer advice and case studies on energy efficiency and climate action to assist in the writing of neighbourhood plans.

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
Climate.Action@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.6 | Healthy Place Shaping

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council is a member of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, which is a partnership between local government, the NHS and the people of Oxfordshire. One of the headline priorities for the Board is Healthy Place Shaping, which is about ensuring the physical environment, housing, social networks and services can nurture and encourage health and wellbeing.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

We support plans that build Healthy Place Shaping into strategies and policies. This will enable and influence the population to make healthier choices. You should consider existing and projected community health and wellbeing needs and any assets that can be enhanced to promote health. This includes creating more opportunities for people to be physically active, to make healthier food choices, interact socially and foster good mental health and wellbeing by enabling people to maintain their independence for longer and reducing isolation and loneliness.

Further Information

- **Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2023)**
- **Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
Public.Health@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.7 │ High Speed Broadband Provision

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The Digital Infrastructure team manages programmes aimed at improving all aspects of digital infrastructure in the county. This includes superfast and ultrafast broadband, full fibre broadband, and mobile connectivity including 5G. This work combines three approaches; engaging with commercial operators to encourage private investment in Oxfordshire, working with all tiers of government to reduce barriers to commercial investment, and operating intervention schemes with public funds to support deployment of digital infrastructure where there is market failure.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

Consideration should be given to the fact that any new homes or commercial premises planned to be built will need to have full fibre connectivity installed at the build phase.

The inclusion of full fibre is as important in a 21st century home/business as the connection of other utilities because of its ability to mitigate some of the environmental impacts of any proposed development. More people will be able to work from home, reducing the amount of traffic on the roads and connected homes and offices can optimise environmental controls reducing power consumption and pollution.

Groups working on emerging neighbourhood plans can contact Better Broadband for Oxfordshire to learn more about current and forthcoming full fibre broadband and mobile provision for their local area and for advice on all aspects of strategic digital infrastructure planning.

Further Information

- **Oxfordshire County Council Better Broadband for Oxfordshire**
- **Digital Connectivity for Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
broadband@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.8 │ Oxfordshire County Council Property and Assets

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council owns assets (buildings and land) across the county to meet service needs across many areas, including but not limited to:

- Schools
- Fire stations
- Libraries
- Council offices
- Gypsy and traveller sites
- Day Centres
- Children's homes
- Museums and archives
- Highways depots

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

If you need to know if the county council owns a piece of land or premises, please email:

Estates.Team@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The county council will be able to advise on any future plans for land that it owns and any proposals for new or improved facilities.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council owned land and premises**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
Estates.Team@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2.9 | Trees and Woodland

Oxfordshire County Council's role:

The county council is responsible for the maintenance of trees on council owned properties and adopted road verges which are part of the Highway, Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE).

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

We can provide advice to neighbourhood planning groups regarding existing tree or proposed tree planting that are within the HMPE as part of their neighbourhood plan area.

Queries regarding trees on other land within a neighbourhood plan area should be addressed to the relevant landowner, which may be the local district council.

Information about trees within Conservation Areas or trees that are afforded protection with Tree Preservation Orders can be found with the Local Planning Authority, usually the district council.

Further Information:

- **Oxfordshire County Council Trees and Woodland**

Oxfordshire County Council contact:
highwayenquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Additional Neighbourhood Planning Resources

In addition to the resources provided by the county council and your local district council, the following websites provide valuable information and resources to groups involved in neighbourhood planning and preparing neighbourhood plans.

ACRE Community-Led Planning Site

ACRE's (Action with Communities in Rural England) website provides neighbourhood planning news and resources.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust – Guide to Planning Policy

This website provides advice on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and how to implement policies through neighbourhood plans.

Design Council – Design in Neighbourhood Planning

This toolkit provides guidance on how they can help communities achieve their aspirations of well-designed places.

Energy Saving Trust

This tool helps communities provide home energy advice. As well as providing a tailored report on energy saving for everyone who uses it, the community HEC enables community groups to track how many people they have advised and gain an overall picture of home energy efficiency in their area.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act sets out a series of measures with the potential to achieve a substantial and lasting shift in power away from central government and towards local people.

Locality

Locality provides grant and technical support to neighbourhood planning groups for preparing neighbourhood plans on behalf of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The MHCLG website provides the latest government advice for communities in neighbourhood planning.

National Planning Policy Guidance – Neighbourhood Planning

The guidance explains the neighbourhood planning system introduced by the Localism Act, including key stages and considerations required.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

The Regulations set out the procedure for the designation of neighbourhood areas and neighbourhood forums and for the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders (including community right to build orders).

Oxfordshire Insight

A collection of current data and statistical information on many aspects of living in Oxfordshire that may prove useful in preparing evidence bases for neighbourhood plans and scoping reports for Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) of neighbourhood plans.

Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study (OWLS)

This website shows the results of the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), an investigation of landscape character and biodiversity across the county.

Parish and Town Councils in Oxfordshire

General information on parish and town councils, including a full list of parish and town councils.

Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

PAS is part of the Local Government Association (LGA). They publish a range of useful guidance documents on neighbourhood planning, which although many are aimed at local planning authorities, will be of interest to neighbourhood planning groups.

Planning Portal

Planning Portal's introduction to neighbourhood planning, including neighbourhood development orders and community right to build.

Royal Town Planning Institute Planning Aid

Planning Aid England offers planning advice and support to individuals and communities.

Thames Valley Environment Records Centre (TVERC)

TVERC collect data on biodiversity for Berkshire and Oxfordshire to support sustainable land management. TVERC may charge for some of their services; please contact them for more details.

United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP)

UKCIP help organisations adapt to climate change.

Wild Oxfordshire

Wild Oxfordshire is a local charity which provides a co-ordinated and strategic approach to conservation in Oxfordshire.

Glossary

Local Plan

Local plans are part of the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other documents, for example Area Action Plans, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The districts and the city council each prepare local plans. The county council produces a Minerals & Waste Local Plan.

Local Planning Authority

Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, metropolitan council, a county council, a unitary authority or national park authority.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Also referred to as a neighbourhood plan in this document.

Neighbourhood Forum

An organisation or group empowered to lead the neighbourhood planning process in an area where there is no town or parish council.