

Public Document Pack

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 5 September 2011 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor James Macnamara
Councillor D M Pickford
Councillor Nicholas Turner

Also Present: Councillor Leslie F Sibley, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Kieron Mallon

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nigel Morris

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Ian Davies, Strategic Director - Environment and Community
John Hoad, Strategic Director - Planning, Housing and Economy
Philip Clarke, Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development
Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services
David Marriott, Head of Regeneration & Estates
Paul Marston-Weston, Head of Recreation & Health
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Chris Rothwell, Head of Safer Communities, Urban & Rural Services
Alison Davies, Project Manager
Claire Taylor, Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager
Karen Muir, Corporate System Accountant
Steven Newman, Economic Development Officer
Nigel Bell, Team Leader - Planning and Litigation / Interim Monitoring Officer
Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

31 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

20. Value For Money Review of Public Protection.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Personal, as the owner of premises inspected and licensed by the department and would leave the room for the duration of the item.

32 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

33 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

34 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2011 and 26 July 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 **Quarter 1 Finance Report**

The Head of Finance submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital performance for the first 3 months of the financial year 2011/12 and projections for the full 2011/12 period. These are measured by the budget monitoring function and reported via the Performance Management Framework (PMF) informing the 2011/12 budget process currently underway.

The report also presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy during 2011/12 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue & capital position at June 2011 be noted.
- (2) That the Q1 performance against the 2011/12 investment strategy and the financial returns from each of the 3 funds be noted.
- (3) That the contents and the progress against the Corporate Procurement Action Plan and the Procurement savings achieved at June 2011 be noted.

Reasons

This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2011/12 Financial Targets for Revenue, Capital, Treasury and Procurement Monitoring.

Options

Option One To review current performance levels and considers

any actions arising.

Option Two

To approve or reject the recommendations above or request that Officers provide additional information.

36

2012/13 Budget Strategy, Service & Financial Planning Process and 2012/13 Budget Guidelines

The Head of Finance and Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager submitted a report which informed the Executive of the service and financial planning process for 2012/13, sought approval of the 2012/13 budget strategy and agreement of budget guidelines for issue to service managers to enable the production of the 2012/13 budget and updated Members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 onwards.

Resolved

- (1) That the latest forecast for the Council's revenue budget for 2012/13 to 2015/16 be noted.
- (2) That the preliminary results from the public consultation and proposed prioritisation framework be noted.
- (3) That the overall 2012/13 budget strategy and service and financial planning process be endorsed.
- (4) That the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2012/13 budget process be agreed.

Reasons

The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2012/13. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the 5-Year Corporate Plan, Improvement Strategy and in particular the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Council will be asked to agree the 2012/13 budget and corporate plan (and the service plans that underpin delivery) at their meeting in February 2012.

(Councillor Atack left the meeting at the conclusion of this item)

37

Overview and Scrutiny Reports: Commissioning of Advice, Volunteering and Voluntary Car Driving Schemes in Cherwell

The Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which sought consideration of the overview and scrutiny report on Commissioning of Advice, Volunteering and Voluntary Car Driving Schemes in Cherwell.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the reports. He explained that that the Committee had held three sessions to consider

each area in detail and presented their findings which fell under three headings: (i) the project was about commissioning not cost cutting; (ii) the commissioning project would offer improvements; (iii) funds needed to be channelled to relevant services. The Committee has concluded that they supported the Executive decision to move forward with the commissioning project. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman thanked the Strategic Housing Manager and Strategic Housing Officer for their hard work and support to the Committee throughout the review.

The Executive thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work on the review. The Lead Member for Housing commended the review and explained that it was important for the Committee's findings to feed into the project. She subsequently tabled revised recommendations for consideration.

Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Labour Party, addressed the Executive to commend the review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and sought confirmation about the transition in the funding arrangements for the services.

In response to Councillor Sibley's address, the Chairman confirmed that Members were seeking to protect the service, however the funding arrangements would change from grant aid to commissioning which would involve contractual service provision to meet the requirements of the district.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be thanked for the thorough work it had undertaken in considering the commissioning exercise.
- (2) That Executive confirms earlier signals that existing funding agreements will cease from 2012/13.
- (3) That, following resolution (2) above, officers, as a priority, continue their discussions with Oxfordshire County Council regarding the creation of a county wide Dial-a-Ride scheme, taking full account of ongoing customer surveys and protecting the needs of the most vulnerable customers.

Reasons

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed their support for the Executive's decision to proceed with the commissioning project and agreed that it was important that the project progressed according to the set timetable to ensure that no residents were disadvantaged in April 2012 because contracts and suppliers were not in place.

Options

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Option One | To note the conclusions contained in the Overview and Scrutiny report. |
| Option Two | Not to note the conclusions contained in the Overview and Scrutiny report. |

Cherwell Economic Development Strategy

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report which asked the Executive to approve a final version of the Economic Development Strategy 2011 – 2016 for subsequent consideration by the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, addressed Executive regarding elements of the Economic Development Strategy relating to Kidlington.

The Executive noted the importance of the Economic Development Strategy for the district and that the key to maintaining momentum would be through the action plan. Members expressed their thanks to the Economic Development Officer and the Planning Policy team for their hard work.

Resolved

- (1) That the Economic Development Strategy (attached as an annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be approved to go forward to the Board of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for final approval.
- (2) That the Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development be authorised, in conjunction with the Lead Member for Estates, to agree any further non substantive changes to the document following this Committee and either prior to, or following, its consideration by the LSP Board at the end of this month.

Reasons

The Economic Development Strategy is an important document for helping shape the economic development priorities of the Cherwell District. It will help us to consider how best to use our resources, and those of our partner organisations within the LSP, to build upon the strengths within our economy and tackle those issues we know that our local economy is facing now, and to respond to issues that our economy will certainly face in future.

Options

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Option One | To approve the Economic Development Strategy for consideration by the LSP Board |
| Option Two | To approve the Economic Development Strategy with amendments for consideration by the LSP Board |
| Option Three | Not to approve the Economic Development Strategy. |

Car Park Order Notice

The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services submitted a report which advised Members of any objections to the Cherwell District

Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington) Order advertised on 4 August 2011 and to seek authority to make the Order subject to any objections received.

The Deputy Leader advised Executive that fourteen responses had been received via the consultation portal comprising both objections and approvals to each of the proposals. He reported that none of the objections were sufficiently strong to recommend any amendments to the proposals and these would therefore be introduced on, or as soon after, 11 November 2011 as practicable. The Deputy Leader confirmed that all changes would be publicised.

Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Labour Group, sought clarification about the consultation process. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed that the correct legal processes had been followed and the statutory requirements for the consultation met.

Resolved

- (1) That the responses to the Order be noted.
- (2) That formal Order Making on final proposals for implementation on, or as soon after, 11 November 2011 as is practicable be authorised.

Reasons

Subject to any objections received to the Order Notice; the Executive dealing with these objections; and the required implementation works being carried out, the proposals will be implemented on or as soon after 11 November 2011.

Options

Option One Consider and deal with any objections to the Cherwell District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington) Order

40

Kidlington Pedestrianisation and Traffic Regulation Order

The Head of Regeneration and Estates submitted a report which sought approval to make a new Traffic Regulation Order for Kidlington High Street.

Councillor Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, addressed Executive and commended the pedestrianisation scheme noting the positive impact it would have on Kidlington. He also thanked officers and particularly the Urban Centres Development Officer for all their hard work progressing the scheme.

Resolved

- (1) That the making of a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Kidlington High Street be approved.

Reasons

This project is identified as a priority in the Regeneration and Estates Service plan and is a key partnership project undertaken at the request of the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board and Kidlington Parish Council.

Options

Option One Approve the making of the Order for the scheme to move forward.

Option Two Reject the making of the Order. However this will result in the postponement of any further work on the scheme and a failure to meet Service Plan targets.

41

Bicester Civic Building

The Head of Regeneration and Estates submitted a report which sought consideration of the brief and options for the procurement of a new civic building for Bicester, and determination of the preferred method of procuring this building.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council pursue the development of the Franklins Yard car park site with a new civic building, to comprise offices and a public library, together with a proposed hotel, on the basis that the Council finances the development in return for a future revenue income, subject to the terms of the pre-letting agreements being approved by this Committee, and completed, prior to the scheme being committed.
- (2) That any costs or expenses incurred in fees and expenses necessary to progress this proposal being met from the existing capital approval for the Bicester town centre redevelopment scheme.
- (3) That £5m of general capital receipts be earmarked to this project and a further report be submitted seeking the necessary capital approval, when the costs and income achievable are known.

Reasons

The key issue is whether the Council wishes to invest further capital in Bicester town centre in return of a commercial rate of return. If it does so it can maintain full control over the project.

If the Council does not wish to invest in this site, it could look to the market to provide the premises required, and secure a capital contribution towards the cost of the proposed new offices. However, it would be necessary to transfer a significant degree of control over the project to the developer selected.

Options

Option One

The Council to act as developer, and to build the new civic building and a hotel, assuming pre-letting agreements can be secured with OCC and a hotel operator, and Bicester Town Council if relevant. The Council will have to commission a degree of design work before it is possible to secure the binding occupier agreements, but beyond that, it would not be required to proceed unless it was reasonably satisfied that the return would be as expected. It would be possible to finance these professional fees from the existing £10m capital approval relating to the town centre scheme, as the terms agreed with the developer of that scheme indicate that the net expenditure which the Council will incur will not exceed £8.55m.

At this stage the projected return on capital appears to be very attractive, and in line with normal commercial expectations. The process of designing the scheme, obtaining planning consent and letting a building contract is likely to take around 18 months, and consequently it would not be necessary to finalise the brief until spring 2012, if a start in autumn 2013 is desired. Autumn 2013 is the time when the existing car park is scheduled to close following the opening of the new town centre scheme car park.

Option Two

To advertise the development opportunity on the open market, and seek to appoint a development partner who would enter into a development agreement with the Council to provide the civic building, in part consideration for the opportunity to develop the remainder of the site. This would be designed to allow the market to identify the most valuable use for the site, but it is likely to be difficult to secure a revenue return rather than a capital contribution. The developer will take a proportion of the development value as profit. This approach is likely to involve a substantial lead in period before development could start, as it would be necessary to select a development partner and negotiate a development agreement. Significant legal costs are likely to be required. The process is likely to take at least two years, and hence, if the development is to commence in the autumn of 2013, an early start is needed. This presents a problem as OCC are not yet able to commit to acquiring the library, and there is no certainty as to the Town Council's possible requirement.

42 **Award of Contracts for the Design, Supply and Installation of Photovoltaic Panels to Six Commercial Buildings for Cherwell District Council**

The Head of Regeneration and Estates submitted a report which sought approval to award six contracts for the Design, Supply and Installation of Photovoltaic Panels to six commercial buildings for Cherwell District Council.

Resolved

- (1) That contracts for Lots 1, 2 and 6 be awarded to the companies identified in the exempt Appendix 1 (as set out in the exempt annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book).
- (2) That, subject to finalising negotiations with Parkwood Leisure Ltd and in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Head of Finance, contracts for Lots 3, 4 and 5 be awarded to the companies identified in the exempt Appendix 1 (as set out in the exempt annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book).

Reasons

The approval of this Executive report will benefit the Council with a guaranteed income and savings. This is expected to be a combined sum of £102,322 for year one with a carbon reduction of 198t CO₂ per annum for the next 25 years. The Council will continue to benefit from these systems for a 25 year period but the actual savings will depend on fluctuating electricity costs and the manufacturer's efficiency factors applying to the panels as stipulated in the manufacturer's warranty i.e. 90% minimum power output guaranteed for 10 years and 80% minimum power output guaranteed for a further 15 years

This project is identified in Cherwell's Carbon Management Plan (approved by the May 2011 Executive) and will achieve approximately 3.6% of the overall 22% energy reduction target.

The Council will demonstrate leadership in the community on being environmentally conscious through good value for money procurement with an excellent return on investment. Energy generated will also increase the Council's security against future energy cost increases and allow energy budget savings.

43 **Value For Money Review of Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Management**

The Strategic Director for Environment and Community, the Head of Environmental Services and the Improvement Manager submitted a report which sought consideration of the findings of the Value for Money Review of Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Management and the recommendations arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the Value For Money conclusion that the service offers good value for money and has actively driven down its cost base, providing a top performing, high quality service be endorsed.
- (2) That the Service Plan Framework as a guide for the service in future years including areas for future improvements, savings and increased income be adopted.
- (3) That the projected MOT Bay income shortfall in 2011/12 and the plans in place to reduce costs and increase income to address the shortfall in-year be noted.
- (4) That the following recommendations to achieve additional savings and income be agreed:
 - £8k per annum from 2012/13, through improved fleet procurement and reduced spending on parts
 - Potential future revenue savings and income of £12k from a number of sources including working in partnership with other agencies, neighbouring councils and procurement partnerships
 - Additional new capital income source totalling £12k in both 2011/12 and 2012/13, rising to £24k in future years, as a result of improving the re-sale value achieved at auction from Council-owned equipment.

Reasons

Cherwell's Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Management Service offers good value for money to the Council.

The Service Plan Framework sets out a guide to planning the future service, within which the service can undertake its annual service and budget setting activity.

Agreeing to the level of income and savings proposed by this review assists the Council in delivering its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

44 **Performance and Risk Management Framework 2011/12 First Quarter Performance Report**

The Chief Executive and Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager submitted a report which presented the Council's performance for the period 01 April to 30 June 2011 as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

Resolved

- (1) That the following achievements be noted:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Job clubs continue to provide a strong service with solid attendance and special events planned for the next quarter to improve accessibility.
- Business support – good progress has been made with support to local business through the advisory service and the investment partnership. In addition a business breakfast in Banbury was held around the theme of apprenticeships, local business were asked to make pledges to improve local opportunities. This resulted in more than 140 pledges including ten apprenticeships and 28 placements lasting from one to eight weeks. The Council is also continuing its successful business apprenticeship scheme.

A Cleaner Greener Cherwell

- Feasibility work has been commissioned to explore potential sites for more bring bank recycling centres.
- A neighbourhood litter blitz has taken place in Kidlington, helping to work with local communities to improve the environmental quality of their areas.

A Safe, Healthy and Thriving Cherwell

- Good progress towards securing the long term future of the Banbury Museum through work to develop a museum trust.
- The Council continues to provide a strong community leadership role for local health provision. During the first quarter the Council has supported the first meeting of the new Community Partnership Network to ensure effective stakeholder engagement in local health issues. The Horton Hospital paediatric appointments and anaesthetic service models are now complete and in place.

An Accessible, Value for Money Council

- Additional resources will be available over the summer to ensure that processing times for housing and council tax benefit claims do not increase. Briefing sessions for voluntary and other agency advisors supporting those affected by benefits changes have continued and been very successful.
- The Council has continued its programme of public engagement and consultation with work to consult on long term budget priorities undertaken. Successful community engagement events aimed at improving the accessibility and delivery of services have taken place, these include the parish, faith and disability forums as well as a number of consultations undertaken using the Council's web based consultation portal.

- (2) That officers be requested to report in the second quarter on the following items where performance was below target or there are emerging issues.

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Number of households living in temporary accommodation: a rise in the figures has occurred during June with 36 households against a predicted number of 33. Preventative and advisory work continues and the implications of national policy changes are being monitored.
- Deliver 500 new homes: performance against this target is off track with 32 completions against a target of 125. During the year it is expected that the rate will increase but the national economic context is still suppressing performance.

A Safe, Healthy and Thriving District

- Leisure centre usage: visitor figures are down in comparison to the same period as last year. Issues such as extended bank holidays are likely to be a cause; however the issue will be reviewed with the provider to ensure there are no other factors.
- (3) That the responses identified to issues raised in the end of year performance report be agreed.
- (4) That officers be requested to produce a one page summary of the Quarter 1 performance highlights for circulation to all Members.

Reasons

This report presents the Council's performance against its corporate scorecard for the first quarter of 2011/12. It includes an overview of our successes, areas for improvement and emerging issues to be considered.

Options

- Option One**
1. To note the many achievements referred to in paragraph 1.3.
 2. To request that officers report in the first quarter on the items identified in paragraph 1.4 where performance was below target or there are emerging issues.
 3. To agree the responses identified to issues raised in the end of year performance report in paragraph 2.1 or to request additional action or information.
- Option Two**
- To identify any additional issues for further consideration or review.

45 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

46 **Award of Contracts for the Design, Supply and Installation of Photovoltaic Panels to Six Commercial Buildings for Cherwell District Council - Exempt Appendix 1**

The Committee considered the exempt annex to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Estates which detailed the financial appraisal and proposed contract award.

Resolved

(1) That the exempt annex be noted

47 **Woodgreen Leisure Centre - Leisure Management Contract**

The Strategic Director Environment and Community submitted a report which sought consideration of the Woodgreen Leisure Centre leisure management contract.

Resolved

That the resolutions as set out in the exempt minute be approved.

48 **Value For Money Review of Public Protection**

The Strategic Director Environment and Community submitted a report which sought consideration of the findings of the Value for Money Review of Public Protection and the recommendations arising from that report.

Resolved

That the resolutions as set out in the exempt minute be approved.

(Councillor Turner left the meeting for the duration of this item)

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Executive - 5 September 2011

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Economic Development Strategy 2011 - 2016

Revised Draft



**Cherwell local
strategic Partnership**

August 2011

Revised Draft Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell, North Oxfordshire (2011 – 2016)

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Appendix 4	An Environmentally Sustainable Economy

Executive Summary

1. We have a vision for the economy of Cherwell, north Oxfordshire in the year 2016 and we invite you to share it with us.
2. Cherwell is a tremendous location where businesses flourish. Home to over 6,000 companies, local networks and partnerships have created a strong and resilient business community which has in recent recessionary times ensured continuing and successful evolution. We want to ensure that success continues by supporting appropriate economic growth!
3. The superb location of Cherwell mid-way between London and the UK's industrial heartland in the Midlands provides a basis for business efficiency and investment. With excellent road and rail connections, Cherwell's infrastructure is unique in containing the only commercial airport between Birmingham and London. Furthermore, the University of Oxford's research facilities are in Cherwell at Begbroke Science Park, allowing local business innovation and enterprise to be supported by one of the world's great research institutions. We have a unique package for businesses to invest in.
4. This Economic Development Strategy builds upon the success of previous work, adding new insights and understanding that has resulted from discussions with businesses and partners, and innovative research during a time of immense organisational, political and economic change. There is a strong collective will to join together through formal structures, particularly the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and informally to maximise opportunities locally for the benefit of the District's businesses, employees, residents and visitors.
5. The LSP, involving the voluntary sector, business groups, local authorities, the police, NHS, college and others has joined together to create this coherent vision.
6. It begins by identifying the 'Issues' facing Cherwell's economy, the detail of which is contained within a companion document. The context, themes and actions that follow are a result of public consultation and further work by LSP partners.
7. The central theme of this Strategy is the creation of 'economic resilience', whereby we focus upon the power we have locally to combine the resources of the private, social and public sector partners. By joining together, we add value by becoming more effective and efficient, ready to make an even greater difference through enabling the creation of jobs and prosperity this year, the next and in the decades to come.
8. Whilst supporting a 'diverse and resilient economy' is also key to the Sustainable Community Strategy, a further cross-cutting theme of this Strategy is to maximise the value of the unique opportunity arising through the Bicester eco-town project. The development of 'green' infrastructure, skills and technology will allow the town and the wider district to become home for innovative business investment, creating sufficient 'higher value' employment opportunities in line with the expected growth in resident population.
9. The leadership of a 'Low Carbon' economy will involve the development of 'green technologies' and 'green knowledge' around existing and new employers, sectors

and clusters. This Strategy addresses the challenge of climate change by working with industry to support innovation in alternative energy sources and maximises opportunities within engineering and construction to develop practical solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change and secure competitive, green business practice. Furthermore, we aim to explore ways to increase capacity to design and build or upgrade existing infrastructure so that it does not contribute to climate change such as buildings, roads and communication networks. We also seek to protect the environment and bio-diversity as this is a considerable attraction for sustainable investment by businesses and for the visitor economy.

10. At the heart of this strategy is a will to continuously develop our local economy to ensure it remains internationally competitive by recognising and developing our unique set of resources contained within three broad themes:
 - **People** (skills development, work readiness, help to find work)
 - **Business** (entrepreneurship, enabling success, attracting investment)
 - **Place** (provide transport and housing infrastructure, support rural areas and develop key urban sites)
11. Whilst the recession adversely affected investment in sites and property before 2011, we now see renewed interest and, in places, a shortage of readily available land for business development. An employment land review will ensure that sufficient land is available throughout the Local Development Framework period to 2026 for the realisation of this, and subsequent, economic development strategies.
12. By implementing annual action plans to show how we will provide the support and create the conditions for private business growth, we expect to develop renewed resilience to ensure that the economy and people of Cherwell can withstand further 'economic shocks', such as national recession or local business closures.
13. How will we know we have achieved our goals? We will keep in direct contact with our businesses, our communities and our residents to ensure that resources are being used most effectively to develop our economy, and to react flexibly to meeting needs and opportunities as they arise, if not before.
14. You are welcome to join us on our journey to sustainable prosperity for all.

Contact Cherwell's Economic Development Officer on (01295) 221860 or at economic.development@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

1) Introduction

What is the Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell?

- 1.1 This is a shared 'vision' supporting and developing the broad themes outlined in the Community Strategy, setting out the direction we need to take to ensure that the economy and society of the District is prosperous and resilient, for the benefit of all who live and work in north Oxfordshire. To be successful, it must integrate with partners' work and other key strategies, such as housing and transport, to maximise its impact. Ultimately, it should support Cherwell to prepare to resist future economic, environmental and social challenges, and to maximise opportunities. This is particularly timely as the nationally-significant Bicester Eco-Town project begins.

When will it happen?

- 1.2 The Strategy covers the 5 year (medium term) period from 2011 to 2016, as part of the Community Strategy's vision for 2030. It will both inform annual delivery plans and look to a longer horizon to ensure cohesion and synergy with other strategic documents and policy frameworks.

Why is it necessary?

- 1.3 An Economic Development Strategy is necessary to reflect the changed economic conditions, and priorities of the Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership, as identified in broad terms within the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy 2010.
- 1.4 Economic growth has until recently been enjoyed since the early 1990s but the context has changed considerably through a series of crises hitting the world's financial systems, deeply affecting global, national and local economies:
- The housing crisis (i.e. sub-prime mortgage defaults & slowing market);
 - The banking crisis (i.e. collapse of banks, nationalisation & recapitalisation);
 - The 'credit crunch' (i.e. constraints in borrowing for investment);
 - Recession (i.e. reduced output and increased unemployment);
 - Public borrowing (i.e. high public debt, reducing expenditure)
 - Public spending cuts (i.e. further unemployment and increased reliance upon private and social sectors)
- 1.5 Whilst the causes of the crises were beyond the direct control of local partners, the Economic Development Strategy previously developed for Cherwell (2007-11) ensured that resources were adjusted to provide a timely, flexible and effective response to minimise the impact upon people and businesses in Cherwell. Support to residents facing redundancy, for example, was given through operating Job Clubs and an enterprise agency alongside core support for our 6,000 local businesses.
- 1.6 High aspirations for the local economy remain and we now also have a changed national political context, new local Community Strategy and new research to inform our understanding. Significantly, we have a unique opportunity to deliver economic growth through 'Eco Bicester' development, to be focussed upon the North West Bicester site and raising opportunities around 'green technologies' throughout the district and beyond.
- 1.7 Against a volatile background, local economic strategy and effective partnerships will have an important role to play, ensuring that resources are co-ordinated and that priorities can be agreed towards achieving the community's vision.

Where does it cover?

- 1.8 The Strategy deals with economic development as a theme that cuts across all that happens in Cherwell District, north Oxfordshire. Whilst administrative boundaries may be tightly drawn, partnerships and trade across boundaries are supported. A framework is provided for decision-making and local action; specific locations are rarely mentioned, apart from in annual operational plans.
- 1.9 North Oxfordshire is in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, it lies at the geographical heart of England, mid-way between the powerhouses of London and Birmingham, and in an excellent position for business. However, we also lie at the far north-western corner of the administrative South East region, at a junction point between the South East, East and West Midlands and South-West regions. This has in the past led to difficulties in being on the periphery of the large and economically highly active South-East region but, with a review of regions, there is renewed vigour to put Cherwell more effectively 'on the map'.

Who is it for?

- 1.10 It's for everybody with an interest in north Oxfordshire: businesses, investors, residents, visitors and communities. Whilst the Strategy is led by Cherwell District Council, the 'vision' belongs to all members of the Local Strategic Partnership and will be delivered in partnership by agencies, organisations and businesses, involving local Members of Parliament as appropriate.

Upon what evidence is it based?

- 1.11 The Strategy draws upon the following research:
- Cherwell Community Strategy 2010
 - Cherwell Economic Resilience Study 2010
 - Cherwell Employers Skills Study 2010
 - Cherwell Employment Land Review 2010
 - Eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy 2010
 - Oxfordshire Economic Assessment 2010

How will it be made to happen?

- 1.12 Building upon research and partnership discussions since 2009, the strategy will be predominantly delivered through a series of Annual Operational Plans which will focus on how the vision will be realised in the short-term within north Oxfordshire. It seeks to configure resources between partners across the social, private and public sectors in north Oxfordshire, exploiting the value to be added local by innovative and effective linkages, as illustrated below:

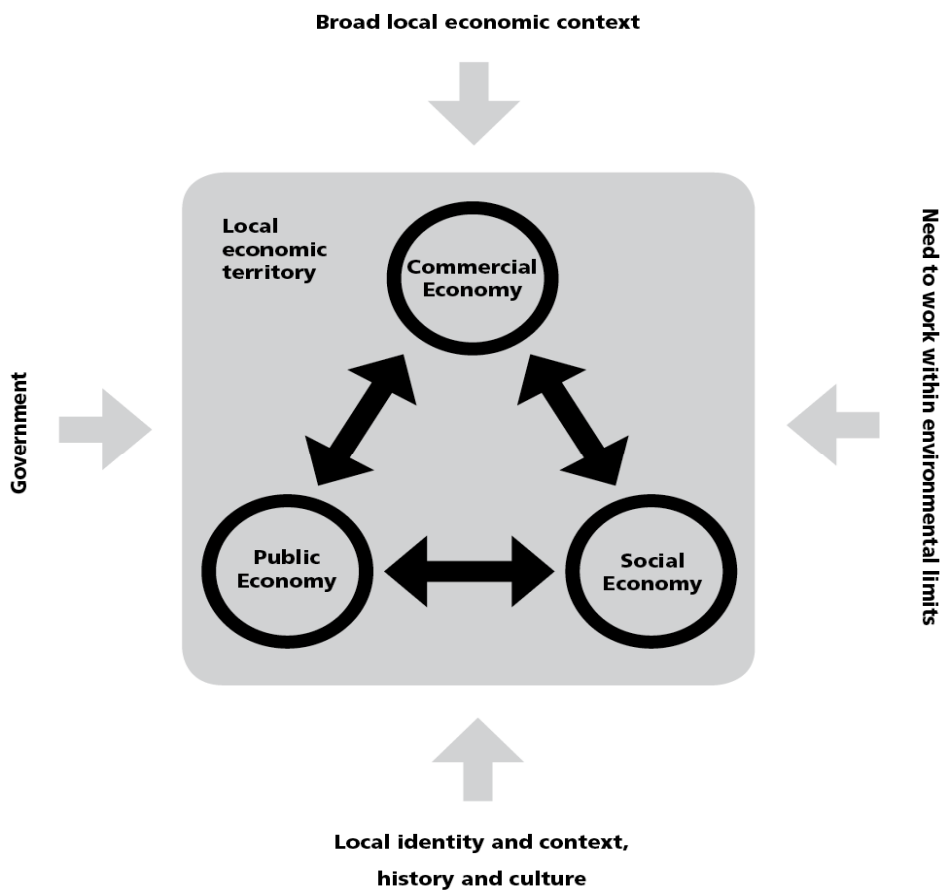


Figure 1: The CLES resilience model

- 1.13 The resilience model stands out because it acknowledges the relative strength of the reciprocal relationships between the public, private and social sectors that help generate resilience within an area. Stronger mutual relationships allow a locality to be more flexible, proactive and agile if faced with an economic/environmental shock or changing context.
- 1.14 Aiming to enhance the resilience of Cherwell's economy, this strategy follows a logical format:
- Firstly, we will outline the economic situation for the District; some of the recent and long-term trends, and key issues to address over the period of the strategy.
 - Then we will set the strategic context within which we are working, and the main aims of the Community Strategy that we are seeking to deliver.
 - Finally, we will present a series of themes covering the economy in the District, giving a more focused view of how we will move forward together over the next five years.

2) Cherwell's Economy – the Key Issues

We face the following issues:

- a) Levels of **employment** remain high but not everybody is benefiting;
- b) We have increasingly relied upon **public sector** jobs which are set to reduce in number;
- c) **The economic climate, access to finance and cash flow** have become critical issues for businesses;
- d) **Wages** paid within Cherwell still lag behind South East regional averages;
- e) There are still residents without the right **skills**;
- f) There remain pockets of **deprivation** within our overall prosperity;
- g) Our **population** is expected to grow significantly;
- h) Employment **land, premises & infrastructure** do not always meet modern business needs;
- i) We have a **diverse** economy but often with 'lower value' activity similar to the south Midlands;
- j) **Manufacturing** is a particular strength but is often lower skilled locally;
- k) The **knowledge** economy is growing but not quickly enough;
- l) Businesses are generally highly **satisfied** with their location in Cherwell yet all too often still face real issues and constraints;
- m) This is an **enterprising** district with potential for innovation;
- n) The **environment** provides both challenges and opportunities in creating a low carbon economy, especially through the 'Eco Bicester' project;
- o) **Globalisation** has also become a significant issue for the economy: both a challenge and opportunity;
- p) The **community** sector will have an increasing role to play.

a) Levels of employment remain high but not everybody is benefiting

- 70,200 residents (over 16 years old) of the district (April 2009 - March 2010) were in work (as employees or self employed), with Cherwell's employment rate remaining consistently above 80% in recent decades.
- Individuals and communities, however, have been affected by the national recession with youth inactivity & unemployment becoming a serious concern since 2009.
- Some residents, such as Disability Allowance claimants and long term unemployed, face challenges in finding work.

b) We have increasingly relied upon public sector jobs which are set to reduce in number

- The strong labour market performance has been helped by large growth in public sector employment, increasing by 39.1% during 1998-2008, particularly in education.

- Although Cherwell has a strong level of private sector employment, this has actually decreased by 2.4% during 1998-2008 and the public sector has taken the slack in terms of local employment.
- The likelihood of public spending cuts continuing for the foreseeable future presents a significant challenge to the private and social sectors to provide alternative sources of employment, and to the public sector to lead and support this transition.

c) The economic climate, access to finance and cash flow have become critical issues for businesses

- Nine out of ten Cherwell businesses (90%) report in 2010 that they face constraints on their business of some kind, a higher proportion than found in 2008 (83%).
- The most commonly cited constraint is the economic climate (73%), followed by access to finance or cash flow and lack of market opportunities (both 28%).
- Access to finance is often constrained by SMEs not knowing how to ask for funding, rather than simply its availability.

d) Wages paid within Cherwell still lag behind South East regional averages

- Within Cherwell, workplace earnings, whilst higher than the national average, are lower than the Oxfordshire and South East averages.
- The relative change in earnings, however, has increased markedly between 2002 and 2009, suggesting an increase of knowledge intensive activities.
- The resident-based earnings are notably high compared to workplace-based earnings, suggesting high levels of out commuting to increasingly higher paid, higher value jobs.
- The challenge, therefore, is to attract higher value employers into north Oxfordshire to provide residents with opportunities to work locally in activities that create further wealth and employment, therefore reducing the need to commute outwards.

e) There are still residents without the right skills

- A lack of 'basic' numeracy, literacy and work-readiness skills act a major impediment to finding work especially in the 'knowledge economy' age, and are a barrier to other skills which are becoming essential in the workplace, especially with a decline in e.g. traditional manufacturing and construction jobs.
- Difficulties in recruiting and developing the right skills and attitudes could restrict the competitiveness of our businesses.
- With opportunities arising for enterprise through eco-Bicester, the issue is how to develop skills quickly enough to capture the opportunity to build a cluster of knowledge and employment.

f) There remain pockets of deprivation within our overall prosperity

- Cyclical nature of problems facing households with a concentration in Banbury but also households affected elsewhere in the District.

- Numbers of school leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) at an all time high.

g) Our population is expected to grow significantly

- Cherwell's population increased by almost 12% between 1991 and 2001, and by a further 4.5% since then. Growth predictions of a further 8% by 2016 and a cumulative 15.6% by 2026 are significantly higher than regional and national rates.
- Most of the recent growth has been in Banbury and Bicester and this will continue, with Bicester's population projected to grow by 13.8% between 2001 and 2016; however the rapid growth across the District will put pressure on the local infrastructure. Kidlington's population is expected to reduce due to declining size of households and green belt restraints on growth.
- The number of residents of pensionable age in particular is set to grow, presenting challenges and opportunities for service provision and employment.

h) Employment land, premises & infrastructure do not always meet modern business needs

- There has been investment interest for advanced manufacturing and distribution but demand for office sites and premises is low with few new speculative developments beginning.
- Pressure remains to use industrial and office land for uses such as housing, retail and leisure, and to demolish vacant buildings; further reducing supply.
- The growing 'internet economy' relies less on land and property but more on ever-advancing telecommunications infrastructure.
- The LDF seeks to identify appropriate locations and amounts of new land.
- Utilities such as power, water/sewage and broadband are key issues in certain locations that could restrict economic growth.
- Rail services are being significantly improved but local concerns exist over Government's proposal for High Speed 2 (HS2) service.

i) We have a diverse economy but often with 'lower value' activity similar to the south Midlands

- The business base within Cherwell generally consists of lower value activity, as highlighted in the reliance upon wholesale/retail and a low proportion of residents in management and professional occupations.
- There is evidence of differences between Cherwell's economy and that of Oxfordshire, and between the north and south of the District.

j) Manufacturing is a particular strength but is often lower skilled locally

- Traditional manufacturers can become uncompetitive in the global economy but modern manufacturing is a key wealth creating activity, especially when incorporating knowledge gained through research & development.

- 'Value added' manufacturers investing in skills, technology and local networks perform well but are under-represented in Cherwell compared with other parts of Oxfordshire.

k) The knowledge economy is growing but not quickly enough

- Compared with other parts of Oxfordshire, employment in "high skilled industries" is less common in Cherwell and high skilled clusters are less strong. The proportion of employment in such industries is similar to that in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.
- Higher Level Skills are important, and the challenge is address these skill needs which are likely to be more *dispersed*, among smaller high technology or knowledge intensive employers, or in *niche* activities within firms where lower level skills are more common.
- Competition for staff, including competition from other areas and attracting potential employees to Cherwell as a place to work, appears to represent a key issue for some businesses.

l) Businesses are generally highly satisfied with their location in Cherwell yet all too often still face real issues and constraints

- Investors tend initially to consider more congested and expensive parts of the county before realising the competitiveness of Cherwell implying that the benefits of Cherwell to businesses need to be better communicated and understood.
- A small minority of businesses report locally a high cost of living and business premises, poor transport and challenges from competition locally, meaning that infrastructure improvements and business support need to be made available.

m) This is an enterprising district with potential for innovation

- There were 5,800 VAT registered businesses in Cherwell at the end of 2007, with a high proportion of registrations and low level of de-registrations compared to national and regional levels.
- The challenge is to ensure that advisory and financial support remains during a period of cuts to publicly-funded business support services, to help residents to start and grow competitive and innovative businesses.

n) The environment provides both challenges and opportunities in creating a low-carbon economy, especially through the 'Eco Bicester' project

- Transforming to a competitive low carbon economy is an overarching objective of this economic development strategy.
- Transportation and telecommunication systems have a significant impact on economic development, and are set to be of increasing importance as costs of energy increase and waste is minimised.
- Cherwell has a unique opportunity as the location of the nationally-significant North West Bicester (Eco-town) site.

o) Globalisation has also become a significant issue for the economy: both a challenge and opportunity;

- Our successful businesses look both within and beyond north Oxfordshire to sell their products and services, as do their competitors.
- Competition is increasingly global for many businesses and set to grow further through the movement of products, services, capital, people and knowledge.
- If we are to prosper and achieve sustainable economic recovery with reduced national debt, the trade imbalance needs to be particularly addressed at national level, with corresponding action at local levels, including at the level of organisations, businesses and the individual person as consumer, employee or entrepreneur.

p) The community sector will have an increasing role to play

- The community/social sector is already important to north Oxfordshire.
- Government direction for a 'Big Society' will place more responsibility on community groups and individuals, requiring value to be added by the reducing public sector and support hoped for from a growing private sector.

3) Local Context

3.1 Across the UK economy, we are aware of several factors that are almost certainly going to grow in importance in the coming years;

- **Increasing global trade**, including the movement of products, services, people and knowledge;
- **The effective minimum level of qualifications for employment is steadily increasing;**
- **Jobs in services to individuals**, from hairdressing to personal shopping, are expected to increase as time becomes an increasingly rare commodity for many people;
- **The draw of the south east** for people relocating, both from other parts of the UK and further afield, will remain as long as the area retains its general prosperity.
- **Rising energy costs** and potential for volatility in access to fossil fuels.

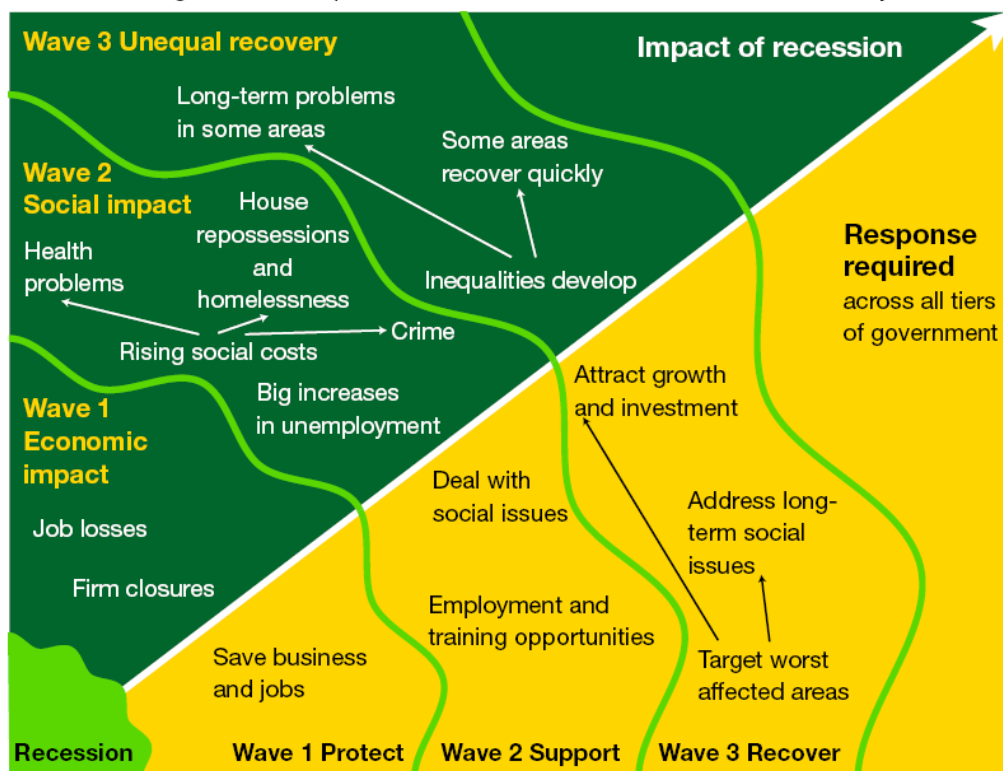
3.2 Recent experience, however, reminds us that economic development does not occur at a steady rate and is subject to many global influences; foreseeable and unforeseeable, controllable and uncontrollable. Our experience during the recession proved that Cherwell was a 'resilient' place, particularly in:

- Economic partnership across the private, public and social sectors
- Business culture, and
- Its ability to cope with recession

3.3 By previous actions and by rapidly adjusting its economic development strategy, Cherwell took swift action to develop effective partnerships and services to meet head-on the waves of recessionary impact, as explained below:

Figure 1: Responses to the three waves of a recession

Economic effects generate social problems, and some areas are left behind in a recovery

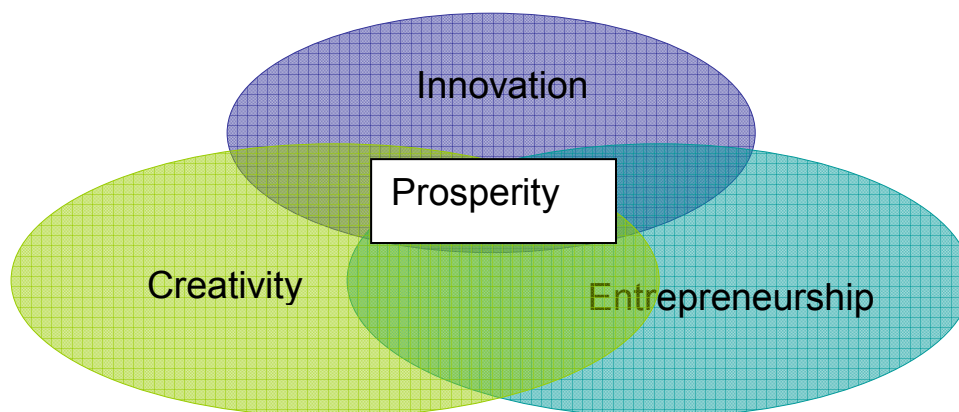


Source: Audit Commission

- 3.4 Nevertheless, the recession has had an impact on Cherwell businesses and the economic climate remains a constraint for 73% of employers. However, expectations around turnover and staff growth in the next year are quite positive (70% expect turnover to increase, 24% expect increased staff numbers) and there are signs that employers in Cherwell are taking pro-active steps to try to grow their business or recover from the downturn, for example by looking to new markets or undertaking innovative activities.
- 3.5 The incidence of businesses with the aim to "grow by increasing sales" has increased strongly in Cherwell (82% in 2010 compared with 73% in 2008). This proportion is greater than that found across Oxfordshire as a whole (78%) and has increased at a faster rate. The importance of this aim in the District suggests that businesses may have an interest in training or support to help them achieve their goal.
- 3.6 The study also suggests a need to support *employees* to ensure they have the skills required to help their employer maximise their competitiveness in the current climate. As is the case across the County and in the neighbouring areas of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, the incidence of skills gaps reported by employers has increased since 2008 (20% compared with 14%), with particular issues highlighted around motivation of established staff members, their ability to keep up with change and to be *flexible* in terms of the skills they have and how they apply them. (Employers Skills Survey 2010 – Cherwell)
- 3.7 The response has therefore been achieved by effective mobilisation and co-ordination of social, public and private resources. The challenge for Cherwell must now, therefore, be to maximise competitiveness and to ensure that effective action can be taken to repel the impact of further waves of recession through **sustainable economic growth**, defined as:

“Growth that can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances environmental and social welfare and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles”.
(Communities & Local Government, 2009b, p3).

- 3.8 Prosperity within a resilient Cherwell will be built through:



- 3.9 Against a background of these factors, we have unique local circumstances; our geographical location in the country, our history, culture and heritage, the presence of transport links and other infrastructure. In this section we explore a possible future for the District, its three main urban centres, and its rural population.

Cherwell

- 3.10 Following the completion of the M40 in 1990, Cherwell has grown in population, and seen its economy transform, bringing low unemployment and high economic activity and resilience through the recession. However, we are still a relatively low-wage economy. Simply increasing wages isn't going to help – companies need to be successful and productive to be able to afford to pay, and this situation must be sustainable in the face of competition.

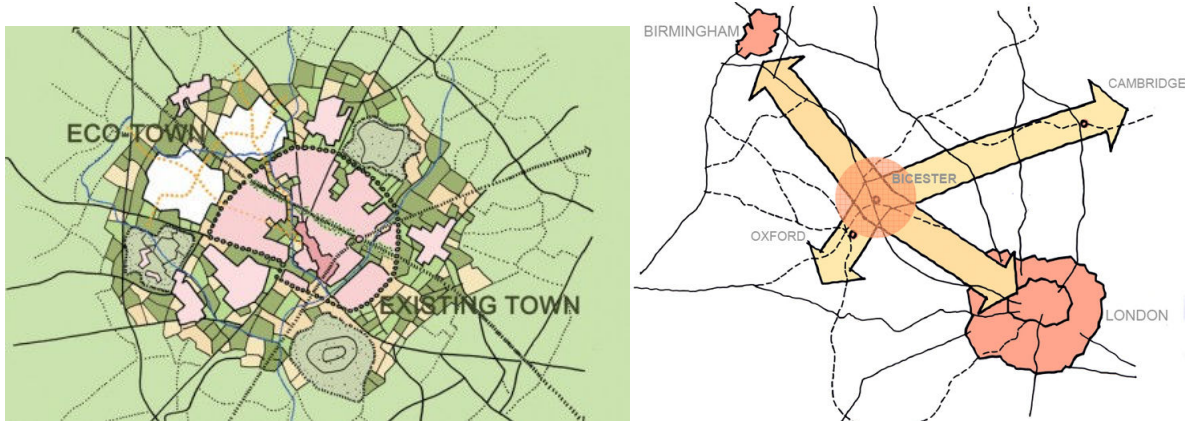
- 3.11 The future economy of Cherwell needs to retain what is good now and address its weaknesses. Population growth has been, and is likely to continue to be, driven by migration into the area. The presence of a strong economy is a cause, an effect, and a necessary requirement of such population growth. A key issue in the future will remain a careful balancing of population growth, economy and infrastructure. Cherwell is a good place to live and work, and our top priority must be to maintain that.
- 3.12 Cherwells' economy will by necessity be even more outward-looking than it is now. We will seek to add to our strong indigenous industry with selected inward investments, focussing on those companies which either bring diversity to our economy, or add to established strengths. We will also see an increase in companies trading on an international, global basis, in both goods and services.
- 3.13 We will need to provide new sites for development to ensure a paced economic growth, close to where people live and making use of investments in rail and road infrastructure. It will also be necessary to redevelop existing sites in the district to ensure that sites remain relevant to modern business needs and to address the changing nature of our built and natural environment.
- 3.14 We see Cherwell further strengthening its technical capacity, using high-profile areas such as motor-sports as a 'shop front', but fulfilling a leading role in a variety of high-technology, specialised engineering sectors. We also expect Bio-technology, materials engineering and nanotechnology (engineering of functional systems at the molecular scale) to become an increasingly significant wealth generator, especially in the southern part of the District.

Banbury

- 3.15 Banbury has undergone considerable growth over the past 20 years, and there is every reason to expect that to continue. The closure in 2008 of the aluminium works after 80 years was a major shock and Banbury's manufacturing and service sectors will continue to face competition from lower cost competitors overseas. However, with a diverse service sector and a large proportion of manufacturing in higher-value and specialised areas which are more dependent upon skilled input, we can be confident that the town will remain an important employment centre.
- 3.16 Banbury has a strong industrial heritage, and we see this evolving into a robust 21st century engineering economy, well located in relation to customers and suppliers. Driven by flagship sectors such as motor-sports and advanced materials, this will give Banbury a firm footing from which it can compete in a global marketplace. A cluster of other employment activity, such as food production, will ensure that a diverse range of jobs and employers maintain a 'resilient' economy.
- 3.17 The town itself will also continue to be a sub-regional shopping centre, anchored by Castle Quay, attracting shoppers from a broad catchment of towns and villages. A continuing programme of environmental improvements, investment, events and activities will enable its town centre 'product' to remain competitive and attractive in a dynamic retail / tourism market. Independent shops and cultural assets such as The Cross, Fine Lady on a White Horse and St Mary's Church amongst many other historic buildings add unique interest to the town.
- 3.18 As an historic market town and employment centre, Banbury serves as a hub for its surrounding rural hinterland, and its catchment area stretches beyond the County boundary into a sphere of influence often known as 'Banburyshire'. The provision of services such as business support, schooling, public transport and health services often crosses boundaries into other local authority and organisational areas, creating a need to ensure seamless services.

Bicester

- 3.19 The development of an 'eco town' at north west Bicester, expected to create 5,000 homes and at least 5,000 jobs, provides an enormous and unique opportunity for the town to create itself as an internationally renowned location. The master planning of the site will take account of the land required to deliver the employment whilst work with partners will seek to successfully promote the site to established and new businesses. There is great scope for the north west Bicester development to act as a catalyst for inward investment and repositioning of the local economy, through the development of skills and expertise leading to innovative 'eco-regeneration' elsewhere in the town and beyond.



- 3.20 Bicester's history has been dominated by its location at a nexus of major transport routes and the presence of the Defence activities. Bicester Garrison army base has around 700 working military personnel and aspires to create an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) centre of excellence.
- 3.21 As the MOD has gradually reduced its presence, sites and premises such as those at Graven Hill have become available to let out to local industry in the short term, with a local desire for more to become permanently available for businesses, making use of the railhead and strategic location. Land and buildings at RAF Bicester also have great potential, to provide leisure and visitor heritage facilities.
- 3.22 Meanwhile, other private industry has had to provide alternative employment. Bicester's industrial estates have nurtured manufacturing employment since the 1960s and, whilst not entirely suited to modern employment requirements, have started to see some investment which should be continued.
- 3.23 The ease of access from Bicester to Oxford, Aylesbury and London has made it a popular residential area, but created significant issues of transport pressures and a 'brain drain'. The town will have even better rail connections through planned investment in:
- East West Rail (Oxford to Cambridge via Bicester)
 - Project Evergreen 3 (Oxford to London Marylebone via Bicester)
 - Faster journey times between London and Birmingham (via Bicester)
- 3.24 The challenge is for Bicester to become a more attractive work location for many of its more-qualified and higher-earning residents. With new opportunities arising from its major growth plans, Bicester is expected to become a significant location in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and so see an increase in science and technology based businesses, exploiting innovations and spin-outs from academic research.
- 3.25 Bicester will be able to take advantage of both materials engineering and bio-technology in its economic future, thanks to its location and the strength of those sectors already nearby. In addition, as these become more established the breadth of the towns' knowledge economy will increase to encompass other areas of innovation and creativity. Examples are in the motorsport engineering strengths of Oxford & Cherwell Valley College in Bicester and connections to local industry. Great potential exists for local Universities to lead in , for

example, the transfer of green technology (Oxford Brookes University) and materials engineering (University of Oxford's Begbroke Science Park) in Bicester and across the whole district.

- 3.26 Following work by Thames Water to complete the ring main, the owners and tenants of property in the older industrial areas must ensure, with the utility companies, that basic service infrastructure is of a high enough standard to satisfy future needs.
- 3.27 The presence of the Bicester Village retail development has placed the town on the international map and given the town a stronger retail offering than would be expected in a centre of this size; our primary concern will continue to be to ensure that the town centre is vital and viable, and able to co-exist with Bicester Village in a mutually productive way. Drawing visitors from a very wide area, we expect that Bicester will show an increase in specialist high-value retailers appealing to discerning but affluent customers alongside its good range of local services in a revitalised town centre.

Kidlington

- 3.28 The economy in Kidlington is dominated by the proximity of Oxford, and inevitably its future is intimately linked with the future of the city. However, whilst it is a popular location to live for people working in Oxford, it has in recent years developed a considerable commercial property stock and now contains two key assets that provide a foundation for not only Kidlington's economy, but that of the district and wider region:
- 3.29 Over the last decade, the University of Oxford has developed **Begbroke Science Park** into a successful centre for scientific research, much of it linked to the Departments of Engineering and Materials Science. In addition to meeting the space requirements of the University, the Science Park has provided facilities and support to those wishing to develop commercially the results of pure research initiatives through its purpose-built Centre for Innovation & Enterprise. Further expansion plans at Begbroke will ensure that Kidlington has an increasingly important role to play in developing the 'knowledge economy'.
- 3.30 **Kidlington's airport** is named 'London Oxford Airport' as a reflection of its growing importance. Recent investment in a passenger terminal / business hub signifies an increasing role in relation to supporting local businesses that require efficient global transportation services, and is therefore also an important asset in attracting inward investment. Airport-related services have the potential to develop into a key cluster.
- 3.31 Kidlington has therefore become a quality business location in Oxford's green belt, having access to the City but free from major flood risks and traffic congestion with competitively priced commercial and residential accommodation. These qualities, coupled with an active business network 'Kidlington Voice', provide a competitive offer to businesses. This will ensure that Kidlington develops a stronger identity and integrates its facilities better.
- 3.32 Kidlington will need to work hard to retain those aspects of village life that it most treasures; providing an attractive centre around which a sustainable community can thrive. It will also benefit from developing stronger links between its resident, shopper, and daytime employee populations. Its relationship with the surrounding environment, particularly the Green Belt, will shape its future development.

Rural

- 3.33 The countryside has undergone massive changes in recent years and this is likely to continue. Whilst the countryside may be perceived by some as being less an area of agricultural production and more as a managed environment, agriculture remains to be of considerable importance to the economy and society of local communities. Quality of life factors have made rural villages attractive, and consequently expensive, places to live with knock on effects for young people seeking to set up home in their native territory.

- 3.34 We expect that villages will remain popular places to live and will encourage the provision of local services by commercially viable businesses and through social enterprises. The changing rural economy will continue to benefit from the growing public interest in the food and drink we consume and in rural attractions to visit, enabling rural enterprises to offer higher-value products such as organic produce and visitor services.
- 3.35 Farm diversification and conversion of existing buildings will provide opportunities for employment, skills and services to be retained in rural communities. Creative and knowledge based industries will continue to be attracted to rural locations, as will some activities where yards and commercial buildings are re-used. Our rural areas are well located to afford engagement in the national economy while enjoying social and environmental advantages.
- 3.36 Some rural communities do, however, suffer a technological disadvantage when it comes to broadband connectivity. Given increasing reliance upon Information Communication Technology within the 'knowledge economy', it is of fundamental importance to address this issue. Rural areas also bear the brunt of high fuels costs given that many of our villages are off the mains gas grid.

4) Strategic Context

- 4.1 The purpose of any strategy is to provide a focussed approach to achieving its' key goals. Therefore, our strategy must first and foremost concentrate on delivering for Cherwell. However, it is important to remember that many initiatives and actions that enable us to deliver on our aims are dependent on our partners, and many issues that affect us reach more broadly than our District border.

Community Strategy

- 4.2 The new Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 'Our District; Our Future' identifies the central importance of a 'resilient' economy and provides a strategic context for the revision of the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy for 2010 – 2016.

- 4.3 The SCS identifies seven challenges:

- Managing growth;
- Managing resources and creating prosperity;
- Adapting to an ageing population;
- Empowering the next generation;
- Reducing inequality and addressing deprivation;
- Safe, strong and vibrant communities;
- Adapting to climate change.

Local Strategic Context

- 4.4 There is also a need for the Economic Development Strategy to integrate with the other medium-term strategies, and for all of those strategies to contain elements of local economic development at their core:

- Rural Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Environmental Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Public Health Strategy

Government's Economic Strategy

- 4.5 Since the election of the Coalition Government in 2010, the strategic context for economic development has – along with other strategy – changed significantly. In its White Paper, *Local growth: realizing every place's potential*. (October 2010), Government states its intention to:

- shift power to local communities and business, enabling places to tailor their approach to local circumstances;
- promote efficient and dynamic markets, in particular in the supply of land, and
- provide real and significant incentives for places that go for growth; and
- support investment in places and people to tackle the barriers to growth.

“The Government's economic ambition is to create a fairer and more balanced economy – one that is not so dependent on a narrow range of economic sectors, is driven by private sector growth and has new business opportunities that are more evenly balanced across the country and between industries. The Government is therefore determined that all parts of the country benefit from sustainable economic growth”. (HM Government, 2010, pg 5).

- 4.6 With the enhanced role of localities to drive their own economy, achievement of the Government's aims rely heavily upon the development and implementation of local economic development strategies such as this partnership strategy for Cherwell.

Open Public Services

- 4.7 Government has also launched, through its *Open Public Services White Paper*, a programme of modernising public services based on its key principles of increasing choice, decentralising services, opening services to a range of providers, ensuring fair access and accountability to users and taxpayers. Again Government recognises that it does not have all the answers and wishes to provide people and communities the opportunities to shape services that best meet their own needs (HM Government, 2011). See: [open-public-services-white-paper.pdf](#)
- 4.8 Cherwell District Council is renowned for shaping its own services in support of the local economy, working effectively with partnerships and neighbouring councils, and is recognised as an 'Excellent' council by the Audit Commission. This foundation has become all the more important as resources to support the economy are limited and services to our business from Government are reducing.
- 4.9 Business Link services are, for example, being cut from autumn 2011 whereby its regional service providing face-to-face support and training is being replaced by a centralised call-centre and website. The leadership, therefore, by Cherwell partners in maintaining the Oxfordshire Business Enterprises since 2007 has provided a model in combining public, voluntary and private sector strengths to provide continuity of much needed support, and retention of the value of earlier investment in services to assist our residents to start and to develop their own business.
- 4.10 Similar experience and success has been gained in skills and labour market support through the local development of Job Clubs in Banbury and Bicester since 2009. In 2011, the success of Cherwell's leadership was recognised by the opening of a National Work Club Network.
- 4.11 The challenge is to now, whilst national and regional structures are being reduced, to build upon this local leadership and continuity of partnership for the benefit of our people and businesses.

Emerging Labour Market Strategy

- 4.12 Government has identified four themes to get more people working:
- 1) **ensuring that society rewards work**; removing the barriers to job creation and improving the incentives for individuals through welfare and employment law reform; reducing taxation for the lowest paid; a temporary reduction in employer National Insurance Contributions for qualifying new businesses in selected countries and regions;
 - 2) **a new Work Programme**; giving greater flexibility and incentives to private and voluntary sector organisations to work with partners to help people back to work;
 - 3) **connecting people to jobs**; reforming social housing and maintaining investment in local transport; and
 - 4) **reform of the Further Education and skills system**; through a new skills strategy setting out how vocational training will be delivered and driven by the choices of learners and employers

Emerging Skills Strategy

- 4.13 The Government will shortly be setting out its skills strategy and response to its recent skills consultation. Within this, a refocused network of business-led Sector Skills Councils and National Skills Academies will work with employers to ensure skills provision is tailored to employers' needs and that learners have timely and relevant information to inform their career choices.

Emerging Green Economy Strategies

4.14 The Government's approach to policies for growing the green economy will, according to the White Paper *Local growth: realizing every place's potential* (October 2010), be based on the following elements:

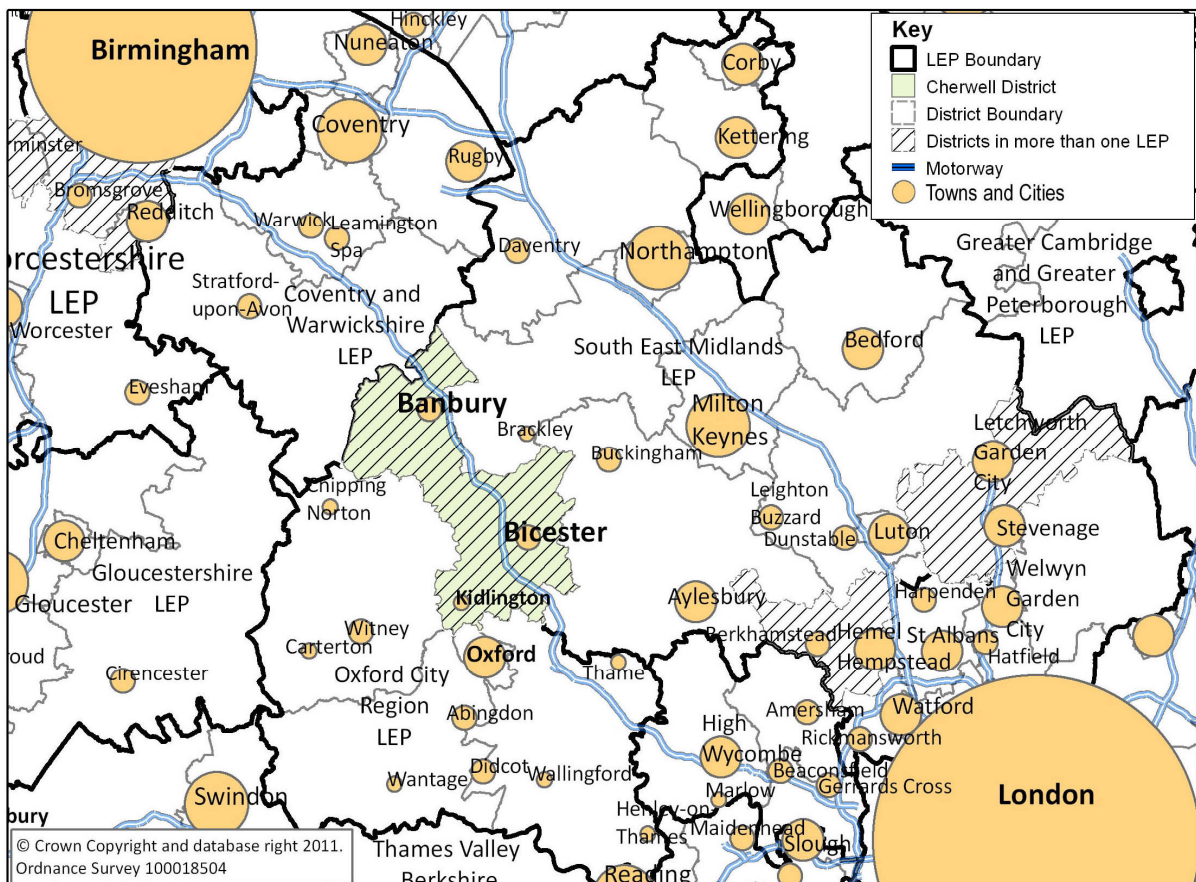
- **low carbon, green innovation** in new technologies that require further investment in research, development and demonstration (R, D&D) before they are ready for market.
- **green infrastructure** to enable sustainable growth and potentially crossing LEP boundaries with national involvement where necessary.
- **stimulation of UK-based supply chains** and emerging business opportunities; and
- **Low Carbon Cluster** development to reinforce local competitive advantage.

4.15 Natural England (2009) identifies that “a healthy natural environment is indispensable to current and future economic prosperity.”

Local Enterprise Partnerships

4.16 By abolishing Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) by 2012 and agreeing to the establishment of the first phase of 24 local enterprise partnerships from April 2011, the Government seeks to encourage a more responsive approach to the needs of local business, and people by:

- supporting local authorities' existing role in fostering and sustaining growth;
- putting local business leadership at the helm of bodies that represent real economic geographies;
- managing the wind down and closure of the RDAs to maximise value and take the opportunity to look again at key European funding for economic development.



Above: Cherwell's location connecting Oxfordshire LEP with South East Midlands LEP

- 4.17 Cherwell has, in the White Paper *Local growth: realizing every place's potential* (October 2010) been included within both the South East Midlands LEP and the Oxford City Region LEP. At the heart of these two powerhouses of the modern UK economy, north Oxfordshire's economy could gain new opportunities and resources, and be less impeded by its previously peripheral location within the South East region.
- 4.18 The Local Authority Partners in SEMLEP are Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale, Cherwell, Northampton, Corby, Daventry, Kettering and South Northamptonshire. In the Oxford City Region LEP, the County Council and five Districts are involved, including Cherwell.
- 4.19 The Business Organisation Partners of both LEPs are the Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Directors for their respective areas.
- 4.20 The production of economic development strategies for both LEPs is underway, including the incorporation of the issues and themes identified in this strategy for Cherwell.
- 4.21 Both LEPs identify high value clusters including Advanced Technology/Precision Engineering; Creative Industries; Life Sciences/Biotech; and Finance/Businesses Services, coupled with the strengths of nearby education establishments including the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, Cranfield University, University Of Bedfordshire, and University Centre Milton Keynes and University of Northampton.
- 4.22 The Local Enterprise Partnerships have identified the following priorities to build their strategies around to create economic growth:

South East Midlands LEP	Oxfordshire LEP
Generating/Supporting Start up Businesses .	Providing the local link to business support .
Expansion of High Growth Businesses .	Improving the skills of Oxfordshire's workforce and those about to enter it, to improve their employability.
Attracting New Businesses into the area (including Foreign Direct Investment).	Maximising Oxfordshire's potential to increase inward investment .
Engaging with Central Government on urgent issues associated with Transport and Infrastructure which affect short term job growth in the area.	Enabling infrastructure for growth and reducing barriers, including getting the County connected to fast broadband access and improve mobile phone coverage.

- 4.23 The emerging strategies will include a diverse range of roles and responsibilities for LEPs, including:
- **working with Government to set out key investment priorities**, including transport infrastructure and supporting or coordinating project delivery;
 - **coordinating proposals** or bidding directly for the Regional Growth Fund and Enterprise Zones;
 - **supporting high growth businesses**, for example through involvement in bringing together and supporting consortia to run new growth hubs;
 - **making representation** on the development of national planning policy and ensuring business is involved in the development and consideration of strategic planning applications;
 - **lead changes** in how businesses are regulated locally;
 - **strategic housing delivery**, including pooling and aligning funding streams to support this;

- **help local workless people into jobs** by working with local employers, Jobcentre Plus and learning providers;
- **leveraging funding from the private sector** by coordinating approaches;
- **renewable energy projects and Green Deal**; exploring opportunities for developing financial and non-financial incentives on; and
- **becoming involved in delivery of other national priorities** such as digital infrastructure.

Oxfordshire 2030 strategy

4.24 The Oxfordshire Partnership has an ambition to:

- a) Create a world class economy for Oxfordshire.
- b) Have healthy and thriving communities.
- c) Look after our environment and respond to the threat of climate change.
- d) Break the cycle of deprivation by addressing regeneration, education and aspiration.

Economic Development Strategy for Oxfordshire 2006-2016

4.25 Oxfordshire's Vision is now being implemented through the Oxfordshire LEP and remains:

"To raise Oxfordshire's profile as a pioneering, productive, world-class economy that fulfills the potential of its inhabitants through continually developing its capacity for innovation, business and personal development, research and education, and through the effective management of its high quality environmental resource".

Other Oxfordshire Strategies

4.26 The following are relevant to the development of Cherwell's economy:

- **Ox-Online – The Digital Strategy for Oxfordshire** to enhance broadband and mobile communications.
- **Oxfordshire Children's and Young People Strategy** to support Cherwell's children and young people to become the successful employees and business leaders of the future.
- **Area Transport Strategies** to reduce congestion, enhance public transport and provide sustainable options.
- **Better Mental Health in Oxfordshire**, jointly between OCC and NHS including the promotion of healthy workplaces.

Eco-Bicester Economic Strategy

4.27 The Eco-Bicester national exemplar provides Cherwell with a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of the emerging green economies.

4.28 A detailed strategy is being developed for the Eco town at Bicester, meeting the requirement of Planning Policy Statement 1 policy ET10 - Employment:

"It is important to ensure that eco-towns are genuine mixed-use communities and that unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum. An economic strategy should be produced to accompany planning applications for eco-towns that demonstrate how access to work will be achieved. The strategy should also set out facilities to support job creation in the town and as a minimum there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport". (The Department for Communities & Local Government, 2009a, p8).

4.29 The Economic Strategy for the exemplar site at North West Bicester identifies the following jobs as part of the initial phase:

- 1) Construction jobs

- Jobs related to construction of the Eco-development
- 2) Endogenous jobs (from within)
 - 'service' jobs related to the increase in population (e.g. care home)
 - Population thresholds: a tipping point?
- 3) Exogenous jobs (from outside)
 - Bicester as a hub for 'eco'-activity
 - Other high value-added employment
 - Using the re-branding of Bicester as a key attraction for investment
- 4) Changing patterns of living and working (e.g. homeworking)

4.30 It has three key components:

- **Formulation** – covering the initial stages of the eco-town's development
- **Evolution** – demonstrating how the economy will evolve, particularly in response to new a changing context, and in particular how it may lead to more efficient resource use and low-carbon production
- **Implementation** – guidance on how relevant key actions will be taken forward

Procurement Strategy

4.31 Cherwell District Council is identifying how it can use its resources most effectively: it spends around £9 million a year on a diverse range of goods, works and services with external suppliers. It aims to commit to ensuring the goods and services it purchases are manufactured, delivered, used and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and deliver long-term value for money for the Council and the public sector as a whole. There remains a challenge to engage local suppliers to play a greater role, and for partners organisations to follow suit to maximise their positive impact upon the local economy.

Cherwell District Council's expenditure

- Spend with third party suppliers in 09/10 was £9,373,790.
- 66% of total spend was with SMEs - this is 19% more than the English Council average of 47%.
- 19% of SME spend was within the district.
- 23% of total spend was within the district - this is 9% more than the English Council average of 14%.

4.32 By working with all members of the Local Strategic Partnership, the cumulative benefits resulting from enhance co-operation on procurement could reduce costs to the public sector and increase local multiplier benefits to local private and social sector providers of goods and services.

Spatial Strategy

4.33 Delivery of economic development frequently has a crucial spatial dimension contained within national Planning Policy Statements and the Local Development Framework.

1) Planning for Economic Development

4.34 In planning for sustainable economic growth, Planning Policy Statement 4 states that Cherwell District Council, as local planning authority, should:

- **Set out a clear economic vision and strategy** which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- **Support existing business sectors**, and identifies new and emerging **sectors** whilst retaining flexibility to respond to changing circumstances;

- **Positively plans for clusters of knowledge-driven or high technology** industries, co-ordinated with the regional level;
- **Make the most efficient and effective use of land;**
- **Identify, protect and promote key distribution networks**, and locates or co-locate developments which generate substantial transport movements;
- **Plan for the delivery** of sustainable transport and phasing of development;
- Disaggregate **minimum job targets** from regional to local level;
- **Safeguard land from other uses**, identify a range of sites, facilitate a broad range of economic development and not carry forward sites that are unlikely to be developed during the plan period;
- **Encourage new uses** for vacant or derelict buildings;
- Consider how **sites for different business types** can be delivered;
- **Facilitate new working practices** such as live-work.

2) Local Development Framework

- 4.35 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the Council's vehicle for shaping its overall spatial strategy and setting out its planning policies for Cherwell District. The LDF is not a single document but a suite of documents which are prepared at different times as required. The Economic Development Strategy therefore has strong links with the LDF, and some of the studies which have informed this Economic Development Strategy (such as the Employment Land Review) will also inform the work on the LDF.
- 4.36 The first document within the LDF is the Core Strategy. This will set out the overall development strategy for the district and the core policies (and allocations) that the Council will need to follow. In February 2010, the Council produced its Draft Core Strategy and consulted with local people on this. This Draft Core Strategy set out some broad policies for protecting employment land and identified several major areas where employment uses would be promoted.
- 4.37 The Draft Core Strategy was written in the context of the (then) regional spatial strategy for the south east of England; the South East Plan. This required the district to provide 13,400 new homes over the period 2006 - 2026. In July 2010, the new Secretary of State revoked all Regional Spatial Strategies, and instead permitted local authorities to consider what level of growth would be appropriate within their areas and, if they can justify these, plan for them accordingly. However, in November 2010, the decision to abolish Regional Strategies was successfully challenged. The forthcoming Localism Bill is expected to clarify the position and a New Homes Bonus scheme will reward councils and communities for home building from late 2010-onwards.
- 4.38 Cherwell District Council has indicated its intention to review its housing figures with a view to proposing some new targets which, it considers, may result in less development pressure on certain areas. In doing this, it has reaffirmed its commitment to growth at Bicester in line with its eco-town status.
- 4.39 At the time of writing this draft Economic Development Strategy, the Council is currently undertaking the work to inform what these new housing targets may be, and what impact this may have upon overall levels of growth, and its spatial distribution, across the district. The review of the Economic Development Strategy has come at a good time to allow the Core Strategy to consider the economic implications of growth (or lack of it) and make sure that it responds to the economic needs and priorities of the district as set out in the Economic Development Strategy.

5) Vision, Leadership & Golden Threads

Vision

5.1 The overall vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cherwell in 2030 is:

“A diverse economy with opportunities for all, vibrant communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose”.

5.2 But what will the economy of Cherwell look like in 2016 – or 2030 or 2060 for that matter? The honest answer is that we do not know for certain, and whilst we can make reasoned arguments for expecting certain changes, the further into the future we look, the thicker the mists of time become. However, this is no reason not to try to envisage how we would like that economy to be, drawing on what we know is happening now and what we believe is likely to happen in the future.

5.3 The Community Strategy is the main source of aspirations and goals for the Economic Development Strategy, and has four ambitions:

- Opportunities for all;
- A diverse and resilient economy;
- Connected infrastructure and protected environment;
- Resourceful and receptive community leadership.

5.4 Development of the local economy will in fact involve all four ambitions; in light of the strong linkages – between the community, private and public sectors - that will need to underpin the development of a ‘resilient’ economy. Primary focus will, however, be upon ‘creating a diverse and resilient economy’, as summarised below:

Our Economic Vision:

To develop a **diverse and resilient economic base** with an appropriately **skilled workforce** that can **adapt to challenges and opportunities, supported by a well planned and effective infrastructure** of housing, transport, leisure and services.

5.5 Our Vision involves:

- **Enabling** appropriate **housing & business development** to meet the future needs of the population;
- **Engaging** with the wealth of **expertise, enterprise and innovation** on our doorstep;
- **Helping** our residents to develop their **skills** to allow everybody to have employment;
- **Tackling** the causes of **under achievement** which include engagement in education and training, poor housing, lack of access to transport, poor socio- economic cultures and dependence on benefits.
- **Supporting** new and existing **businesses**, and their products and services, for them to locate and grow in North Oxfordshire which, in turn, will encourage our younger population to stay or return here;
- **Evolving** our **rural and urban areas** through the engagement and involvement of our business communities.

- 5.6 A vibrant and diverse economic infrastructure is the bedrock upon which we can build a sustainable future.

Leadership

- 5.7 On behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership, Cherwell District Council is leading and shaping the delivery of significant elements of this Vision to 2016, supported by partners; all contributing to its achievement to the best of their ability within available resources.
- 5.8 To ensure partnership action is effective, local outcomes will be used to measure against baseline data and annually set targets in Cherwell District Council's Corporate Plan, so that by 2016 we can show we have contributed towards:
- Increased numbers of employment opportunities;
 - Increased number of VAT and NNDR registered local businesses;
 - Reduced number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) – both 16-18 year olds and under 25s;
 - Retention of the low level of unemployment;
 - Increased qualifications among residents of working age – particularly NVQ 3 plus
 - Wage rate levels;
 - Outcomes focused in priority areas: Bicester Eco Town and 'Banbury Brighter Futures' wards.

Golden Threads

- 5.9 This Vision is ambitious and contains three 'golden threads' that run throughout our Strategy:

- **Ensure a diverse and resilient economy remains at the heart of Cherwell's Vision;**
- **Build a strong and flexible partnership culture which acknowledges capacity but 'adds value' by working together effectively;**
- **Maximise the 'green economy' benefits arising from Eco-Bicester.**

- **Ensure a diverse and resilient economy remains at the heart of Cherwell's Vision**

- 6.1 Cherwell has been a prosperous district with very low unemployment. Much of the stability we have experienced has come from small and medium sized businesses and these businesses need continued support so that they are maintained. We also need to look to new and innovative business to attract this into the area and retain the population through a range of work opportunities. Lastly we need to ensure that our population is skilled enough to take up these opportunities and to balance this with homes they can live in and transport they can get to work with.

- **Build a strong and flexible partnership culture which acknowledges capacity but 'adds value' by working together effectively**

- 6.2 There is an established culture of co-operation in Cherwell with a strong track-record of taking both proactive and timely reactive steps to address economic 'shocks'. It is upon this positive culture and new opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnerships (as noted under 'Strategic Context') that the annual delivery plans will be based, enabling a flexible and responsive approach to be taken, through effective community leadership.

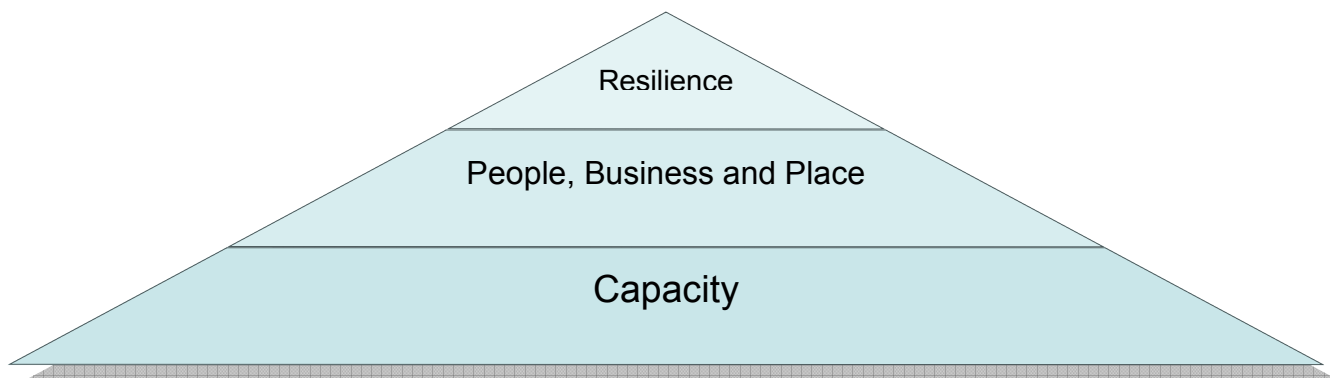
6.3 Our great ambition, coupled with the availability of only limited resources, will require that actions are prioritised to maintain a clear focus upon the 'golden threads' of our Strategy.

- **Maximise the 'green economy' benefits arising from Eco-Bicester**

6.4 In maintaining the global competitiveness of Cherwell's economy, we must sustain an environment in which people choose to live, work and visit. As energy costs rise and regulations tighten, the 'green economy' will be synonymous with the whole economy. Individuals, businesses and locations will have to be resource and energy efficient to survive and to compete. We have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of sustainable community development through Eco-Bicester, and to spread the benefits across the whole district.

6) Developing Resilience

- 6.5 We have established that the local economy is a complex series of interactions between private, public and social interests, and that the inter-relationships form the basis of value to be added to Cherwell's economy. This may not always be easy - or even necessary - to measure, but continuous practical experience over the past two decades nevertheless provides us with a solid basis upon which to build our shared economic vision for 2016.



- 6.6 We wish to secure the economic resilience and the comprehensive sustainability of our community by developing our capacity to then be able to develop the key themes of people, business and place:

A) Developing Capacity

- 6.7 Much of the work in economic development is now delivered in partnership – both with professional bodies such as Job Centre Plus and Business Link, and with voluntary groups such as community associations. A key part of the success in economic development in Cherwell over the last 20 years has been the Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP), which has been instrumental in attracting and retaining quality employers in the district.
- 6.8 As with many fields, economic development has its own jargon and specialist knowledge; to achieve our aims we must communicate as clearly as possible with our partners, and where appropriate work with existing partners, and new ones arising through Local Enterprise Partnerships, to increase their capacity to work with us.
- 6.9 Our work is knowledge-based, and so depends greatly on quality information, which in turn rests upon quality data. A good base of robust data from a variety of sources is an essential resource, and one we will strive to maintain. We also need to keep up our analytical capacity through strong working partnerships to create the context within which that information becomes knowledge. Ultimately, we must become a learning partnership to effectively deliver our strategic aims.
- 6.10 We are actively engaging with the new Local Enterprise Partnerships to identify shared priorities and resources to achieve them. Even with effective partnership working, our resources are limited and we must be realistic when setting our aims and ambitions. With this in mind:

Our partnership is committed to implement this Vision for 2016, and we will:

- 1. Develop the resilience of Cherwell's economy by maximising the effectiveness of our partnerships**

We will:

- **Enhance co-operation** within the Local Strategic Partnership, and between the social / community, private and public sectors.
- **Ensure skills within the partnership** are utilised and maintained.
- **Communicate, analyse information and build understanding** to encourage individuals, organisations and businesses to actively contribute to this vision.
- **Actively engage in Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** for the benefit of Cherwell's businesses, residents and visitors.

B) Developing Themes: People, Business and Place

6.11 Whilst valuing the inter-relationships, we will also take actions to develop the diversity and resilience of our local economy, as identified by the Community Strategy:

1. **Raise expectations and ambitions** and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining. We will foster and develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training;
2. **Promote and support business diversification** and a sustainable economy in both urban and rural environments. Protect and grow local services and businesses, while supporting town centres to be attractive economic hubs for the district.
3. **Manage our infrastructure development**, matching housing growth with local jobs, transport to work, facilities and services. We will plan effectively for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and actively attracting the right businesses into the area.

6.12 There are complex inter-linkages within and between these objectives but can be simplified into three broad headings:

- i. Developing people
- ii. Developing business
- iii. Developing place

Developing People

Our people are indeed the greatest asset within our community and, to engage all, we will:

2. Create employment

6.13 Our economy generally consists of high levels of employment and economic activity but as identified in Issue b, this has increasingly been reliant upon a growing public sector whilst the private sector has contracted slightly. The implications of the coalition government's austerity plans, with likely reductions in public sector employment and expenditure will be experienced over the years of this strategy and will need interpretation and review locally.

6.14 Underpinning all other themes in the delivery of our economic strategy, continued high levels of engagement with the economy will support skills development, business growth, community vibrancy and social inclusion.

We will:

- **Create sufficient additional jobs** by 2016 to cope with the predicted increase in population.
- **Maintain the low unemployment rate** in the district.

3. Provide access to Employment

- 6.15 Creating jobs is insufficient to ensure a prosperous economy. If we cannot find the right people with the right skills and aptitudes to fill those jobs, in the right location, then neither the local populace nor the employer will benefit. It is therefore vital that we continue to ensure that local people are able to take advantage of the opportunities that are created. This means more than simply ensuring they have access to training; it involves helping young people avoid being 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET), helping people with basic skills to enter into work for the first time, return to work with new skills and to use those skills and experiences throughout life to progress as individuals within a strong society.
- 6.16 Although our economy is generally prosperous, there are clusters of households suffering the linked disadvantages of poor housing, low skills, and low levels of economic activity. Where these problems are concentrated, we must have a flexible approach dealing with all the issues. The danger of communities forming within our large towns on the shared basis of exclusion from the broader prosperity is alienation, social exclusion and eventually problems of crime and disorder.
- 6.17 Housing is fundamentally important for workers and employers, with a mix of affordable and desirable housing key to retaining businesses and attracting inward investment. Cherwell's Housing Strategy provides innovative approaches to engaging residents in achieving and maintaining their own home.
- 6.18 The Job Clubs have proven to be national exemplars of best practice in how the private, public and social sectors can forge successful working partnerships to tackle the economic shock of recession locally. The momentum created should ensure effective labour market support to individuals in good times as well as bad.

We will:

- **Raise expectations and ambitions** and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining.
- **Develop Job Clubs** to improve access for economically inactive people to skills, training, enterprise and employment opportunities.
- **Help young people into employment, education or training** by providing alternative routes to economic activity.

4. Enhance Skills

- 6.19 Cherwell is served by Oxford and Cherwell Valley (Further Education) College (OCVC) and other college networks, and we are within an hour's travel of five universities, incorporating three business schools. Despite this, skill levels in the District are still a cause for concern. It is vital for our future prosperity that we equip the existing and future working population with the skills required for a 21st Century economy. These skills range across the board, including both technical skills and generic 'soft' skills such as customer service, team-working and so forth, and must be based on the needs of employers.
- 6.20 To maintain our diverse and resilient economy, skills development is about improving productivity, efficiency, and adding value. Through the recession, however, the challenge has also arisen to help provide individuals with the basic skills, knowledge and support to enter and return to work.

We will:

- **Develop relationships with local employers** as partners in addressing education and skills issues, meeting future needs and supporting key local sectors.
- **Provide the 'eco' skills** needed to develop Bicester eco-town, to attract businesses and to develop a competitive 'green economy'.

Developing Business

Businesses will work with each other, and public and social partners, to become even stronger and more diverse, and

We will:

5. Promote business start-up and entrepreneurship

- 6.21 The creation of new businesses, especially those in creative and knowledge-based sectors, is vital for the future of our economy. It will create more diversity and resilience amongst the businesses in our economy. Businesses started in a locality often have a strong loyalty to their 'place of birth', and generate all the benefits of wealth generation associated with a head-office function.
- 6.22 For some people, starting a business is self-employment in its truest sense; the aim is sustainable income rather than growth, and the focus is on the activity at hand rather than managing a business. This has an important role to play for individuals for whom mainstream employment may be inaccessible – their domestic demands may require them to manage time in a different way to 9-5 employment, or they may have recently become redundant with no clear opportunity to use their skills in a role with a new employer.
- 6.23 For others, the business is the focus, and these are the true entrepreneurs; their aim would be growth and competitiveness whatever their product. These businesses provide the powerhouses of the future for our economy, growing and employing people in skilled roles. With increasing reliance now needed on private sector job creation, both self-employment and entrepreneurship are vital to our economy.

We will:

- **Increase the numbers of new businesses forming**, fostering enterprise through Oxfordshire Business Enterprises, enabling all residents considering starting a business to gain help and support, smoothing the start-up process and ensuring early survival.
- **Enable high skill and high tech entrepreneurship** through the Innovation and Growth Team, Oxford Innovation and other local support networks,
- **Support the early survival and growth of enterprises**, though developing the network of agencies, banks and other professional advisers, training and education providers and local authorities.
- **Embed an entrepreneurial culture in our young people**, through programmes such as Young Enterprise, increasing the number of young people involved in these programmes.

6. Develop local procurement and supply chains

- 6.24 In an increasingly global economy, individual purchasing and investment decisions are often taken outside Cherwell yet the effects of those decisions can then be felt locally through business closures and job losses. Whilst in a global market place, it is increasingly difficult

to compete on price alone, so quality and service are becoming more important, as is an understanding of the local 'multiplier' effects.

- 6.25 The public, private and increasingly social elements of a resilient economy should ensure that the exchange of products and services can involve all potential providers to contribute, allowing 'value for money' to be identified, especially where it contributes to circulation of wealth locally.
- 6.26 Initiatives, such as breaking down larger contracts to match small to medium sized enterprise (SME) and social enterprise capacity, and encouraging collaboration between local SMEs and social enterprises to compete for larger contracts, will have a real positive impact on the local supply chain.

We will:

- **Maximise opportunities for the private and social sectors** to supply to the public sector.
- **Assist businesses to identify local supply chains.**

7. Promote business & cluster development

- 6.27 All businesses now compete in a national, international or for many a global marketplace. It is recognised that businesses geographically related and operating in a broadly similar field have much to gain by working in partnership. By pooling resources and knowledge, whilst reducing costs, collaborative actions can create competitive advantage for Cherwell through the growth of private sector-led employment, enabled by the public and social sectors where necessary.
- 6.28 Cherwell is home, fully or partially to some established clusters (for instance, we are at the mid-point in the famed 'motor-sport valley'). There is considerable prestige to be gained by acting as the 'spiritual home' to an established and high-profile cluster, leading to further investment and success; we should support further virtuous development to create future 'resilience' for businesses, and therefore our whole community.
- 6.29 Support for businesses is often delivered on a themed basis. Effective support provides a high return on the time invested by the company in becoming engaged; it is therefore a sign of a strong business support framework that it manages its contacts with the private sector closely and streamlines processes – this is all the more important when there are multiple agencies involved.

We will:

- **Continue to support the growth of established clusters** locally involved with the bio-medical, nanotechnology, materials engineering, motor-sport and other high-technology sectors, identify key areas for co-operative development, and identify further clusters.
- **Develop and integrate a new 'green technology cluster'** in and around Bicester as part of the eco-town's low carbon economy.
- **Engage with our businesses** to understand what support we can give them to stay and grow here into medium sized, high performing businesses.
- **Support businesses in conforming to regulations** and avoiding 'red tape'

8. Attract new investment

- 6.30 A key part of the success of the Cherwell economy since 1990 has been the concerted drive to attract inward investment to build today's local economy which has proven, through facing recession, to be 'resilient'. Through its geographic advantage of being in central England, between London and Birmingham, Cherwell is naturally in an enviable position. It has, however, been the investment in road, rail, airport, colleges, universities, innovation

centres and other infrastructure necessary for business to really thrive that has resulted from the actions of successful local networks.

- 6.31 A key to the success has been the Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership, bringing together public and private sector partners to deliver comprehensive support for inward investors and expanding local companies. A number of highly successful firms have set-up or grown, making strong commitments to the area as a result, bringing many quality jobs and contributing diversity and resilience.
- 6.32 We must not rest on our laurels. The partnership services and networks must operate efficiently and effectively to overcome obstacles in the delivery of further sustainable investment, especially by the private sector.

We will:

- **Continue to enable investment** by inward investors and existing businesses in north Oxfordshire through our Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP), maximising the use of the private and public sector's resources.

9. Develop a 'World Class' Business Community

- 6.33 No business, however small, can continue untouched by the increasing impact of globalisation. As a part of one of the most economically active and dynamic regions in the world, we are 'in the top drawer' as a local economy. Developing our new businesses and encouraging further investment will increase our competitiveness, and many of these new firms will join existing ones in trading on a European, and even a global basis.
- 6.34 We must be prepared to support and facilitate the internationalisation of our businesses, by giving them access to specialist knowledge and support, opportunities and markets. We must maintain our links with other parts of the world as a geographical and governmental entity, and look for opportunities to develop more. Since the demise of NOVEC (North Oxfordshire Virtual Exporters Club) there has been a vacuum for networking and support for export at the local level, which we are keen to address. Such a group will enable the sharing of experience and pooled resources, reducing the often daunting barriers to international markets.

We will:

- **Promote the benefits of international trade** by bringing experienced exporters and traders together with novices and professional services to share experiences, develop knowledge, collaborate and exploit opportunities.
- **Maximise the value of overseas links** formed through civic activity or other networks.

10. Develop the Visitor Economy

- 6.35 The visitor economy is a unique sector comprising of not only attractions and overnight accommodation but also part of the transport, catering and retail industries. The visitor economy is an important part of the locality, providing expenditure, facilities, services and opportunities that might not otherwise exist whilst improving businesses and infrastructure for local residents to also use. There is also great potential to generate wealth by drawing in expenditure from visitors arriving from outside the region and, in particular, from outside the UK.
- 6.36 Cherwell's tourism product faces the challenge of nearby tourism 'hot-spots' such as Oxford City, the Cotswolds, Silverstone, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and the Chilterns. However, our strong transport infrastructure and central location for all these areas does give us a unique offering, whilst also benefiting from attractive local countryside.

- Businesses in Cherwell directly received £287,143,000 from visitors in 2009; an increase of 6.8% from 2008. This led to further 'multiplier' expenditure of £45,295,000 – and therefore a total expenditure of £332,438,000 (Tourism South East 2010).
- 5,700 jobs in Cherwell were in tourism in 2009 - equivalent to 8.5% of total employment locally. (Annual Business Inquiry).

6.37 The promotion of Oxford and Oxfordshire allows the potential for venues in the district to engage with the lucrative business tourism market. Both Banbury and Bicester have in recent years seen limited investment in hotels and further investment is needed to meet existing and projected demand. Business tourism fits well with our aim to be a centre of business growth and innovation in the sub-region. Our improved accessibility in comparison with Oxford City centre, and our excellent transport links, means we are in a strong position to develop the premier business tourism product for Oxfordshire.

We will:

- **Work in partnership with businesses and tourism bodies to enhance and develop our tourism product, maximising the value whilst minimising any negative affects.**

Developing Place

Our district will be an even better place in which to live, work, learn and spend leisure time, and

We will:

11. Promote employment sites & premises

6.38 The successful Cherwell-M40 partnership brought together public and private sector partners, enabling the paced development and occupation of commercial property to meet demands from employers. All businesses require premises; be they on an industrial estate, in a town or village, or increasingly at home. It is important to maintain the capacity to create new space to meet needs when required, but it is also important to make the best use of existing business sites. We will seek to protect existing allocations of land for new employment generating development, and ensure sufficient new land is available through the Local Development Framework to accommodate economic growth.

6.39 Continued marketing, improvement and redevelopment where necessary of existing employment sites and premises will form a central pillar in the support we provide to the business community. Our main aim must be balance the need for new land against the opportunity to re-use previously developed land. We hope to improve the efficiency of land use, increasing the amount of employment and economic activity without unnecessarily increasing the amount of land used.

We will:

- **Provide sufficient quantity, quality and choice of employment land and premises** to accommodate the expansion needs of existing and future employers, across a diverse range of activity, whilst protecting established and identified employment sites.
- **Support businesses through the planning process**

- **Enhance business environments** to encourage a virtuous cycle of upgrading of premises to encourage further investment, reducing the number of vacant units and enhancing economic activity.

12. Manage our infrastructure development

- 6.40 The quality of communications links has been highlighted as one of the key economic drivers in our district. Transport and telecommunications provide the key link to markets that businesses require and in a rural, centrally located area, maintaining and improving those connections is a vital task for economic development to take place.
- 6.41 We need to ensure that people have convenient access to homes and jobs, being able to get themselves to their place of work in a reasonable time and a sustainable manner. Cherwell residents generally travel long distances to work. Car ownership overall is high and residents in the rural areas are particularly dependent on their cars. Over 60% of people drive to work. This dependency on cars to get Cherwell's residents to work could prove to be a problem as fuel prices continue to rise and, therefore, alternatives are required.

We will:

- **Enhance key transport infrastructure** to support business efficiency.
- **Enhance telecommunications** to support business and home-working throughout Cherwell.
- **Enable a good supply of housing** and a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to ensure that housing provision is able to support the development of the local economy.
- **Ensure that utilities to all businesses meet present and future demand**, particularly in the older industrial areas where power and water/sewage supplies can become inadequate.
- **Develop Eco-Bicester** as an exemplar of innovative transport and communications.

13. Support rural areas

- 6.42 Cherwell's Rural Strategy acknowledges the importance of a strong local economy. Rural business locations are proving to be ever more popular, due to a combination of lower cost and pleasant surroundings, making them particularly appealing to start-up and micro-businesses where the owner lives locally. This is especially true of those working in the valuable creative or knowledge driven sectors. A key enabler of such rural business growth is the continual enhancement of infrastructure, as recognised in Theme 12.
- 6.43 All businesses need to innovate and compete, and this is no exception for farms and other rural businesses. Service businesses, such as shops, post offices and public houses in villages, can often face commercial challenges yet are very important in providing a valuable community hub, services and local employment opportunities.
- 6.44 The isolation of residents of rural areas running their own businesses from home, or working remotely from their main employment base, can adversely affect productivity and opportunity. This can be overcome by effective networking which can add-value to private businesses and the vitality of rural areas during the working week.

We will:

- **Implement Cherwell's Rural Strategy**, including support to rural businesses and employees.

14. Support urban centres

- 6.45 Our three Urban Centres, in Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury, have an important role to play at a county and sub-regional level. Much has been achieved in creating thriving attractive places where people want to live, work and relax, but these places exist in a dynamic environment, and therefore if they do not keep moving forwards, in relative terms, they can be moving backwards.
- 6.46 The urban centres play a pivotal role in the economic life of the District. They form hubs around which our economy revolves, as meeting points for communications, and providing a critical mass of property, businesses and local customers. Quality urban centres represent the District to the outside world, being one of the main impressions gained by visitors here on either business or pleasure and therefore high quality, tidy, thriving centres establish the District firmly as a modern, dynamic and pleasant place to live, work and visit.
- 6.47 Transportation to urban centres is important for shoppers, workers and visitors. Car parking services provided by the District Council will continue to balance real benefit to those car park users and town traders with the accepted effects on the Council's limited and reducing finances. Other providers of transportation services are encouraged to also work collectively to promote trade.
- 6.48 To enhance the resilience of Cherwell and to maximise resources, there is scope to stimulate more business interaction between our urban areas providing businesses with a perfect opportunity to develop cross sector working relationships, activity and trade.

We will:

- **Maximise the benefits of co-operation** between local chambers and business networks to build relationships with each other, and with public and community partners.
- **Promote the economic vitality** of centres through successful services, shops markets and events.
- **Undertake regeneration** schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centres.
- **Maximise use of public & community assets** in support of the local economy.

Banbury

- **Develop local business leadership further** and align economic actions.
- **Undertake key development projects**, including the 'Brighter Futures' programme, 'Cultural Quarter' development, Canalside and Bolton Road redevelopment.

Bicester

- **Develop local business leadership further** and align economic actions.
- **Maximise the potential of the eco-town development** – build upon the accessibility of Bicester, its skilled workforce, further education opportunities, and location to attract new businesses and seize this major opportunity, as detailed separately in the eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy.
- **Raise the profile of the town**, attracting & retaining visitors to maximise the links with other areas of this strategy.
- **Undertake key development projects**, including the completion of the town centre redevelopment and remodelling Market Square.

Kidlington

- **Develop local business leadership further** and align economic actions.

- **Maximise its unique advantages:** promote the benefits of the airport, University of Oxford Begbroke Science Park and its proximity to Oxford in supporting local business growth.
- **Enable stronger sustainable transport links** between industrial/employment areas, residential areas, the village centre and key local facilities.
- **Consider Kidlington pedestrianisation** – a project from the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board involving a review of the current ineffective Traffic Regulation Order for the High Street and formal public consultation on changes to be made, not only to the Order but signage too.

7) Action Plan

- 7.1 Having identified the themes to address the issues, it is necessary to prepare for action and to plan how this can best be done to achieve an even more diverse and resilient Cherwell.
- 7.2 This Strategy belongs to everybody with an interest in the economy of north Oxfordshire.

Existing partners include:

- Aspire www.aspireoxford.co.uk/
- Association of Local (parish) Councils www.oalc.org.uk/
- Banbury Chamber of Commerce www.banburychamber.com/
- Banbury Old Town Association
- Banbury Town Centre Partnership
- Banbury Town Council (Ban.TC) www.banbury.gov.uk/
- Bicester Chamber of Commerce www.bicesterbusiness.org.uk/
- Bicester Town Council (Bic.TC) www.bicester.gov.uk/
- Bicester Vision www.bicestervision.co.uk/
- Bomber Command Heritage (BCH) www.bc-heritage.org/
- Businesses
- Cherwell Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Cherwell District Council (CDC) www.cherwell.gov.uk
- Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership www.cherwell.gov.uk
- Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP) www.cherwell-m40.co.uk
- Connexions www.spired.com/connexions/
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) www.fsb.org.uk/oxfordshire
- Fredericks Oxfordshire www.fredericksoxfordshire.org/
- Highways Agency www.highways.gov.uk/
- Institute of Directors (IoD) www.iod.com/
- Jobcentre Plus <http://jobseekers.direct.gov.uk/>
- Job Club www.cherwell.gov.uk
- Kidlington Village Centre Management Board www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/community/villagecentre.asp
- Kidlington Voice www.kidlingtonvoice.org.uk/
- Ministry of Defence (MoD) www.mod.uk/
- National Apprenticeship Service www.apprenticeships.org.uk/
- National Farmers Union (NFU) www.nfuonline.com/
- Next Step <https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>
- NHS Oxfordshire www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/
- Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC) www.ocvc.ac.uk/
- Oxford Brookes University (OBU) www.brookes.ac.uk/
- Oxfordshire Business Enterprises (OBE) www.oxonbe.co.uk
- Oxfordshire Business First (OBF) www.obfirst.org.uk/
- Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (OLEP) www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/
- Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/
- Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Partnership <http://oxtranet.com/OLSP/default.aspx>
- Oxfordshire Partnership www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/
- Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) www.oxonrcc.org.uk/

- Oxfordshire Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/
- Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network (OTCN) www.otcn.co.uk/
- Prince's Trust www.princes-trust.org.uk/
- P3Eco (private enabler of Bicester Eco Town) www.p3eco.com/
- Skidz Motor Project www.skidzofbanbury.org.uk/
- Skills Funding Agency <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>
- South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) www.southeastmidlands.org.uk/
- UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) www.ukti.gov.uk/
- University of Oxford (UoO) Begbroke www.begbroke.ox.ac.uk/

The following action plan identifies projects to be led by Cherwell District Council shaded yellow in the right hand side column.

A) Developing Capacity

Objective:

Our partnership is committed to implement this Vision for 2016, and **we will:**

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
1) Develop the resilience of Cherwell's economy by maximising the effectiveness of our partnerships	Enhance co-operation within the Local Strategic Partnership, and between the social / community, private and public sectors.	Identify the importance of economic development within Cherwell throughout all work of the Local Strategic Partnership.	Consideration of economic impact within all LSP strategies.	2011-on	LSP
		Address economic issues regularly and collectively through the LSP Board and/or Reference Group, and other appropriate forums and partnerships.	Clear roles and contributions to the delivery of the Strategy.	2011-on	LSP
	Ensure skills within the partnership are utilised and maintained.	Review & upgrade our own skills to ensure we have the skills to deliver economic development in Cherwell.	Up-to-date skills being used to deliver annual action plan.	Annually	LSP
		Identify opportunities for voluntary and community sector representatives to be involved in training and development opportunities alongside professional staff to	Increased capacity of volunteers to contribute to this Strategy.	2011-on	LSP
	Communicate, analyse information and build understanding to encourage individuals, organisations and businesses to actively contribute	Maintain a business and investment database covering land, property and businesses as the underpinning of a knowledge-driven service, and access to other data sources as appropriate.	Up-to-date information being effectively used.	On-going	CDC, CHIP

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
	to this vision.	Use our working partnerships to analyse and learn from data and information.	Up-to-date information being effectively used.	2011-on	CDC, OCC
	Actively engage in Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) for the benefit of Cherwell's businesses, residents and visitors.	Participate in working groups and steering groups of both LEPs (the South East Midlands LEP and the Oxfordshire City Region LEP).	Contribution toward Cherwell's Economic Development Strategy.	On-going	CDC, LEPs, all partners to identify roles.

B) Developing people

Objective:

Our people are indeed the greatest asset within our community and, to engage all, we will:

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
2) Create employment	Create sufficient additional jobs By 2016 to cope with the predicted increase in population.	Implement this Strategy.	Jobs created (CDC & NOMIS)	On-going	All partners, including businesses, CDC, OCC, CHIP, LEPs.
	Maintain the low unemployment rate in the district.		Working age people on out-of-work benefits (NI152).	On-going	All partners.
3) Provide access to Employment	Raise expectations and ambitions and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining.	Implement education strategy and college plans.	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher (NI 163). Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher (NI 164).	On-going	OCC, OCVC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
		Help disadvantaged people into employment through social enterprises providing services to the private sector.	Expand into Cherwell and employ 20 new people per annum.	2012-on	Aspire, CDC
	Develop Job Clubs to provide support and access for economically inactive people to skills, training, enterprise and employment opportunities.	Co-ordinate Job Clubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise special events Develop the role of libraries Attract businesses to recruit & to sponsor Ensure that Job Clubs remain flexible and responsive to local needs. 	Help 1,000 job seekers per annum through Banbury & Bicester Job Clubs measuring satisfaction with the service and modifying it to meet changing needs.	2009-on	CDC, MP, LEPs, OCC, JC+, OCVC, businesses
		Provide practical one-to-one help and careers advice to job seekers through national services delivered locally, supported by referrals from partners.	Enhanced confidence and c.v. and interview skills for job seekers to find employment.	On-going	Next Step, Connexions, NHS (GPs), all partners to refer
	Help young people into employment, education or training by providing alternative routes to economic activity.	Apprenticeships: building upon the Cherwell pilot, disseminate learning and good practice models to engage other employers.	Number and variety of apprenticeship courses and involvement of employers and partners.	2011-on	Colleges, private providers, National Apprenticeship Service, businesses, CDC
		Encourage and support volunteering as a pathway to employment, and identify new opportunities.	Numbers of job seekers finding work through volunteering. Integration with Job Club.	On-going	VCS, Job Club, CDC
		Develop projects to prevent young people becoming NEET.	Number of young people per annum moving on into employment, education or training.	On-going	Skidz Motor Project, schools, colleges, OBE, businesses, OCC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
		Prince's Trust courses for 16-24 year olds to avoid becoming NEET.	Work experience, qualifications, practical skills, community projects.	12 week courses	Prince's Trust , Connexions.
4) Enhance Skills	Develop relationships with local employers as partners in addressing education and skills issues, meeting future needs and supporting key local sectors.	Develop the Cherwell Skills Board and work with Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Partnership to determine and agree targets and delivery plan.	Achievement of Skills Board's targets.	On-going	CDC , businesses, colleges, OLSP, OCC, Skills Funding Agency
		Identify the skills needs of businesses and provide for the future needs of employers and employees.	Skills needs understood and findings shared with businesses & partners.	Biennially or as required.	OLEP , CDC, businesses, colleges, universities
		Identify employers who do not currently link with education (schools/colleges/HE) and encourage them to get involved.	Businesses aware of and engaged in local training.	Include question in annual Cherwell business survey.	CDC , colleges, universities & other providers
		Host 'Skills Summits' to raise awareness of current issues & opportunities, and support available.	Greater business engagement and understanding of skills issues and opportunities.	As required	CDC , businesses, Skills Funding Agency, schools, colleges, universities
		Establish Cherwell Investors in Training Awards scheme to recognise and encourage further investment.	Encouragement of further investment in skills through the Cherwell Skills Awards.	As required	CDC , Bicester & Banbury Chambers, KV

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Partner(s)
	Provide the 'eco' skills needed to develop Bicester eco-town, to attract businesses and to develop a competitive 'green economy'	Implement the Eco-Bicester Economic Strategy, to include training courses to meet the needs of the emerging eco-construction sector.	Local employment opportunities.	2011-on	P3Eco , OBU, OCVC, private providers, Bicester Chamber, businesses, CDC
		Develop a 'University Technical College' to specialise in sustainable construction and science engineering.	National exemplar of education for 14-19 year olds.	Bid in July 2011. Opening in 2014.	OCVC , OBU, P3Eco, A2D, Bicester Schools

C) Developing Business

Objective:

Businesses will work with each other, and with public and social partners, to become even stronger and more diverse, and we will:

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
5) Promote business start-up, entrepreneurship & innovation	Increase the numbers of new businesses forming , fostering enterprise through Oxfordshire Business Enterprises (OBE), enabling all residents considering starting a business to gain help and support, smoothing the start-up process and ensuring early survival.	Support OBE in continuing to provide advice within a wider support network.	Independent advice service available to all residents considering business start-up. - Number of local residents supported. - Satisfaction rate over 90%.	On-going	OBE, CDC, LEPs, OBF, OCC, TBAC, banks & other business service providers.

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	Enable high skill and high tech entrepreneurship through the Innovation and Growth Team (IGT), and its possible successor from 2012 - the High Growth Coaching programme, and other support networks.	Maximise the involvement of Cherwell businesses in such programmes to create growth and value-added businesses within all sectors.	Number of businesses actively engaged in Cherwell, and their success over time.	IGT until Aug 11. High Growth Coaching programme possibly from 2012.	LEPs, IGT & successor
	Support the early survival and growth of enterprises , through developing the network of agencies, banks and other professional advisers, training and education providers and local authorities.	Work within the LEPs Business Support Task Groups to map and publicise support services , including advice and access to finance.	Increased survival rate of Cherwell businesses.	On-going	OLEP, OCC, CDC
Operate a loan scheme for viable enterprises unable to access mainstream funding.		Businesses assisted. Survival beyond 12 months. Repayment of loan.	2011-on	Fredericks Oxfordshire, OBE, TBAC	
Recognise and celebrate innovation amongst local businesses through awards to encourage further success and investment in our knowledge economy.		Businesses participating and growing as a result of involvement.	Annual	Banbury Innovation Award partners, CDC businesses.	
Embed an entrepreneurial culture in our young people , through programmes such as Young Enterprise, increasing the number of young people involved in these programmes.	Support North Oxfordshire Young Enterprise	60 young people and 5 schools engaged p.a. in activities	On-going	Young Enterprise Board/CDC, schools, businesses	
	Bid to become a partner and develop the National Enterprise Academy ('Peter Jones' Academy).	To enable more young people to consider entrepreneurialism.	2011-on	OCVC, businesses	

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
6) Develop local procurement and supply chains	Maximise opportunities for the private and social sectors to supply to public sector.	Implement Cherwell District Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prompt payment to assist the cash-flow of businesses. • Work with public sector partners to develop a single procurement portal. • Hold 'Meet the Public sector Buyer' events. 	Achievement of Procurement Strategy targets.	On-going (since 2009).	CDC Procurement, South East Business Portal, businesses, Oxfordshire Procurement Hub, Police, NHS, universities & colleges
	Assist businesses to identify local supply chains.	Make available to businesses information and contacts that identify potential local trading partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Cherwell database. • Review Oxfordshire Business directory. • Contribute to business network meetings. 	On-going	CDC, OCC, LEPs
		Engage residents with the local economy , providing information on local businesses and encouraging local trading.	Higher local multiplier expenditure through conscious purchasing decisions.	On-going	OTCN, FSB, Chambers, CDC
7) Promote business & cluster development	Continue to support the growth of established clusters locally involved with the bio-medical, nanotechnology, materials engineering, motor-sport and other high-technology sectors, identify key areas for co-	Strengthen links with Oxfordshire wide technology clusters	Expanding clusters	2011-on	CHIP/CDC, Oxon LEP, colleges, universities
		Strengthen links with South East Midlands partners around performance engineering .	Expanding clusters	2011-on	CHIP/CDC, SEM LEP, colleges, OBU

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	operative development, and identify further clusters.	Develop Begbroke Science Park to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening an ISIS Innovation Centre to enhance technology transfer cluster, and Provide additional space for spin-off companies. 	1) Completion of new road access. 2) Commercialisation of intellectual property arising from research by patenting, licensing and formation of spin-out companies. 3) Increase floorspace from 12,148sq.m to 21,236sq.m	1) Road by 2012. 2) ISIS by 2016. 3) Long-term development by 2021.	UoO Begbroke Science Park
		Identify potential clusters around Kidlington's London Oxford Airport .	Sustainable job creation.	2011-on	CHIP/CDC, Oxford Airport
	Develop and integrate a new 'green technology cluster' in and around Bicester as part of the eco-town's low carbon economy.	See Actions under 14) Bicester.	Delivery of Bicester Economic Development Strategy objectives.	On-going	P3Eco, CDC
	Engage with our businesses to understand what support we can give them to stay and grow here into medium sized, high performing businesses.	Communicate with businesses , through e.g. participating in business meetings and occasional surveys to identify issues.	Response to issues within 5 working days.	On-going	CDC
		Identify and overcome constraints to business growth through lack of finance.	All viable businesses able to access development finance.	On-going	LEPs, Banks, BCFI, CDC.
		Provide employers with help to recruit and support for staff facing redundancy.	Special recruitment events held and redundancy support provided.	On-going	Job Club/CDC, businesses, JobCentre Plus

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	Support businesses in conforming to regulations and avoiding 'red tape'.	Operate a protocol for business support , clarifying the roles of various agencies and the transferring of clients between them.	Efficient services to business and high satisfaction.	2011-on	LEPs, OCC, CDC
		Provide Health & Safety training and advice to pilot industrial estates and, if successful, extend across district.	Awareness and avoidance of incident.	On-going	CDC (Environmental Health)
8) Attract new investment	Continue to enable investment by inward investors and existing businesses in north Oxfordshire. through our Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP), maximising the use of the private and public sector's resources.	Work day-to-day with existing businesses, potential investors and other professional partners.	Contribute to the creation of 200 new jobs per annum.	On-going	CDC, CHIP, LEPs, UKTI
		Meet regularly with commercial property agents to maintain intelligence on the local market, combine resources and adjust actions as appropriate.		Quarterly meetings of the CHIP Working Group.	CHIP/CDC
		Joint attendance at key exhibitions , e.g. to promote 'clusters' such as Eco-Bicester and engineering.	Effective use of resources, referrals and information leading to investment and jobs.	As required.	CHIP/CDC, OCVV, local businesses
		Attract investment to Eco-Bicester , as part of the Bicester Economic Development Strategy.		2011-on	P3Eco, CHIP/CDC
		Produce and maintain marketing and investment materials for Cherwell , including website information to identify what makes the district special and to assist investment.	Attraction of inward investment and expansion of existing companies.	2011-on	CHIP/CDC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome (Measure)	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
9) Develop a 'World Class' Business Community	Promote the benefits of international trade by bringing experienced exporters and traders together with novices and professional services to share experiences, develop knowledge, collaborate and exploit opportunities.	Enhance knowledge of exporting opportunities by establishing a local 'exporting club' . Develop actions.	Maximise commercial opportunities available to Cherwell businesses.	Establish 2011. Annual action plan.	OTCN CDC UKTI Chambers FSB
		Attract investment from overseas into Cherwell.	Support business expansion and employment.	On-going, review annually.	UKTI , LEP, CHIP/ CDC, BCFI
	Maximise the value of overseas links formed through civic activity or other networks,	Identify opportunities for potential overseas co-operation that support this Economic Development Strategy.	Community links developed to support skills, investment, employment and trade.	Identify as appropriate.	Town & parish councils , CDC, OCC, BCFI
10) Develop the Visitor Economy	Work in partnership with businesses, cultural and tourism bodies to enhance and develop our tourism product , maximising the value whilst minimising any negative affects.	Attract new investment in tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor attractions, accommodation, transport, public realm, etc.	Increased visitors' length of stay and expenditure.	On-going	CDC , CHIP businesses, Oxfordshire Tourism, Oxford Inspires
		Encourage sustainable tourism development through the green advantage initiative.		On-going	CDC , businesses
		Enable businesses to make the most of opportunities afforded by London 2012 .	On-going to 2012 and beyond	CDC , businesses, SEEDA	
		Improve visitor information .	On-going	CDC , Oxfordshire Tourism	

D) Developing Place

Objective:

Our district will be an even better place in which to live, work, learn and spend leisure time, and we will:

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
11) Promote employment sites & premises	Provide sufficient quantity, quality and choice of employment land and premises to accommodate the expansion needs of existing and future employers, across a diverse range of activity, whilst protecting established and identified employment sites.	Review employment land provision to ensure the Local Development Framework provides sufficient amount and choice of land, in the right place and with every chance of becoming available to meet the future needs business until 2026.	Employment Land Review completed and Local Development Framework adopted.	In 2011	CDC
		Continue to work closely with partners in the commercial property and investment fields to encourage the bringing forward of new commercial property to meet demand, working to re-develop and improve existing commercial properties to maintain high environmental standards, meet changing demand patterns and improve the built environment for local people.	See CHIP targets under 8) Attracting Investment	Quarterly meetings and daily communication.	CHIP/CDC commercial agents and other professional services, landowners, businesses
	Support businesses through the planning process.	Contribute to pre-application discussions and consultations to ensure that the planning process fully considers business needs.	Business satisfaction. Jobs created or safeguarded.	Within 5 working days, and formal consultation responses within 14.	CDC , planning consultants.

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	Enhance business environments to encourage a virtuous cycle of upgrading of premises to encourage further investment, reducing the number of vacant units and enhancing economic activity.	Identify environmental issues affecting business success and work with partners to overcome.	Address issues that have not been resolved by statutory authorities or businesses.	Set by project.	CDC & partners
12) Manage our infrastructure development	Enhance key transport infrastructure to support business efficiency.	M40 junction 9 improvements.	Commencement and completion of Phase 2.	When funds come available.	Highways Agency
		Identify bottle-necks within urban centres and seek to resolve.	Improved efficiency of business and vehicles.	2011-on	OCC Local Transport Plans
		East West Rail (linking Oxford to Cambridge via Bicester)	Investment attracted to Bicester/Kidlington.	Completion of western section by 2017.	Consortium
		Project Evergreen 3 rail (linking Oxford to London via Bicester, including major investment in Bicester Town station and Water Eaton (Kidlington).	Investment attracted to Bicester/Kidlington.	Completion of Phase 2 by 2013.	Chiltern Railways
		Improved signalling and track to enhance north south rail services.	Reduced journey times to London/Birmingham.	Initial phase by summer 2011.	Chiltern Railways
		Maximise the benefits of 'London Oxford Airport' (at Kidlington) for Cherwell's businesses.	Development of aero-cluster and reduced journey times for international travel.	On-going	Oxford Airport, CHIP
	Enhance telecommunications to support business and home-working throughout Cherwell.	Implement Ox-Online – The Digital Strategy for Oxfordshire throughout Cherwell.	High quality broadband and mobile telecommunications meeting business needs.	By 2015	OLEP, OCC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	Enable a good supply of housing and a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to ensure that housing provision is able to support the development of the local economy.	Implement Cherwell's Housing Strategy.	Achievement of Strategy objectives, including meeting the needs of employers and employees.	On-going	CDC
	Ensure that utilities to all businesses meet present and future demand , particularly in the older industrial areas where power and water/sewage services can become inadequate.	Work with utility companies, property owners and businesses to establish how infrastructure can be improved.	Premises suitable for modern business needs, attracting more investment.	On-going	Utility companies, Chambers, CHIP, CDC
	Develop Eco-Bicester as an exemplar of innovative transport and communications.	From 'One Shared Vision', implement low-emission transportation and telecommunications in Bicester.	Efficient transportation and carbon reduction.	By 2016	P3Eco, OCC, CDC, Telecoms providers
13) Support rural areas	Implement Cherwell's Rural Strategy , including support to rural businesses and employees.	Support to rural businesses includes action to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the development and occupation of appropriate rural sites and premises for local employment. • Encourage diversification of farms and other rural businesses. • Support rural businesses, including rural shops. • Develop access to high-speed broadband. • 	Achievement of Rural Strategy objectives and targets.	On-going	CDC, ORCC, Police, retailers, NFU, CDC, parish councils, FSB, IoD, WODC, OCC, OLEP.

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
14) Support urban centres	Maximise the benefits of co-operation with local chambers and business networks to build relationships between each other, and with public and community partners.	Promote membership and meet regularly to identify issues and develop collaborative working.	Increased business involvement and collective action.	Quarterly meetings and day-to-day contact.	Chambers, Kidlington Voice, BicsterVision, FSB, OTCN, CDC.
	Promote the economic vitality of centres through successful services, shops markets and events.	Hold specialist markets and events.	Increased footfall and expenditure, and high business occupancy level supporting jobs and thriving centres.	On-going	CDC, market operators, town & parish councils, CDC, businesses.
		Provide successful car parking services that balance the real benefit to car park users and town traders with the effects on the public sector's limited and reducing finances.		On-going	CDC, private and public car park operators.
		Produce guides / websites to attract trade to Cherwell's urban centres.		On-going	Chambers, businesses, town councils, CDC.
		Providing policing services through Cherwell Crime Partnership to reduce crime, and the fear of crime, engaging businesses through e.g. Business Watch schemes.		On-going	Police, retailers, CDC, town councils.
	Undertake regeneration schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centres.	Key schemes described in detail below designed to regenerate urban centre sites.			
	Maximise use of public & community assets in	Promote available properties to assist the development of new	Development of micro businesses in vacant	2011-on	CDC, OCC (Mill Arts & libraries)

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	support of the local economy.	businesses, and use buildings to support unemployed residents to access Job Centre services, careers advice and to find work/training via Job Clubs.	industrial units and supporting residents into work/training.		JC+, public meeting places, Next Step, Connexions
- Banbury	Develop local business leadership further and align economic actions.	Create a Banbury Town Centre Strategy to identify opportunities for marketing and partnership activity to enhance the town centre.	Completion of Strategy to include an Action Plan to increase footfall and expenditure, and high business occupancy level.	2012	Banbury Town Centre Partnership , Banbury Chamber, CDC, Town Council, Old Town Association, Chamber, Sketts Market.
	Undertake key development projects.	Implement the 'Brighter Futures in Banbury' project , enhancing Skills, Employment and Financial Inclusion.	Achievement of project objectives.	On-going	CDC, NHS, OCC
		Redevelop Canalside, including Tramway Industrial Estate , ensuring that existing businesses are supported in relocating locally if necessary.	Allocation of Canalside as a development site within Cherwell Core Strategy and preparation of Supplementary Planning Document area to support this policy.	2012	CDC
		Redevelop Bolton Road - a comprehensive redevelopment of the north western edge of Banbury town centre, which also includes the Meteor car park.	Allocation of site for development within Cherwell Core Strategy and preparation of Supplementary Planning Document area to support how this site should be taken forward.	2012	CDC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)	
		Implement the 'Banbury Cultural Quarter' development to build a hub for the creative and cultural sector throughout the town.	Creation and safeguarding of jobs and facilities, and attraction of visitors.	2011-14	OCC, CDC	
- Bicester	Develop local business leadership further and align economic actions.	Implement Bicester Economic Development Strategy by engaging all local interests.	Delivery of Strategy targets.	2011-on	P3Eco/CDC, CHIP, LEPs, OCC, BicesterVision, Bicester Chamber, Bic.TC	
	Maximise the potential of the eco-town development – build upon the accessibility of Bicester, its skilled workforce, further education opportunities, and location to attract new businesses and seize this major opportunity, as detailed separately in the eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy.	Implement NW Bicester 'Eco Town' Strategy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'exemplar' development of 5,000 homes and at least 5,000 jobs • Establish & develop the factory of the eco-homes builder in Bicester • Develop an Eco Innovation Centre. • Attract new investment & enable existing businesses to maximise the new 'eco' opportunities. 	Delivery of Strategy targets.	Planning approval in July 2011. Masterplan by 2012. Development 2011 – 2032		
	Raise the profile of the town , attracting & retaining visitors to maximise the links with other areas of this strategy.	Promote tourism and business in the town through Bicester Village's Visitor Information Centre and marketing activity.	Enhanced income and investment to the town.	On-going		Bicester Village, CDC, Bicester Chamber, Bic.TC, CDC, OLEP,
		Identify further improvements to footpath and signs between Bicester Village and the town centre.	Increased time and money spent in the town.	2011-on		

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
		Develop suitable leisure, visitor, community & educational facilities; for example at RAF Bicester.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the heritage land and buildings through a commercially viable scheme. • Attract more visitors & expenditure to Bicester. 	Discussions on-going	Bomber Command Heritage, MoD and local partners
	Complete the Town Centre Redevelopment Project - a comprehensive redevelopment of Crown Walk and Franklins yard car parks to provide a supermarket, cinema, replacement car parks and bus facilities and further retail and restaurant units.	Work programmed to start on site by Jan 2012 and be completed 18 months later. Phase 2 comprising a new civic building to follow-on.	Attractive centre leading to increased footfall, expenditure and business occupancy.	Diversion of river by 2011. Acquisition of whole site by 2012. Completion of development by 2014.	CDC, Sainsburys.
	Remodel Market Square – led by Oxfordshire County Council, a highway and townscape improvement scheme.	Works to commence after the Town Centre Redevelopment has been completed.	Attractive centre leading to increased footfall, expenditure and business occupancy.	2014-on	OCC, CDC
Kidlington	Develop local business leadership further and align economic actions.	Regular business meetings in Kidlington and involvement with wider actions.	Business co-operation and growth leading to further employment.	On-going	Kidlington Voice, CDC

Theme	Aim	Action	Outcome / Measure	Timescale	Lead partner(s)
	Maximise Kidlington's unique advantages: promote the benefits of the airport, University of Oxford Begbroke Science Park and its proximity to Oxford in supporting local business growth.	Support Begbroke Science Park & encourage 'spin-out' companies to remain within north Oxon, attract other related businesses, and sustainably develop the airport and other transport infrastructure.	Development of science and technology 'cluster', transport infrastructure and high value jobs.	See 'cluster' actions in Theme 7 & 'infrastructure' in Theme 12.	UoO, Oxford Airport, businesses, CHIP, CDC
	Enable stronger sustainable transport links between industrial/employment areas, residential areas, the village centre and key local facilities.	Enhance public transport & cycling connections to the new Water Eaton rail station (Evergreen 3), including from the industrial estates/airport.	Bus services & infrastructure provided.	By the opening of new station.	OCC (Transport)
		Encourage journeys made by public transport, by bike and on foot.	As in Kidlington Area Strategy - Oxon Local Transport Plan.	2011-30	OCC Transport
	Consider Kidlington pedestrianisation	Review the current ineffective Traffic Regulation Order for the High Street and formal public consultation on changes to be made, not only to the Order but signage too.	Make Traffic Regulation Order and implement improvements.	Autumn 2011-on	Kidlington Village Centre Management Board, OCC, CDC

How to contact us

This document, and a form for making comments on it, is available to view from the Council's website at www.cherwell.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact us in the following ways:-

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The information in this document can be made available in other languages, large print braille, audio tape or electronic format on request. Please contact 01295 227001

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać. 01295 227001

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如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。01295 227001

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔
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**Cherwell local
strategic Partnership**

Minute Item 46

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted