

FUTURE VISION TO 2016

1. Strategic Context:

Cherwell's Economic Development Service plays a key role, working with employers and partner organisations, to support delivery of the Cherwell Community Strategy's overall Vision to 2030 of "a diverse economy with opportunities for all, vibrant communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose".

The draft Cherwell Economic Development Strategy to 2016, being developed by partners across Cherwell and led by the District Council, sets out a vision for the aspiration and needs of the local economies of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and rural areas, as well as Cherwell-wide issues of:

- supporting existing companies to be successful and productive, especially in international markets, aiming to reverse the relatively low-wage local economy
- selective encouragement of inward investment, supporting diversity
- identification of development sites for economic growth
- strengthening technical capacity, leading expansion of high-technology, specialised sectors
- balancing population and business growth with infrastructure requirements
- Overall, maintaining Cherwell as a good place to live and work

Whilst intended as a Strategy delivered by many employers and partners working together, the themes for delivering the Economic Development Strategy directly shape much of the future leadership and delivery role of Cherwell's Economic Development Service:

1.1 Strategy Delivery Theme A: Resilience

- A diverse and resilient economy
- Strong and flexible partnerships that add value by working together
- Maximise the gain from the "green economy" arising from Eco-Bicester
- Responding to the challenge from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies in 2010: 'The catalytic elements are in Cherwell, it just needs gluing together.'

1.2 Strategy Delivery Theme B: People, Business and Place

Developing People: Our people are our greatest asset in our community, we will:

- create employment
- provide access to employment
- enhance skills
- improve the life chances of people living in some of Cherwell's less prosperous areas
- ensure wages keep pace with local costs of living

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

- promote business start-ups and entrepreneurship
- develop local procurement and supply chains
- promote business & cluster development
- attract new investment
- develop a "World Class" business community and develop the visitor economy

Developing Place: So Cherwell is an even better place to live, work and play, we will:

- promote employment sites & premises
- manage infrastructure development
- support rural areas and urban centres.

2. Economic Development Service: Vision 2011 – 2016

The service aims to lead and shape delivery of significant elements of the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy to 2016, contributing to its delivery to the best of its ability within available resources.

2.1 Strategic Benefits

By 2016 the Economic Development Service will have contributed towards and be able to evidence a range of **strategic benefits** to Cherwell:

- **Increased resilience and diversity of the business community across Cherwell:** How the economy has become more diverse and resilient over the 5 years of the Economic Development Strategy.
- **Balanced economic development and housing growth:** through promotion of economic development through business advice and support, inward investment and Local Enterprise Partnerships (Cherwell's Corporate Plan 2011/12)
- **Gains from Eco-Bicester:** Demonstrable economic gain from the significant opportunities offered by the exemplar national Eco-Bicester project of 5,000 homes and at least 5,000 jobs.
- **Work with partners to tackle disadvantage in the District:**
 - added value to the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme (Cherwell's Corporate Plan 11/12).
 - Work with our partners to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training across the district. (Cherwell's Corporate Plan 2011/12).
 - A programme of support for local people into work – such as creation of apprenticeships and co-ordination of Job Clubs (Cherwell's Corporate Plan 11/12).
- **Value added through Partnerships:** The value added by the partnerships in Cherwell that are created or remain in place.

2.2 Local outcomes, measured against baseline data, with annual targets, so that by 2016 we can show we have contributed towards and are able to evidence:

- Numbers of employment opportunities created.
- Increased number of VAT and NNDR registered local businesses.
- Reduced number of young people not in education, employment and training (Cherwell's Pledges 2011/12) – both 16-18 year olds and under 25s.
- Retention of the low level of unemployment, experienced in 2010.
- Increased qualifications among residents of working age – particularly NVQ 3 plus.
- Wage rate levels
- Outcomes focused in priority areas: Bicester Eco Town and Brighter Futures for Banbury Wards

3. Achieving the Vision:

Taking a Strategic Lead for delivering the Economic Development Strategy:

- We will champion the overall delivery of the Economic Delivery Strategy 2016 and respond to the challenge to bringing the catalytic elements in Cherwell together.
- We will commit to deliver annual plans representing Cherwell's contribution.
- We will review progress each year through the Local Strategic Partnership which will hold partners to account for their contribution.

3.1 Strategic Delivery Theme A: Resilience

A1. Supporting the development of a diverse and resilient economy

- We will promote cohesion of the business community through close working with organisations like the Chambers of Commerce.
- We will provide a network of support to local businesses of information, advice and guidance.
- We will connect local businesses together to increase the knowledge of what is available locally.
- We will encourage local procurement and procure locally ourselves wherever we are able.

A2 Leading or contributing significantly to Partnerships that we consider add value:

- We will prioritise the following Partnerships:
 1. Local Enterprise Partnerships – both SEMLEP & Oxford City Region LEP
 2. Cherwell Job Club Strategic Alliance of Partners
 3. Brighter Futures in Banbury Steering Group
 4. Oxfordshire Business Enterprises
 5. Bicester Vision
 6. Cherwell Investment Partnership
 7. Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership
 8. Cherwell Skills Board
- We recognise the networking value associated with Partnerships, and value this benefit in the context of supporting outcomes and delivering benefits.
- We will maximise the gain for Cherwell from Partnerships to which we have agreed to be members, such as drawing on our regional professional and employers' networks.
- Where we lead, we will be clear of the objectives of the Partnership and its aims for the year with appropriate, focussed forward planning and reporting back in the Annual Report.

Future funding of OBE may become an issue as early as April 2012 and Cherwell is already in discussions with key partners. The Council may need to look to alternative partnership funding sources or fill the funding gap from its own resources (as it has done previously).

A3 Maximising the economic development gains from Eco Bicester:

- We will explore joint marketing with P3Eco of Bicester as the eco destination for commercial investment.

- We will use our unique position to promote Eco Bicester to our business contacts, particularly new business start-ups such as to clients of Oxfordshire Business Enterprises.
- We will support our partners to maximise their offer, such as the College's plan for eco skills training centres in Bicester.

3.2 Strategy Delivery Theme B: People, Business and Place

B1 Developing People

(i) Get local people back into local jobs:

- We will co-ordinate Cherwell's Job Clubs and the associated website, while resources allow and until such time as the economic situation improves.
- We will re-focus Cherwell's support for Job Clubs towards "special events":
 - specific employment sectors (e.g. Health & Social Care) or employers
 - specific groups of clients (e.g. young people or graduates)
- We will look to Partners to increase co-ordination of "routine" elements of the regular Job Clubs, particularly developing the offer at alternative venues such as libraries. This will need to be actively considered during 2011/12.

Future funding for Job Club is a key issue to be addressed. The Council will need to seek increased sponsorship, greater self help and also make more of its remaining project budgets available to support this service. It is to be hoped that an improving economic climate will allow a careful re assessment of the form of service needed.

(ii) Careers Advice: improving skills and access to jobs

- We will support local co-ordination of careers advice for the benefit of Cherwell's residents.
- We will work with partners, like JCP and local GPs, to increase resident referrals for support in access skills and jobs.
- We will work with partners to increase local, accessible venues for careers advice.

(iii) Employer Support:

- We will work with employers with local vacancies looking to recruit local people.
- We will co-ordinate special recruitment events for significant opportunities.
- We will work with local employers looking to make redundancies, tailoring the package accordingly, co-coordinating Partners to support employees.

(iv) Supporting Young People:

- We will focus our economic development activity towards supporting young people not in employment, education and training, specifically we will:
 - host Young People's Job Clubs with our partners.
 - encourage employers to take on apprentices and work-based training.
 - We will employ apprentices ourselves.
 - We will support mentoring schemes through the local schools and encourage schemes such as Young Enterprise.

B2 Developing Businesses

- We will support existing businesses in Cherwell, prioritising supporting local businesses ahead of attracting new businesses into Cherwell (inward investment).
- We will increase the profile of what we have to offer existing businesses, recognising the withdrawal of regional Business Link support, such as:
 1. Support and advise local businesses looking to expand or relocate.

2. Host business events & clubs to support business growth, such as the Export Club and Cherwell Investment Partnership.
3. Support new businesses starting up with free, expert advice and information from Oxfordshire Business Enterprises.
4. Promote Cherwell M40 Investment Partnership, its website and Working Group as a portal for businesses to find answers to their queries and help to invest.
5. We will maintain an up-to-date database of businesses in Cherwell and available land and premises.

B3 Developing Place

- We will support Bicester Vision and Banbury Town Centre Partnership as they develop the sense of place and identity of these Towns.
- Offer use of our premises to Partners if it helps our residents affected by the economic downturn, such as Jobseeker Allowance claimants signing-on at Cherwell's Bicester Linkpoint and expert careers advisors from the Government's Next Step Service using the Council's Linkpoints to offer free, confidential careers advice to Cherwell's residents.

3.3 Funding the Vision

The Vision will need to be funded from existing resources. The most significant element of spending is staff costs and discretionary spend on "supplies and services". Some current activities rely on other funding (either internal funds for Job Clubs or external funding for OBE and Job Club expenses). The continued availability of this funding will need to be assessed on an annual basis and will be considered through the annual budget and service planning process.