

Executive

Local Plan 2012

28 May 2012

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To submit to members for their consideration the Proposed Submission draft of the Local Plan 2012. Once adopted the Local Plan 2012 will replace the Local Plan 1996 and will form the basis for determining development applications in the Cherwell District.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve the Local Plan 2012 for public consultation.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any minor changes to the document before publication for consultation.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Proposed Submission draft of the Cherwell Local Plan 2012:
 - Sets out clear ambitions for the District and the 2 towns in particular.
 - Provides certainty for communities and developers as to what will /can be developed and where.
 - Focuses growth at Bicester.
 - Proposes less growth at the villages than was envisaged in the Feb 2010 version of the plan.
 - Shifts focus of the plan to strengthening the local economy, job creation and inward investment and company growth, together with what sort of communities we wish to build.
 - Creates a major platform to help deliver economic development in a recession.
 - Strengthens the Town Centres at the heart of the District.
 - Secures infrastructure such as new rail and road investment.

- Avoids coalescence with villages, by introducing new green buffers at the edge of development.
- Takes permissions and what has been constructed into account.
- Emphasises high environmental standards and design quality.
- Protects the Oxford Canal
- Promotes area renewal and regeneration in Banbury
- Supports innovation such as Community Self build.
- Addresses planning reforms

Proposals

- 2.1 Securing the adoption of a 'sound' up to date Local Plan for the District is a priority for Cherwell District Council as it will guide the growth of the District over the next 19 years.
- 2.2 Without this the District faces an imminent challenge of piecemeal development by appeal, in which Cherwell District Council would lose the ability to ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations and future community needs are properly planned for and maximum community gain (and mitigation) secured.
- 2.3 The District faces a number of current challenges:
 - A policy vacuum with a Local Plan dating back to 1996.
 - Recession leading to planned strategic sites being delayed or with slower development profiles.
 - Identifying sites sufficient to meet local demographic needs over the next 19 years for both housing and employment.
 - Ensuring growth takes place at Banbury and Bicester and at more sustainable levels at the villages.
 - The passage of the Localism (2011) Act introducing major changes to the planning system in England.
 - The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategies due in 2012 and the move to a housing growth based on an assessment of local need (Locally derived growth).
 - The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 which continues with the requirement to maintain a 5 year land supply, and brings with it the 'duty to cooperate' and the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
 - Major sites in the two towns beginning to come forward for determination ahead of the strategic planning framework which the Local Plan should set.
- 2.4 Following the creation of the shared management team a review was conducted of the timetable for completing the Local Plan and preparing for submission for examination and the setting of realistic, deliverable deadlines. The review sought to ensure that the plan has taken account of the national changes being introduced and to ensure that the plan is as robust as possible, is 'challenge proof' and a plan which CDC can be confident will pass through its Examination for adoption.
- 2.5 Since November 2011 when Local Plan preparation begun in earnest, gaps in technical evidence has been completed to inform the Submission draft Local Plan for it to be 'sound'. These include:
 - Commissioning an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which relates to site

viability and development obligations and will pave the way for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is required by 2014 and which is being prepared alongside the Local Plan.

- A Sustainability Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment of the final draft plan (required by regulation).
- An update of the SHLAA (Housing Land Assessment) and SHMA (Housing Market Assessment) to ensure a full option appraisal of strategic sites and that they are the most sustainable locations for growth (required by the NPPF).
- A further assessment of housing mix and need for extra care and self-build housing and consideration of procedures for financial contributions for affordable housing part units.
- The completion of an outstanding employment land assessment and ensuring the conclusions of the Council's Economic Development Strategy are fully taken into account
- A study of economic change facing the District and a retail assessment to inform how we position the economy of the District.
- A review of the NPPF for the Plan.
- Addressing the 'Duty to co-operate', showing how the plan takes account of the views of neighbouring Councils (required by the NPPF).
- Ensuring the plan takes account of the Bicester Masterplan and emerging Banbury Masterplan which examine how major sites in each town (SW & NW Bicester, Graven Hill, the two Town Centres) might be properly integrated with the wider town and the town centres strengthened.
- Ensuring the plan is legible and readable to help secure community acceptance.

2.6 The district is in need of an adopted Local Plan as soon as possible. It has an old adopted Local Plan (1996), with only saved polices forming part of the statutory Development Plan. Its intended replacement, the Cherwell Local Plan 2011, was withdrawn from the statutory process and approved by the Council as interim policy in December 2004. The Non-Statutory Plan (Feb 2010) has only limited weight and its plan period has now expired. Since that time the Council has been working on a Local Development Framework.

2.7 Following the passage of the Localism Act (2011) and the creation of the Joint Management Team conclusive steps have been taken to complete the Submission Draft of the Local Plan (formerly the Core Strategy) as quickly as possible.

2.8 A Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan (May 2012) has now been prepared which grows out of the Draft Core Strategy (Feb 2010) but which re-prioritises policies based on up-to-date assessments of the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the district. This marks the beginning of the final stages of plan preparation.

Conclusion

3.1 It is proposed that the Local Plan 2012 be approved for public consultation.

Background Information

4.1 See Appendix 1.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

3.1 The approval of the Local Plan 2012 for consultation.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

Option One	To support the contents of the Local Plan 2012.
Option Two	To support the contents in the Local Plan 2012 with amendments
Option Three	To not support the completion of the Local Plan 2012.

Consultations

Cllr Michael Gibbard Regular Briefing

Implications

Financial:	There are no significant direct financial implications A rising from this report. Comments checked by Leanne Lock 01295 227098
Legal:	The Council is required to have an up to date Local Plan and following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework has 12 months to complete the preparation of the Local Plan after which the NPPF would become the primary basis for determining planning applications. Comments checked by Nigel Bell Team Leader – Planning and Litigation 01295 221687
Risk Management:	Not having an up-to-date Local Plan is a major weakness for the consideration of planning applications and weakens the ability of the Council to shape and guide growth to the more sustainable locations. Council's proposed Development Plan Documents being found 'unsound' at Examination with consequent delay implications for resources. Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Performance Manager 01295 221563

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

- Accessible, Value for Money Council
- District of Opportunity
- Safe and Healthy
- Cleaner Greener

Lead Member

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Report on Submission draft Local Plan 2012
Appendix 2	Local Plan 2012 –circulated separately
Background Papers	
See Local Plan 2012 Annex 3 detailing evidence	
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