

## C.5 Our Villages and Rural Areas

### Meeting the Challenge of Developing a Sustainable Economy in the Villages and Rural Areas

**C.200** Most of rural Cherwell's economically active residents commute to their workplaces, and less than a quarter of them work within 5km of home. There are limited employment opportunities in Cherwell's villages. Kidlington is the exception to this pattern; in recent years it has developed its high technology, office and airport offerings, positioning itself to absorb the potential overflow from Oxford University's spin off businesses. Kidlington is well connected with easily accessible business premises, and is well positioned to continue to provide for overflow needs from Oxford.

**C.201** The key economic issues facing the villages and rural areas are:

- Addressing the changing needs of the rural economy and the district's farming communities. Farming remains of vital importance to Cherwell's rural identity [and to local food production](#). In order to remain viable many farms are diversifying into tourism, recreation, food retail and other types of business
- Ensuring that there are appropriate opportunities for local rural employment and to support home working will be important; there is a lack of fast broadband in some locations.
- The need to support the vibrant visitor economy in a way which contributes to the local economy whilst also preserving the local environment
- The need to support the economic role of Kidlington
- Preserving the canal and its immediate surroundings whilst maintaining and realising its recreational potential
- Potential future demand for airport expansion at Kidlington and the potential for employment land in this location.

**C.202** Our vision for our rural areas is that our villages should be "lived in" as well as "slept in". To achieve this, rural areas must seek to provide appropriate opportunities for new jobs such as support for farm diversification proposals and rural employment opportunities that are sustainable and support local communities, whilst at the same time protecting the landscape and built environment of the district. In particular we will encourage appropriate proposals that can support a vibrant tourist economy whilst also preserving the local environment.

**C.203** At Kidlington, we will support the function of the Village Centre as a vibrant heart of the village and build on Kidlington's strength as a focus for employment generating development as a quality centre for office and laboratory based businesses, recognising its proximity to Oxford.

### Meeting the Challenge of Building Sustainable Villages and Rural Areas

**C.204** Cherwell District has many attractive villages with valued built and natural environments. High house prices and an emphasis on commuting by private car mean that those of limited means, and those seeking to live, work and

access services locally, can be disadvantaged. There are also pockets of deprivation in Cherwell's rural areas.

**C.205** The key community issues facing the villages and rural areas are:

- A lack of affordable homes of all types. There is a lack of private rented homes, social rented housing stock and smaller homes generally. In some areas there is a lack of any new housing coming onto the market at all. House prices are more expensive in Kidlington and the rural areas compared to Banbury and Bicester, meaning that it is less likely that those born in the village will be able to purchase a house there
- The Council's Playing Pitch and Green Spaces Strategy and 2011 Open Space Update have identified that there are deficiencies in open space provision in the rural areas
- The number of permanent local services (~~village shops, pubs, schools, GP surgeries~~) is generally declining. Public transport provision is variable across the rural areas. In smaller and more isolated villages, it can be infrequent or non-existent. There is a need to protect services and facilities and improve them wherever possible.
- A lack of school places

**C.206** As our district continues to grow, a key challenge will be to steer development towards the most ~~appropriate~~ sustainable locations in a manner which meets the needs of our villages and rural communities as far as possible. We will aim to ~~seek to~~ provide good quality, affordable rural housing and support the provision of services and facilities to meet ~~rural needs and meet~~ the needs of rural communities for services where possible ~~and for open space, sport and recreation facilities~~.

### **Meeting the Challenge of Ensuring Sustainable Development in our Villages & Rural Areas**

**C.207** There ~~is a~~ need to manage the rural environment ~~to and~~ create inclusive, sustainable ~~rural~~ communities and help, ~~meeting~~ the needs of ~~all those people~~ who live and work there. We wish to protect our built and natural environments and the character and appearance of our villages. ~~creates particular tensions. We do not wish to see development that leads to a loss of village character.~~

**C.208** The key environmental issues facing the villages and rural areas are:

- The need to protect the biodiversity of the rural areas. The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation, which is of European importance, is located 2km from Kidlington
- The need to address the challenges faced by the legacy of major developments that have taken place in the rural areas. In particular, the MOD has developed significant assets across the district, and over time their needs for these will change. The former RAF base at Upper Heyford has particular challenges as it is redeveloped for new uses
- The impact of growth and new development in the rural areas may impact upon the quality, character and landscape setting of villages
- Any further expansion of Kidlington needs to be carefully considered in relation to the Green Belt.

- The rural areas are not congested when compared to the towns but traffic is an issue in the rural area owing to the high level of commuting to larger urban areas nearby towns and cities for work. Traffic congestion is an issue for Kidlington. The Sustainable Community Strategy highlights the need to address traffic management and the issues of resulting from the main road bisecting the village, and traffic management.

**C.209** The major environmental challenge for our villages and rural areas is to maintain and enhance the quality of our natural, built and historic environment in the face of pressures for new development. In addressing this challenge the Local Plan aims that the district must accommodate; to protect and enhance biodiversity; and to support a pattern of development which reduces people's need to travel, and maximises opportunities to use public transport and, thereby minimising additional levels of road traffic on the roads and pollution.

### **Our Vision and Strategy for Our Villages and Rural Areas**

**C.210** By 2031, we will have protected and enhanced where possible, enhanced our services and facilities, landscapes and the natural and historic built environments of within our villages and rural areas, and We will have encouraged created sustainable economic opportunities and we for the people who live and work there. We will have provided 3,902 (2006-2031) dwellings in total in the rural area including in the rural areas and Kidlington and the approved included 761 additional homes at former RAF Upper Heyford.

**C.211** We will cherish, protect and enhance the appearance and character beauty of our villages through by protecting conservation areas and by promoting high standards of design for new development, and We will have protect ed and enhance d the beauty and natural diversity of the countryside for the enjoyment of all.

**C.212** To secure our vision this Local Plan has a strong urban focus which deliberately seeks to direct housing towards Bicester and Banbury. However, there will still be a need for some development within the rural areas to meet local needs.

### **What will Happen and Where**

**C.212a** The overall level of housing growth for our villages and rural areas is set out in 'Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution'. Compared to the former South East Plan, the Local Plan reduces the overall level of proposed growth directed to the rural areas of the district in favour of a higher level of growth at Bicester. Proposed figures take into account growth in the rural area since 2006. There is a particular need to achieve economic growth at Bicester and to protect the quality of our rural environments in the context of development pressures.

**C.213** In identifying the strategic approach towards new development in our villages and rural areas, this Local Plan must do three things. It must:

- Identify the overall level of growth to be developed within the rural areas

- ~~Identify an approach for distributing the growth across the different villages within the rural areas~~
- Identify a sustainable hierarchy of villages to set a framework for considering how proposals within villages will be determined
- Identify an approach for distributing growth across the different villages within the rural areas.-

**C.214** Our approach to ~~providing where~~ development in the rural areas seeks to is to be located is informed by:

- provide new housing for people in rural areas to meet, in particular, the needs of newly forming households
- provide affordable housing in what are generally areas of higher housing cost
- deliver housing at villages where Distribution of development across our most sustainable villages where there is good access to local shops, services and job opportunities are available and accessible , or where access to nearby towns would be there is sustainable in transport terms best access by means other than the car to nearby towns
- provide development to help sustain Where existing rural services and facilities can best be supported through controlled population growth
- ~~Where opportunities for affordable rural housing can be taken~~
- avoid Where there will not be significant environmental harm.

**C.215** To this end, This approach is reflected in the policies for Policy Villages 1 Villages 1 provides a categorisation of the district's villages to ensure that unplanned, small-scale development within villages is directed towards those villages that are best able to accommodate limited growth. The Policy establishes different scales of development that are appropriate for different categories of village. -and 2 below.- Policy Villages 2 sets out that some additional planned development will be required, to meet district housing requirements and help meet local needs. Policy Villages 3 seeks to respond to often acute issues of affordability in rural areas and allows for affordable housing to be provided in any of Cherwell's villages- to meet locally identified needs in locations or on sites that might otherwise not be appropriate. All villages can receive infilling or minor development through Policy BSC3. Policy Villages 4 establishes a framework for addressing open space, sport and recreation deficiencies at the villages. Policy Villages 5 seek to deliver the approved new settlement at former RAF Upper Heyford. This approach will mean that development is focussed in villages which are sustainable and where development can help maintain and potentially enhance use of services and facilities. With services and facilities declining, due to many factors, this approach will at least help to maintain some key services and facilities in key sustainable rural locations.

**C.216** The overall level of growth for our villages and rural areas is set out earlier in 'Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution'. The Local Plan proposes to reduces the overall level of growth directed to the rural areas of the district.-

**C.217** We do not allocate specific sites within villages in this document. The suitability of individual sites will be considered through work on a Local Neighbourhoods Development Plan Document or, where appropriate, through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans may provide

an opportunity for local communities to propose development not identified in the Local Plan provided it is in general accordance with the Local Plan's strategic policies and objectives. Where Neighbourhood Plans have been prepared, formally examined, and have been supported through a local referendum, they will be adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan. The Council will advise and support Parish Councils and relevant Neighbourhood Forums in preparing their Plans.

**C.218** ~~Where development is proposed permitted in villages, we will be required that it to be s-~~ built to exemplary design and building standards as set out in Section B3 Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development.

**C.219** ~~In addition, some villages are also preparing and others considering whether to prepare Neighbourhood Plans as has been enabled by the Localism Act (2011). Where Neighbourhood Plans have been prepared, formally examined, and have been supported through a local referendum, they will be adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan.~~

### **Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation**

**C.219a** Village categorisation helps understand which villages are in principle best placed to sustain different levels of residential development. The Policy ensures that unanticipated development within the built-up limits of a village is of an appropriate scale for that village and does not unnecessarily exacerbate travel patterns that are overly reliant on the private car and which incrementally have environmental consequences. Village categorisation therefore seeks to manage small scale development proposals (typically but not exclusively for less than 10 dwellings) which come forward within the built-up limits of villages. This approach will mean that development is focussed in villages which are sustainable and where development can help maintain and potentially enhance use of services and facilities. With services and facilities declining, due to many factors, this approach will at least help to maintain some key services and facilities in key rural locations.

**C.220** ~~In order to ensure the most sustainable distribution of growth across the rural areas the v-~~ villages have been categorised based on the following criteria:

- Population size
- The number and range of services and facilities within the village (shops, schools, pubs, etc.)
- Whether there are any significant known issues in a village that could be materially assisted by an increase in housing (for example to maintain pupil numbers at a primary school)
- The accessibility (travel time and distance) of the village to an urban area by private car and public transport (including an assessment of any network constraints)
- Accessibility of the village in terms of walking and cycling
- Local employment opportunities.

**C.221** Survey work was undertaken to form the categorisation and this was supplemented by "the Cherwell Rural Areas Integrated Transport & Land Use Study" (CRAITLUS). The Council, which was produced in association with Oxfordshire County Council, commissioned the "Cherwell Rural Areas

~~Integrated Transport & Land Use Study” (CRAITLUS) to assess many of these issues.~~

**C.222** The principle of categorising villages is well established within the district, with this approach being taken in both the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan in 2004. It is considered that this approach is still appropriate.

**C.223** This Local Plan has also considered the issue of village clustering. Some villages, which may not necessarily have many services and facilities of their own, are geographically close to villages which do have services and facilities. People living in the rural areas may use services and facilities in other nearby villages. Those larger villages with services and facilities (the ‘service centre’ villages) in combination with the smaller “satellite” villages can be considered to form a functional “cluster”. Clustering will allow for:

- The support of community facilities (such as shops) in service centres, by locating new development and therefore people/customers close to as well as within service centre villages.
- Small sites to come forward for development in satellite villages where sites in service centres may be limited
- The reduction in length of car journeys in the rural areas (i.e. between satellite villages and service centres)
- Where appropriate, the potential for developer contributions [or other mechanism to support the delivery of infrastructure and services](#) to be applied to needs in any village in a cluster.

**C.224** It is not proposed that clustering forms part of the development strategy in ‘Policy for Villages 2: Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas’ as the services and facilities in most satellite villages are too limited to sustainably accommodate [the development of larger](#) allocated ~~development~~ sites. There is considered to be a role for satellite villages to accommodate infilling which is set out in ‘Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation’ below.

**C.225** The following categorisation will be used to assess residential proposals that come forward within villages.

### Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation

Category	Villages by Category	Satellite Villages	Type of Development
A	Adderbury, Ambrosden, Begbroke, Bloxham, Bodicote, Cropredy, Deddington, Fritwell, Hook Norton, Kidlington, Kirtlington, Launton, Steeple Aston, Sibford Ferris/ <a href="#">Sibford</a> Gower, Weston on the Green (*), Yarnton		Minor Development Infilling Conversions
B	Arcott, Bletchingdon, Chesterton, Finmere, Fringford, Islip, Middleton Stoney,	Blackthorn, Claydon, Clifton, Great Bourton, Hempton, Lower Heyford, Middle Aston,	Infilling Conversions



	Milcombe, Wroxton	Milton, Mollington, South Newington, Wardington	
C	All other villages		Conversions

(\*) *This village lies partly within and partly outside the Green Belt. In those parts that lie within the Green Belt, only infilling and conversions will be permitted.*

- C.226** This policy sets a framework for considering sites which have not been specifically identified for development in the Council's planning documents. The appropriate form of development will vary depending on the character of the village and development in the immediate locality. In all cases, 'Policy ESD 16: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment' will be applied in considering applications.
- C.227** In assessing whether proposals constitute 'minor development', regard will be given to the size of the village and the site's context within the existing built environment, general location of the site within the village. In considering the scope of new residential development within the built-up limits of at Kidlington, consideration will be given to its role and urban character as an urban area to be limited due to the Green Belt.
- C.228** Infilling refers to the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage that is suitable for residential development.
- C.229** The category A villages which perform as 'service centres' within village clusters are Adderbury, Ambrosden, Bloxham, Cropredy, Deddington, Kirtlington, Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower, Steeple Aston and Yarnton.
- C.230** The villages which do not 'score' highly enough in their own right to be included as category B villages but which have been included because of the benefits of access to a service centre within a village cluster are: Blackthorn, Claydon, Clifton, Great Bourton, Hempton, Lower Heyford, Middle Aston, Milton, Mollington, South Newington, and Wardington. For example, Claydon, Great Bourton, Mollington and Wardington benefit from their relationship with Cropredy. Information on village clusters was set out in the Council's Options for Growth Paper (on Map 6).
- C.231** Appropriate infilling (and minor development for affordable housing) in these "satellite villages" may help to meet needs not only within the village itself but also the larger village with which it is clustered.
- C.232** This policy Villages 1 applies to includes all these villages in the District including those that are, in whole or in part, within the Green Belt. The general extent of, and policy for, the Green Belt is set out in 'Policy ESD 14: Oxford Green Belt and on the Proposed Submission Policies Map' (Appendix 5: Maps). The villages of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke (all "category A" villages) are "inset" villages within the Green Belt and therefore will not be covered by Green Belt policy. All other villages within the Green Belt, however, are "washed over" by Green Belt designation and Policy ESD 14 will apply in relation to whether development maintains the Green Belt's openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or harm

~~its visual amenities.- Policy ESD14 will apply in the same way for those parts of Weston on the Green and Bletchington that lie within the Green Belt, where only infilling will be permitted. For Category 3 villages within the Green Belt only conversions will be permitted.~~

## **Policy Villages 2: Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas**

**C.233** The Local Plan must set out an approach for identifying the development of new sites for housing across the rural areas to meet local needs in sustainable locations and to meet the strategic targets set in 'Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution'.

**C.234** The Housing Trajectory shows that the district already has a substantial housing supply from rural areas:

Completions (2006-2012):

Kidlington (10 or more dwellings)	-	62
Rural Areas (10 or more dwellings)	-	640
Rural Areas and Kidlington (less than 10 dwellings)	-	596

Planning Permissions at 31/3/12:

Former RAF Upper Heyford	-	761
Rural Areas (10 or more dwellings)	-	465

**C.234a** In the interests of meeting local housing need in rural areas, a limited allocation is also being made to enable the development of some new sites (for 10 or more dwellings) in the most sustainable locations where developable sites are most likely to be available. A further 50 dwellings will be made available at Kidlington and a further 348 dwellings at other villages. Sites for 10 or more dwellings that have received planning permission since 31 March 2012 will contribute in meeting these requirements.

Additionally, a realistic windfall allowance of 980 homes is identified for sites of less than 10 dwellings for the period (2012-3031). In total, some 3,902 homes will be delivered across the rural areas from 2006 to 2031.

## **Policy Villages 2: Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas**

**The development of new housing sites for 10 or more dwellings will be directed to the following villages as set out below:**



<b>Villages – Housing Allocation 2012-2031 (10 or more dwellings)</b>	
Kidlington	50
Adderbury, Ambrosden, Chesterton, Deddington, Launton, Hook Norton	252
Arncott, Bletchington, Bloxham, Bodicote, Cropredy, Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Kirtlington, Middleton Stoney, Milcombe, Sibford Gower / <a href="#">Sibford</a> Ferris, Steeple Aston Weston on the Green, Wroxton, Yarnton	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>

**C.235** Not all villages will necessarily accommodate a site. The precise number of homes to be allocated to an individual village will be set out in the Local Neighbourhoods Development Plan Document in the light of evidence such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Sites will be allocated in either the Local Neighbourhoods DPD or in Neighbourhood Plans. In some cases, the approval of schemes will make it unnecessary to allocate specific sites. Regard will be had to the level of building that has already taken place in each village to avoid over development. At Bletchington and Weston on the Green development will take place outside that part of the village that is within the Green Belt. The Plan makes no provision for reviewing the Green Belt boundary to accommodate residential development [within the District](#).

**C.236 (Para' Deleted)**

**C.237 (Para' Deleted)**

**C.238 (Para' Deleted)**

**C.239 (Para' Deleted)**

### **Policy Villages 3: Rural Exception Sites**

**C.240** Housing is generally less affordable in rural areas than in Cherwell's towns. There are also less new housing opportunities than in urban areas and a low turnover of existing social or 'affordable' homes. This makes it particularly difficult for those who cannot afford market housing including many newly forming households. The Council's Housing Strategy (2012-17) highlights that the attraction of rural areas adds to the pressure on affordability. Allowing opportunities for small scale affordable housing to meet local needs as an exception to planning policies which otherwise restrain development can provide homes for people in rural areas who otherwise might have to move out of their communities.

**C.241** Such 'rural exception sites' do not have the same economic value as market housing sites. It is therefore important that the key parties involved work in

partnership. In limited occasions consideration will be given to the introduction of market housing to enable a degree of cross-subsidisation. This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.

- C.242** The Council will support proposals for community self-build or self-finish affordable housing where they will meet a specific, identified local housing need and particularly where they will result in suitable empty properties being brought into residential use. Arrangements will be made to restrict the occupancy of the housing to ensure that it continues to meet local needs in perpetuity.
- C.243** In identifying suitable sites, it will be necessary to balance the advantages of providing affordable housing with the degree of harm that would be caused, for example to the appearance of the village, the surrounding landscape or to the historic environment. It will be particularly important that proposals for developments in the Green Belt are able to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites outside of the Green Belt that could reasonably meet the identified needs (for example if part of the village lies outside the Green Belt or needs could be met in another village close by).
- C.244** In considering the number of homes proposed and the form of development, the suitability of villages to accommodate additional development will be assessed having regard to 'Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation' and to demonstrated local housing need.
- C.245** Where rural exceptions sites are shown to be unviable, the Council will consider whether an element of market housing would be appropriate to secure the delivery of affordable housing. 'Open-book' analysis of the costs of development will be expected. The policy sets a limit of 25% market housing. This will be kept under review and, if necessary, adjusted by way of a Supplementary Planning Document.
- C.246** The Council will work in partnership with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Parish Councils, Registered Providers and other interested parties in identifying suitable opportunities.

### **Policy Villages 3: Rural Exception Sites**

**The Council will support the identification of suitable opportunities for small scale affordable housing schemes within or immediately adjacent to villages to meet specific, identified local housing needs that cannot be met through the development of sites allocated for housing development.**

**Arrangements will be secured to restrict the occupancy of the housing to ensure that it continues to meet local needs in perpetuity.**

**Market housing for private rent or sale will only be considered on rural exception sites in the following circumstances:**

- **The number of market homes should not exceed 25% of the total number of homes proposed**
- **The market housing must be shown to be required to secure the viability of the proposal and development costs must be justified**

- **No alternative, suitable site is available to provide a rural exception site and a robust site search can be demonstrated**
- **The market housing ensures that no additional subsidy for the scheme is required**
- **The development has the support of the local community**
- **The total number of dwellings and the scale of development is in keeping with the categorisation, character and form of the village and its local landscape setting.**

#### **Policy Villages 4: Meeting the Need for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

**C.247** The evidence base studies have identified a number of existing deficiencies and future shortfalls in provision in Kidlington and the Rural Areas. The action plans contained in the Playing Pitch and Green Space Strategies (See Appendix 3 Evidence Base) recommended deficiencies being met through a combination of improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing facilities, using existing areas of one type of provision to meet deficiencies in another type, and the provision of new areas of open space. ‘Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision’, ‘Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision- Outdoor Recreation’ and ‘Policy BSC12: Indoor Sport, Recreation and Community Facilities’ will be used to help address existing deficiencies in provision and future development needs.

**C.248** The evidence base studies divided the district’s Rural Areas into three sub-areas for analysis purposes, comprising the following:

Rural Sub Areas: Open Space	
Sub Area	Wards
Rural North	Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote, Cropredy, Hook Norton, Sibford, Wroxton
Rural Central	Caversfield, Deddington, Fringford, The Astons and Heyfords
Rural South	Ambrosden and Chesterton, Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton, Kirtlington, Launton, Otmoor

#### **Policy Villages 4: Meeting the Need for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

**In terms of addressing existing deficiencies in Kidlington, based on the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Green Spaces Strategy (as updated by the 2011 Open space review) land would need to be allocated for the following if possible:**

- **1 new junior football pitch**
- **A park ideally on the northern outskirts of Kidlington**
- **11.29 ha of amenity open space with priority provision in South ward**
- **1.51ha of allotments.**

**The Playing Pitch and Green Spaces Strategy estimated that the following additional provision was required to meet needs to 2026:**

- **1 adult football pitch**
- **4 junior football pitches**

- 5 mini-soccer pitches
- 0.4ha park ideally on the northern outskirts of Kidlington
- 0.1ha natural/semi-natural green space
- 0.4ha amenity open space
- 0.2ha allotments.

These strategies were formulated before the amount and preferred distribution of development in the district for an extended plan period had been established, and as a result future needs will need to be updated to cover the period through to 2031.

In terms of addressing existing deficiencies in the rural areas, based on the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Green Spaces Strategy (as updated by the 2011 Open space review) new areas of open space would be required for the following:

- 6.38 ha of amenity open space in Rural North sub-area with priority provision in Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote, Cropredy and Sibford Wards
- 2.87 ha of amenity open space in Rural South sub-area with priority provision in Gosford and Water Eaton, Kirtlington, Launton, Otmoor and Yarnton.

The Playing Pitch and Green Spaces Strategy estimated that the following additional provision was required to meet needs to 2026:

Rural North Sub Area	Rural Central Sub Area	Rural South Sub Area
2 junior pitches	1 junior pitch	1 junior pitch
1 mini-soccer pitch	1 mini-soccer pitch	1 mini-soccer pitch
2 cricket pitches	2 cricket pitches	2 cricket pitches
5.3ha of natural/semi-natural green space (through new provision or public access agreements)	1.5ha amenity open space	2.7ha amenity open space
2.6ha amenity open space		1 tennis court
		1 bowling green subject to local demand

**C.249** It is important that provision to meet future open space and recreation needs is made in conjunction with new housing, in order to achieve development that secures sustainable communities. The Local Plan sets out the framework for housing development in Kidlington and the Rural Areas but site specific allocations will be determined by the Local Neighbourhoods DPD and this will include allocations to [meet help address](#) deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision for the plan period.

**C.250** As indicated above, the strategies were formulated before the amount and preferred distribution of development in the district for an extended plan period had been established, and as a result future needs will need to be updated as the Local Neighbourhoods DPD/Neighbourhood Plans are progressed.

## **Policy Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford**

- C.251** The former RAF Upper Heyford site is located 7 km north west of Bicester, in an isolated rural location, within the parishes of Upper Heyford, Somerton and Ardley. It measures approximately 500 hectares in total.
- C.252** The US Air Force vacated the airbase in 1994 and since 1996 this unique site has been allocated for residential led mixed uses as enabling development to secure environmental improvements and conservation of the heritage interest of the site associated with its former use as a Cold War military base.
- C.253** In view of this heritage interest, the whole site has been designated as a Conservation Area. There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings, and non designated heritage assets on site, and much of the airfield is of ecological importance. The site has been divided into three main functional character areas: the main flying field and a technical site to the north of Camp Road and the residential area that is mainly to the south of Camp Road.
- C.254** The site is subject to a policy from the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (Policy H2) which was saved by the South East Plan and retained upon the South East Plan's revocation. A Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief to guide the future redevelopment of the site was adopted by the Council as an SPD in 2007.
- C.255** Since the airbase closed in 1994 temporary planning permissions have been granted for the reuse of a large number of the buildings on the site. At present there are just over 300 residential dwellings on the site, the majority of which are rented. Buildings used for employment purposes provide around 1000 jobs. The Cherwell Innovation Centre is also located on the site, providing serviced offices and flexible office space, lab space, and meeting rooms. The Centre is home to a large number of science, technology and knowledge-based businesses.
- C.256** Over the last 10 years numerous applications have been made seeking permission to either develop the whole site or large parts of it and many have gone to appeal. The most significant application proposed a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings (gross), together with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure for the entire site. Following a major public inquiry in 2008 the Council received the appeal decision from the Secretary of State in January 2010. The appeal was allowed, subject to conditions, together with 24 conservation area consents that permitted demolition of buildings on the site including 244 dwellings. More recently, and following a change of ownership of the site, a new outline permission has been granted for a revised scheme focusing on the settlement area only. A new masterplan was produced in which the same numbers of dwellings are proposed with the majority of the existing units retained but the development area extends further westwards.
- C.257** The 2010 permission granted consent for some of the many commercial uses already operating on temporary consents on the site. However no new build development has yet taken place nor has any part of the permitted residential development commenced. This site is therefore allocated in this Local Plan

as a means of securing the delivery of a lasting arrangement on this large scale brownfield site, which reflects the exceptional nature of the site. As the former RAF Upper Heyford has planning permission for limited redevelopment, it represents a permitted strategic housing site which, together with its existing employment activity (nearly 1,000 jobs), provides it with potential to be a self-contained development.

## **Policy Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford**

**Development Area: 500 ha**

**Development Description: This site will provide for a settlement of approximately 761 dwellings (net) and necessary supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved.**

### **Housing**

- **Number of homes – approximately 761 (net)**
- **Affordable housing – 30%**

### **Employment**

- **Land Area – approx 120,000 sq.metres**
- **Jobs created – approx 1500**
- **Use classes – B1, B2, B8**

### **Infrastructure Needs**

- **Open Space – sports pitches, sports pavilion, play areas, indoor sport provision**
- **Community Facilities – nursery, community hall, local centre/hotel, education provision, a neighbourhood police facility**
- **Access and Movement – transport contributions and sustainable travel measures, countryside access measures, fencing along the boundary of the new settlement and the Flying Field**
- **Utilities – contamination remediation**

### **Key site specific design and place shaping principles:**

- **Proposals must demonstrate that the conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements will be achieved across the whole of the former airbase in association with the provision of the settlement**
- **The settlement should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than travel by private car, with the provision of footpaths and cycleways that link to existing networks. Improved access to public transport ~~ments to bus and rail facilities~~ and measures to minimise the impact of traffic generated by the development on the surrounding road network will be required**



- **Development should provide for good accessibility to public transport services**
- **A Travel Plan should accompany any development proposals**
- **The construction of the settlement on the former technical core and residential areas should retain buildings, structures, spaces and trees that contribute to the character and appearance of the site and integrate them into a high quality place that creates a satisfactory living environment.**
- **Integration of the new community into the surrounding network of settlements by reopening historic routes and encouraging travel by means other than private car as far as possible**
- **The preservation of the stark functional character and appearance of the flying field beyond the settlement area, including the retention of buildings of national interest which contribute to the area's character (with limited, fully justified exceptions) and sufficient low key re-use of these to enable appropriate management of this area.**
- **The achievement of environmental improvements within the site and of views to it including the removal of buildings and structures that do not make a positive contribution to the special character or which are justified on the grounds of adverse visual impact, including in proximity to the proposed settlement, together with limited appropriate landscape mitigation, and reopening of historic routes.**
- **The conservation and enhancement of the ecological interest of the Flying Field through appropriate management and submission of an Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan, with biodiversity preserved and enhanced, and wildlife corridors enhanced, restored or created**
- **Visitor access, controlled where necessary, to (and providing for interpretation of) the historic and ecological assets of the site**
- **Provision of a range of high quality employment opportunities, capable of being integrated into the fabric of the settlement, and providing that the use would not adversely affect residents or other businesses and would not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape, historic interest of the site, or on nearby villages**
- **New and retained employment buildings should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and should be located and laid out to integrate into the structure of the settlement**
- **A full arboricultural survey should be undertaken to inform the master plan, incorporating as many trees as possible and reinforcing the planting structure where required**
- **New development should respond to the established character of the district character areas where this would preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area**
- **Management of the Flying Field should preserve the Cold War character of this part of the site, and allow for public access. New built development on the Flying Field should be restricted to preserve the character of the area**
- **Proposals should demonstrate an overall management approach for the whole site**
- **A neighbourhood centre or hub should be established at the heart of the settlement to comprise a primary school and nursery facilities, community hall, place of worship, shops, public house, restaurant, and social and health care facilities. Proposals should also provide for a heritage centre given the historic interest and Cold War associations of the site**

- **The removal or remediation of contamination or potential sources of contamination will be required across the whole site**
- **The scale and massing of new buildings should respect their context. Building materials should reflect the locally distinctive colour palette and respond to the materials of the retained buildings within their character area, without this resulting in pastiche design solutions**
- **Public art should be provided**
- **Recycling and potential reuse of demolition materials where possible**
- **Provision of sustainable drainage including SuDS in accordance with Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), taking account of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**
- **Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures including exemplary demonstration of compliance with the requirements of policies ESD1 – 5.**