

The Cherwell Local Plan Submission Draft

October 2013

Statement of Consultation

Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to set out how the Council has involved the local community, stakeholders and statutory bodies in the formation of the Cherwell District Local Plan. It sets out the various consultations undertaken, who was consulted and when. This document and its appendices summarise the main points raised as a result of each consultation and how these points were taken into account as part of the preparation of the Local Plan.

2. The Plan has also been prepared throughout with due regard to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It should also be noted that the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 resulted in a change in title of the document from the Core Strategy to the Local Plan, however terms remain consistent with the date of publication.

3. Table 1 summarises the key stages for which the Local Plan has been prepared and acts as a useful navigation tool between the Consultation Statements prepared at each formal consultation stage.

4. There have been five main stages of consultation undertaken by the Council in the plan making process.

5. There is a "Report of Consultation" available for each consultation stage and they are included as appendices to this report. Each "Report of Consultation" sets out:

- The purpose of the consultation
- How we consulted
- Distribution
- Details of exhibitions, workshops and meetings
- Response rate
- Summary of representations received
- Officers responses to each question and how they have been addressed in the Local Plan

6. Consultation responses are available to view online at <http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/ldf>. For the last two consultations they are available at www.cherwell.gov.uk/publicationscheme. They are also summarised in the Appendices to this Statement. All officers used the full responses for each subsequent stage of the Plan's preparation process.

Table 1: Local Plan Timeline



* Originally advertised as 28th March 2013 – 9th May 2013 before being extended.

7. Table 2 below identifies the documents forming part each consultation. Documents were placed in a range of ‘deposit’ locations including libraries and Council offices as well as being published on the Council’s website. Public Notices were placed in relevant newspapers. The documents are available on-line at www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk .

Table 2: Public Consultation Documents

Date	Public Consultations – Main Documents
Dec 2005	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Paper
27 th Feb 2006 – 10 th Apr 2006	Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, Core Strategy Spatial Report, Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report and Housing Technical Paper 1
29 th Sep 2008 – 24 th Nov 2008	Core Strategy Options for Growth – Consultation on Directions of Growth and Strategic Sites; Supporting Report: Identification of Reasonable Alternatives for Directions for Growth and Strategic Sites
22 nd Feb 2010 – 19 th Apr 2010	Draft Core Strategy & Draft Sustainability Appraisal
29 th Aug 2012 – 10 th Oct 2012	Proposed Submission Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal, Statement of Consultation, Equalities Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 – Screening, Statement of Representations Procedure
28 th Mar 2013 – 23 rd May 2013	Proposed Changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal; Statement of Consultation, Equalities Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment Addendum, Statement of Representations Procedure

8. The Council has undertaken separate consultations for other site allocation work. Some of the consultation documents included sites also included in the preparation of the Local Plan. In parallel with the Local Plan, it has also prepared and consulted upon draft Supplementary Planning Documents for a Bicester Masterplan, and for the Canalside and Bolton Road strategic sites (both at Banbury). Those consultation documents are available on-line at www.cherwell.gov.uk. Stakeholder consultation has taken place for the production of a Banbury Masterplan.

Summary of Local Plan Consultation Stages

Issues and Options Consultation

9. The first consultation on Core Strategy (now Local Plan) Issues and Options took place in February/April 2006. The document set out the strategic issues facing Cherwell to 2026 and a range of options to address them. The consultation invited comments to help inform the Councils “preferred options”. A total of eighty two responses were received.

10. The full consultation statement can be view in **Appendix 1: Issues and Options Consultation.**

Options for Growth Consultation

11. In September 2008 the Council undertook consultation on the Options for Growth document. This document sought opinions on the best ways to accommodate future housing development in Cherwell. The consultation document invited comments to help decide what the “reasonable alternatives” were.

- How might development be distributed across the District?
- Where might development go at Banbury and Bicester?
- How might development be distributed to the villages?

12. This included a variety of different consultation methods including a questionnaire, exhibitions, a summary leaflet, a newspaper wrap, and meetings. A total of three hundred and forty three responses were received.

13. The full consultation statement can be viewed in **Appendix 2: Options for Growth.**

Draft Core Strategy

14. In early 2010 the Council consulted on its draft Core Strategy. As part of its preparation, the draft Core Strategy set out and sought opinions on.

- How the district will grow
- Where this growth will be, including strategic sites for new housing and employment
- How the growth will be delivered.

15. This again included a variety of consultation methods including exhibitions, meetings, leaflets and questionnaires. A total of five hundred and ninety two responses were received.

16. The full consultation statement can be viewed in **Appendix 3: Draft Core Strategy.**

Proposed Submission Local Plan

17. The Council consulted upon the Proposed Submission Local Plan in August 2012 and invited comments on whether the Plan was considered legally compliant and sound: Positively Prepared, Justified, Effective and Consistent with National Policy. A total of some 204 responses were received.

18. The full consultation statement can be viewed in **Appendix 4: Proposed Submission Local Plan.**

Proposed Changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan

19. The Council consulted upon a schedule of Proposed Changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan in March 2013. These ‘Focused Changes’ sought to respond to further evidence prepared by the Council and to the representations to the Proposed Submission draft August 2012. A number of necessary major changes had been identified leading to the need to re-consult. Major changes included amending the proposed Green Boundaries to Growth outlined by Policy ESD15 to reflect new landscape evidence, some changes to the capacity of strategic housing sites, revising Policy BSC4 Housing Mix to provide for more market flexibility and clarifying the purpose of the proposed ‘area of search’ for an expanded Bicester Town centre set out in Policy SLE2: Securing Dynamic Town

Centres and Bicester 5: Strengthening Bicester Town Centre. As there was a need to consult, other minor changes were included in the consultation.

20. The full consultation statement can be viewed in **Appendix 5: Proposed Changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan.**

Who have we consulted during formal consultations?

21. The Council has consulted the general public and other groups as required by the Regulations and as set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The Council has also contacted all those that have been registered on our consultation database, which now includes over 2000 bodies and individuals and which is regularly updated on request and as required. This includes the following bodies:

Specific Consultation Bodies

22. These are those we have to consult to meet the statutory requirements such as adjoining Councils and agencies such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and utility providers.

General Consultation Bodies

23. These include voluntary bodies and groups which represent the interests of different religious, racial, ethnic or national groups, local business groups and organisations that represent the interests of those with disabilities.

Other Consultees

24. These are those that have expressed a desire to be involved such as agents, developers, landowners and individuals (on the consultation database) and clubs and societies, charities and special interest groups.

What other consultation has taken place in preparing the Local Plan?

25. In addition to periods of formal consultation, the Council has consulted on an on-going basis and to varying levels with a wide range of stakeholders including developers, Parish Councils, local organisations, national organisations and statutory bodies.

Forms of Additional Consultation

Meetings with Town and Parish Councils

26. The Council held a series of structured workshops in 2007 / 2008 to discuss a range of subjects in the interest of developing planning policy. Subjects included: directions of growth, village sustainability and clustering; settlement boundaries; the location of development within/on the edges of villages; affordable housing; employment; tourism and design.

27. The Council hosts biannual Parish Liaison Meetings where all Town and Parish Councils are invited to hear the latest work being undertaken by the District Council and to ask questions. The Local Plan has featured regularly at these meetings with the most recent being on 12 June 2013. Officers have at times held “surgeries” for attendees to come and ask any specific questions.

28. Additionally, Council officers have met with Parishes on an individual basis to discuss issues arising. Recently, with some Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning and the links to the Local Plan has become a focus of discussion.

Stakeholder Events

29. The Council has held a number of stakeholder events that informed early Plan preparation.

- 17th May 2007 – Sustainability Appraisal – Key Stakeholders only such as EA, English Nature etc
- 4th September 2007 – Directions of Growth Workshop – Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Town and Parish Councils.
- 13th September 2007 – Two Directions of Growth Workshops facilitated by Adams Hendry (1 afternoon and one evening) – afternoon had 58 attendees plus Cherwell District Council and Adams Hendry staff; evening had 12 attendees plus CDC staff. Key stakeholders in attendance included the development industry, local organisations, statutory organisations and local organisations.
- 7th October 2007 – Design and Heritage Workshop - Thirty stakeholders with expertise in design and conservation fields were invited with 12 attending

Key Stakeholder Meetings

30. Consultation with stakeholders has included formal one to one meetings, topic meetings and joint working to inform preparation of the Core Strategy / Local Plan and, on occasions, the respective plans and policies of the other organisations. This has included but is not restricted to meetings and dialogue with the stakeholders listed in Table 3:

Table 3: Key Stakeholder Meetings

Key Stakeholders	
Parish and Town Councils	Oxfordshire County Council
Environment Agency	Oxford City Council
Natural England	West Oxfordshire District Council
Cotswold Conservation Group	South Oxfordshire District Council
Highways Agency	Vale of White Horse District Council
SEEDA	BBOWT
Thames Valley Police	Chiltern Railways
English Partnerships	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership	Homes and Community Agency
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Services	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Thames Valley Police	(formerly Defence Estates)
South Northamptonshire District Council	British Waterways
Aylesbury Vale District Council	

Registered Providers (Housing Associations) Thames Water	
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31. Attendance at the consultation events of other organisations has also been informative. Examples included those for the Northamptonshire SHMA and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Forum.

Local Strategic Partnership

32. There have been meetings with the Cherwell LSP particularly to inform preparation of the Options for Growth and Core Strategy consultations in 2008 and 2010. The topics covered included:

- Links between the LSP and the preparation of the LDF / Local Plans
- The need to promote and enhance the role of the town centres and local shopping facilities
- The need to ensure convenient access to services and facilities
- The need to enhance and protect Cherwell's built and natural environment
- The need to ensure the full and timely provision of housing including affordable housing
- The need to promote prosperity and a sustainable economy

33. Some meetings have also been held with the Oxfordshire LSP.

Duty to Cooperate

34. Consultation with key stakeholders is highlighted above. On-going and constructive engagement with neighbouring authorities and relevant organisations has taken place since work on the Local Plan began. The Council benefits from possessing a series of very well developed, interlocking relationships with neighbouring Councils and a particularly close engagement with Oxfordshire County Council and South Northamptonshire District Council. Through the various forums, regular debate and coordination takes place on strategic planning, growth strategies, transport and economic development issues facing the sub-region, county, and district, and in relation to its neighbours.

35. A 'Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate' supports the Local Plan. Key areas of cooperation, in addition to working with specific stakeholders as outlined above, include:

- involvement in both the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- joint working and collaboration through the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) supported by the Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers group (OPPO)
- development and maintenance of a county Local Investment Plan
- joint working on Bicester and Banbury Masterplans, Gypsies and Traveller housing needs, flood risk and transport
- liaison with Bicester Vision and Chambers of Commerce
- involvement in the Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy produced by the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership

36. Cooperation has helped shape the Local Plan, for example in understanding the growth needs of Bicester, the opportunities associated with strategic investment in the railways, the need for regeneration in central Banbury, strategic highway issues, the re-alignment of the national logistic needs of the military, and the environmental priorities for the future.

37. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities and others on planning issues which cross administrative boundaries.