

Appendix 1: Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031) – Introduction to section on Banbury

The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011 - 2031) part 1 establishes the Development Framework for the District. It includes a section on how Banbury will develop and which sets the framework for the draft Banbury Masterplan:

'C.3 Banbury

C.108 Banbury is the District's largest town with its own sub-region. It is a focus for major retail developments, employment, housing and cultural and community uses that attract large numbers of people.

C.109 Banbury is a market town with an historic core and is expected to see continued growth over the period of the Local Plan. The growing population will have consumer, employment and community needs. Whilst most employment and housing growth will take place on the edge of the town, the Plan seeks to also take active steps to strengthen the town centre. The town centre of Banbury will adapt and evolve to meet the new growth and changing needs, demands and patterns of activity.

C.110 Banbury faces topographic and historic landscape constraints important to the setting of the town including the River Cherwell valley to the east, a steep sided valley and villages to the west, rising landform and village conservation areas to the north and an open aspect and village to the south beyond the Salt Way. These are all barriers to growth that have shaped how the town has grown and which will affect its growth in the future. More recently, the M40 motorway has also become a significant factor in identifying directions of growth and the need for focused urban renewal has become more pressing. The identified strategic development sites in this section of the Plan reflect these constraints and issues; particularly the need to retain Banbury's historic landscape context and character.

C.111 The development of a Masterplan for Banbury, to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide the means to establish an integrated delivery plan for the growth of the town that respects its setting, meets the needs for a stronger economy, housing and community facilities, and delivers sustainable development. The Council will explore all potential mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, and appropriate powers for the delivery of Local Plan sites and key proposals, to secure the development vision for the town.

Meeting the Challenge of Developing a Sustainable Economy in Banbury

C.112 Banbury's economy is focused on manufacturing, distribution, service industries, local government and health. Generally it has had very low levels of unemployment and a high demand for labour. However, there is a need to further diversify its economy, to attract more highly skilled businesses, to increase the levels of education, training and ambition in the town and to continue addressing the impact of the recent recession. In recent years the major manufacturers Hella (automotive parts) and SAPA (aluminium) have left the town with the loss of about 800 jobs.

C.113 The key economic issues facing Banbury are:

- *Ensuring the town remains competitive so that it retains and attracts major employers.*
- *Addressing the impact of recession on the unemployment level: the claimant count has reduced in Cherwell since it rose fairly sharply in 2009 but it remains higher in Cherwell than in other rural Oxfordshire Districts. In areas of Grimsbury and Castle Ward and Banbury Ruscote ward unemployment as a percentage of working age population was at 8.2% and 7.4% respectively, again the highest in Oxfordshire.*
- *The need to improve standards of education and training: five areas within Banbury Ruscote ward and one in Banbury Neithrop are in the worst 10% in England in terms of skills, education and training. GCSE performance is below county and national averages. A third of residents have no qualifications. There is an above average concentration of people employed in low-skilled and lower paid occupations.*
- *Maintaining a strong manufacturing sector but further diversifying the economy and creating more higher skilled and knowledge based job opportunities.*
- *The need to improve the overall attractiveness of the town as a place to live and work.*
- *The need to improve the appearance and vitality of the town centre outside of the Castle Quay shopping centre.*
- *Banbury has undergone considerable growth over the last 20 years and the Council's Economic Development Strategy (2011-2016) (EDS) envisages this as continuing in the long-term. The EDS considers that there will be a reduction in the size of the town's manufacturing sector (in common with UK trends) however since much of this is in higher value and specialised areas which are more dependent upon skilled input, it is of great importance that the sector remains an important local employer. The town has a strong industrial heritage and the EDS sees this evolving over the 21st century into a robust engineering economy driven by flagship sectors such as motor sport and advanced materials.*
- *Some of Banbury's employment areas/sites are in need of investment and there are vacant buildings. Development should take place on existing employment sites wherever possible to help regenerate these and ensure land is used efficiently.*

C.114 A key challenge for the Local Plan will be to ensure that the needs of both existing employers seeking to relocate and expand, and new businesses moving to the area can be met, by ensuring that the redevelopment of sites and buildings on existing sites within the town is encouraged by planning policies. This is a particular issue as this Local Plan seeks to regenerate the Canalside area of the town. This 26 hectare area includes a number of existing businesses and it will be important that there are sites and help available to relocate any of these that wish to develop locally.

C.115 Banbury has the largest supply of employment land in the District and the Council's Employment Land Review (2006, updated 2012) identified a range of

available sites totalling over 46 hectares. In this Local Plan Bicester will be the focus for new employment land to respond to its significant planned housing growth and to reduce out-commuting. Banbury also has valued landscapes on the edge of the town where growth is not appropriate. Whilst many of the sites in Banbury are non-strategic, one site is considered to be of strategic importance to securing Banbury's long term supply of employment land and is identified in this Local Plan (Policy Banbury 6: Employment Land West of M40). Planning permission has recently been granted for new employment uses on this site. Another site at Junction 11 of the M40 will provide for mixed employment uses. Existing employment sites such as the vacant former Hella site could be occupied by smaller and medium size businesses, such as those that relocate from the Canalside site. Proposals for the town centre set out in this plan will also provide jobs particularly in the retail and leisure sectors.

C.116 Providing for economic growth and diversification is necessary to increase the number of economically active residents, to lower unemployment to pre-recession levels, to provide more training opportunities and to encourage more ambitious educational attainment in Banbury. This will help provide a broader range of employment opportunities and potential access to more highly skilled jobs. Our plan seeks to build on the current manufacturing strength of the town with support for new business units for small-medium enterprises (SME's). We wish to encourage a wider range of employers into the town, particularly higher skilled and higher technology businesses, by providing suitable employment land, delivering regeneration and improving the quality of the built environment, to help create the conditions that will help reduce deprivation and improve the attractiveness of Banbury as a place to live, work and visit.

Strengthening Town Centre Vitality

C.117 This Plan seeks to ensure that the town centre remains the primary focus for new development; particularly retail uses together with other appropriate town centre uses such as employment, community, leisure and residential development being accommodated in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

C.118 In addition to the town centre there are out-of-centre retail locations including freestanding supermarkets, retail parks and neighbourhood centres. Banbury's role within the District is also supported by Bicester and Kidlington, together with other local centres that provide a hierarchy of facilities to serve Cherwell's population.

C.119 The existing and future role of Banbury has been considered in relation to the competition experienced from other centres outside the District. The principal centres that currently compete with Banbury are as follows:

- Leamington Spa - 22 miles*
- Stratford upon Avon - 27 miles*
- Oxford - 28 miles*
- Northampton - 32 miles*
- Milton Keynes - 35 miles.*

C.120 These centres generally fulfil a similar role to Banbury within their respective catchment areas, although Oxford and Milton Keynes are identified as higher level regional centres. Other centres such as Northampton are also growing rapidly which is increasing the level of competition experienced by Banbury (and also Bicester and

Kidlington). In addition to this, significant commercial development is being delivered in Oxford City Centre which will significantly enhance the commercial offer in the city centre.

C.121 This competition illustrates the need to maintain the renewal and strengthening of the town centre.

C.122 We will strengthen Banbury town centre to be the focus of the town. This plan will ensure that it remains a pleasant place to spend time and a usable space for all members of the community which brings people together and fosters a stronger sense of belonging. This plan builds on the heritage and natural assets of the town, but will also encourage change. It must be a place that people choose to use and enjoy. Therefore we will:

- Create more natural flows of people between its various quarters, creating a single whole rather than a group of unrelated parts*
- Bring together a broad mix of uses including open space, commercial, residential, leisure, shopping, and education, to ensure there is a human dimension throughout the day*
- Ensure the town is accessible from a variety of transport options*
- Make features and focal points of our key assets including our waterside areas, and our built and cultural heritage, to create and maintain uniqueness and a sense of community ownership*
- Promote a wide variety of activities at all times of the year.*

C.123 In general terms, mixed-use (residential, commercial and retail) development will be favoured to ensure that there is an active ground floor commercial use.

Meeting the Challenge of Building a Sustainable Community in Banbury

C.124 Banbury faces some challenging community and social issues. Increasing opportunities in the Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury and Castle wards is a priority and many of Banbury's main social issues are related, but not confined, to the complex problems of deprivation. This includes educational attainment, teenage pregnancy, anti-social behaviour, child well-being and access to services and facilities and affordable housing. This Local Plan provides for new development in a way that helps deal with Banbury's social issues and provides necessary community facilities, working in combination with the Council's 'Brighter Futures in Banbury' project which has been established to improve outcomes. In particular, the proposals for area renewal around Woodgreen and the wider Bretch Hill area are concerned with renewing the physical and community fabric of the area, to help reduce social disadvantage, improve health and well-being, educational attainment and employment outcomes. This approach will be extended to other wards within Banbury over the life of this plan and beyond.

C.125 The key community issues facing Banbury are:

The need to ensure social opportunities increase in a number of wards in Banbury, particularly Ruscote ward and two areas of Banbury Grimsbury and Castle Ward which

are in the 20 per cent most deprived areas nationally according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010.

- *The need to foster social cohesion, integration and equal opportunity: Banbury has a diverse population, with higher concentrations of people of non-white ethnic origin than elsewhere in the District, many of whom live in the more deprived areas.*
- *The need to reduce the incidences of teenage pregnancy, anti-social behaviour and to improve educational attendance and attainment*
- *The need for a replacement library*
- *The need for affordable housing and a more diverse private rented housing sector*
- *The need to improve access to services and facilities and to address deficiencies. A new ground is needed for Banbury United Football Club, and the town is lacking 11 junior football pitches, 1 cricket pitch, children's play space, allotments and tennis court provision. There are deficiencies in natural/semi-natural green space. Accessibility to open space and recreation opportunities is also mixed.*
- *Improved cultural facilities are also needed.*
- *Additional open space, sport and recreation provision will also be required to provide for future development needs*
- *New cemetery space is also needed.*

C.126 The Sustainable Community Strategy emphasises the importance of increasing opportunity across all wards in Banbury, reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and providing affordable housing and better training and employment opportunities. It looks to improve the skills and aspirations of young people and the opportunities open to them. It aims to provide better access for diverse communities to services and the provision of affordable recreational opportunities to help residents of all ages stay healthy. Retention of Banbury's Horton General Hospital remains of particular importance as a valued community facility and given the distance to alternatives.

Meeting the Challenge of Ensuring Sustainable Development in Banbury

C.127 Banbury's rapid post-war and continuing expansion has placed great pressures on its environment. The quality and distinctiveness of Banbury's town centre, its residential areas, green spaces and employment areas are important to the well-being of existing residents and in attracting new businesses and drawing people to the town. Growth has pushed the built-up perimeter of the town close to major landscape and other constraints and managing further expansion is a major challenge. Improving the town's river / canal corridor and continuing with regeneration to improve the environment and make effective and efficient use of land is also necessary. Banbury has some deficiencies in 'green' infrastructure which also need to be addressed.

C.128 Banbury's key environmental challenges are:

- *Managing growth in a way that will not unacceptably harm important natural and historic assets*
- *The need to manage traffic congestion and to provide more opportunities to travel using more sustainable modes.*
- *Improving footpaths and cycle ways to encourage walking and cycling*
- *Preserving and enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of the urban area including the historic street pattern of the town centre*
- *Recognising the river and canal as an asset and improving the river / canal corridor to improve the setting of the town centre,*
- *Make more efficient and effective use of land and enhance its ecological value*
- *Improving access to natural and semi-natural green space*
- *The need for more publicly accessible woodland and protecting existing areas of urban woodland*
- *Protecting the ecological value and the historic rural character of Salt Way.*

C.129 The major environmental challenges at Banbury are managing growth in a way that will not unacceptably harm areas of sensitive landscape around the town; which will preserve and, where possible, enhance natural and historic assets; plus its green spaces to provide more wooded areas and to minimise the impact of new development on the natural environment which will enhance biodiversity, improve the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment and which will maximise the opportunity for more sustainable traffic management and reducing carbon emissions. In particular we will regenerate land east of Banbury town centre and west of the railway line to improve the setting of Banbury town centre, the river/canal corridor and make effective and efficient use of underused land.

Banbury in 2031

C.130 By 2031, Banbury will have become a larger and more important economic and social focus for its residents, for business, and for a large rural hinterland.

- *The town will have a more diverse economic base and new employment areas will have been established with levels of deprivation reduced*
- *Over 7,000 new homes will have been constructed by 2031 of which a substantial number will be 'affordable'. New services, facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been provided. A new football ground will have been provided.*
- *The town centre will be vibrant, regionally competitive and at the heart of the town; a place that builds on our heritage and natural assets. The quality and distinctiveness of the built environment will have improved, particularly as a result of Canalside regeneration and the construction of new urban extensions.*

There will be more opportunity to travel on foot, by cycle and by bus and traffic management measures will have been implemented.

- There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public including new wooded areas and a green corridor or 'lung' will have been created through the town, with effective screening and access.*
- Electrification of the railway line through Cherwell will encourage investment and regeneration at Banbury.*

C.131 To achieve this vision, our strategy for Banbury is to:

- Bring about Canalside regeneration for the benefit of the whole town*
- Ensure implementation of the permitted urban extension at Bankside Support the role of the town centre by creating opportunities for further growth to meet the needs of local people*
- Help reduce the level of deprivation by securing benefits achieved through specific development proposals and by economic growth and diversification.*
- Secure a site that will deliver a new ground for Banbury United Football Club in an accessible location*
- Provide for new development that will bring with it new open space and recreation opportunities*
- Plan new development in a way that will improve access to natural and semi-natural green space and promote opportunities for new publicly accessible wooded areas*
- Provide for new development in accessible locations which will provide good opportunities for improving and accessing public transport services, for delivering and using new cycleways, for travelling on foot and for minimising the impact on the highway network and traffic congestion.*

What will Happen and Where

C.132 Mixed use strategic development sites delivering housing, services and facilities and contributions to local infrastructure are considered to be the most sustainable way of meeting Banbury's housing needs and addressing the issues facing the town. We have sought to identify sites which will maximise benefits in terms of providing new homes and affordable housing, address deprivation, encourage economic growth and achieve good urban design, and to balance this with the need to minimise the use of natural resources, the harm to nearby villages and the surrounding the landscape, and the pressure on the road network.

C.133 A major strategic site of some 1,090 dwellings has already been permitted for the south east of Banbury at Bankside and will be delivered with a new primary school, park, playing fields, shops, community facilities and employment opportunities. A further extension of the site and the relocation of the town's football club next to the existing rugby club will complete development in this area. The now completed

redevelopment of the former Cattle Market site will be complemented by major Canalside regeneration close to the town centre. An extension to the west of the town will be accompanied by proposals to help the regeneration of the wider Bretch Hill area and extensions to the north of the town will bring about new housing and community facilities.'