

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

4 April 2016

### Upper Heyford Masterplan

## Joint report of Head of Development Management and Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

### Purpose of report

To consider the Upper Heyford Framework Plan.

### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To adopt the Upper Heyford Framework Plan as a guideline for the purposes of Development Management

### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (CLP) was adopted by the Council on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. It contains a strategic site specific policy for the development of the former RAF Upper Heyford base, Policy Villages 5, in which 1,600 dwellings are proposed and 1500 jobs. The policy boundary area extends the brownfield development area to include greenfield land in order to meet the full objectively assessed housing needs of the District. The CLP requires a comprehensive integrated approach to the development of Heyford in order to achieve a lasting arrangement where a new settlement will be provided but at the same time conserving the heritage interests of the site associated with its Cold War history. To achieve the comprehensive integrated approach that the Local Plan policy for the site requires work began on a Framework Plan following the adoption of the CLP in July 2015.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Framework Plan is to establish a clear Development Framework for the site, as non-Statutory Policy Guidance, which will be used in support of the CLP in the determination of future planning applications relating to the site.
- 2.3 Prior to the CLP's Examination in Public an agreement was reached between the Council and the main landowner at Heyford, the Dorchester Group (DG) over certain principles of developing the former base and a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) signed. A copy of the policy is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**. However there is considerable background planning history that preceded the Local Plan designation.

- 2.4 The former base was designated a conservation area in 2006, its primary architectural and social historic interest being its role during the Cold War. The nature of the site is defined by the historic landscape character of the distinct zones within the base. The designation also acknowledges the special architectural interest, and as a conservation area, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and provides the context and framework to ensure the setting and appearance of sections of the Cold War landscape are preserved. The base is approximately 505 hectares in total.
- 2.5 In terms of the uses on site, the military use ceased in 1994. Over the last 20 years numerous applications have been made seeking permission to either develop the whole site or large parts of it and numerous of them have gone to appeal. The most significant was application ref 08/00716/OUT. Following a major public inquiry that commenced in September 2008 the Council received the appeal decision in January 2010 that allowed “A new settlement of 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure (as amended by plans and information received 26.06.08).”

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 In partnership with the main landowner at Heyford, the Dorchester Group (DG), officers engaged LDA Consultants to produce a new Development Framework Plan to deliver a comprehensive integrated approach in accordance with Policy Villages 5 of the CLP. They undertook significant preparatory work including site assessments and research followed by individual interviews with key partners. They met Dorchester’s Consultants, followed those with statutory undertakers and those representing the Council, plus relevant third parties which included owners of land allocated for development in the CLP, some developers and representatives of the local Parish Councils and Residents Association.
- 3.2 A draft Framework document has been prepared and submitted to DG and the Council. The Development Framework Plan is attached, **Appendix 2**. The Framework Plan demonstrates how the level of growth identified within the Policy Villages 5 could be delivered.
- 3.3 The Framework document aims to provide certainty for developer and the surrounding community as to what is physically proposed on which part of the site. The Framework document considered how best to integrate the new growth allocated in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan with existing planning consents. The document proposes locations for residential growth and associated facilities and new employment growth alongside established employment on site
- 3.3 Member’s attention is drawn to a number of key elements:
- It provides for a new access to the flying field for commercial traffic along Chilgrove Drive.
  - This facilitates the creation of a new parcel of land for commercial development.
  - The land for residential development on the Policy Village 5 inset map needs to be extended and an area is indicated where this can take place.

- An area can be set aside for a Heritage Park with its own access and the possibility of a new Heritage Visitor Centre.
- The main heritage assets, including the flying field can be preserved with limited harm.

3.4 It also recognises that further work is required in order to support future development proposals that come forward under Policy Villages 5 and this Framework Plan. A number of further studies are required including traffic and transport modelling, heritage impact assessment, heritage visitor study, ecology surveys and social infrastructure provision.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 A Development Framework has been prepared for Upper Heyford. It expands and provides further details to the objectives and policies contained in Local Plan Part 1 and benefits from extensive research and consultation carried out by the appointed consultants. Members are recommended to approve the draft Framework for the purposes of Development Management in the implementation of Policy Villages 5 and to progress the additional studies

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 With regard to the final document:

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

5.2 By LDA, Planning Consultants as part of the master planning exercise:

Oxford Archaeology, Peter Brett Associates, Pegasus, Third Party Landowners, Neighbourhood Plan & Heyford Park Representatives, Cherwell District Council - Ecology, Oxfordshire CC – Transport, CDC Heritage - Claire Mitchell and Rose Todd, Historic England, Existing Tenants, Saietta, Thames Valley Police, Restore, Paragon Fleet Solutions, Integration Technologies

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

6.1 The Draft Framework Plan has been produced having regard to an extensive evidence base and stakeholder engagement. It is considered by officers to be an appropriate document to take forward the implementation of Policy Villages 5. There is the potential for further refinement in the light of further work yet to be undertaken in terms of transport modelling and heritage assessment.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

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## Legal Implications

- 7.2 If adopted the framework plan will become a material planning consideration for the purpose of determining relevant planning applications.

Comments checked by:

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## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met:** Yes

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** Yes

### Wards Affected

Upper Heyford

Lower Heyford

Somerton

Ardley with Fewcott

Middleton Stoney

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

District of Opportunity

Cleaner Greener

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2013 Policy Villages 5
Appendix 2	Draft Development Framework Plan for Upper Heyford
Background Papers	
None	
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