

Cherwell District Council

Executive

19 June 2017

Partial Review of the Local Plan – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Needs

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek approval of a ‘Proposed Submission Document’ for the Partial Review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 for the purpose of inviting representations. The Document contains proposals for residential development to assist Oxford City Council in meeting its unmet housing needs and has been prepared to fulfil a commitment set out at paragraph B.95 of the adopted Local Plan.

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Proposed Submission Document at Appendix 1 be approved for the purpose of inviting representations.
- 1.2 That the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy be authorised to approve the final presentation of the Proposed Submission Document and to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections prior to formal publication.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted on 20 July 2015, the Council committed to working on an on-going basis under a legal Duty to Cooperate with all other Oxfordshire local authorities to address the need for housing across the Oxfordshire housing market area.
- 2.2 The Oxfordshire councils had all recognised that Oxford may not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary.
- 2.3 The Plan made clear that if joint work between the authorities revealed that Cherwell and other districts needed to meet additional need for Oxford, this would trigger a ‘Partial Review’ of the Local Plan.
- 2.4 The Proposed Submission Document presented to Members at Appendix 1 is a complete draft of that Partial Review – a Plan to provide Cherwell’s share of the

unmet housing needs of Oxford to 2031. The Plan sets out recommended proposals for accommodating 4,400 homes in addition to the existing Cherwell Local Plan requirement of 22,840 homes (2011-2031).

- 2.5 Members are invited to consider the Proposed Submission document, supporting documents and background papers. A Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2) and Statement of Consultation (Appendix 3) have been placed in the Members' Room and are available on-line as part of the agenda:
<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=3060> .
- 2.6 Other background papers - supporting evidence and representations received during the plan-making process - are available on-line at:
<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11183> . Further documents, taken into account in preparing the Plan, will be published for the representation period.
- 2.7 If approved by Members, the Proposed Submission Document would be published for the purpose of inviting representations over a six week period under Regulations 19 and 20 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The dates for the representation period are yet to be confirmed. All necessary publicity will be arranged in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (July 2016). Public exhibitions will be arranged including within Oxford.
- 2.8 The representations received will be taken into account in determining whether any changes are required to the Plan prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Examination. The Plan could proceed to submission with suggested minor changes. Representations would again need to be invited if major changes were considered to be necessary. The submission of the Plan is the point at which the Examination would commence by a Government appointed inspector.
- 2.9 The Plan has been informed by cooperative work between the Oxfordshire councils on the level of Oxford's unmet need and the how much of that need should be 'apportioned' to each district (see section 3 of this report). It has been informed by an examination of the critical and cross boundary issues which are relevant to meeting those needs. It has been informed by public consultation and engagement and by evidence gathering. Officers consider the document to be a 'sound' Plan; one that is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- 2.10 The Plan does the following:
- Section 1 explains in further detail why the plan has been produced and how an understanding of Oxford's unmet housing need has been arrived at
- Section 2 explains how the Plan has been prepared including the options considered in arriving at our development strategy
- Section 3 sets the scene for the Plan; describing the county, Cherwell and Oxford context and the wider cross-regional issues
- Section 4 describes a vision and objectives for helping to meet Oxford's unmet housing need within Cherwell

Section 5 provides our strategy for meeting the vision and objectives in a way that achieves sustainable development including policies for strategic development sites to provide the required homes

Section 6 explains how we will ensure that the strategy is delivered.

2.11 The Plan's vision is as follows:

“To provide new development that meets Oxford's agreed, identified housing needs, supports the city's world-class economy, universities and its local employment base, and ensures that people have convenient, affordable and sustainable travel opportunities to the city's places of work, study and recreation, and to its services and facilities. This development will be provided so that it:

- i. creates balanced and sustainable communities*
- ii. is well connected to Oxford*
- iii. is of exemplar design which responds distinctively and sensitively to the local built, historic and environmental context*
- iv. is supported by necessary infrastructure*
- v. provides for a range of household types and incomes reflecting Oxford's diverse needs*
- vi. contributes to improving health and well-being, and*
- vii. seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment.”*

2.12 To achieve this vision, the Plan has a number of objectives. In summary they involve:

- i. partnership working to meet needs and required infrastructure by 2031
- ii. providing development so it supports the projected economic growth which underpins the housing needs and local Oxford and Cherwell economies
- iii. substantively providing affordable access to new homes for those requiring affordable housing, new entrants to the housing market, key workers and those requiring access to Oxford's key employment areas; and, providing well designed development that responds to the local context
- iv. providing development so that it complements the County Council's Local Transport Plan (including the Oxford Transport Strategy) and facilitates demonstrable and deliverable improvements to the availability of sustainable transport for access to Oxford.

2.13 The Plan's strategy has been prepared to meet these objectives and achieve the vision. It seeks to meet Oxford's specific needs while achieving substantial benefit for Cherwell's communities.

2.14 The Plan provides for development that will support the city's economy, universities and its local employment base and ensure that people have convenient, affordable and sustainable travel opportunities to the city's places of work and to its services and facilities.

2.15 The strategy prioritises the need for development to be well connected to Oxford, to be related to the area of the district that has the strongest economic and social relationships with the city, which is fully integrated with the County Council's sustainable transport policies, which seeks to grasp the opportunities for distinctive place-shaping and which provides a consolidated approach to green infrastructure and for the achievement of net gains in biodiversity.

- 2.16 The Plan focuses development on a geographic area extending north from Oxford to south Kidlington, along the A44 corridor to Yarnton and Begbroke, and up to Woodstock in West Oxfordshire.
- 2.17 The Plan is not without controversy. It involves development in the Oxford Green Belt - a designated area of land around Oxford in which existing planning policies have the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Under national policy Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan.
- 2.18 Having considered all reasonable options for accommodating development, the Plan explains (Appendix 1, para. 5.17), that there are exceptional circumstances for development in the Green Belt to help meet Oxford's needs within Cherwell. The consideration of all other reasonable options suggested that a sustainable alternative could not be delivered without unacceptable harm to the existing Cherwell development strategy. The Plan avoids undermining the strategy of the existing Cherwell Local Plan (2015) and the delivery of planned growth at Bicester, Banbury and Former RAF Upper Heyford. Other examined options outside the Green Belt would not deliver development that sufficiently and sustainably meets Oxford's needs so that it achieves the Plan's vision.
- 2.19 In summary, the Plan's proposed policies seek to achieve the following:
- i. deliver the required homes for Oxford by 2031 in a form that achieve sustainable development (policy PR1)
 - ii. deliver a mix, tenure and size of homes that responds to identified needs (policy PR2)
 - iii. exceptionally allow for development in the Green Belt having considered all other reasonable options and the vision and objectives we need to achieve (policy PR3)
 - iv. maximise the opportunity for affordable and sustainable transportation from development areas to Oxford's key employment areas, services and facilities (policy PR4a)
 - v. use the advantage of sustainable transport opportunities to help strengthen Kidlington centre in accordance with the existing Local Plan (2015) and the Kidlington Framework Masterplan (policy PR4b – Kidlington Centre)
 - vi. provide a consolidated and integrated approach to the provision of green infrastructure alongside new development, particularly within the Green Belt (policy PR5)
- 2.20 The Plan provides for the development of strategic sites that will best achieve the vision and objectives and deliver sustainable development in the Oxfordshire, Cherwell, Oxford and wider context.
- 2.21 The proposed sites are as follows:

Area	Policy / Site	No. of
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		Homes
North Oxford	Policy PR6a – Land East of Oxford Road	650
	Policy PR6b – Land West of Oxford Road	530
	Policy PR6c – Land at Frieze Farm (reserved site for replacement Golf Course)	-
Kidlington	Policy PR7a – Land South East of Kidlington	230
	Policy PR7b – Land at Stratfield Farm	100
Begbroke	Policy PR8 – Land East of the A44	1950
Yarnton	Policy PR9 – Land West of Yarnton	530
Woodstock	Policy PR10 – Land South East of Woodstock	410
Total		4400

2.22 The Plan's proposed policies map shows the location of the sites. Each policy is also supported by its own policies map.

3.0 Report Details

Background

- 3.1 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment was published in April 2014. This finds that across Oxfordshire, there is an identified need for provision of around 5,000 homes a year over the period 2011 to 2031. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan provides for Cherwell's needs – some 22,840 homes from 2011 to 2031. Oxford's needs are identified as being between 1,200 and 1,600 homes a year, a potential requirement of around 28,000 additional homes by 2031.
- 3.2 In 2014, through the then 'Shadow' Oxfordshire Growth Board, all of Oxfordshire's councils accepted that Oxford cannot fully meet its own housing needs. They collectively committed to consider the extent of Oxford's unmet need and how that need might be sustainably distributed to the neighbouring districts so that this could be tested through their respective Local Plans.
- 3.3 When the existing Cherwell Local Plan was being prepared the Council proposed a commitment to the Partial Review of the Local Plan in the event that there was a need to provide additional housing for Oxford.
- 3.4 The Government appointed Planning Inspector who examined the Plan stated, "...*It is ...essential for clarity and soundness that the Council's firm commitment to help meet the needs of Oxford city as part of the countywide housing market area, jointly with other relevant authorities including through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, as well as in respect of the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014), is formally recorded in the plan...*" (Inspector's Report, para. 62)
- 3.5 His Non-Technical Summary records: "*Add a formal commitment from the Council, together with other relevant Councils, to undertake a joint review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt, once the specific level of help required by the city of Oxford to meet its needs that cannot reasonably be met within its present confines, is fully and accurately defined*" (Inspector's Report, p.3)

3.6 The commitment is provided at para. B.95 of the existing Local Plan (2015).

“Cherwell District Council will continue to work under the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ with all other Oxfordshire Local Authorities on an on-going basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and to meet joint commitments such as the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014). As a first step Cherwell District Council has sought to accommodate the housing need for Cherwell District in full in the Cherwell Local Plan. Cherwell District Council recognises that Oxford may not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary. The urban capacity of Oxford is as yet unconfirmed. Cherwell District Council will continue to work jointly and proactively with the Oxfordshire local authorities and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to assess all reasonable spatial options, including the release of brownfield land, the potential for a new settlement and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt. These issues are not for Cherwell to consider in isolation. These options will need to be undertaken in accordance with national policy, national guidance, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to establish how and where any unmet need might best be accommodated within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. Joint work will need to comprehensively consider how spatial options could be supported by necessary infrastructure to ensure an integrated approach to the delivery of housing, jobs and services. Full public consultation will be central to a ‘sound’ process and outcome. If this joint work reveals that Cherwell and other Districts need to meet additional need for Oxford, this will trigger a partial review of the Local Plan, to be completed within two years of adoption, and taking the form of the preparation of a separate Development Plan Document for that part of the unmet need to be accommodated in the Cherwell District. The Council will engage in joint working on supporting technical work such as countywide Sustainability Appraisal as required to support the identification of a sustainable approach to meeting agreed, unmet needs.”

3.7 In November 2014, the Oxfordshire Growth Board agreed a joint work programme for considering the level of unmet housing need and how that need could be distributed to the individual district councils.

3.8 On 19 November 2015, the Growth Board agreed a total working figure for Oxford's unmet housing need of 15,000 homes. On the basis of Oxford's overall housing need being 28,000 homes from (2011-2031), this meant approximately 13,000 homes being provided within Oxford's administrative boundary.

3.9 On 26 September 2016, the Growth Board considered a report summarising the output of the countywide work programme. The programme included:

1. the review of the urban capacity of Oxford to inform agreement on the level of unmet housing need
2. a Green Belt Study to assess the extent to which the land within the Oxford Green Belt performs against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in national policy
3. the sustainability testing of spatial options to help inform the apportionment of unmet need to the rural districts

4. a high level transport assessment of spatial options
5. an education assessment of spatial options.

3.10 The Growth Board decided on an apportionment of 14,850 homes between the district and city councils. Cherwell District was asked to consider the accommodation of 4,400 homes in addition to its existing Local Plan commitments (some 22,840 homes).

Oxfordshire Growth Board Apportionment of Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs	
District	Apportionment - No.of Homes (Net)
Cherwell	4400
Oxford	550
South Oxfordshire*	4950
Vale of White Horse	2200
West Oxfordshire	2750
Total	14850

*South Oxfordshire did not agree to the final proposed apportionment

- 3.11 The Leadership of South Oxfordshire District Council did not agree to the final apportionment though the Council had been engaged in the Growth Board work programme for its duration and had agreed the final report recommended to the Growth Board as well as all intermediate progress reports.
- 3.12 The Growth Board work programme enabled a countywide, cooperative decision to be made on how the unmet housing need should be accommodated at a district level. It has informed the plan making process of the Cherwell Partial Review but as a non-statutory planning process it does not bind the Council to a prescribed approach as to how the Council should provide for Oxford's unmet housing need. The Partial Review process does this on a statutory plan making basis.
- 3.13 Following the apportionment decision, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the Leaders of all the Oxfordshire Councils (except South Oxfordshire) making clear the agreed position.

'...This apportionment is based upon a common assumed start date of 2021 for the commencement of development after the adoption of the respective Local Plan review or Local Plan update/refresh. This assumption does not preclude earlier delivery, but does recognise the complexity of the issues being considered and has sought to factor in reasonable lead times to enable options to come forward and to be fully considered through the Local Plan process.'

The Programme does not seek to identify, propose or recommend any site or sites for additional housing within any district. Each LPA will remain responsible for the allocation of housing sites within any district. Each LPA will remain responsible for the allocation of housing sites within its own district and through its own Local Plan process' (extract from Memorandum of Cooperation, November 2016 signed by Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council)

- 3.14 An Issues consultation paper for the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan was approved by Members on 4 January 2016 and published that month with a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The consultation paper highlighted issues potentially requiring consideration in undertaking the Partial Review. The paper was prepared to inform engagement with local communities, partners and stakeholders in the early stage of the Partial Review process and to ensure that a wide cross-section of views were obtained. A 'call for sites' was made in the interest of identifying sites that might be appropriate to develop to help meet Oxford's housing needs.
- 3.15 Two workshops took place for parishes in the north and south of the district on 23 and 24 February 2016 respectively. A meeting with Wolvercote & Cutteslowe, and Summertown & St Margarets Neighbourhood Forums took place on 2 March 2016. A total of 148 representations were received.
- 3.16 On 7 November 2016, the outcome of the Oxfordshire Growth Board work programme was presented to Members together with a proposed Options consultation paper and the results of consultation at the Issues stage. The representations and site submissions received in response to the previous Issues Paper and the wider 'call for sites' were made publicly available and a Statement of Consultation was presented to Members. This included an extensive schedule of the comments received in relation to each Issues Paper question.
- 3.17 The Executive noted the Oxfordshire Growth Board's decision to apportion 4,400 homes to Cherwell in the interest of meeting Oxford's agreed unmet housing need and approved the Options Paper for formal public consultation.
- 3.18 Consultation on the Options Paper took place between November 2016 and January 2017. The proposed consultation matters included the level of housing the council was being asked to accommodate, a draft vision and objectives for the Partial Review, potential areas of search for accommodating development potential strategic development sites and the emerging evidence base.
- 3.19 During the consultation period workshops were held with Town and Parish Councils on 7 and 12 December 2016 and other stakeholders on 13 December. Four staffed, public exhibitions were held - in Banbury (26 November), Bicester (3 December), Cutteslowe in Oxford (10 December) and in Kidlington (19 December).
- 3.20 A total of 1225 responses were received to the options consultation. A statement of consultation setting out the main issues raised and how those issues have been taken into account in preparing the Proposed Submission Document is presented to Members at Appendix 3.
- 3.21 Since the Options consultation, evidence gathering has continued. A Sustainability Appraisal is included on this agenda and supporting evidence (background papers) is being published on-line (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11183>) to support the representation period.

Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

- 3.22 The Sustainability Appraisal supporting the Plan tests the likely environmental, social and economic effects of providing for 4,400 homes and the effects of providing a significantly higher or lower number. It appraises areas of search as broad locations for accommodating growth across the district and specific development sites within the areas of search taken forward.
- 3.22 Within the Sustainability Appraisal is a summary of the reasons that specific areas of search and sites have either been taken forward or rejected having taken into account the sustainability appraisal and other considerations. The environmental, social and economic effects of proposed policies are appraised and mitigations identified which have informed plan preparation.
- 3.23 As explained in the Plan, officers examined nine areas of search as potential broad locations for accommodating the additional development. Within these areas a total of 147 potential sites were considered that comprised at least two hectares of land. The Areas of Search were:
- | | |
|----------|---|
| Option A | Kidlington & Surrounding Area |
| Option B | North & East of Kidlington |
| Option C | Junction 9, M40 |
| Option D | Arncott |
| Option E | Bicester and Surrounding Area |
| Option F | Former RAF Upper Heyford & Surrounding Area |
| Option G | Junction 10, M40 |
| Option H | Banbury & Surrounding Area |
| Option I | Remainder of District / Rural Dispersal |
- 3.24 The outcome of the plan preparation process, informed by the evidence base (including the Sustainability Appraisal) and the outcome of consultation, was that Option C through to Option I were not considered to be suitable for accommodating housing to help meet Oxford's unmet housing needs for the following reasons:
1. they were less well situated to build communities associated with Oxford
 2. they were less well situated to assist with the delivery of the Oxford Transport Strategy, in terms of existing sustainable travel connectivity and the opportunity for sustainable commuter travel behaviour
 3. they were more likely to result in a higher level of commuting to Oxford by private motor vehicle
 4. they were likely to result in less affordable transport options for accessing Oxford for potential occupiers of affordable and low cost housing
 5. more dispersed options provided less opportunity for strategic infrastructure investment (e.g transport and education)
 6. the likelihood that significant additional development could not be built at Bicester, Banbury and RAF Upper Heyford by 2031 in addition to that in the existing Local Plan (2015)
- 3.25 It was therefore concluded that options C to I, or a combination of any options including C to I, would not sufficiently deliver the vision and objectives which underpin the Partial Review.
- 3.25 Additionally, it was concluded that option C to I would have a greater detrimental impact on the development strategy for Cherwell set out in the existing adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2015). The reasons for this are documented in section 7 of the Sustainability Appraisal

3.26 Option A (Kidlington & Surrounding Area) and Option B (North & East of Kidlington) were considered to be most suitable for meeting Oxford's needs.

3.27 In summary, this was because of:

1. the proximity to Oxford, the existing availability of public transport and the opportunity to maximise the use of sustainable and affordable transport in accessing Oxford's key employment areas and services and facilities
2. the opportunity to achieve an overall, proportionate reduction in reliance on the private motor vehicle in accessing Oxford's key employment areas and services and facilities and to achieve further investment in sustainable transport infrastructure
3. the deliverability of sustainable transport improvements in comparison to other Areas of Search
4. relationship of existing communities to Oxford
5. existing economic relationship between the areas of search and Oxford
6. the opportunity to provide affordable homes to meet Oxford's identified need close to the source of that need.

3.28 It was therefore concluded that Options A and B could deliver the vision and objectives which underpin the Partial Review. Furthermore, it was considered that they would not significantly undermine the delivery of the development strategy for meeting Cherwell's needs set out in the existing Local Plan (2015). In the absence of other suitable options, Areas A and B were taken forward.

3.29 Within Areas A and B a total of 41 site options were considered and assessed for inclusion in the Partial Review. These sites were assessed through the consideration of range of evidence including landscape, transport, land availability, flood risk and green belt studies. They were also assessed with the benefit of feedback from consultation, through the preparation of a Habitats Regulations Assessment, and through the Sustainability Appraisal of the likely environmental, social and economic effects of developing each site and the synergistic and cumulative effects of the proposed growth.

3.30 Many of the sites identified were situated within the Oxford Green Belt. In addition to their overall sustainability, sites were also considered for their suitability in meeting the Partial Review's vision and objectives. Sites within the Green Belt were only taken forward in the absence of other suitable alternatives.

Proposed Policies for the Partial Review Plan

3.31 The Partial Review Plan provides a number of overarching policies which reflect the specific needs of the Partial Review and the requirement to sustainably accommodate Oxford's needs. The Plan's policies supplement those of the adopted Local Plan which would also need to be considered in the determination of applications for planning permission. The overarching policies are:

- Policy PR1: Achieving Sustainable Development for Oxford's Needs – seeks to ensure that 4,400 homes are delivered by 2031 in a way that will achieve sustainable development, meet the specific requirements of the Partial Review and without harm to the delivery of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan

- Policy PR2: Housing Mix, Tenure and Size – seeks to ensure that the type of housing provided responds to Oxford’s needs while having regard to the Cherwell context in which development would take place
- Policy PR3: The Oxford Green Belt – provides for necessary and exceptional revisions to the Green Belt within Cherwell to: sustainably accommodate the required development and meet national policy requirements for reviewing/establishing boundaries. In order to compensate for loss of Green Belt land, the policy requires development proposals on land to be removed from the Green Belt to contribute to improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt, as detailed in the strategic site allocation policies.
- The Oxford Green Belt in Cherwell presently comprises some 8409 hectares of land. Policy PR3 sets out the area of land for each strategic development site that is proposed to be removed from Green Belt to accommodate residential and associated land uses to help meet Oxford’s unmet housing needs. In total it comprises 253 hectares of land – a 3% reduction. Consequently, the total area of Cherwell that comprises Green Belt would fall from 14.3% to 13.9%.
- Policy PR4a: Sustainable Transport – provides for necessary improvements and mitigations for highways and public transport to accommodate the development and seeks to ensure that proposals are complementary to the Local Transport Plan, A44/A4260 Corridor Study and Transport Assessment.
- Policy PR4b: Kidlington Centre – supports proposals for sustainable transport improvements and associated infrastructure which would lead to improvement to the built and natural environment along the A4260 corridor within Kidlington (consistent with the Kidlington Framework Masterplan)
- Policy PR5: Green Infrastructure – seeks to deliver a connected green infrastructure network as an integral part of the Plan’s strategy and in the design approach to each development site.

3.32 Site specific policies are set out by development area:

- North Oxford (Policies PR6a, PR6b and Policy PR6c)

New urban extensions (650 and 530 homes) are proposed to be fully integrated with the north of Oxford either side of the Oxford (A4165) Road and to the south of the A34. The area lies immediately to the north of the Cutteslowe and Wolvercote areas of Oxford. The A4165 is the main arterial route into north Oxford from Kidlington and connects Oxford Parkway Railway Station/Water Eaton Park and Ride to the city.

There is an opportunity to connect the whole of this area comprehensively to the existing built-up area of Oxford, to the City Council’s Northern Gateway site which is allocated for mixed use development and to the Parkway Station / Park and Ride. A high level of use of sustainable transport can be achieved to access Oxford’s employment areas, its services and facilities and its places of study and recreation. Land at Frieze Farm is reserved for a potential replacement Golf Course to replace that operated by the North Oxford Golf Club

should the need for this be demonstrated. That land would remain within the Green Belt.

- Kidlington (Policies PR7a & PR7b)

Limited development is proposed to the south east of Kidlington (230 homes) and at Stratfield Farm to the south of Kidlington (100 homes) in near proximity to Oxford. A high level of sustainable transport connectivity can be achieved. There is an opportunity to provide housing so that it contributes significantly to the overall vision, provides benefits for the local community and achieves positive use of land remaining within the Green Belt. Biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements, connectivity (including over the Oxford Canal) and provision for outdoor sport and recreation (the need for which was highlighted in the Kidlington Framework Masterplan) are key policy elements. Important separation between Oxford and Kidlington would be retained.

- Begbroke (Policy PR8)

A new neighbourhood (1950 homes) is proposed along the A44 corridor which seeks to complement the County Council's sustainable transport strategy for access to Oxford and the location of economic assets that are of mutual interest to Cherwell and Oxford (specifically Begbroke Science Park but also London-Oxford Airport, the Langford Lane area of Kidlington and Northern Gateway within the city boundary).

The County Council's proposals for rapid transit routes into Oxford and to significantly improve the opportunities for cycling and walking provide the scope for a highly sustainable development in transportation terms.

The Plan provides for development to the east of the A44 and to the south of Begbroke Science Park; development that in design terms is influenced by the University's presence, the setting of the Oxford Canal and the sustainable transport opportunities. There is the potential for a coherent, distinctive neighbourhood in a very high quality environmental setting. Separation from Kidlington and Begbroke can be retained while improving significantly pedestrian, cycling and wheelchair connectivity between Begbroke, Kidlington and Yarnton. Proposals for a Local Nature Reserve, nature conservation area, canalside park, the retention of agricultural land and recreational cycling, walking and wheelchair routes would help reinforce the separation while providing new opportunities for outdoor recreation .

- Yarnton (Policy PR9)

On the western side of the A44, a northerly extension to Yarnton (530 homes) is provided for which reflects proposed development to the east of the A44 and takes the opportunity to capitalise on sustainable transport connectivity and improvements, The policy provides for improved access to the countryside, a community woodland, a Local Nature Reserve and additional land for the existing primary school. Development would avoid the more sensitive landscape to the west.

- Woodstock (Policy PR10)

Further north along the A44, to the east of Woodstock, West Oxfordshire District Council has recently approved an extension to the town for up to 300 homes which will take the edge of the town to the Cherwell boundary. A further extension on a limited area of land within Cherwell is provided for in a highly sustainable location in transportation terms. The land is close to where a new Park and Ride is intended to be provided by the County Council associated with its rapid transit proposals for access into Oxford.

The site presently the only suitable opportunity to meet Oxford's needs outside the Green Belt. There is also the opportunity for development to be integrated with Woodstock and to provide land that will assist with wider education needs at the town. However, it has been crucially important to give very significant consideration to the proximity of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, the Grade 1 Registered Park and Garden and the Blenheim Villa Scheduled Ancient Monument. These matters that have previously had some scrutiny through development management cases and they have directly influenced the scale, location and extent of development proposed

Proposed Next Steps

- 3.33 As is always the case in proposing major development next to established settlements, these policies and sites will be of very significant interest to affected local communities. The proposals relate to an areas of the district that, principally due to Green Belt policy, have not for many years been the subject of strategic development proposals in the way that has been seen an Banbury, Bicester and more recently at Upper Heyford at the former USAF base.
- 3.34 Officers will ensure that that public exhibitions and consultation material clearly articulate the necessity for the Partial Review of the Local Plan and the reasoning behind the proposals, including the exceptional justification for why development is required in the Green Belt. Arrangements will also be made in discussion with both Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. Advance notice and publicity for the public exhibitions will be issued. The representation period will be for six weeks in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 3.35 The representations received will be reported to Members in determining whether any minor changes are required to the Plan. If only minor changes are required, Members would be invited to consider the 'Submission' version of the Plan. The Submission version of the Plan would need to be approved by Council. Major changes would require an additional representation period and will significantly delay the submission of the Plan.
- 3.36 The commitment to undertake the Partial Review of the Local Plan (para. 3.6 above) provided for two years to complete the Partial Review (ending in July 2017). There has been some unavoidable delay to the programme due to its complexity, but officers intend to present the results of the consultation with recommendations at the earliest opportunity. The number of representations that officers receive and the issues raised will determine how soon a report can be presented to Members with the final submission version of the Partial Review Plan. The Lead Member for Planning and will be kept informed.

- 3.37 A further update of the Local Development Scheme, the programme for the Council's planning policy documents, will be presented to Members as soon as is practicable.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 A Proposed Submission Document for the Partial Review of the Local Plan has been prepared in the interest of delivering Cherwell's share of the unmet housing needs of Oxford to 2031. The Proposed Submission Document is presented to Members at Appendix 1 for approval for the purpose of inviting representations.
- 4.2 The Plan's strategy has been prepared to meet objectives and a vision to specifically meet Oxford's needs in the Cherwell context. It seeks to meet Oxford's specific needs while achieving substantial benefit for Cherwell's communities.
- 4.3 It provides for development that will support the city's economy, universities and its local employment base and ensure that people have convenient, affordable and sustainable travel opportunities to the city's places of work and to its services and facilities. It prioritises the need for development to be well connected to Oxford, to be fully integrated with the County Council's sustainable transport policies, to be distinctive and for a consolidated approach to green infrastructure and for the achievement of net gains in biodiversity.
- 4.4 The Plan provides for 4,400 homes in addition to the existing Cherwell Local Plan requirement of 22,840 homes (2011-2031). It focuses development on a geographic area extending north from Oxford to south Kidlington, along the A44 corridor to Yarnton and Begbroke, and up to Woodstock in West Oxfordshire.
- 4.5 Officers consider the document to be a 'sound' Plan; one that is positively prepared, justified, effective and fully consistent with national policy.
- 4.6 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening is presented at Appendix 4. It concludes that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

5.0 Consultation

Internal briefing: Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 Not to progress the Proposed Submission Document

The Council has committed to undertaking the Partial Review of the Local Plan in para. B.95 of the adopted Plan. Not progressing the Partial Review would make it likely that Oxford's unmet needs would need to be met within Cherwell through the consideration of applications for planning permission for unplanned development elsewhere in the District. The total housing requirement for Cherwell's share of Oxford's unmet needs would remain untested on a statutory plan-making basis.

Officers consider that this option would not be in the best interests of the district

6.2 *To reconsider the content of the Proposed Submission Document*

The Proposed Submission Document has been prepared having regard to statutory requirements, evidence and national planning policy and guidance. If Members do not agree with significant aspects of the Plan, officers would need to consider the planning reasons for any changes and the implications for the extensive evidence base including the Sustainability Appraisal. There would be a lengthy delay to the programme and an increase in risk of a redrafted Partial Review Plan not being found 'sound'.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The work associated with completing the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan has been met from existing budgets.

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Paul.Sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Council has committed to undertaking a Partial Review of the Local Plan in the within the Local Plan at paragraph B.95. Failure to complete the process as proposed would leave the Council vulnerable to potential administrative challenges by other Oxfordshire Council's and to planning appeals against the refusal of planning permission.

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision:

Financial Threshold Met:	No
Community Impact Threshold Met:	Yes

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

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

Lead Councillor

Councillor, Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Proposed Submission Document – Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Needs
Appendix 2	Sustainability Appraisal (Members’ Room & on-line only)
Appendix 3	Statement of Consultation (Members’ Room & on-line only)
Appendix 4	Equality Impact Assessment Screening
Supporting Information	
Evidence: http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11183 Inspector’s Report – Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11343	
Background Papers	
None	
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