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# **Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review**

## **Proposed Submission Sustainability Appraisal Report**

Prepared by LUC  
June 2017



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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cherwell District Council commissioned LUC in October 2015 to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cherwell District Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, as well as the Local Plan Part 2.
- 1.2 An initial SA Report relating to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper was prepared and consulted upon with the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper in November 2016.
- 1.3 This SA Report should be read in conjunction with the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document (June 2017). This SA report replaces the initial SA Report.

## The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

- 1.4 Cherwell District Council formally adopted the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The Local Plan Part 1 sets out the strategic planning policy framework and strategic site allocations for the District to 2031. It forms part of the statutory development plan and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting Cherwell District.
- 1.5 In the Local Plan the Council committed to work that seeks to address the unmet objectively assessed housing need from elsewhere in the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA), particularly from Oxford City. All of Oxfordshire's rural district Councils, together with the County Council, have accepted that Oxford cannot fully meet its own housing needs principally because the city is a compact, urban area surrounded by designated 'Green Belt'. The Oxfordshire Councils 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 can be tested through their respective Local Plans. In order to achieve this joint working, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (comprising representatives of the County and District Councils of Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Universities of Oxford and business leaders) was established and a strategic work programme developed. The programme comprises a number of inter-related projects and milestones relating to the preparation and appraisal of long-term strategic development options for the county and the identification of associated infrastructure requirements. This joint strategic work programme called the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, will inform local plan reviews (including Cherwell's) including by identifying and appraising strategic spatial options for accommodating Oxford City's unmet housing need.
- 1.6 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is a Development Plan Document that will effectively be an addendum to the Local Plan Part 1 – it will sit alongside it and form part of the statutory Development Plan for the District. The Partial Review has a specific focus and it is not a wholesale review of Local Plan Part 1. The vision, aims and objectives, spatial strategy and the policies of the Local Plan Part 1 will guide development to meet Cherwell's needs to 2031. The Partial Review focuses specifically on how to accommodate additional housing and associated supporting infrastructure within Cherwell in order to help meet Oxford's housing need.

### Approach to the SA

- 1.7 The work undertaken by the Growth Board has involved examining broad locational options within Oxfordshire, through an appraisal process, to inform how much of Oxford's unmet housing need could be delivered by each Oxfordshire authority. The SA for the Partial Review is informed by the Growth Board work but an SA is needed at the District level, meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive, to inform the Partial Review in order to accommodate some of Oxford's unmet housing needs in Cherwell.
- 1.8 The SA for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review focuses on the quantum and locational options for accommodating Cherwell's portion of Oxford's unmet housing need within Cherwell District only. The SA also assesses the Plan vision, objectives, and planning policies.

- 1.9 The SA considers how options for delivering additional housing development within Cherwell District's boundaries perform in sustainability terms, particularly in respect to their relationship with Oxford City, considering the requirement to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 1.10 They have been appraised against how sustainably they help meet Oxford's unmet housing need, considering factors such as:
- Need for affordable housing.
  - Commuting patterns and travel to work areas.
  - Transport infrastructure, traffic congestion (and related air quality and carbon emissions issues), and options to travel through use of sustainable transport options, such as rail.
  - Accessibility not only to the City of Oxford itself, but also to the main employment areas, science and business parks that are located on the fringes of the City, considering economic and social relationships and linkages.
- 1.11 Individual locations within Cherwell have also been assessed in relation to environmental assets and constraints, such as biodiversity, landscape character and sensitivity, flood risk, soils quality and the historic environment, including the setting of Oxford.
- 1.12 The SA also considers how well the locational options for delivering housing relate to the existing and planned communities, jobs, services and facilities within Cherwell itself. It is likely that some everyday needs, such as recreation and sport, shopping, and schools will be accessed locally.
- 1.13 Given that the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review focusses on the potential effects of options and policies relating to development within Cherwell District (albeit to meet a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need), this SA Report sets out the baseline information relating to Cherwell District. Relevant information that relates to planning and key issues in Oxfordshire and Oxford City is also important. This will assist in determining the most appropriate location and form of development (and therefore policies) required in the Local Plan 1 Partial Review document.
- 1.14 The adopted Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 was subject to SA/SEA throughout its preparation, and that SA work has been drawn on as appropriate throughout the SA/SEA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. The Local Plan Part 1 strategy and policies have also been taken into account for this SA.
- 1.15 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document, which this SA Report accompanies, has been produced under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A final version of the SA Report will be published and submitted alongside the submission of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review.
- 1.16 The SA only informs the Council's decision-making process. The Council has also undertaken work including an assessment of options considering matters such as representations received, deliverability, and viability in order to help determine the most sustainable and suitable options for development. A summary is presented in **Chapter 9**.
- 1.17 Following consultation on the Initial SA report all elements of the SA have been reviewed and where required revised.

## The Plan area

- 1.18 Cherwell is situated in north Oxfordshire and lies between London and Birmingham, immediately north of Oxford and south of Warwick / Leamington Spa. Cherwell District has an area covering approximately 228 square miles. The M40 runs through the District and there are good rail connections to Birmingham, London and beyond.
- 1.19 The District's settlement hierarchy is dominated by the towns of Banbury and Bicester in the north and south respectively. Banbury is the administrative centre for the District and fulfils a role as a regional centre. The third largest settlement is Kidlington. Kidlington is both an urban centre and a village and is surrounded by the Oxfordshire Green Belt but is excluded from it. The District has over 90 smaller villages and hamlets.

- 1.20 Cherwell is largely rural in character with much of the northern part of the District consisting largely of soft rolling hills. The southern half of the District particularly around Bicester has constraints but is much flatter. The northwest of the District lies at the northern edge of the Cotswolds. The river Cherwell passes through the District.
- 1.21 The District shares boundaries with Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Aylesbury Vale, South Northamptonshire and Stratford upon Avon Districts, but it is the relationship with Oxford City to the south that is of particular importance for this SA, as the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is focussing on meeting a proportion of Oxford City's unmet housing needs.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.22 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC). Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.
- 1.23 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup>), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken in Cherwell. From here on, the term 'SA' should therefore be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive'.
- 1.24 The SA process comprises a number of stages, as shown in **Figure 1.1** below. How these stages have been met during the preparation of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review to date is also described below.

**Figure 1.1: Main stages of Sustainability Appraisal**

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the SA report
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan Part 1 Review

### SA Stage A: Scoping

- 1.25 The Scoping stage of the SA involves understanding the social, economic and environmental baseline for the plan area as well as the policy context and key sustainability issues. The SA Scoping Report was prepared in December 2015 and presented the outputs of the following tasks:
- Policies, plans and programmes of relevance to Cherwell's Local Plan Partial Review were identified and the relationships between them were considered, enabling any potential synergies to be exploited and any potential inconsistencies and incompatibilities to be identified and addressed.
  - Baseline information was collected on environmental, social and economic issues in Cherwell and Oxfordshire. This baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely effects of policies and site allocations (including reasonable alternative options) and helps to identify ways of mitigating any adverse effects identified.
  - Key sustainability issues were identified.

<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal-and-how-does-it-relate-to-strategic-environmental-assessment/>



- A 'Sustainability Appraisal framework' was developed, comprising a list of SA objectives which provides a clear way in which the sustainability impacts of implementing a plan can be described, analysed and compared. It sets out a series of sustainability objectives and associated sub-questions that can be used to 'interrogate' options and draft policies during the plan-making process. These SA objectives reflect the long-term aspirations and needs of the District and area with regard to social, economic and environmental considerations. Throughout the SA process, the performance of Local Plan options (and later policies and site allocations) are assessed against these SA objectives and sub-questions.

- 1.26 Public and stakeholder participation is an important part of the SA and wider plan-making processes. It helps to ensure that the SA report is robust and has due regard to all appropriate information that will support the Local Plan in making a contribution to sustainable development. An SA Scoping Report for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review was published in January 2016 alongside an Issues Paper for a six-week consultation period with the statutory consultees Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Following the consultation, the comments received were addressed as appropriate. **Appendix 4** lists the comments that were received during the consultation on the Scoping Report and explains how these have been dealt with in the SA and this proposed submission SA Report.
- 1.27 The majority of the SA Scoping Report, including the review of plans, policies and programmes and the baseline information, were updated as part of the preparation of this SA Report. This was in order to ensure that they reflect the current situation in Cherwell District and take account of the most recent evidence.

### SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

- 1.28 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SA can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options being considered for a plan.
- 1.29 Regulation 12 (2) of the SEA Regulations requires that:
- "The (environmental or SA) report must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of—*
- (a) implementing the plan or programme; and*
- (b) reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme."*
- 1.30 Any alternatives considered for the plan need to be 'reasonable'. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Examples of unreasonable alternatives could include options that do not meet the objectives of the plan or national policy (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework) or site options that are unavailable or undeliverable.
- 1.31 The SA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified for different options, such that it is not possible to 'rank' them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability, conformity with national policy and other evidence will also be taken into account by plan-makers when selecting preferred options for a plan.

### Identification and appraisal of options for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

- 1.32 Four types of options have been identified and appraised as part of the development of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review:
- Broad areas of search within which new housing development to meet Oxford's unmet need could be located.
  - Quantum options representing different quantities of additional growth to meet Oxford's need.
  - Potential site options that could be developed to meet the additional housing required. (In addition to residential site options, site options for open space provision were also identified and appraised.)

- Policy options for the proposed site allocations, as well as other policies to supplement policies in the Council's adopted Local Plan Part 1.
- 1.33 The identification of these options is summarised below and described further in the individual chapters setting out the SA findings for each set of options (see **Chapters 7-10**).
- 1.34 In addition, the Council has devised an updated Vision and Strategic Objectives for the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and these have been appraised in **Chapter 6**. Both the vision and the strategic objectives have evolved from those initially tested and consulted upon in November 2016 in response to further evidence and the consultation on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper.
- 1.35 Nine areas of search have been identified by the Council. The areas have been identified having regard to the location of urban areas, the potential opportunities to develop on previously developed land, received site submissions and 'focal points' or nodes that might be developable. These areas of search have been appraised to identify the most sustainable locations (for both Cherwell and Oxford) within which to accommodate some of Oxford's unmet housing need. The areas of search have been reviewed considering the representations received and new evidence. No new options have been identified.
- 1.36 Three quantities of additional housing growth were defined by Cherwell District Council based on an apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need proposed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board of 4,400 dwellings<sup>2</sup>. The three options were:
- 4,400 homes.
  - Significantly more than 4,400 homes.
  - Significantly less than 4,400 homes.
- 1.37 The Council has decided to accommodate 4,400 new homes to meet some of Oxford's unmet housing needs in its Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document.
- 1.38 The quantum options and the appraisal have been reviewed considering the representations received and new evidence. No new options have been identified.
- 1.39 Potential development sites have been submitted to the Council as part of the on-going consultation process. Following the appraisal of the areas of search and the identification of the best performing areas, reasonable alternative site options for residential and open space sites were identified within selected areas of search A and B. These options have been appraised and are set out in **Appendix 6**.
- 1.40 Promoted sites over 2 hectares were appraised as potential strategic residential site options within areas of search A and B and potential open space options within areas A and B on the assumption that open spaces are likely to be incorporated within or located near to larger strategic residential site allocations as part of achieving sustainable communities.
- 1.41 Following consultation on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper and the Initial SA Report in November 2016, the site options appraisal was reviewed and additional site options were identified and appraised. The appraisal findings on these additional site options are presented alongside those appraised in the initial SA Report in **Chapter 9**.
- 1.42 The reasons for selecting and rejecting options are provided in **Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10**.

### SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal report

- 1.43 This SA report buildings on the work carried out in the preparation of the SA Scoping Report (2015) and Initial SA Report (2016) and describes the process that has been undertaken to date in carrying out the SA of Cherwell's Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. It sets out the findings of the appraisal of the Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives, the areas of search for growth, quantities of additional growth, specific site options and a set of preferred policy options. The report highlights any likely significant effects (both positive and negative, and taking into account the likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term and permanent and temporary

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<sup>2</sup> The process for identification of this apportionment is summarised in Chapter 2.

effects), helping to identify the locations for development and where to mitigate negative effects and maximise the benefits of the plan as it is drafted.

### SA Stage D: Consultation on Local Plan and this SA report

- 1.44 The Cherwell District Council invited comments on a Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper and initial SA report in November 2016. All documents are available on the Council's website. Consultation on this SA report will take place alongside the Council's proposed submission document in June 2017.
- 1.45 **Appendix 3** presents the consultation comments that have been received to date in relation to the SA Scoping Report and the initial SA report and explains how they have been addressed in this updated SA Report.

### SA Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the Local Plan

- 1.46 Recommendations for monitoring the residual social, environmental and economic effects of implementing Cherwell's Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review have been outlined in this updated SA Report (see **Chapter 11**).

### Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

- 1.47 **Table 1.1** below signposts the relevant sections of the SA Report that are considered to meet the SEA Directive requirements.

**Table 1.1: Meeting the Requirements of the SEA Directive**

SEA Directive Requirements	Coverage in the SA Report
<b>Preparation of an environmental report</b> in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex I):	This SA Report for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review constitutes the 'environmental report' for the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review.
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapters 1 and 2 and Appendix 1.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Chapters 3 and 4.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Chapter 3.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	Chapters 3 and 4.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Chapter 2 and Appendix 1.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Chapter 10.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 for alternatives Chapter 1 for difficulties encountered.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11.

SEA Directive Requirements	Coverage in the SA Report
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Separate document.
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)	This SA Report has adhered to this requirement.
<b>Consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4)</li> </ul>	Consultation with the relevant statutory environmental bodies was undertaken in relation to the Scoping Report for 6 weeks in January and February 2016 covering the statutory five-week requirement. The SA Report was consulted on for nine weeks from November 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)</li> </ul>	Public consultation took place on an 'Options' version of the Part 1 Partial Review alongside the Initial SA Report from November 2016 and is taking place again on the Proposed Plan and SA Report from June/July 2017.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7).</li> </ul>	Not relevant as there will be no effects beyond the UK from the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review.
<b>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)</b>	
<b>Provision of information on the decision:</b> When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the plan or programme as adopted</li> <li>a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9)</li> </ul>	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
<b>Monitoring</b> of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)	Chapter 11

### Data limitations and difficulties encountered

- 1.48 The SEA Regulations require that the environmental report should include information on *"any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know how) encountered in compiling the required information"* (Schedule 2(8)). The difficulties encountered in carrying out the SA are described below.
- 1.49 The first 'Issues Consultation Paper' published in January 2016 sought to gather early opinions on issues facing the District as a consequence of accommodating a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need and on possible ways in which the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review might address these. This paper contained no proposals which could be subject to SA.
- 1.50 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper published alongside an initial SA Report contained options for meeting a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need but no draft policies. Therefore, only the principle of development within specific locations was subject to SA.
- 1.51 Policies have been prepared for the proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, including mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate. It has therefore been possible to draw conclusions about the likely effects of developing within specific locations through the appraisal of the draft policies. There has been a need to ensure that a large number of site options could be appraised consistently. This has been achieved by the use of assumptions

relating to each SA objective for determining the difference between positive and negative, minor and significant effects, as described in **Chapter 5**.

- 1.52 When applying the assumptions (see **Appendix 2**) to inform the SA of areas of search and site options, distances were measured from the nearest point of a site to the nearest point of the feature(s) in question, which may not always accurately reflect the distance to features for the whole of a site, particularly large sites. This is to ensure a consistent approach for the SA. The Council has examined site options and the evidence to supplement the SA process in selecting preferred development locations and policies.
- 1.53 The sheer number of strategies, plans, programmes, policy documents, advice and guidance produced by a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies means that it has not been possible within the resources available to consider every potentially relevant document in detail (see **Chapter 2** and **Appendix 1**). However, we have drawn out the key generic messages relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and the SA.
- 1.54 Similarly, with regard to the evidence base set out in **Chapter 3** upon which effects have been identified, every effort has been made to ensure that the SA Report reflects the latest baseline information.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.55 Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land-use plans, including Development Plan Documents, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.
- 1.56 The HRA for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review has been undertaken separately to the SA. The HRA considers the potential for adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC alone and in combination with development proposed in the Local Plan Part 1 Review, the adopted Local Plan Part 1 and neighbouring authorities' Plans. The conclusions of the HRA have been taken into account in the SA where relevant.

## Structure of the SA Report

- 1.57 This chapter has described the background to the production of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:
- **Chapter 2** describes the review of plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix 1**).
  - **Chapter 3** presents the baseline information which has informed the assessment of the policies and sites in the Local Plan Part 1 Review.
  - **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues and problems in Cherwell and Oxford of relevance to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
  - **Chapter 5** presents the SA framework that has been used for the appraisal of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the method for carrying out the SA.
  - **Chapter 6** reports the findings of the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Vision and Strategic Objectives.
  - **Chapter 7** reports the findings of the SA of the District's nine areas of search.
  - **Chapter 8** reports the findings of the SA of the three quantum options for meeting some of Oxford's unmet need.
  - **Chapter 9** reports the findings of the SA of the site options with areas of search A and B.

- **Chapter 10** reports the findings of the SA of the policy options for the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, including the cumulative effects and mitigation.
- **Chapter 11** summarises the conclusions of the SA to date, the proposed monitoring framework and the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Review.

## 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies

2.1 Annex 1 of the SEA Directive requires:

(a) *"an outline of the...relationship with other relevant plans or programmes"; and*

(e) *"the environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation"*

2.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. Given the SEA Directive requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and other relevant plans, policies and programmes, including Local Plan Part 1. The Council also considers this further as part of the plan-making process.

### Relationship between the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and other plans and programmes

#### Cherwell Local Plan

- 2.3 The Local Plan Part 1 identifies where strategic development will take place in the District. The Adopted Part 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan provides for 22,840 additional dwellings through Policy BSC1: District Wide Housing Distribution, which meets the objectively assessed need for Cherwell District only. The Local Plan identifies sites to deliver 200 hectares (gross) of employment land which will result in approximately 20,500 jobs generated on B Use class land.
- 2.4 The Local Plan identifies that Banbury will accommodate 7,319 dwellings in the Plan period. To date all allocated sites are under construction, except Banbury Canalside (Policy Banbury 1), land at Bankside phase 2 (Policy Banbury 4), land at Drayton Lodge Farm (Banbury 18), land at Bolton Road (Policy Banbury 8), land at Higham Way (Policy Banbury 19) and west of the Warwick Road. At 31 March 2016 893 dwellings were complete at Banbury. Bicester will accommodate 10,129 dwellings to 2031. Sites are under construction at North West Bicester (Policy Bicester 1) and Graven Hill (Policy Bicester 2), South West Bicester and Talisman Road. At 31 March 2016 956 dwellings were complete at Bicester and in the rural areas 1,628 dwellings, including at the former RAF Upper Heyford (Policy Villages 5), were complete.
- 2.5 Kidlington has no strategic housing allocations in the Local Plan and has received limited residential development. However, the council has prepared the Kidlington Framework Masterplan, a Supplementary Planning Document that builds on the contents of the Local Plan Part 1 to explore issues and opportunities for the development and improvement of Kidlington. The masterplan includes an action plan which includes a list of priority projects including improvements to the village centre, Exeter Close, sport and recreation facilities, the Oxford Canal corridor, the environment of Oxford Road and the relationship between Kidlington and neighbouring employment centres.
- 2.6 Part 2 of the Local Plan will provide detailed planning policies that assist the implementation of strategic policies and the development management process, covering topics such as employment, town centres, tourism, transport, housing, open space, sport and recreation and community facilities, sustainable construction and renewable energy, natural environment, Green Belt, built environment, green infrastructure, Bicester Garden Town designation, rural areas and infrastructure. It will also identify smaller, non-strategic development sites for housing, employment, open space and recreation, travelling communities and other land uses, in accordance with the overall development strategy set out in Local Plan Part 1.

- 2.7 Following adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, Cherwell District Council committed to producing a Partial Review of Local Plan Part 1 which is expected to be completed within two years from adoption. Para. B.95 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) explains that Cherwell District Council will continue to work 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 assess all reasonable spatial options for meeting Oxford's unmet need, 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.
- 2.8 The Partial Review will need to provide for additional development to that proposed in Local Plan Part 1 to meet some of Oxford's unmet housing needs. Some of the options proposed for accommodating this growth are located in areas where growth is proposed in the Local Plan. An issue for the Local Plan Part 1 Review is the continued delivery of sites in the Local Plan by 2031 and the compatibility of the Partial Review with Local Plan Part 1 policies.
- 2.9 At the sub-regional and local levels there are some key plans and programmes that are specific to Cherwell and in particular Oxford and Oxfordshire, which provide context for the Partial Review of the Local Plan. These include plans and programmes relating to issues such as housing, health and well-being, transport, renewable energy and green infrastructure and the economy. The policies and site allocations in the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review take account of those plans and programmes. As well as those plans and programmes that relate to Cherwell, those of particular relevance will be key documents that relate to planning in Oxfordshire and Oxford City. These are described below. These are relevant as they assist in determining the most appropriate location and form of development (and therefore policies) required in the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review document. For example the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Oxford City's Housing Strategy help identify the need for affordable accommodation which the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review policies should seek to address.

## Oxfordshire wide work

- 2.10 Providing sufficient homes to meet Oxford's needs, and the constraints to development presented by Oxford's natural and historic assets as well as the Green Belt, is a significant challenge for the five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire. To address the challenge of meeting Oxford's unmet housing need, and taking account of the Duty to Co-operate, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (comprising representatives of the County and District Councils of Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Universities of Oxford and business leaders) has agreed to work collaboratively to provide a countywide spatial picture and strategy.

### Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation

- 2.11 The Localism Act requires all the planning authorities, county councils and a number of other public bodies in England to abide by the 'Duty to Co-operate' which aims to ensure that there is co-operation on issues of common concern in order to develop sound local plans. The Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation<sup>3</sup> is particularly relevant to Cherwell as it sets out how the parties involved will manage the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need. The current statement will remain in perpetuity, but will be reviewed annually.

### Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014

- 2.12 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>4</sup> (SHMA), published in April 2014, identified a need for the provision of around 5,000 homes per annum over the period 2011 to 2031 across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. The need within the administrative area of Oxford City Council is identified as between 24,000 and 32,000 homes up to 2031. As the adopted Oxford

<sup>3</sup> Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation (November 2016) Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership Board <http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s31300/Oxfordshire%20Statement%20of%20Cooperation.pdf?txtonly=1>

<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) GL Hearn Ltd <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/ourworkwithcommunities/oxfordshirepartnership/spatialplanninginfrastructure/SHMA%20Key%20Findings%20Summary.pdf>



Core Strategy does not meet this forecast provision, and as noted above through the countywide on-going work, there is general agreement between the Oxfordshire local authorities that the capacity of the City is limited and therefore there will be a significant shortfall which will need to be met within neighbouring districts.

#### **Oxford Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (2014)**

- 2.13 Oxford published a city-wide SHLAA and an unmet need assessment<sup>5</sup> in December 2014. The study concluded that the City had potential to accommodate 6,422 dwellings on sites deemed to be suitable, available and achievable, alongside an estimated 180 windfall dwellings per year, resulting in a total capacity between 2011 and 2031 of 10,212 dwellings. However, the Study concluded that the City had an objectively assessed housing need for between 24 and 32 thousand dwellings over the same period, resulting in a shortfall of between 13,788 and 21,788.

#### **Unlocking Oxford's Development Potential (Cundall, 2014)**

- 2.14 This document was commissioned by Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils to provide an alternative assessment of housing capacity for Oxford set out in the Oxford SHLAA (2014).

#### **Oxford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Assessment (2016)**

- 2.15 Oxford's new Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment published in October 2016 identified potential capacity to accommodate around 7,511 additional homes between 2016 and 2036. In addition, the Study highlighted capacity for 300,000sqm of B1 (offices), 92,000sqm of B2/B8 (industrial) and 200,000sqm of leisure and community employment uses.

#### **Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme**

- 2.16 A strategic work programme has been developed by the Growth Board, which comprises a number of inter-related projects and milestones relating to the preparation and appraisal of long-term strategic development options for the county and the identification of associated infrastructure requirements. This joint strategic work programme called the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, will inform local plan reviews (including Cherwell's) by identifying and appraising strategic spatial options for accommodating Oxford City's unmet housing need.
- 2.17 The Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme does not allocate sites. The Programme demonstrates the ability of each District to deliver a range of sites that can be shown to closely relate to Oxford and thus to enable the unmet housing need of Oxford to be apportioned in a manner which would deliver development which is sustainable over a realistic time period. The final allocation of any development will be up to individual Local Plans to take forward, taking into account wider detailed planning considerations, and the fit with proposed local strategies and potentially a wider set of options. Within this context, the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review seeks to accommodate a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 2.18 The working group commissioned work streams to inform the apportionment. These considered:
- The Urban Capacity of Oxford.
  - The Study of the Oxford Green Belt.
  - Spatial Options Assessment Project.
  - Transport Infrastructure Assessment.
  - Education Impact Assessment.
  - High-Level Habitats Regulation Assessment.

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<sup>5</sup> Oxford's Housing Land availability and Unmet Need Assessment, URS, , December 2014

<sup>6</sup> Oxford City Council Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, AECOM, October 2016

### *Urban Capacity of Oxford*

- 2.19 Fortismere Associates (FA) were appointed *“to review the Oxford City Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), to satisfy partners that the assessment of the ability to meet the stated level of unmet housing need is correct in two respects: a) In the context of existing policies; and b) In the context of a consideration of reasonable adjustments to existing policy that Oxford City could consider, whilst maintaining consistency with the NPPF”*.
- 2.20 FA reviewed a range of existing documentation on this issue and recommended a way forward. These documents included the Oxford SHLAA and the Cundall report (a critique of the City Council’s SHLAA) commissioned by South, Vale and Cherwell, plus the Oxford City response to this report. The aim was to secure agreement to a single figure or narrower range as a working assumption for the unmet housing need of Oxford City, in order to inform the assessment of the proposed spatial options.
- 2.21 The report concluded that Oxford City Council’s approach to assessing its housing supply is compliant with government policy and guidance (NPPF, PPG). It also identified a number of matters that Oxford City Council was recommended to consider in order to increase its housing capacity and so that it has *‘left no stone unturned’* in seeking to meet as much of its housing needs within the City as possible.
- 2.22 Following consideration of the Fortismere report, at its meeting held in November 2015, the Oxfordshire Growth Board approved *‘that the working assumption of 15,000 is a working figure to be used by the Programme as a benchmark for assessing the spatial options for growth and is not an agreed figure for the true amount of unmet need’*.
- 2.23 Subsequent to this decision, Oxford City Council commenced its review of its Local Plan in spring 2016. The recommendations from the Fortismere report will be considered through that process.

### *The Study of the Oxford Green Belt*

- 2.24 Land Use Consultants (LUC) was commissioned to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within Oxfordshire.
- 2.25 The overall aim of the Study was to assess the extent to which the land within the Oxford Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.26 The study assessed the contribution that separate identified land parcels within the Green Belt make to the purposes of the Green Belt according to the five NPPF purposes of Green Belt. The study does not propose areas for release from Green Belt but does allow individual councils, alongside challenge from partners, to consider whether Green Belt land could be included as part of the areas of search that formed the basis of the allocation of Oxford’s unmet housing need. In this way the study, in combination with the Spatial Options Assessment (see below), helps to identify the potential, or not, for development, and the case for additional areas to be added to the Green Belt.

### *Spatial Options Assessment*

- 2.27 Land Use Consultants (LUC) and BBP Regeneration were commissioned to carry out a Spatial Options Assessment for meeting the Oxford’s unmet housing need up to 2031. The overall aim of the Spatial Options Assessment was to provide a criteria-based analysis of 36 predetermined spatial options for meeting Oxford’s unmet housing need, to establish their ‘relative’ sustainability at a strategic level.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A full Sustainability Assessment was not judged to be necessary, as the process was not allocating specific sites.

- 2.28 These criteria included a number of issues grouped into four categories:
- Sustainability (comprising spatial relevance to Oxford, social and economic criteria, and environmental criteria).
  - Landscape.
  - Green Belt.
  - Deliverability and viability.
- 2.29 The Study found that there is more than enough capacity within these spatial options to meet Oxford's unmet housing need and a number of the spatial options within each of the local authorities have been identified as relating well to Oxford with good existing and future access to the cultural offer, universities and key employment locations in the City. However, some of these options are in the Green Belt, or may have deliverability and viability issues, therefore the Study highlighted the need for choices to be made regarding which, if any, options to take forward for consideration through each authority's Local Plan process.

#### *Transport Infrastructure Assessment*

- 2.30 Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) Ltd was commissioned to prepare a high-level assessment of the transport implications of development at the 36 spatial options in Oxfordshire that could potentially accommodate the working assumption of Oxford City's unmet housing need to 2031 of circa 15,000 homes.
- 2.31 The Study included a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) analysis against a set of eight transport-related metrics which fed into an initial Check and Challenge workshop on 15th April 2016 led by LUC as part of their wider work to consider the general viability of the 36 different spatial options for accommodating Oxford's future unmet housing need.
- 2.32 The Growth Board recognised that the response to the impact assessment will be a matter for the subsequent Local Plan processes to address; as the individual sites brought forward to meet the unmet housing need of Oxford may change as this local work is undertaken.

#### *Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy- Stage 1*

- 2.33 AECOM have prepared the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on behalf of the Oxfordshire Growth Board to provide a view of emerging development and infrastructure requirements to support growth from 2016 to 2031 and beyond. The strategy highlights that the Oxfordshire authorities are forecast to deliver a total of 123,500 dwellings from 2016 to 2040, accommodating a population increase of 267,700 new residents. It is projected that there will be a 25% increase (101,000) in the number of available jobs in the County. Delivering the necessary infrastructure to support this growth from now to 2040 is estimated to cost at least £8.96 billion in 2016 terms. The strategy highlights a number of areas along the strategic and local road network that are and will continue to be increasingly vulnerable to congestion and identifies projects to help alleviate this. Notable roads within Cherwell include:
- the A35, particularly the Oxford junctions;
  - east of Junction11 on the M40 at Banbury;
  - the A4260- Bridge Street/Cherwell Street eastern corridor improvements at Banbury; and
  - upgrades to the A4421 at Bicester.

#### *Education Impact Assessment*

- 2.34 High levels of additional housing growth generate the need for new education provision, which has complex catchment issues to address and in the case of secondary provision can be expensive to provide and potentially require contributions from more than one strategic development.
- 2.35 To ensure these issues were considered at an early stage, Oxfordshire County Council conducted a high-level assessment of the implications for the provision of primary and secondary school places from the potential development of the 36 identified spatial options for accommodating Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 2.36 The work has been used to help filter out spatial options which could lead to infrastructure carrying a higher risk of being financially unviable, being undeliverable due to reliance on other

sites coming forward and/or of rendering development unviable due to cost per dwelling. The assessment recognises that the potential spatial options would change as the individual Local Plans consider a wider range of options.

#### *High level (Non-Statutory) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)*

- 2.37 Atkins was commissioned to conduct a high level, cumulative HRA screening. Although this work will not directly influence the apportionment, it will be progressed on a Duty to Cooperate basis and the completed work will feed into on-going Local Plan processes which are responsible for determining how the apportioned unmet need is met / distributed within each district.

#### **The Final Apportionment**

- 2.38 The strategic Spatial Options Assessment together with the other studies outlined above has informed the Growth Board's proposed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need between the District Council areas.
- 2.39 The final apportionment is a recommendation, i.e. the list of areas of search that underpins it is an input to each authority's Local Plan process rather than an output. This is because, although the final apportionment is based on Officers' collective existing knowledge of areas of search that would be most suitable to meet Oxford's unmet need, subsequent Local Plan work may bring other sites forward.
- 2.40 Furthermore, in identifying the final apportionment the Growth Board is not seeking to allocate or release sites. Rather the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme has at a high level and using a common basis, identified each District's ability to absorb additional growth to meet a share of Oxford's unmet need. It will be for each of the districts through their normal Local Plan processes to explore how to accommodate their proposed share of Oxford's unmet need under the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.41 It is also important to note that the yield figures for each area of search (spatial option) represent estimated housing numbers to be delivered by 2031 – total capacities at a number of these sites may change through local assessment as part of the more detailed Local Plan process, taking a wider range of planning factors into account, including the potential to deliver further housing beyond 2031.
- 2.42 Cherwell District Council has been apportioned 4,400 dwellings by the Growth Board, which equates to just under 30% of Oxford's unmet housing need up to 2031.

#### **The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)**

- 2.43 The updated SEP<sup>8</sup> was prepared by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and was published in 2016. It sets out the county's economic vision up to 2030 which sees "*Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence*". As well as generating economic growth, the SEP facilitates the infrastructure required to support this growth through furthering the City Deal which was agreed with the government.
- 2.44 The document is of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review as it prioritises housing and employment development in key locations, specifically to the "Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine" which extends from Science Vale Oxford to Bicester in Cherwell District. The SEP highlights that good progress is being made on flagship gateway developments and projects that stimulate growth, including at North West Bicester. The Plan sets out the provision of Local Growth Fund funding of 5.2 million pounds to support a package of improvements to the transport network to the north of Oxford at the 'Northern Gateway', which will provide business and research space and new homes delivered by Oxford City Council at a total investment of 452.5 million pounds.

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<sup>8</sup> The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (2016) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership  
<http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/content/strategic-economic-plan>

## Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan for Oxfordshire

- 2.45 In line with the SEP, the Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan<sup>9</sup> recognises the county's globally important economic assets as well as the growth required to maintain the Oxfordshire's economic prosperity, however the document also highlights the need to conserve the county's natural capital whilst enhancing the economy.

## Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4)

- 2.46 The LTP4<sup>10</sup> recognises that with the current forecasts for over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes in the county by 2031, a series of radical solutions are required to support the growing economy, number of residents and visitors.
- 2.47 The Plan notes the very high use of bus services between Kidlington and Cherwell. A high-level visionary Science Transit Strategy seeks to provide better-integrated, high quality mobility systems that both serve the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine and connect it with the rest of the county. The potential network would link Cherwell's three main towns to Oxford.
- 2.48 A number of road improvements are also identified in the LTP4 which are outlined in their respective Area Strategies. In Bicester there are plans for a new road linking the eastern perimeter route with the A41 and a new highway bridge to allow the Eastern Perimeter Road to cross the new East West Rail line, replacing the current Charbridge Lane level crossing. Additionally a new link road between Banbury and a large employment site could be developed east of M40 junction 11. A spine road to be built as part of development at Salt Way south of the town will link the A4260 Oxford Road and A361 Chipping Norton Road.
- 2.49 The strategy includes the recently opened rail link between Oxford Station Parkway and London Marylebone.
- 2.50 The LTP4 also recognises that the London Oxford Airport has existing capacity for more short-haul flights to cities and hub airports in north-western Europe and the county council will work with the airport to avoid increasing pressure on the road network and to improve public transport access, including links to Oxford Parkway station and key linkage to the emerging Rapid Transit Routes 1 and 3.

## Oxford Transport Strategy

- 2.51 The County's Local Transport Plan includes a 'Oxford transport Strategy' which identifies the current and future challenges for transport in the city and sets out a strategy based on a combination of infrastructure projects and supporting measures to enable economic and housing growth. The strategy includes a focus on north Oxford, including Cutteslowe and Wolvercote, and major corridors into Oxford from the area north of the outer ring road. The Strategy contains aspirations to develop a new Rapid Transit (RT) network providing '...fast, high capacity, zero emission transport on the city's busiest transport corridors, offering a tram-equivalent (or in future potentially tram) level of service and passenger experience...'
- 2.52 Three RT lines have been identified for the city, linking a potential network of new outer Park & Ride sites including on the A44 corridor near London-Oxford Airport at Kidlington. The County Council's strategy is to move Park and Ride facilities further away from Oxford to improve operation of the A34 and other road intersects. The OTS states that future housing and employment growth within Oxfordshire is set to further exacerbate congestion on the A34, the outer ring road and other corridors that feed into the city, unless traffic can be captured before it reaches them.
- 2.53 Facilities at the Park & Ride sites are expected by the County Council to fulfil the criteria required at high quality interchange hubs with significant provision for those wishing to cycle for part of the journey.

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<sup>9</sup> Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan for Oxfordshire (no date) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/sites/default/files/345438%20SEIIP%20Final%20LowRes.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4) (2015) Oxfordshire County Council [https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO\\_LTP4/consultationHome](https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO_LTP4/consultationHome)

## Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy

- 2.54 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy<sup>11</sup> sets out the planning strategies and policies for the development that will be needed for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to the end of 2031. With significant growth in population, new housing, economic development and infrastructure improvements, there are implications for the demand for and supply of minerals and also for the production of waste and how it is dealt with. This will need to be achieved whilst protecting and enhancing the urban and rural environments as well as considering social and economic needs.
- 2.55 There are currently a number of planned mineral developments in Cherwell including an additional rail depot at Shipton on Cherwell which has received planning permission. Through policy M3, the Minerals and Waste Plan has identified principal locations for working aggregate material and a couple of these strategic resource areas fall in the Cherwell District including Duns Tew (soft sand) and the area north-west of Bicester (crushed rock). The Core Strategy also identifies 21 existing and permitted waste management sites safeguarded under Policy W11.
- 2.56 Finmere Quarry is the only site in Cherwell that has void remaining for non-hazardous landfill and is permitted to end in 2035.

## Neighbouring Local Plans

- 2.57 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the SA process, consideration will be given to the local plans being prepared by the authorities around Cherwell.
- 2.58 As shown in **Figure 2.1**, there are seven authorities which border Cherwell District: South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Oxford, Stratford-on-Avon, South Northamptonshire and Aylesbury Vale (Cherwell District and the first four neighbouring authorities are within Oxfordshire).
- 2.59 The Local Plans and any significant development proposals in neighbouring districts in Oxfordshire are of particular relevance. Of most relevance to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is the relationship between Cherwell District's Local Plan and Oxford City's, due to the acknowledged need for Oxford City's neighbouring districts to help deliver the identified housing need for Oxford within their boundaries. The Local Plans of the other three neighbouring districts in Oxfordshire are also therefore very relevant.

## Oxford Core Strategy 2026




- 2.60 Oxford is located to the south of Cherwell. The Oxford Core Strategy 2026<sup>12</sup> was adopted in March 2011. The Core Strategy is the overarching strategy for development in Oxford for the period ending 2026. Many of the policies contained in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 were replaced by new policies in the Core Strategy document. The net provision of additional dwellings in Oxford by March 2026 is to be 8,000 as in the Core Strategy document. Between the period of 2006 and 2026 the job growth forecast is for the creation of between 11,280 and 13,900 new jobs in Oxford. The Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment was used to define the annual demand for affordable housing in the City, which for the first five years was defined at between 1,420 and 2,396 dwellings. As well as achieving growth and development in housing, employment and infrastructure, the Core Strategy also seeks to conserve and enhance the historic and natural assets that form the city's character and visitor appeal.
- 2.61 Following the Core Strategy, the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 was adopted in February 2013. This includes policies that set out what type of housing development is expected and also allocates large sites considered suitable for development for housing and other important uses that will help deliver the aims, including the delivery of 8,000 homes, as set out in the Core Strategy.

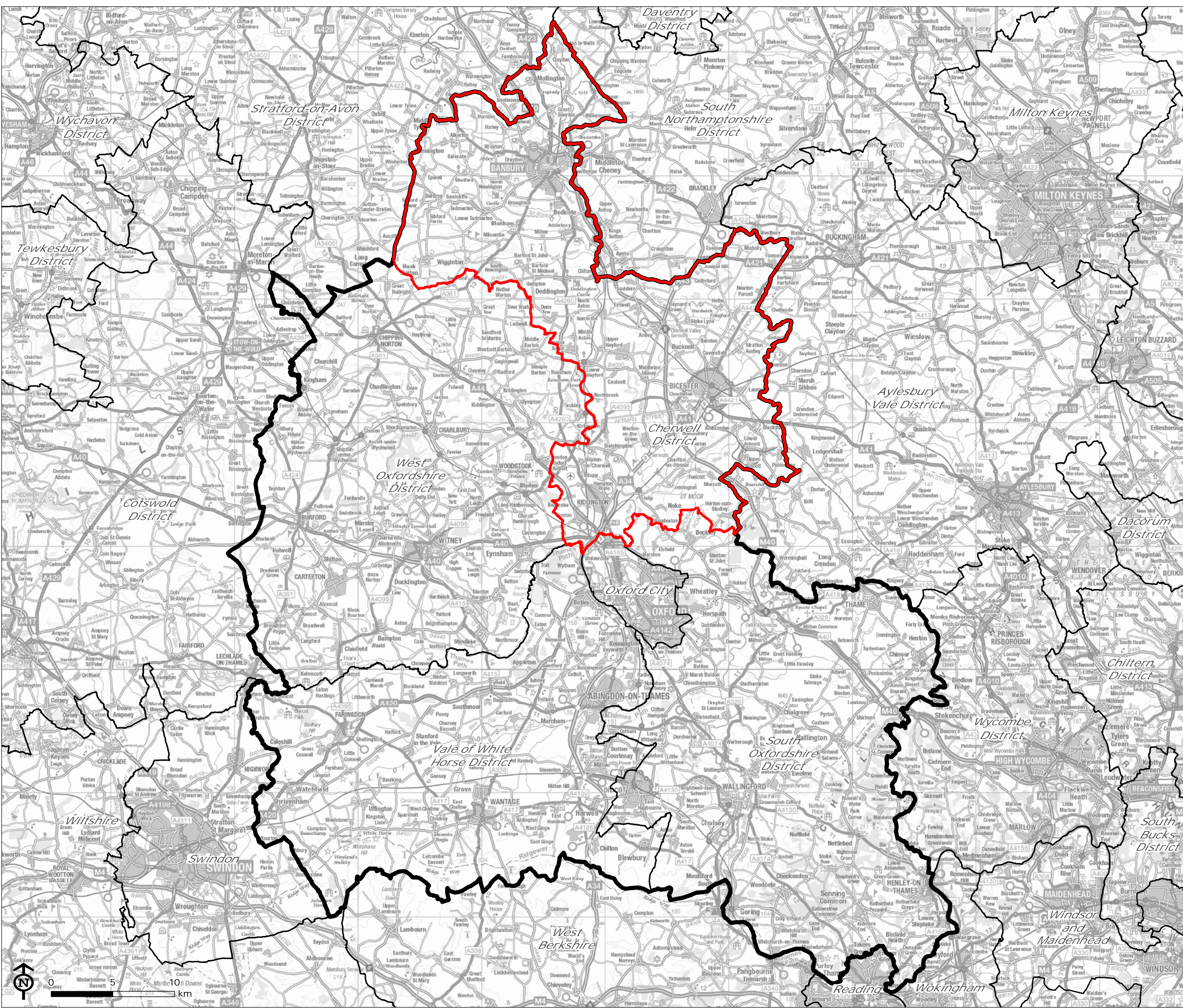
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<sup>11</sup> Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy> (currently under examination with a view to adoption in early 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Oxford Core Strategy 2026 (2011) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Core%20Strategy/Oxford%20Core%20Strategy%202026.pdf%20>

Figure 2.1  
Location of Cherwell District within Oxfordshire

-  Cherwell District boundary
-  Other district boundaries
-  Oxfordshire County boundary



Map Scale @ A3: 1:300,000



- 2.62 Oxford City Council has started preparation of a new Local Plan 2016-2036, with a First Steps Consultation taking place between June-August 2016. The consultation aims to help develop a vision for the city in 2036, to gather ideas on a range of scenarios for future development and to check that the right issues have been identified.

### **Oxford Housing Strategy 2015-2018**

- 2.63 The Oxford Housing Strategy<sup>13</sup> identifies the key issues for housing in Oxford over the next three years and how the Council and its partners are planning to overcome them and help deliver the 'The Housing Offer' to the people of Oxford. The plan identifies that there is a large shortfall in housing within Oxford and due to a shortage in land capacity, the Council needs to look to its strategic partners in order to meet the housing demand.

### **Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP)**

- 2.64 The AAP<sup>14</sup> was adopted by Oxford City Council in July 2015 and provides a policy framework guiding future employment and other development in the 'Northern Gateway' of Oxford with an envisaged completion date of 2026 - in line with Oxford City Council's Core Strategy. The Northern Gateway is located to the north west of Oxford where the northern and western boundaries of this 44ha site lie on the boundary of Cherwell District and Oxford. This strategic development location is therefore of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review.
- 2.65 The site will provide the largest single area of employment land within Oxford to accommodate city's economic growth in its key sectors (education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses linked to the two universities and hospitals) as well as accommodating new homes, a hotel and shops.
- 2.66 The site is adjacent to three strategic roads (A34, A40 and A44) and the area already experiences congestion. Development will therefore include a number of measures to alleviate the existing congestion issues as well as mitigate any future impacts the site may bring. These measures include the provision of sustainable modes of transport and improvements to the road network, with specific reference to improvements that could be achieved in the wider area through the provision of a strategic link road to the west of the A34, creating a link between an enlarged Loop Farm roundabout and a new roundabout on the A40. Such a scheme could further ease congestion on the A40 approach and the Wolvercote Roundabout. However, this proposal is beyond the scope of the AAP as it lies within Cherwell District, and the AAP notes that it is not required to deliver the development at Northern Gateway.

### **Oxford Strategic Partnership**

- 2.67 The Oxford Strategic Partnership<sup>15</sup> was created in 2003 to promote joined-up approaches for improving quality of life in the city. The aims of the Partnership are set out in the 'Oxford: A World Class City for Everyone Vision Statement, Aims, Challenges and Priorities' (2013 – 2018):
- To provide a clear and ambitious vision for the future of Oxford, developing its environmental, economic and social life in a positive and sustainable way.
  - To improve the quality of life of all sections of the community, to reduce inequalities, and support the needs and aspirations of citizens in their local areas.
  - To foster and promote closer working between local agencies to deliver responsive and high quality services across the city.

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<sup>13</sup> Oxford Housing Strategy 2015-2018 (no date) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Community%20Housing/Housing%20Strategy%202015%20-%202018.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (2015) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Northern%20Gateway/Northern%20Gateway%20Area%20Action%20Plan%20-%20July%202015.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Oxford: A World Class City for Everyone Vision Statement, Aims, Challenges and Priorities 2013 - 2018 (2013) Oxford Strategic Partnership [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1757/osp\\_vision\\_aims\\_challenges\\_and\\_priorities\\_2013.pdf](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1757/osp_vision_aims_challenges_and_priorities_2013.pdf)



### South Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 2.68 South Oxfordshire is located to the south of Cherwell. The District Council is currently in the process of producing a Local Plan 2033. The most recent version of the Local Plan 2033 is the Second Preferred Options document; therefore the latest development strategy for the Borough remains as set out in the adopted Core Strategy 2012. The Core Strategy sets out the overarching development strategy for the District up to 2027. The Core Strategy provides for the development of 5,214 new homes for the period 2012- 2027 and around 20ha of employment land, with around 13.5ha in various centres across the District and a further 6.5ha at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse District. The spatial strategy for the District is to provide the majority of housing growth in Didcot.

### Vale of White Horse Local Plan

- 2.69 Vale of White Horse is located to the south west of Cherwell. The Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies was adopted in December 2016.
- 2.70 The Local Plan aims to deliver at least 20,560 new homes during the plan period (2011/12 to 2030/31), which will meet the District's own objectively assessed need. These new homes are to be provided at strategic development sites at the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area (1,790 homes), the Western Vale Sub-Area (1,650 homes) and the South East Vale Sub-Area (9,055 homes) while up 1,000 new homes will be identified for allocation through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 and a further 900 house delivered through windfall sites. Within the District there was a known commitment to 4,468 new homes at the time of Plan submission. The Plan identifies 218ha of land for future employment development divided between the Western Vale and South Eastern Vale. A further 24.2ha of employment land is identified from the saved Vale Local Plan 2011 employment allocations. Like Cherwell, the Vale of White Horse District has committed through its Examination process to working jointly on the countywide Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, in order to address meeting some of Oxford's unmet needs<sup>16</sup>.

### West Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 2.71 West Oxfordshire is located to the west of Cherwell. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was submitted to Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015, and the 'Main Modifications' to the Local Plan, addressing the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City, was submitted on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The plan aims to meet the District's own objectively assessed housing need by delivering at least 15,950 new homes between 2011 and 2031, 13,200 homes (660 per year), as well as an additional 2,750 homes between 2021 and 2031 (totalling 935 homes per year between 2012 and 2031) to assist meeting Oxford's unmet housing needs. The majority of the housing is to be delivered in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. To meet employment needs in the District, 20ha of employment land is identified to the west of Witney, 5ha by Carterton, at least 9ha to the east of Chipping Norton, around 40ha at the West Oxfordshire Garden Village in the form of a 'science park', and at least 5ha within existing commitments in rural areas and other villages; and 2ha at Lakeside Standlake.

## Cherwell Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.72 There are nine defined Neighbourhood Plan Areas in Cherwell District:
- Adderbury.
  - Bloxham.
  - Bodicote.
  - Deddington.
  - Hook Norton.
  - Merton.

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<sup>16</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1. December 2016. <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

- Mid-Cherwell.
- Stratton Audley.
- Weston on the Green .

2.73 Hook Norton and Bloxham Neighbourhood Plans have been formally adopted ('made'). The others are at an early stage of preparation.

## Environmental, social and economic objectives relevant to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

2.74 There are a wide range of plans, policies and programmes at the international and national levels with environmental, social and economic objectives that are relevant to the SA of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. The full review of relevant plans, policies and programmes can be seen in **Appendix 1** and the key components are summarised below.

### *Key international plans, policies and programmes*

2.75 At the international level, Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly significant as they require SEA and HRA to be undertaken in relation to the emerging Local Plan. These processes should be undertaken iteratively and integrated into the production of the Local Plan in order to ensure that any potential negative environmental effects (including on European-level nature conservation designations) are identified and can be mitigated.

2.76 There are a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which have been transposed into UK law through national-level policy; however the international directives have been included in **Appendix 1** for completeness.

### *Key national plans, policies and programmes*

2.77 The most significant document in terms of the policy context for the Partial Review is the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>17</sup> (NPPF) and the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>18</sup>. The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which sets out information about the purposes of local plan making. It states that:

*"Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*

2.78 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be 'aspirational but realistic'. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.

2.79 One of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Other core planning principles are linked to health – such as design and transportation. Section 8 of the NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.

2.80 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>18</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

2.81 Of particular relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to:

- have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area;
- to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment or 'SHMA' to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries;
- to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans;
- to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas, for instance because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to national principles and policies;
- to produce Local Plans in accordance with a statutory Duty to Cooperate;
- to protect the Green Belt from harm, specifically its ability to fulfil its five purposes.
- to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt; and
- to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.

2.82 In addition, Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
- be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.

## 3 Baseline Information

### Introduction

- 3.1 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.
- 3.2 Annex 1 of the SEA Directive requires information to be provided on:
- (a) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;*
  - (b) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;*
  - (c) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC [the 'Birds Directive'] and 92/43/EEC [the 'Habitats Directive'].*
- 3.3 Baseline information that was collated for the SA of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 has been used as the starting point. However, in the December 2015 SA Scoping Report, and in this SA Report, it has been revised and updated to make use of the most recent available information sources, and sources have been referred to in footnotes.
- 3.4 Data referred to has been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, in order to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects. All figures are presented at the end of the Baseline Section.
- 3.5 Given that the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review will be focusing on the potential effects of site options and policies relating to development within Cherwell District (albeit to meet a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need as explained in Chapter 1), this chapter sets out the baseline information relating to Cherwell District, as well as the key baseline information that relates to Planning and key issues in Oxfordshire and Oxford City which is described below.
- 3.6 Map-based information on how the locational options relate to Oxford and further baseline information generally has been gathered as the SA has progressed in order to inform judgments on how well different locations for housing development perform against the SA objectives and criteria (details of how each Area of Search and Site has been assessed against each SA objective can be found in **Appendix 2**). All figures referred to in this chapter can be found at the end of the chapter.

### Cherwell District baseline

#### Geography

- 3.7 Cherwell District has an area covering approximately 228 square miles and is situated in the north of Oxfordshire. It has excellent transport links with London and Birmingham.
- 3.8 The District shares boundaries with Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Aylesbury Vale, South Northamptonshire and Stratford upon Avon districts. The M40 runs through the District and there are good rail connections to Birmingham, London and beyond.
- 3.9 The District's settlement hierarchy is dominated by the towns of Banbury and Bicester in the north and south respectively. The third largest settlement is Kidlington which is both an urban centre and a village and is surrounded by the Oxfordshire Green Belt but is excluded from it. The rest of the District is largely rural in character and Cherwell has over 90 smaller villages and hamlets.

## Climate Change, Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency

- 3.10 Climate change has the potential not only to affect the environment, but also the social and economic aspects of life in Cherwell.
- 3.11 The latest DECC figures<sup>19</sup> are set out in **Table 3.1** and show generally gradually decreasing trends for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (tonnes) per capita in Cherwell from 2005-2014. The decreasing trend in emissions reflects the decrease in overall emissions for the UK during this period driven mainly by reductions in emissions from power stations, industrial combustion and passenger cars. During the period 2005 to 2014 total emissions per capita in Oxfordshire fell from 9.5t CO<sub>2</sub> to 7.1t CO<sub>2</sub>. The reduction from power stations is driven by change in the fuel mix used for electricity generation with a reduction in the amount of coal which is a carbon intensive fuel. The reduction in industrial combustion is largely driven by the closure or reduced activity of industrial plants, a large portion of which occurred during 2009 likely due to economic factors. Emissions for many Local Authorities are heavily influenced by activities at industrial sites, and changes at a single site can have a big impact on emissions trends<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.12 The Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report<sup>21</sup> reports 12 planning permissions were approved for renewable energy schemes in the District in 2015/2016, all for solar photovoltaics (PVs). In the same period of time in Cherwell energy consumption saw a gradual fall from 5,706.3 GWh for all fuels in 2005 to 4,632.8 GWh for all fuels in 2014. During 2014, the most significant contributor to the overall consumption of fuel in the District was petrol used for road travel. The level of consumption from this source fell from 2,210.1 GWh in 2005 to 2,074.7 GWh in 2014. In England as a whole there was a sizeable decrease in consumption of fuel over the same eight year period. In 2005, consumption of all fuels was recorded as 1.420 million GWh and this fell to 1.185 million GWh in 2014.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 3.1: Source of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions in Cherwell per Sector (2005-2014)**<sup>23</sup>

Year	Industry and Commercial (t CO <sub>2</sub> per person)	Domestic (t CO <sub>2</sub> per person)	Transport (t CO <sub>2</sub> per person)	Total (t CO <sub>2</sub> per person)
2005	4.4	2.5	5.1	12.2
2006	4.4	2.6	5.1	12.2
2007	4.1	2.5	5.1	11.8
2008	3.9	2.4	4.8	11.2
2009	3.6	2.2	4.5	10.4
2010	4.1	2.3	4.5	11.0
2011	3.6	2.0	4.4	10.1
2012	3.7	2.2	4.4	10.3
2013	3.9	2.1	4.3	10.4
2014	3.0	1.8	4.3	9.0

## Landscape

- 3.13 Cherwell's natural environment is varied. There are no National Parks within the District; however, the Cotswolds AONB lies within the north-west, as shown in **Figure 3.1: Landscape Designations**.

<sup>19</sup> 2005-2014 UK local and regional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions full dataset. DECC. (Published June 2016) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014>)

<sup>20</sup> Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions estimates 2014. Statistical Release. DECC, June 2016. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014>)

<sup>21</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework

<sup>22</sup> Sub-national total final energy consumption statistics: 2005-2014. DECC (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/total-final-energy-consumption-at-regional-and-local-authority-level-2005-to-2010>) Last updated September 2015

<sup>23</sup> 2005-2014 UK local and regional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions full dataset. DECC (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014>) (Published June 2016)

- 3.14 Cherwell lies within five of the Oxfordshire Character Areas that occur mostly in horizontal east-west strips across the District (see **Figure 3.1**): Northamptonshire Uplands to the north, both the Cotswolds and Upper Thames Valley Character Areas form the central strips, Midvale ridge to the south-east and Northamptonshire Vales to the north-east<sup>24</sup>. There are also 19 landscape types within Cherwell<sup>25</sup>, the four predominant types are: Wooded Estatelands and Farmland Plateau to the north of Bicester; the Clay Vale to the south; and three areas of Upstanding Village Farmlands to the south of Banbury with four further small pockets to the north-east of the District.
- 3.15 Approximately 14% of the District lies within the Oxford Green Belt to the south which surrounds the urban area of Kidlington. The location of the Green Belt within Cherwell is illustrated in the Local Plan Part 1 Review. The area has been subject to development restraint due to the protection provided to Green Belts by national policy and in the mid-1990s, Oxford City Council released areas in the Green Belt for housing and employment uses e.g. Northern Gateway<sup>26</sup>. Today there is debate whether land should be removed from the Green Belt (including locations in Cherwell) in order to deliver development requirements. The 2015 Oxford Green Belt Study recommends that local authorities should undertake careful master planning of development so that harm is minimised. In addition, Cherwell District Council has commissioned a study of the Green Belt within the District to inform the identification of preferred sites for allocation in the Part 1 Partial Review. Building on the Oxford Green Belt Study, all site options have been assessed against the five purposes of Green Belt highlighting where development would minimise potential harm to the wider Green Belt and to enhance potential beneficial use of Green Belt.
- 3.16 A number of documents have considered development in the District's rural landscape and urban fringes and these informed Cherwell's Adopted Local Plan Part 1, including:
- The 2010 Halcrow Report undertook a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study<sup>27</sup> assessed the sensitivity to and capacity of specified sites at Banbury, Bicester to accept development, specifically: residential; employment (commercial and industrial); recreation; and woodland. In general, most sites have a high capacity to accept woodland of an appropriate character and a moderate to high capacity to accept informal recreation. The capacity to accept residential and employment or playing field developments was more variable.
  - The Bicester and Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments<sup>28</sup> provided an assessment of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of ten sites on the periphery and within the two towns. The reports reviewed the sites' boundaries and where necessary, provided opinion and rationale on areas to either be excluded as they were not appropriate to be considered for development, or additional areas to be included.
  - The Environmental Baseline Reports for Banbury<sup>29</sup> and Bicester<sup>30</sup> explored the interaction of these towns with their rural setting and the environmental baseline of their urban fringes. Through understanding the towns' environmental assets, this document provided a foundation that guided development away from sensitive areas in the urban fringes. The Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment of Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Site Options<sup>31</sup> prepared by WYG on behalf of Cherwell District Council in 2016 and 2017. The assessment identifies the landscape character sensitivity and capacity of each site option for residential, employment (commercial and industrial), recreational and woodland land uses.

<sup>24</sup> Regional Character Areas. Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. (<http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Regional+Character/>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>25</sup> Cherwell Landscape Types. Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. (<http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Districts/Oxfordshire+Districts++Landscape+Types/Cherwell+Landscape+Types/>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>26</sup> Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) LUC (<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Oxford%20Green%20Belt%20Study&ID=426&RPID=7460879&sch=doc&cat=13638&path=13637%2c13638>)

<sup>27</sup> Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2010) Halcrow Group Limited (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>28</sup> Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013 & 2014) WYG Group (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)  
Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013 & 2014) WYG Group (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>29</sup> Banbury Environmental Baseline Report (2013) LDA Group (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>30</sup> Bicester Environmental Baseline Report (2013) LDA Group (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>31</sup> Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2016 & 2017) WYG Group

These assessments have been informed by on-site landscape, ecology and cultural heritage assessments.

### Biodiversity

- 3.17 Cherwell District contains many areas of high ecological value including sites of international and national importance, as outlined below and shown in **Figure 3.2: Biodiversity Designations**. However, there are large parts of the District without formal designations or constraints. While the District is predominantly rural, its urban centres, parks and open spaces are just as much part of the local environment and provide important habitats for wildlife.
- 3.18 Cherwell contains one site of European importance; part of Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located in the south west corner of the District (the rest of the SAC lies within Oxford's boundary, approximately 1.5km to the north west of Oxford city). The SAC receives statutory protection under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/42/EEC), transposed into UK national legislation in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations) due to its lowland hay meadow habitats, potentially unique vegetation communities and existence of creeping marshwort<sup>32</sup>.
- 3.19 Sites of national importance comprise SSSIs and National Nature Reserves. Cherwell District has 18 SSSIs but does not contain any National Nature Reserves<sup>33</sup>. Sites of regional/local importance comprise Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), non-statutory nature reserves and other sites of importance for nature conservation including Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs- formerly known as County Wildlife Sites), ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees and NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance. Cherwell contains 3 LNRs and 79 Local Wildlife Sites (completely or partly within the District). Nine sites were surveyed in 2014 and considered by the Local Wildlife Sites panel in 2015. Two sites had extensions to existing Local Wildlife Sites accepted: Bicester Airfield and Quarry Spring Marsh. This has led to an increase in the amount of Local Wildlife Sites in the District from 923 ha to 1,035 ha, an increase of 130 ha. The area of Local Geological Sites remains the same for 2015 with 139 ha<sup>34</sup>, shown in **Figure 3.3: Geological Designations**. Sites of regional/local importance also include the habitats of those species of principal importance for biodiversity (as identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act).
- 3.20 Cherwell District Council commissioned WYG to provide ecological support to inform the Council's work on the Local Plan Part 1 Review. The Study focusses on the potential cumulative impacts of seven sites identified around the villages of Kidlington, Begbroke, Yarnton and Woodstock, to the north of Oxford, specifically on ecological features and designations such as the Rushy Meadows SSSI. The Study concludes that the proposed site allocations have the potential to generate cumulative adverse effects on Rushy Meadow SSSI as a result of:
- Dumping, spreading and discharging of materials during the construction and operational phases of the development.
  - Burning during the operational phase of the development.
  - Disturbance of wild animals by wild, feral or domestic animals during the operational phase of the development.
  - The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould and turf.
  - The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation and storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).
  - Recreational and other activities likely to damage features of interest.
  - Noise disturbance to wildlife present in the SSSI including nesting birds.
  - Light spillage during construction towards the SSSI and impacting nocturnal species likely to be present e. bats, badger, hedgehog etc.

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<sup>32</sup> Habitats Regulations Assessment: Stage 1 – Screening (2014) Atkins (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>33</sup> Magic Map (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>34</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework ([http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/6/i/Final\\_2015\\_AMR\\_for\\_website.pdf](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/6/i/Final_2015_AMR_for_website.pdf))

- Increased run-off (from built-up areas and roads).
- Increased light spillage towards the SSSI from street and residential lighting impacting nocturnal species likely to be present such as bats, badger, hedgehog etc.

### Historic Environment

- 3.21 There are many heritage designations within the District as shown in **Figure 3.4: Heritage Designations**. Cherwell has many attractive villages from those consisting of ironstone and thatch in the north to the southern limestone and stone slate villages. Many of these areas have been designated as Conservation Areas to protect their character and appearance. Banbury and Bicester centres and the historic parts of Kidlington, as well as much of the length of the Oxford Canal have also been designated. There are 60 Conservation Areas in Cherwell, 56 of which have Conservation Area Appraisals available for them. Two of the Conservation Areas (Banbury Grimsbury, North Oxfordshire and RAF Upper Heyford, Ardley) have been identified as being on the Heritage at Risk List by Historic England. The District has 2,331 Listed Buildings, four of which are on the Heritage at Risk Register<sup>35</sup>:
- Church of St Edburg, Church Street, Bicester (Listed Place of Worship grade I)
  - Church of St Mary the Virgin, Church Lane, Cropredy (Listed Place of Worship grade I)
  - Church of St Mary, Church Lane, Kirtlington (Listed Place of Worship grade II\*)
  - Church of St Mary, Horse Fair, Banbury (Listed Place of Worship grade I)
- 3.22 The District has 36 Scheduled Monuments, five of which are on the Heritage at Risk Register<sup>36</sup>:
- Ilbury Camp hillfort, Deddington
  - Islip Roman villa, 300m east of Hillside Farm, Islip
  - Ruins of Hampton Gay Manor House, Hampton Gay and Poyle
  - Defence and ancillary structures at RAF Bicester, Bicester, Launton
  - Blenheim Villa, a Roman villa and associated field system 200m north east of Little Cote, Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp at Woodstock
- 3.23 There are also ten sites which are included in the 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'. Cherwell contains one Historic Battlefield which is the Battle of Cropredy Bridge 1644.
- 3.24 The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site lies directly to the west of the Cherwell District boundary within West Oxfordshire.
- 3.25 **Figure 3.5** illustrates the **Historic Landscape Classifications** mapped across the District. This illustrates that the District is dominated by historic agricultural enclosures. Bicester and Banbury are identified as the District's two historic urban areas, where as Kidlington and Yarnton represent the District's two largest historic rural settlements. Other notable historic features include the Cherwell Valley and the chain of ornamental parks and gardens that run from Kidlington in the south north-eastwards towards Brackley and Buckingham.
- 3.26 The Oxford City Core Strategy 2026 describes the Oxford Green Belt as *"an area of undeveloped land...that helps to retain the distinctive physical form of the City, where the river corridors running either side of Oxford's historic core are an essential part of its special character and landscape setting."* The Oxford Green Belt Study<sup>37</sup> concluded that the Green Belt land close to the urban area of Oxford, from which there are views into and out of the City generally rated higher in its contribution to the setting and special character of the historic city.

<sup>35</sup> Heritage at Risk. Historic England. (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>36</sup> Heritage at Risk. Historic England. (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>37</sup> Oxford Green Belt Study, LUC, 2016



## Air Quality

- 3.27 The Environment Act 1995 introduced the National Air Quality Strategy and the requirement for local authorities to determine if statutory air quality objectives (AQOs) are likely to be exceeded. All local authorities now report to DEFRA on an annual basis, and have the obligation to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and develop action plans for improvement of air quality if objectives are likely to be exceeded.
- 3.28 Air quality throughout the District is generally good. Nitrogen dioxide and particulate (fine dust) concentrations in the AQMAs are above national air quality objectives; however, these concentrations are trending downwards in most places across Cherwell, including within the AQMAs<sup>38</sup>.
- 3.29 The Council has designated four AQMAs<sup>39</sup>:
- AQMA 1 is an area around Hennef Way, Banbury.
  - AQMA 2 is an area between Southam Road and Oxford Road, Banbury, including some of High Street.
  - AQMA 3 is an area of Bicester Road, Kidlington.
  - AQMA 4 is an area around Kings End, Queens Avenue, Field Street and St Johns, Bicester.
- 3.30 Oxford City in its entirety is an AQMA.
- 3.31 Cherwell District Council has developed an Air Quality Action Plan to improve air quality in the District and protect health, particularly the four air quality management areas. This plan was approved by Cherwell's Executive in March 2017. This document will also contribute toward managing the effects of poor air quality of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located in the south west corner of the District (the rest of the SAC lies within Oxford's boundary, approximately 1.5km to the north west of Oxford city.)

## Water

- 3.32 There are a number of water courses in Cherwell as shown in **Figure 3.6: Hydrology** and Cherwell District falls within four major river catchments being: The River Thames, The River Great Ouse, The River Cherwell and The Warwickshire Avon Catchment. The District's major urban and rural development areas are within the Upper Thames catchment. The predominant risk of flooding within Cherwell is due to flooding from rivers and watercourses<sup>40</sup>.
- 3.33 The River Cherwell's source is at Charwelton in Northamptonshire. The river's course generally flows from north to south through the centre of the District passing through Banbury, Upper Heyford, and Kidlington before flowing to Oxford where the River Cherwell meets the River Thames. Land use across the catchment is predominately rural (less than 2% of the catchment is classified as 'urban') and includes the two main urban centres of Banbury and Bicester.
- 3.34 In February 2016, the Environment Agency published regional 'Climate Change Allowances' for flood risk.<sup>41</sup> The climate change allowances are predictions of anticipated change for:
- peak river flow by river basin district;
  - peak rainfall intensity;
  - sea level rise; and
  - offshore wind speed and extreme wave height.

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<sup>38</sup> 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report. Cherwell District Council. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/airqualitymanagement>)

<sup>39</sup> See locations and monitoring reports at: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/airqualitymanagement>

<sup>40</sup> Sequential Test and Exception Test (Flooding): Strategic Sites. (2014). Cherwell District Local Plan. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9637>)

<sup>41</sup> Climate change Flood Risk Allowances. Environment Agency. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>) Accessed 14th February 2017

- 3.35 They are based on climate change projections and different scenarios of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to the atmosphere. There are different allowances for different epochs or periods of time over the next century. The total potential change in peak river flow allowance at the upper end of the Thames River Basin is as follows:
- '2020s' (2015 to 2039) – 25%
  - '2050s' (2040 to 2069) – 35%
  - '2080s' (2070 to 2115) – 70%
- 3.36 The peak rainfall intensity allowance in 'Central' small and urban catchments within England is as follows:
- '2020s' (2015 to 2039) – 5%
  - '2050s' (2040 to 2069) – 10%
  - '2080s' (2070 to 2115) – 20%
- 3.37 Cherwell's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update<sup>42</sup> (SFRA) highlights that there are significant areas of the District at risk of:
- Fluvial flooding, including:
    - Much of the River Cherwell through Banbury.
    - The fields surrounding the river Cherwell to the north east of Kidlington.
    - Land adjacent to the river Ray in the south of the District.
  - Pluvial flooding within impermeable urban areas and along watercourses, including:
    - Kidlington – several locations along the A4260, Mill Street, Mill end, Queen's Avenue, the High Street, Langford Lane, and Thrupp Village.
    - Launton, including Launton Road in Bicester.
    - Wendlebury
    - Cropredy
    - Banbury
    - Tadmerton
    - Bloxham
  - Groundwater flooding, including:
    - The north of the District which is predominantly underlain by clay than can be vulnerable to flash run-off.
    - Areas affected by high water tables, such as Mollington.
    - Low-lying flatter areas in the south of the District, such as south-west Bicester, Merton and Charlton-on-Otmoor.
- 3.38 Cherwell District Council also commissioned a Level 2 SFRA to highlight specific flood risk issues in relation to eight potential strategic development sites within Begbroke, Islip, Kidlington and Yarnton.
- 3.39 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives are to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to improve them such that they meet the required status for that given waterbody (rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and groundwater). The latest Thames River Basin Management Plan<sup>43</sup> identifies the priority issues in the Cherwell catchment to be diffuse pollution from agricultural run-off, pollution from wastewater (including from sewage treatment works) and heavily modified channels.

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<sup>42</sup> Cherwell DISTRICT Council Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood risk Assessment (SFRA) Update, AECOM, 2017

<sup>43</sup> Thames River Basin Management Plan 2009. Environment Agency. (Updated 2015)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>)

- 3.40 The District is underlain by Principal, Secondary A and Secondary (undifferentiated) Aquifers. 23 river water bodies and one lake within the Cherwell catchment. Two are artificial or heavily modified. Over a half (58%) of the water bodies currently achieve moderate or better ecological status/potential. Only 10 water bodies in the Cherwell catchment currently achieve poor ecological status/potential. The main reasons for less than good status are due to pollution from wastewater, pollution from rural areas and physical modifications<sup>44</sup>.
- 3.41 Water abstraction impacts vary across the Cherwell catchment. The Upper Cherwell catchment supports abstractions for public water supply at Banbury and from the Sor Brook at Adderbury, as well as licensed extractions for agricultural purposes and supporting the Oxford Canal. As a result, low flows occur upstream of the Sor Brook confluence, so measures such as increasing water efficiency are proposed.
- 3.42 Cherwell District Council's Water Cycle Study<sup>45</sup> assesses proposed future development with regards to water supply capacity, wastewater capacity and environmental capacity. The Study identifies that 12 Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) will serve any proposed future development across the District. When considering growth from Cherwell District (and estimates of growth from neighbouring Districts with shared WwTW infrastructure), three WwTW (Cassington, Oxford and Bicester) do not currently have sufficient capacity to accept wastewater from all future development proposed within the plan period. Additionally, future discharges from a further six WwTWs (Banbury, Bloxham, Hook Norton, RAF Upper Heyford, Cassington and Woodstock) could potentially result in significant water quality impacts on receiving water if the treatment capacity is utilised due to the currently planned levels of growth. Therefore, solutions are required at these nine WwTW to ensure that the increased wastewater flow discharged does not impact on the current quality of the receiving watercourses, their associated ecological sites and to ensure that the watercourses can still meet with legislative requirements. The WCS has demonstrated that feasible treatment solutions in the form of WwTW upgrades or infrastructure changes are achievable at each of the WwTW to ensure there would be no impact on Water Framework Directive (WFD) status and no adverse impact on hydrologically linked ecological sites. Of the nine WwTW assessed, only one WwTW was considered to have no capacity to accommodate any of the additional demand as a result of new development within its catchment: Oxford WwTW. Consequently, development in close proximity to Oxford will need to be carefully phased and potentially contribute to network upgrades. The Study concludes that there is adequate planned water supply resource to cater for growth over the plan period.

### Soils

- 3.43 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)<sup>46</sup> system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil. These factors together with the interactions between them form the basis for classifying land into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside of these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'land predominantly in urban use'.
- 3.44 The majority of land within Cherwell is grade 3 (good to moderate) and in the north of the District grade 2 (very good) as shown in **Figure 3.7: Agricultural Land Classification**. The two urban centres of Banbury and Bicester are classified as non-agricultural land as they are in urban use. Additionally, there are four pockets of non-agricultural use that is classified as 'other land primarily in non-agricultural use'. The remaining areas of land within the District are classified as grade 4 (poor quality). There are no areas of grade 1 (excellent) or grade 5 (very poor) within Cherwell.

<sup>44</sup> Cherwell. Catchment Data Explorer. (2015) (<http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3079>) Accessed 14th February 2017

<sup>45</sup> Cherwell Water Cycle Study, AECOM, April 2017

<sup>46</sup> Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (TIN049). Natural England(2012) (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>)

- 3.45 A local survey of agricultural land has been undertaken where six grades have been identified (the same as before, but grade 3 is split into grade 3a and grade 3b), however, only limited areas have been surveyed in Cherwell as shown in **Figure 3.8: Local Agricultural Land Classification**. Surveyed areas in Bicester's periphery and Banbury's southwest periphery are mainly grade 3a. The surveyed areas surrounding the town of Banbury are a mix of grade 3a, grade 3b and grade 2.

### Mineral resources

- 3.46 The natural environment in Cherwell also plays a role in minerals supply. Sand and gravel is the most common mineral resource across Oxfordshire and typically found in river valley deposits, particularly along the River Thames which runs north south through the District and its tributaries. Limestone and ironstone are found mainly in the north and west of the county; they are used primarily as crushed rock aggregate but also for building and walling stone.

### Light pollution

- 3.47 The latest light pollution map for the Cherwell District<sup>47</sup> shows that it is the 103<sup>rd</sup> darkest District out of the 326 within England. Proportionally, Cherwell shares a similar light pollution distribution as Oxfordshire with around half of the District being in the darkest categories of light (under 0.25 NanoWatts/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr and between 0.25 and 0.5 NanoWatts/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr). The District has two distinct areas over Bicester and Banbury that are within the highest levels of light pollution in the county (greater than 32 NanoWatts/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr and between 16-32 NanoWatts/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr).

### Resource Use/Waste and Recycling

- 3.48 In 2014/15, the District produced 59,163 tonnes of household waste<sup>48</sup> with a recycling rate of 54.8%. During 2013/14, Cherwell District ranked 39<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities in England for recycling<sup>49</sup>.
- 3.49 Residents of Cherwell are provided with three bins for the alternate week roadside collections; a blue bin for recycling; a brown food and garden waste bin, kitchen caddy; and a green bin for waste that goes to an ERF (Energy Recovery Facility)<sup>50</sup> located near Bicester<sup>51</sup>.

### Population

- 3.50 In 2015, the population of Cherwell was approximately 145,600 and was almost evenly split between females (50.4%) and males (49.5%)<sup>52</sup>. The population is expected to increase to 166,000 by 2039<sup>53</sup>.
- 3.51 The 2011 Census data indicates that Cherwell's population is mainly concentrated in the three urban centres: Banbury which has a population of 46,853 representing 33% of the total population of Cherwell; Bicester which has a population of 30,854 (22%); and Kidlington with a population of 13,723 (10%). The remaining population of 50,438 live in rural villages of varying sizes and makes up around 35% of the total population of Cherwell.

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<sup>47</sup> England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies: Cherwell District (2016) CPRE and LUC ([http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/?\\_ga=1.42454693.1282152547.1437577240](http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/?_ga=1.42454693.1282152547.1437577240)) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<sup>48</sup> Local authority collected waste generation from April 2000 to March 2015 (England and regions) and local authority data April 2014 to March 2015. DEFRA. ([https://data.gov.uk/dataset/local\\_authority\\_collected\\_waste\\_management\\_statistics](https://data.gov.uk/dataset/local_authority_collected_waste_management_statistics)) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<sup>49</sup> Local Authorities in England – Household Recycling Performance 2013/2014,, SITA (<http://www.sita.co.uk/downloads/HRP2013-14-PercentageOfTotalWasteArising.pdf>)

<sup>50</sup> Cherwell District Council - Rubbish and recycling collections (2016), (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3556>) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<sup>51</sup> Ardely ERF (<https://viridor.co.uk/our-operations/energy/energy-recovery-facilities/ardley-erf/>) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<sup>52</sup> Nomis Labour Market Profile: Cherwell (2015) (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#tabrespop>) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017

<sup>53</sup> ONS 2014-based Subnational Population Projections with Components of Change (Births, Deaths and Migrations) for Regions and Local Authorities in England. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/componentsofchangebirthsdeathsandmigrationforregionsandlocalauthoritiesinenglandtable5>)

- 3.52 The proportion of older people aged 65 and over in Cherwell was 15.3%. Banbury and Bicester had a below average proportion of older people and Kidlington was above average at 18.6%. ONS projections indicate that by 2033 the population of those aged over 65 in Cherwell will increase to 24%, which is likely to have planning and resources implications.
- 3.53 In 2011, the mean age of the Cherwell population was 38.9 years<sup>54</sup> which is the same as Oxfordshire but a slightly younger average population than England and Wales as a whole, where the average is 39.4 years. The census data also shows that, 15.3% of the resident population in Cherwell<sup>55</sup> was of retirement age (65 and over) compared with 15.9% in Oxfordshire and 16.6% in England and Wales.
- 3.54 In 2011, Cherwell had a population density of 2.4 persons per hectares<sup>56</sup>, which is comparable to the Oxfordshire figure of 2.5 persons per hectare<sup>57</sup>. The population density of Cherwell is much lower than the England and Wales average (3.7 persons per hectare), reflecting the largely rural nature of the District.

### Housing

- 3.55 In 2011, Cherwell had around 56,728 dwellings<sup>58</sup>. The latest figures show that 30.9% of all homes in Cherwell are owned outright, 38.4% are owned with a mortgage or a loan, 12.2% are socially rented and 14.6% are privately rented<sup>59</sup>. This compares to national averages of 30.8% of households being owned outright, 32.7% owned with a mortgage or a loan, 17.6% being social renters and 15.3% being rented privately. Cherwell is therefore almost comparable with the national average for dwellings owned outright, but is lower than national average with dwellings with a mortgage or a loan. The District also has both less socially rented and privately rented dwellings compared to the national average.
- 3.56 Banbury has experienced a large increase in privately rented accommodation from 14% in 2001 to 22% in 2011. Cherwell has a lower than average rate of households with 1 or 2 bedrooms, 32% compared to 40% nationally.
- 3.57 Of the homes included in the 2011 census for Cherwell, 30% were detached, 35% were semi-detached, 23% were terraced, 11% were flats and 0.3% were caravans or other mobile or temporary structure<sup>60</sup>. The Cherwell Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>61</sup> states that the market is seeking a more mixed delivery of houses and developers agree that the market in Cherwell is mostly for two, three and four bedroom units on two storeys as the market for flats is low. In March 2015, there were 8,280 dwellings that had planning permission but were not yet built<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS102UK Age

Structure. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>55</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS102UK Age Structure.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>56</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS101UK Usual Resident Population.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>57</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS101UK Usual Resident Population.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>58</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS402EW Tenure, local authorities in England and

Wales. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>59</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS402EW Tenure, local authorities in England and

Wales. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>60</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS401EW Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation

type. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>61</sup> Cherwell Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2014) Peter Brett Associates

(<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10056>)

<sup>62</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2015) Cherwell Local Development Framework

(<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9043>)

- 3.58 The District is within the Oxfordshire housing market area which is a high value market. Banbury has its own rural hinterland and housing market area which extends into South Northamptonshire and less so into West Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. London has a significant commuting influence. However, overall Oxfordshire is considered to be a coherent Housing Market Area. In 2012, the median house price in Cherwell was £216,000; which, although higher than the England median (£190,000), is lower than in Oxford and the rural areas. The 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA shows that house prices are cheaper in Bicester and Banbury in the north of the County, and that this is having the effect of helping first-time buyers to the market.
- 3.59 In October 2015, approximately 1,210 of dwellings were vacant, slightly down from 1,210 in October 2015<sup>63</sup>. These figures compare favourably with the national average of 4.2% reported in 2011.
- 3.60 The Cherwell 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>64</sup> estimates that there will be 74,712 homes in 2031 which based on their estimates from 58,690 homes in 2006, equates to a 16,022 or 27% increase over the 25 year period, averaging almost 641 (1.1%) extra households per year. The Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report<sup>65</sup> notes that housing completions (net) in 2015/16 were 1,425 more than the completions for 2014/15 which were 946. However, with a housing shortfall, the Oxfordshire SHMA<sup>66</sup> shows that up to 1,090–1,190 additional homes per year are needed in Cherwell.
- 3.61 As house prices are relatively unaffordable for many households, 33% of housing delivered in Cherwell should be affordable. The latest figures<sup>67</sup> show that net affordable housing completions in 2015/16 were 322, which is an increase on 2014/15 figure of 191 and the 2013/14 of 140 net affordable homes. The Cherwell SHMA<sup>68</sup> also indicated the most appropriate proportions of market and affordable housing (by bedroom size) to meet housing requirements for 2031 where 5% should be one bedroom homes, 46% should be two bedroom homes, 44% should be three bedrooms / two bedrooms plus homes, 4% should be four bedroom homes and 1% should be five bedrooms homes.
- 3.62 Cherwell District Council are in the process of finalising their new Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which determines the suitability, availability and achievability of land for development. The HELAA study area comprises the built-up limits of the district's two towns, Banbury and Bicester, and Category A villages as set out in the adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (July 2015), as well as considering opportunities outside the built-up areas of these settlements.
- 3.63 Figures from the Oxfordshire SHMA<sup>69</sup> show that around 24,000 to 32,000 homes are needed between 2011 and 2031 to meet Oxford's housing need alone. However, due to its tight boundary, the city has a shortage of land suitable for housing to accommodate Oxford's housing need. The Oxford SHLAA 2014<sup>70</sup> found that the housing potential from all sites which have been assessed as suitable, available and achievable is 6,422 dwellings with an estimated windfall of 180 dwelling per year.

<sup>63</sup> Table 615 All vacant dwellings by local authority district, England, from 2004 (2015)

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/519505/LT\\_615.xls](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519505/LT_615.xls))

<sup>64</sup> Cherwell Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Review and Update 2012. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9639>)

<sup>65</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework.

(<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9043>)

<sup>66</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) GL Hearn Limited.

([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford\\_growth\\_strategy/762/strategic\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford_growth_strategy/762/strategic_housing_market_assessment))

<sup>67</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework.

(<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9043>)

<sup>68</sup> Cherwell Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Review and Update 2012. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9639>)

<sup>69</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) GL Hearn Limited.

([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford\\_growth\\_strategy/762/strategic\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford_growth_strategy/762/strategic_housing_market_assessment))

<sup>70</sup> Oxford's Housing Land Availability and Unmet Need Assessment (2014) URS.

([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1720/shlaa\\_-\\_december\\_2014.pdf](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1720/shlaa_-_december_2014.pdf))

- 3.64 Furthermore, Oxford has overtaken London as the least affordable housing location in the UK with the average cost of buying a house in Oxford being more than 11 times the average salary of an Oxford worker<sup>71</sup>. The average price of a home sold in Oxfordshire in January 2013 was £260,000 which was over 70% above the national average. As such, there is a high demand for affordable housing within Oxford and the Oxfordshire SHMA<sup>72</sup> projections indicate that 1,029 affordable homes are needed per year in the city.
- 3.65 A February 2017 survey by Lloyds identified that home affordability across UK cities is at its worst level since 2008. Oxford was the least affordable location for residential property in the UK with average house prices estimated at nearly 11 times the annual gross average earnings in the city (£36,033) at £385,372. This is a key issue and could lead to more people living outside the City including to the south of the Cherwell District and working in either Cherwell or Oxford but benefitting from more affordable residential accommodation in Cherwell.<sup>73</sup>
- 3.66 In the last year the average property price in Banbury is estimated at £305,411, representing a total change in value of 0.46%, whilst the average property price in Bicester is estimated at £337,787 and £394,615 in Kidlington. These figures represent a value change of 2.85%, equivalent to £9,811 in Bicester, and 1.87%, equivalent to £7,305 in Kidlington.<sup>74</sup>
- 3.67 With rising number of students for both of the universities in Oxford, there is also a rising need for the provision of student accommodation despite both universities increasing their number of bed spaces in university halls of residence<sup>75</sup>. In December 2012, there were an estimated 3,508 Oxford University students and 3,836 Oxford Brookes University students living outside of University accommodation. Oxford City Council has agreed with each of the universities that the number of students living in the City outside of University-provided accommodation should be limited to 3,000.
- 3.68 The National Planning Policy Framework requires all local authorities to identify a five year housing land supply with an additional buffer of 5% (moved from later in the plan period). Cherwell District Council has produced a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>76</sup> which is a technical study to assess the theoretical potential of sites in the District to accommodate future housing development. The Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report<sup>77</sup> states that the District currently has a 5.4 year housing land supply for the period 2016-2021 and when commenting on appeal decision throughout the year, inspectors have found that the Council meets the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.69 The latest figures (March 2015) show that the total number of authorised pitches in Cherwell for Gypsies and Travellers was 61. Cherwell presently has a 2.9 year land supply for the period 2015-2020. There are currently 14 plots for Travelling Showpeople, although there are no future plots identified for Travelling Showpeople (this is to be addressed in the District's forthcoming Local Plan Part 2)<sup>78</sup>.

## Health

- 3.70 The health of the population in Cherwell is generally the same or better than the England average. The main health priorities for Cherwell are reducing obesity in children and adults, increasing physical activity, and improving access to screening programmes.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Oxford Growth Strategy (2013) and strategic joint working to meet Oxford's housing needs. Oxford Strategic Partnership. (<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordGrowthStrategy.htm>)

<sup>72</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) GL Hearn Limited. ([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford\\_growth\\_strategy/762/strategic\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford_growth_strategy/762/strategic_housing_market_assessment))

<sup>73</sup> Strategic Economic Growth Study, GVA, March 2017

<sup>74</sup> Strategic Economic Growth Study, GVA, March 2017

<sup>75</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) GL Hearn Limited. ([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford\\_growth\\_strategy/762/strategic\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20201/oxford_growth_strategy/762/strategic_housing_market_assessment))

<sup>76</sup> Cherwell District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (2013) Peter Brett Associates. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10056>)

<sup>77</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9043>)

<sup>78</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9043>)

<sup>79</sup> Public Health England. Health Profile 2016 – Cherwell. (<http://fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2016/e07000177.pdf>)

- 3.71 The Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>80</sup> cites cancer as the leading cause of death in Oxfordshire. An estimated 60% of people aged 16 or over in Oxfordshire are classified as overweight or obese. Between 2007 and 2015, the number of deaths of older people (aged 75 and over) for circulatory diseases in Oxfordshire declined by 15%, while deaths from dementia more than doubled. Furthermore, the number and rate of people in Oxfordshire with depression or anxiety appears to have increased significantly in recent years. Oxfordshire has seen a significant increase in hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions in the 40-64 age group.
- 3.72 Deprivation in the District is significantly lower than average; however 10.8% of children (under 16) live in poverty<sup>81</sup>. Life expectancy for both men and women is slightly higher than the England average at 80.2 years for males and 83.3 years for females in Cherwell, compared to 79.5 years for males and 83.2 years for females in England<sup>82</sup>.
- 3.73 In Cherwell, there were 20.6 conceptions per 1,000 young people under 18 in 2014, compared with 24 nationally<sup>83</sup>.
- 3.74 There are three hospitals within Cherwell District: Bicester Community Hospital, Horton General Hospital and the Foscoote Private Hospital. Oxford has a number of hospitals including the John Radcliffe.

### Social Inclusion and Deprivation

- 3.75 The English Indices of Deprivation 2015<sup>84</sup> is a measure of multiple deprivations in small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), in England. Seven domains of deprivation are measured: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment Deprivation. Each domain contains a number of indicators. The seven domains are combined to give a multiple deprivation score. There are 93 LSOAs in Cherwell<sup>85</sup>, 32,844 LSOAs nationally.
- 3.76 For Local Authority areas, Cherwell is ranked 251<sup>st</sup> and Oxford is 166<sup>th</sup> for the multiple deprivation score (rank of average score) out of the 326 local authority areas in England (where 1 is most deprived and 326 is least deprived)<sup>86</sup>. This means that compared with the rest of the country, Cherwell and Oxford are in the 35% least deprived areas. There is however evidence of disparity between the different parts of Cherwell District when looking at the assessment at small area level. There are no LSOAs in Cherwell that are in the top 10% least deprived, however the highest ranking (therefore most deprived) in Cherwell ranks 4,701 (approximately 14%) in the Banbury Grimsbury & Castle ward (Cherwell 004A).
- 3.77 Similarly, Oxford has areas of deprivation with 10 of Oxford's 83 neighbourhood areas among the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas include the Leys, Rose Hill and Barton areas of the city<sup>87</sup>.
- 3.78 The latest fuel poverty statistics<sup>88</sup> show that 8.3% of Cherwell households and 11.9% of Oxford's households were classified as being fuel poor in 2014. A fuel poor household is considered by the UK Government to be a household which has required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Oxfordshire county Council, 2017

<sup>81</sup> Public Health England. Health Profile 2016 – Cherwell. (<http://fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2016/e07000177.pdf>)

<sup>82</sup> Public Health England. Health Profile 2016 – Cherwell. (<http://fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2016/e07000177.pdf>)

<sup>83</sup> Public Health England. Health Profile 2016 – Cherwell. (<http://fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2016/e07000177.pdf>)

<sup>84</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>)

<sup>85</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG: File 1: Index of multiple deprivation. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>)

<sup>86</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG: File 10: Local authority district summaries. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>)

<sup>87</sup> Poverty and deprivation statistics. Oxford City Council.

[http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/Poverty\\_and\\_deprivation\\_statistics\\_occw.htm](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/Poverty_and_deprivation_statistics_occw.htm) Accessed 15th February 2017.

<sup>88</sup> 2014 sub-regional fuel poverty data: low income high costs indicator (2016), DECC.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2014-sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-low-income-high-costs-indicator>)

<sup>89</sup> Fuel Poverty Statistics. DECC. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.



## Crime

- 3.79 The latest crime statistics<sup>90</sup> show that the crime rate in Cherwell is 60.28 per 1,000 of the population, which is above the wider Thames Valley force area of 52.04 per 1,000 of the population.
- 3.80 In the year ending March 2016, the burglary rate in Cherwell was lower than average at 3.81 per 1,000 of the population, compared to 4.74 per 1,000 of the population in the Thames Valley force area.

## Education

- 3.81 The most recent statistics<sup>91</sup> show that Cherwell has a higher proportion of residents that have no qualifications (6.5%) than that of the South East region (6.3%), but below the national average (8.6%).
- 3.82 During 2015/16, 58.7% of key stage 4 pupils in Oxfordshire achieved 5 GCSEs grades A-C, down from 59.7% in 2014/15.<sup>92</sup> The proportion of adults in Cherwell who have attained qualification levels equivalent to NVQ level 4 (HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent) and above (36.0%) is slightly below the regional and national averages of 39.8% and 37.1% respectively<sup>93</sup>.

## Culture, Leisure and Recreation

- 3.83 All leisure activities contribute to the quality of life of residents, providing amenity and opportunities for enhancing intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing. Additionally, they represent a tourism asset and their provision can result in economic benefits to the District.
- 3.84 Cherwell has a range of cultural, leisure and recreational facilities which are used by both residents and visitors to the town including the Deddington Farmer's Market, Bicester Village (more than 130 outlet boutiques of British and international brands), Broughton Castle and Banbury Museum.
- 3.85 There are several green and open spaces within Cherwell as shown in **Figure 3.9: Recreation – Green and Open Space**. **Figure 3.9** also illustrates that there are a number of open spaces within Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington including country parks.
- 3.86 As a predominantly rural District, there is an extensive Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, as illustrated in **Figure 3.19: Recreation – PROW and Cycle Routes**. There are additionally two National Cycle network links; one to the south of Banbury and another to the north of Kidlington.
- 3.87 Recreational land can be under pressure for redevelopment.
- 3.88 There are a number of sporting pitches in the District; seven Artificial Grass Pitches, five football pitches and six hockey pitches<sup>94</sup>. There are also nine pools within Cherwell spread across seven sites<sup>95</sup>. Levels of participation in the five sports of gym, cycling, swimming, athletics and fitness classes extracted from the Sport England Local Profile Tool show that Cherwell has higher than average participation levels across all categories at a regional and national level. Consultation undertaken as part of the ongoing work to prepare Cherwell District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Assessment and Strategies<sup>96</sup> reveal the facilities and spaces that are used most often by residents and visitors. The facilities and services used most often by respondents included natural greenspaces, formal parks and gardens, swimming pools, children's playgrounds,

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<sup>90</sup> Compare Your Area. Police.UK. (<https://www.police.uk/thames-valley/N426/performance/compare-your-area/>) Accession on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>91</sup> Nomis Labour Market Profile – Cherwell. (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>92</sup> GCSE and equivalent results: 2015 to 2016 (provisional). Department for Education. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2015-to-2016-provisional>)

<sup>93</sup> Nomis Labour Market Profile – Cherwell. (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>94</sup> Sport England (2014) Strategic Assessment of need for AGPs Provision in Cherwell, Interim Report. ([http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/i/h/Sport\\_England\\_AGPS\\_Final\\_Report\\_April\\_20141.pdf](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/i/h/Sport_England_AGPS_Final_Report_April_20141.pdf))

<sup>95</sup> Sport England (2014) Strategic Assessment of need for Pools Provision in Cherwell, Interim Report. (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9641>)

<sup>96</sup> Cherwell District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Assessment and Strategies, Nortoft Partnerships Ltd, 2017

walking and running routes and amenity green spaces. The consultation revealed that there is a strong desire for more natural green spaces, cycle routes, walking and running routes. The balance of opinion suggests that there is also need for more hard courts/multi use games areas, for synthetic/artificial grass pitches, athletics facilities, and indoor tennis.

### Economy

- 3.89 The District's largest employment sectors are: distribution, manufacturing, office, retailing and other services, and public sector employment including in health, defence and education. The District has a clear social and economic relationship with Oxford and to a lesser extent with Northamptonshire.
- 3.90 Banbury is principally a manufacturing town and service centre while Bicester is a garrison town with a military logistics, storage and distribution and manufacturing base. Both towns are important economic locations for the District. Kidlington functions as a village service centre but has a larger, varied employment base benefiting from its proximity to Oxford, its location next to the strategic road network, and the location of Oxford London Airport immediately to the north. Bicester and Kidlington lie within Oxford's hinterland. Bicester now has significant employment sites identified in order to reduce out commuting of its increasing population. In rural areas, the function of villages as places to live and commute from has increased as the traditional rural economy has declined with only a few small places of employment in most areas. The number of people employed in agriculture fell by 18% between 1990 and 2000 and between 2007 and 2008 figures continued to show a decline.
- 3.91 Oxford's economy is the primary economy within Oxfordshire with over 4,600 businesses providing 114,000 jobs and seven million tourists who visit the city each year<sup>97</sup>. Seven of the ten largest employers in Oxfordshire are based in Oxford. Almost 90% of employees work in services, including approximately a fifth in retail, hotel and catering. Oxford's economic profile is famous for academic (Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University), motor manufacturing and tourism sectors. Other key features of the local economy include the bioscience sector; IT, software and creative media businesses; and research and development businesses developed by Oxford's universities.
- 3.92 The M40 motorway passes through Cherwell close to Banbury and Bicester. There are direct rail links from Banbury and Bicester to London, Birmingham and Oxford. A new line was introduced to London Marylebone from Oxford Parkway Station in autumn 2015.

### Employment and Economic Activity

- 3.93 Cherwell District's Annual Monitoring Report<sup>98</sup> reports a considerable gain in employment floor space in the District, with over 67,000sqm completed, with only 2.1 ha being lost to other non-employment uses. The most recent statistics show that between October 2015 to September 2016<sup>99</sup>, 79.4% of Cherwell's residents aged 16-74 were economically active; this is above the national average of 77.8%. Of this 3.5% were unemployed which is below the national average of 4.9%. The three main employment sectors in Cherwell in the same period were professional occupations (20.8%), administrative and secretarial (13.7%) and associate professional & technical occupations (11.0%).
- 3.94 The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance as a percentage of the working age resident population was 0.4% in Cherwell as of August 2016<sup>100</sup>, which is lower than both the regional average (0.8%) and national average (1.2%).
- 3.95 Of the 6,415 enterprises within Cherwell in 2015<sup>101</sup>, 88.2% were considered as 'micro' size (0-9 employees), 9.6% were considered to be 'small' (10-49 employees), 1.8% were considered to be 'medium' (50-249 employees) and 0.3% were considered to be 'large' (250+ employees).

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<sup>97</sup> Economic Profile of Oxford (2016). Oxford City Council.  
([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2343/oxford\\_profile\\_2016\\_key\\_facts](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2343/oxford_profile_2016_key_facts))

<sup>98</sup> Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report (2016) Cherwell Local Development Framework

<sup>99</sup> Nomis 2016 Labour Market Profile – Cherwell.  
(<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Nomis 2016 Labour Market Profile – Cherwell.  
(<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

- 3.96 In 2016<sup>102</sup>, the average gross weekly pay for residents of ages 16 and above in full time work in Cherwell was £582.80. This figure is just above the regional average of £82.00 per week and higher than the national average of £541.00 per week.
- 3.97 In 2016, Cherwell District Council commissioned a Strategic Economic Growth Study that provides an overview of the current economic interdependencies between the south of Cherwell District and Oxford City and comments on growth trends, key sectors/clusters and key opportunities<sup>103</sup>. The Study highlights that Cherwell benefits from high economic activity but that its ageing population and high economic activity creates challenges to developing the local economy. The Study highlights two distinct 'Travel to Work Areas' (TTWAs):
- North Cherwell (alongside parts of neighbouring authority areas including South Northamptonshire) is focused on servicing the employment cluster within Banbury.
  - South Cherwell falls into a larger TTWA that is focussed on Oxford, which extends further to include the wider districts that form part of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) area. Two of the District's main towns (Bicester and Kidlington), London Oxford Airport (LOA) and a number of rural settlements all provide a working population to Oxford.
- 3.98 The study highlights the importance of the corridor between Oxford and Milton Keynes as being a key economic growth area driven by the presence of key high value sectors that have settled in this area.
- 3.99 As part of the Oxford Northern Gateway, the area around Begbrooke is recognised as one of the locations with the greatest potential to support the activity growing out of Oxford sustainably and improve connections north of Oxford to Bicester, strengthened by the close proximity of London Oxford Airport.

### Tourism

- 3.100 The combination of historical towns and the District's rural setting are important factors for attracting visitors to Cherwell.
- 3.101 Banbury is an old market town with its origins dating back to the Saxon era and is host to many historical attractions such as Broughton Castle and Tooley's boatyard dating back over 200 years. The town is attractive with many independent shops, restaurants and cafes and a range of accommodation. The Oxford Canal passes through Banbury offering the opportunities for tourist trips on narrowboats or to walk along its tranquil towpaths.
- 3.102 Growing from a small agricultural market town, Bicester echoes its past by holding traditional weekly market-day, as well as a Farmers' Market once a month in the Market Square. The town also has many places of historic interest including a 17th century Dovecote, St. Edburg's Church built in 1104 and the Old Priory and the Old Vicarage built around 1500.
- 3.103 During 2014, there were 6.6 million day trips to Cherwell with an expenditure of £247 million with a significant proportion of day trips in Bicester Village retail outlet<sup>104</sup>. There were 1.2 million night trips with an expenditure of £72.7 million in Cherwell for the same period. The total turnover related to all trip expenditure was £319.8 million and 4,652 FTE jobs were supported by tourism spending within the District in 2014<sup>105</sup>. The most recent Tourism Development Study<sup>106</sup> shows that tourism within the District is short stay and the majority of visitors (90%) are domestic.

<sup>101</sup> Nomis 2016 Labour Market Profile - Cherwell. (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>102</sup> Nomis 2016 Labour Market Profile - Cherwell. (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx?town=cherwell#>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>103</sup> Strategic Economic Growth Study, GVA, March 2017

<sup>104</sup> The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014 County and District Results. August 2015. (<http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/OS-OX/cms/pdf/Experience%20Oxfordshire%20The%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20Tourism%20on%20Oxfordshire%20in%202014.pdf>)

<sup>105</sup> The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014 County and District Results. August 2015. (<http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/OS-OX/cms/pdf/Experience%20Oxfordshire%20The%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20Tourism%20on%20Oxfordshire%20in%202014.pdf>)

<sup>106</sup> Cherwell District Council (2008) Cherwell Tourism Development Study. ([http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/a/c/Cherwell\\_Tourism\\_Development\\_Study\\_\(August\\_2008\).Pdf](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/a/c/Cherwell_Tourism_Development_Study_(August_2008).Pdf))

## Transport

- 3.104 The M40 runs north-south through the District passing to the east of Banbury and to the west of Bicester providing good links to London and Birmingham. There are also number of A-roads within the District as shown in **Figure 3.11: Transport Links**.
- 3.105 Cherwell residents travel further to work than people in the rest of the south east and nationally. It is estimated that 23,629 people commute from Cherwell with the majority (7,543) commuting into Oxford<sup>107</sup>. Evidence also suggests that 57,451 people commute into Oxford with significant flows deriving from the other Oxfordshire districts with the Vale of White Horse being the most prominent (16,563)<sup>108</sup>.
- 3.106 The District has high levels of car ownership and residents living in rural areas in particular are highly dependent on cars resulting in a number of congestion hotspots in the District including in the centres of Banbury, Bicester and to some extent Kidlington<sup>109</sup>. According to the 2011 census data<sup>110</sup>, 15.6% of residents in Cherwell had no cars or vans in household, which is significantly lower than the national average of 25.6%, 41.4% of Cherwell residents had one car or van in household which is similar to the national average of 42.2%, and 32.5% had two cars or vans in household which is significantly higher than the national average of 24.7%.
- 3.107 There has been a general decrease of road traffic casualties in Cherwell with nearly 900 in the year 2000 to almost 600 in the year 2015. During 2014 there were four fatal, 93 serious and 491 slight road traffic casualties<sup>111</sup>.
- 3.108 There are five railway stations in Cherwell as illustrated in **Figure 3.11**. Banbury station is served by Chiltern Railways connecting Banbury with London Marylebone, Oxford and Birmingham, Cross Country linking the town with Manchester, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Reading. The station has four platforms and 795 car parking spaces.
- 3.109 Bicester has two train stations; Bicester North (the larger) and Bicester Village. Bicester North station is on the Chiltern Main Line running south to London Marylebone and north to Birmingham.
- 3.110 Oxford Parkway Station is also served by Chiltern Railways and is located between Kidlington and Oxford, near the A34. In October 2015, a new line was introduced to London Marylebone from this station and is now extended to Oxford which is anticipated to bring significant economic benefits to those living along the route<sup>112</sup>. The proposed HS2 route passes through small sections of the District's eastern boundary. Cherwell District Council along with other councils in the South East and Midlands has opposed the Government's high-speed rail project<sup>113</sup>.
- 3.111 London Oxford Airport is situated north-west of Kidlington. The airport is home to the Oxford Aviation Academy training student commercial pilots. The airport is mainly used for private and recreational aviation activity as well as operating a small number of private and chartered flights. It is also one of Kidlington's main employment areas.
- 3.112 Oxfordshire County Council's A44/A4260 Corridor Study<sup>114</sup> was published in 2017 in response to considerations brought forward through Cherwell District Council's Kidlington Framework Masterplan, specifically the need to enhance bus and cycle routes to and from Oxford and strengthen the ability of the existing highway network to more effectively accommodate high levels of traffic. The Study highlighted that the A44 has the greatest score for upgrading to accommodate greater numbers of vehicles but that the quitter A4260 would be more appropriate

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<sup>107</sup> Commuting flows from the Annual Population Survey, Great Britain, 2011 ([http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/Commute\\_APS\\_Map/Index.html](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/Commute_APS_Map/Index.html)) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>108</sup> Commuting flows from the Annual Population Survey, Great Britain, 2011 ([http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/Commute\\_APS\\_Map/Index.html](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/Commute_APS_Map/Index.html)) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>109</sup> 2014 Air Quality Progress Report for Cherwell District Council. (2014) (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleID=4080>)

<sup>110</sup> ONS (2011) Table KS404EW Car or Van availability, local authorities in England and Wales. (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata/2011censusdatacatalogue>)

<sup>111</sup> Oxfordshire County Council Road Traffic Accident Casualty Data Summary 2014 (<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/safety/CasualtyReport2014.pdf>)

<sup>112</sup> October 2015 Timetable (<http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/october-timetable>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>113</sup> Cherwell District Council - High speed 2 rail link (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=8118>) Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

<sup>114</sup> A44/A4260 Corridor Study, Oxfordshire county Council, 2017

for cycling investment. In addition, Cherwell District Council's Local Plan Part 1 Review Transport Assessment<sup>115</sup> acknowledges the necessity for the development of 4,400 homes in close proximity to Oxford to contribute to such transport improvements, particularly in light of the fragility of the existing highway network which are already susceptible to high levels of traffic congestion and delay. The Study concludes that the closer the additional 4,400 homes are located to Oxford the better, so as to minimise the impact of vehicle trips on the already congested highway network and increase the effectiveness of non-motorised (walk/cycle) and public transport travel options, safety measures, air quality measures and journey time reductions, particularly around the A34/A40/A44/A4260 interchanges. The Study raises the importance of effectively:

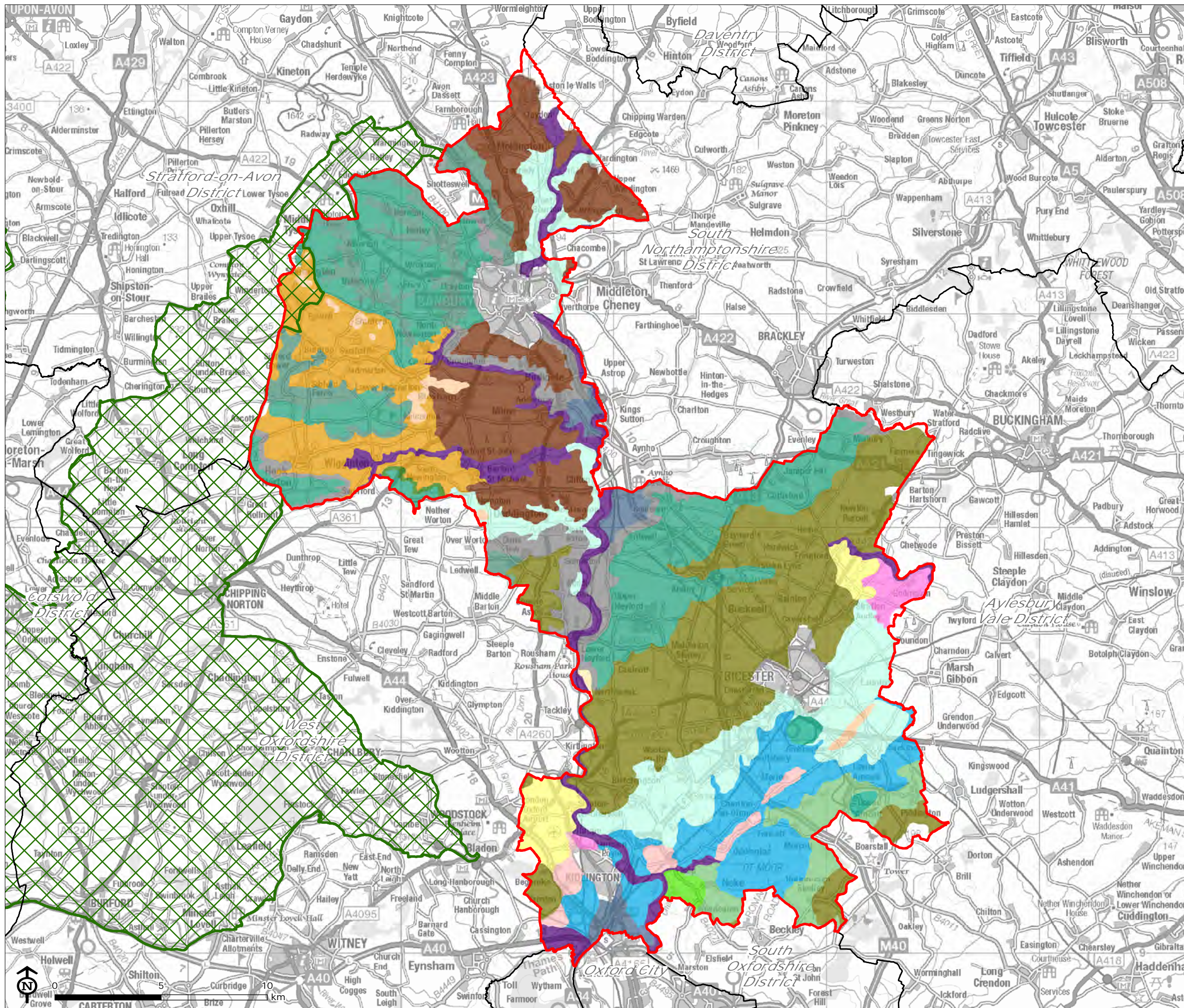
- Improving sustainable transport (walk, cycle, public transport) connectivity between Kidlington/Yarnton/Begbroke and employment sites north of Oxford (notably Langford Lane and the proposed Northern Gateway site), Oxford City centre jobs/retail/cultural facilities, and local shops and community facilities.
- Managing increases in commuter trips on the A44/A4144 and A4026 /Oxford Rd corridors – particularly where they cross the A34 and A44 – which will impact on existing trip demands along these corridors.
- Managing the increases in traffic along the A44 and A4026 as a result of development along the corridor west of Kidlington.

## Oxford City spatial portrait

- 3.113 As described above, Oxford has an acute housing shortage, particularly affordable housing and student accommodation. The Oxford Green Belt, formerly designated in 1975, with a tight inner boundary around the built-up area of the city, and extending outwards for around five to six miles in every direction and into each of Oxford's neighbouring districts, has for almost 40 years provided an open, landscape backdrop to the urban area of Oxford and prevented coalescence with neighbouring towns and villages. However, it has also presented a major constraint on the City's growth and development, alongside the constraints of the floodplain and sensitive ecological and historical areas.
- 3.114 Oxford is a world-renowned tourist destination and historic city, with over 1,500 listed buildings and 16 conservation areas, which cover 17.3% of the total area of the city. The built-up area extends to the administrative boundary around much of the eastern side of the city, and the river corridors of the Thames to the west and Cherwell to the east have created extensive green wedges running north-south through the city. This gives Oxford a distinctive physical form, with much of the residential population concentrated to the east of the city centre. Around 27% of Oxford is in the Green Belt, with much of this land being flood plain associated with the two river corridors, and therefore presenting areas of high flood risk. The historic city parks and nature conservation areas (including a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) create pockets and corridors of green space within the city boundary.
- 3.115 Oxford is also an important retail centre with a successful economy based on higher education, health services, car manufacturing, high-tech and medical scientific research. The potential of Oxford and its sub-region to act as a catalyst for growth and investment has been recognised in past and present regional and local planning policy.
- 3.116 Providing sufficient homes to meet Oxford's needs, and the constraints to development presented by natural and historic assets as well as the Green Belt, is a significant challenge for the five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire; one which is being addressed through the countywide joint work discussed in **Chapter 2**.

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<sup>115</sup> Local Plan Part 1 Review Transport Assessment, ITP, 2017



Cherwell Local Plan

Figure 3.1

Landscape Designations

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study

- Alluvial Lowlands
- Clay Vale
- Estate Farmlands
- Farmland Hills
- Farmland Plateau
- Farmland Slopes and Valley Sides
- Lowland Village Farmlands
- Pasture Hills
- Rive Meadowlands
- Rolling Clayland
- Rolling Farmland
- Rolling Village Pastures
- Uprstanding Village Farmlands
- Vale Farmland
- Wooded Estate Slopes and Valley Sides
- Wooded Estatelands
- Wooded Farmland
- Wooded Hills
- Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes

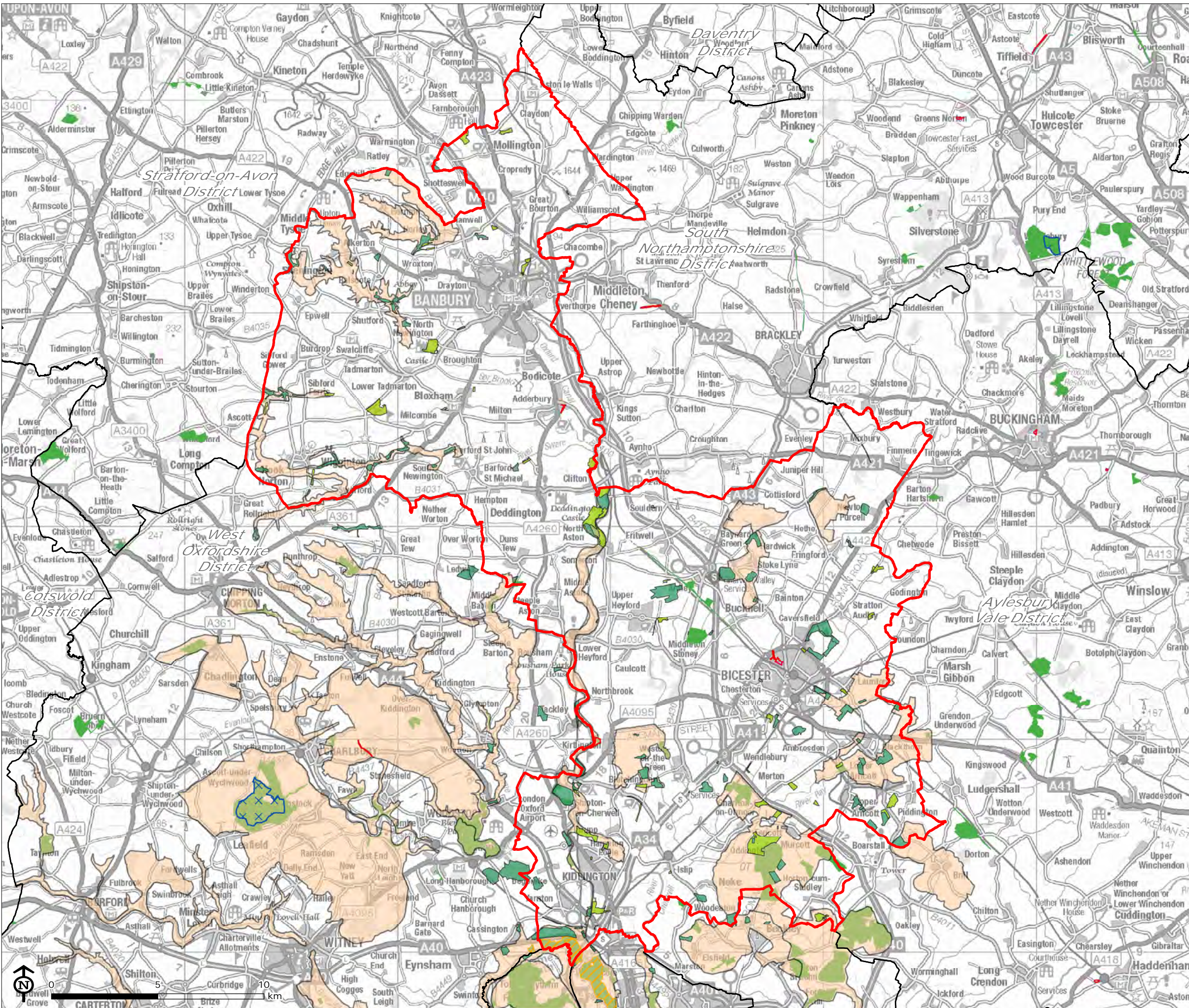
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Figure 3.2

Biodiversity Designations

- Cherwell District boundary
  - Other district boundaries
  - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - National Nature Reserve (NNR)
  - Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Local Designations
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
  - District Wildlife Site (DWS)
  - Conservation target areas

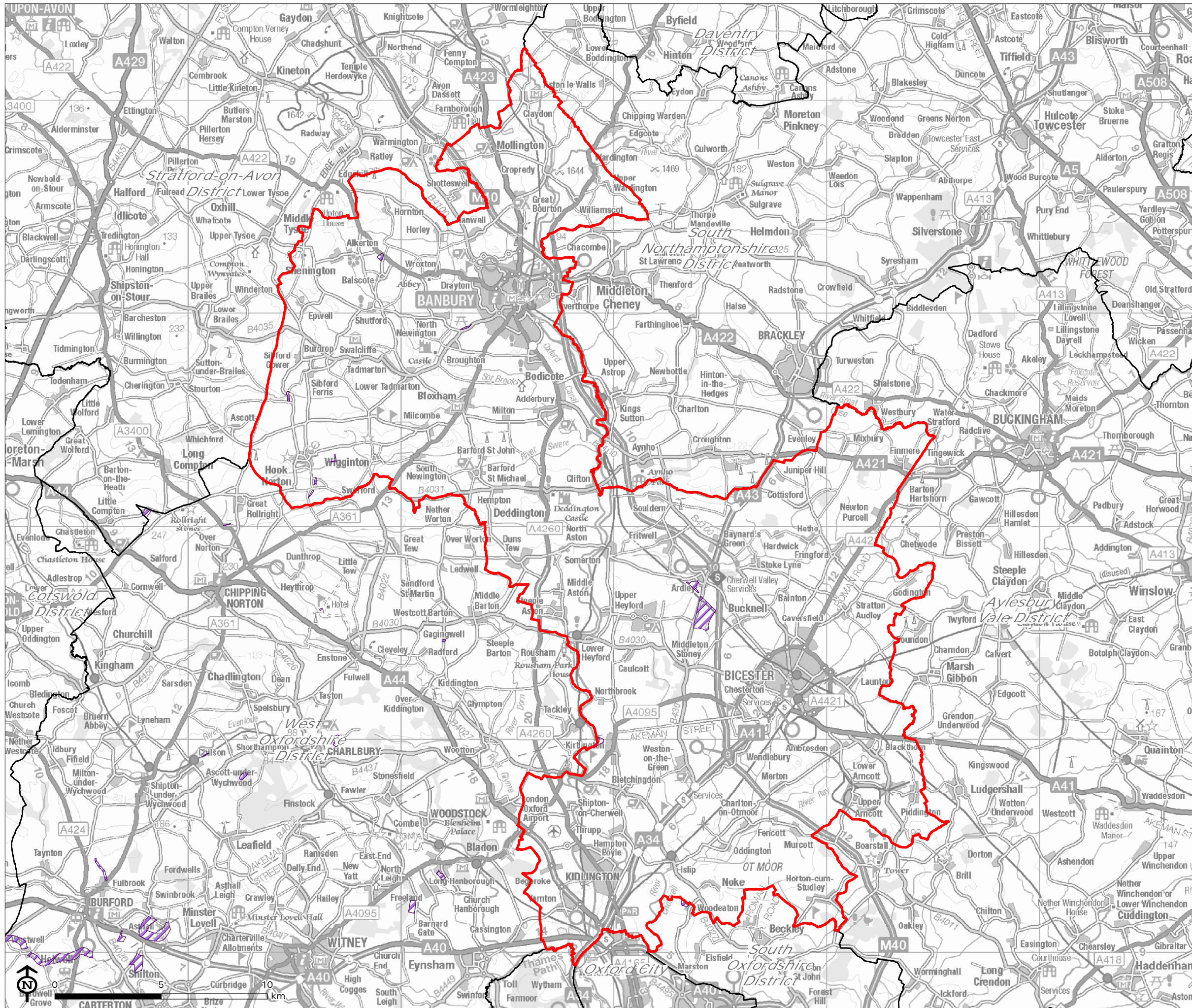


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Figure 3.3  
 Geological Designations

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Local geological site



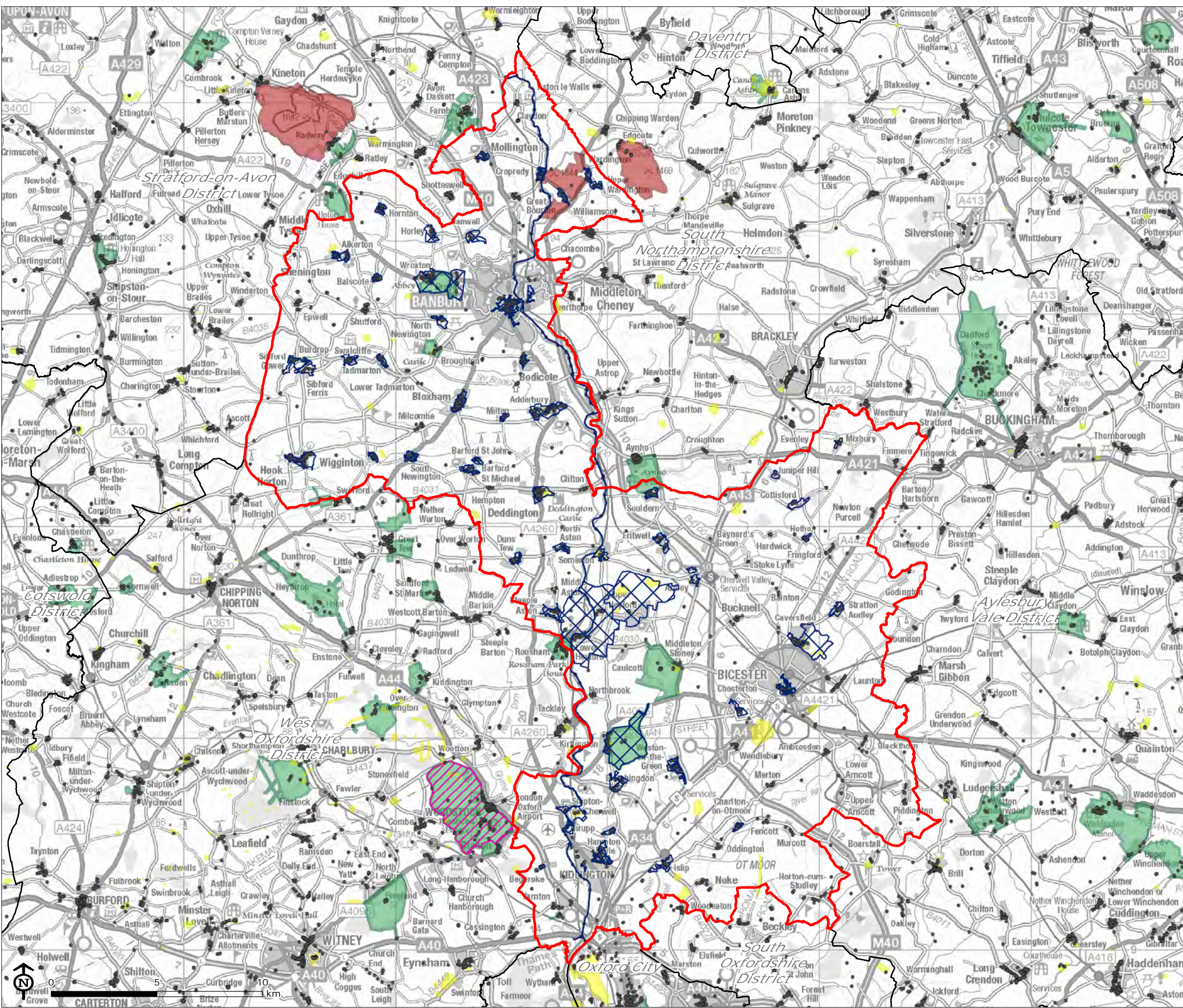
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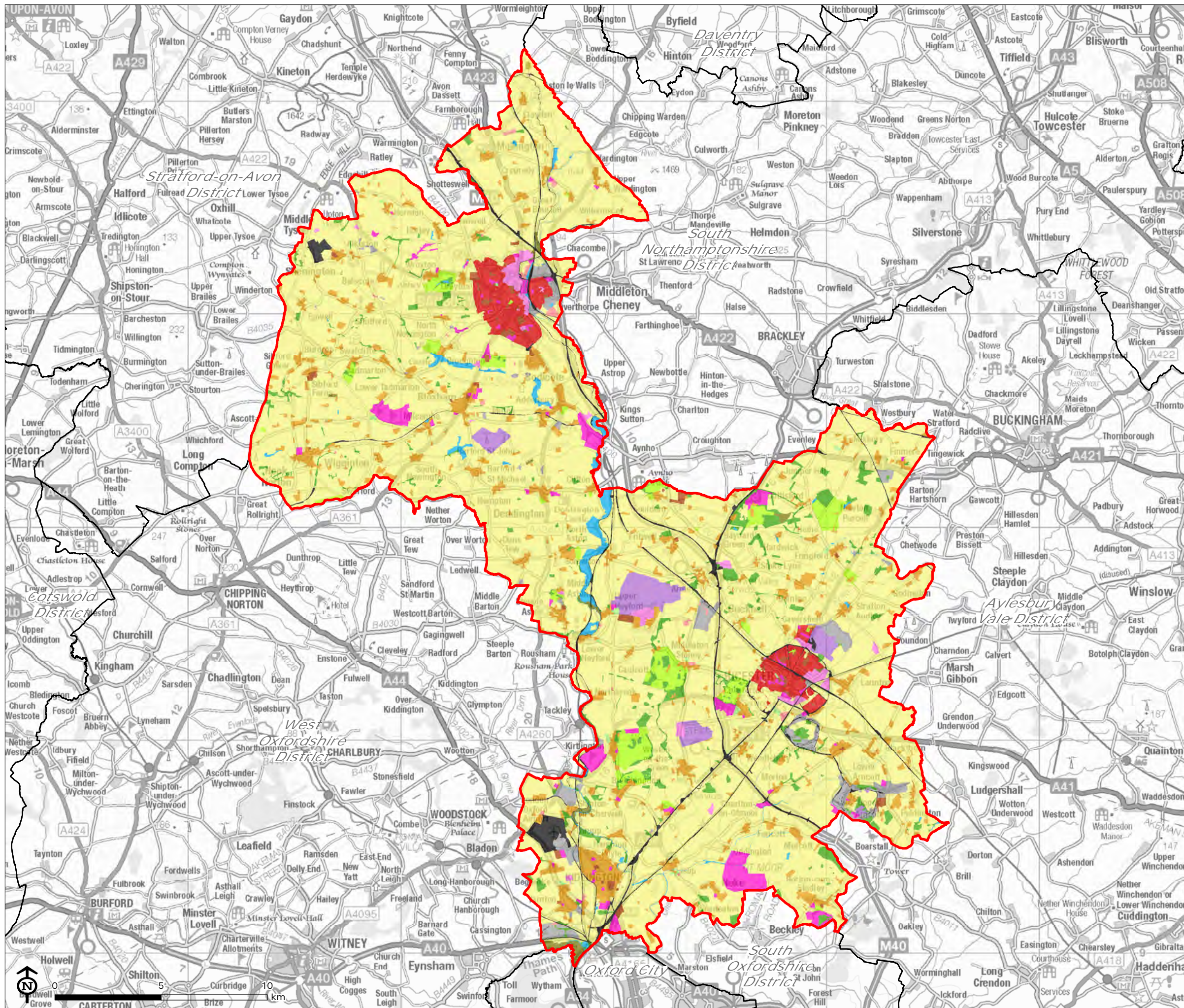
Figure 3.4  
Heritage Designations

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Listed buildings
- World Heritage Site (WHS)
- Scheduled monument
- Registered park and garden
- Registered battlefield
- Conservation areas



Map Scale @ A3: 1:175,000





# Cherwell Local Plan

**Figure 3.5**  
**Historic Landscape Classification (HLC)**

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
  
- HLC broad type**
- Civic Amenities
- Civil Provision
- Commercial
- Communication
- Enclosure
- Industry
- Military
- Orchards and Horticulture
- Ornamental
- Recreation
- Rural Settlement
- Unenclosed Land
- Urban Settlement
- Water and Valley Floor
- Woodland

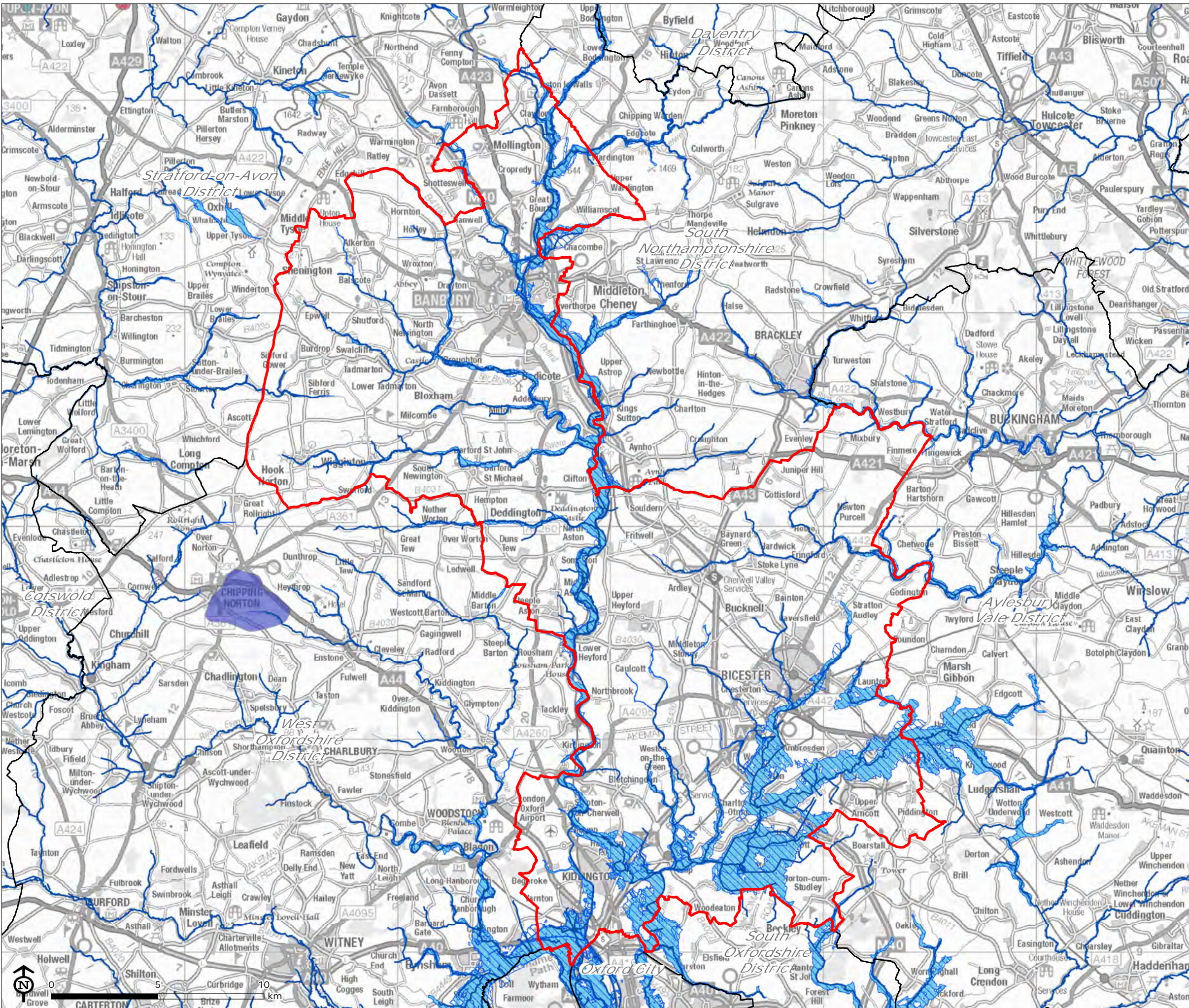
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Figure 3.6

Hydrology

- Cherwell District boundary
  - Other district boundaries
  - River
  - Flood zone 2
  - Flood zone 3
- Ground Water Source Protection Zone (GWSPZ)
- 1
  - 1c
  - 2c
  - 3

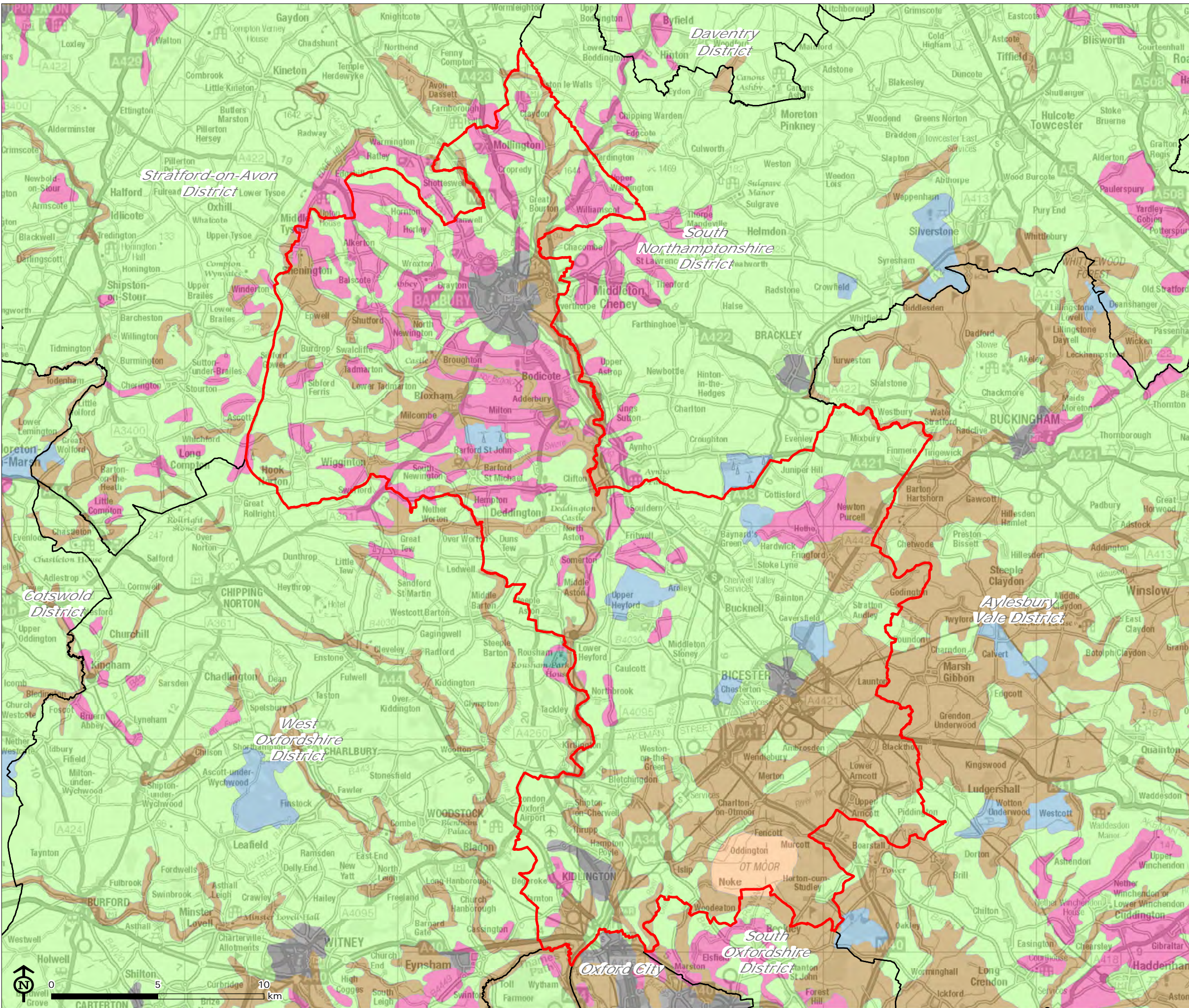


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Figure 3.7  
Agricultural Land Classification

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- National Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)
  - Grade 1
  - Grade 2
  - Grade 3
  - Grade 4
  - Grade 5
  - Non Agricultural
  - Urban (Indicative)



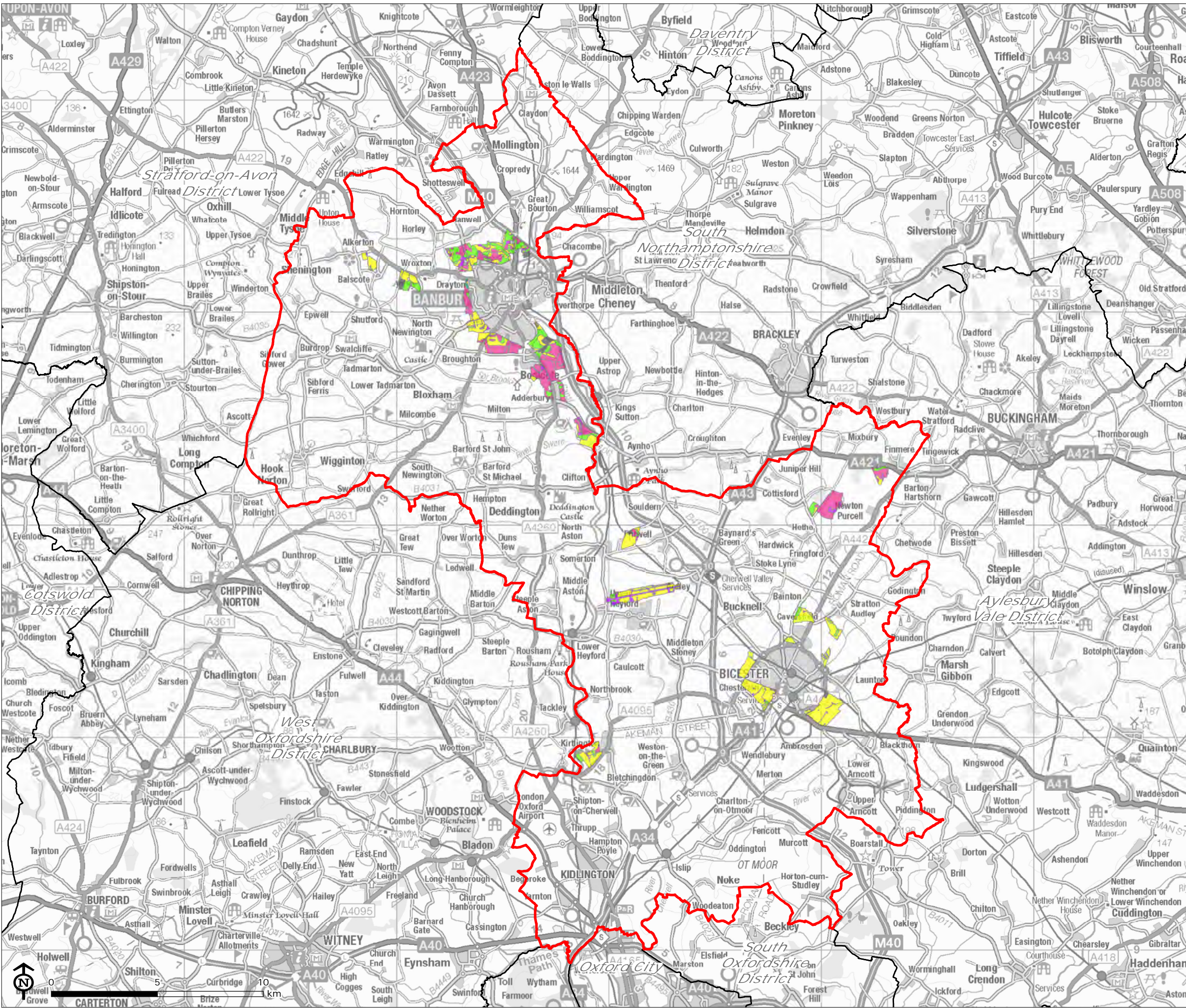
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Figure 3.8

Local Agricultural Land Classification

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Local Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3a
- Grade 3b
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Other
- Not Surveyed

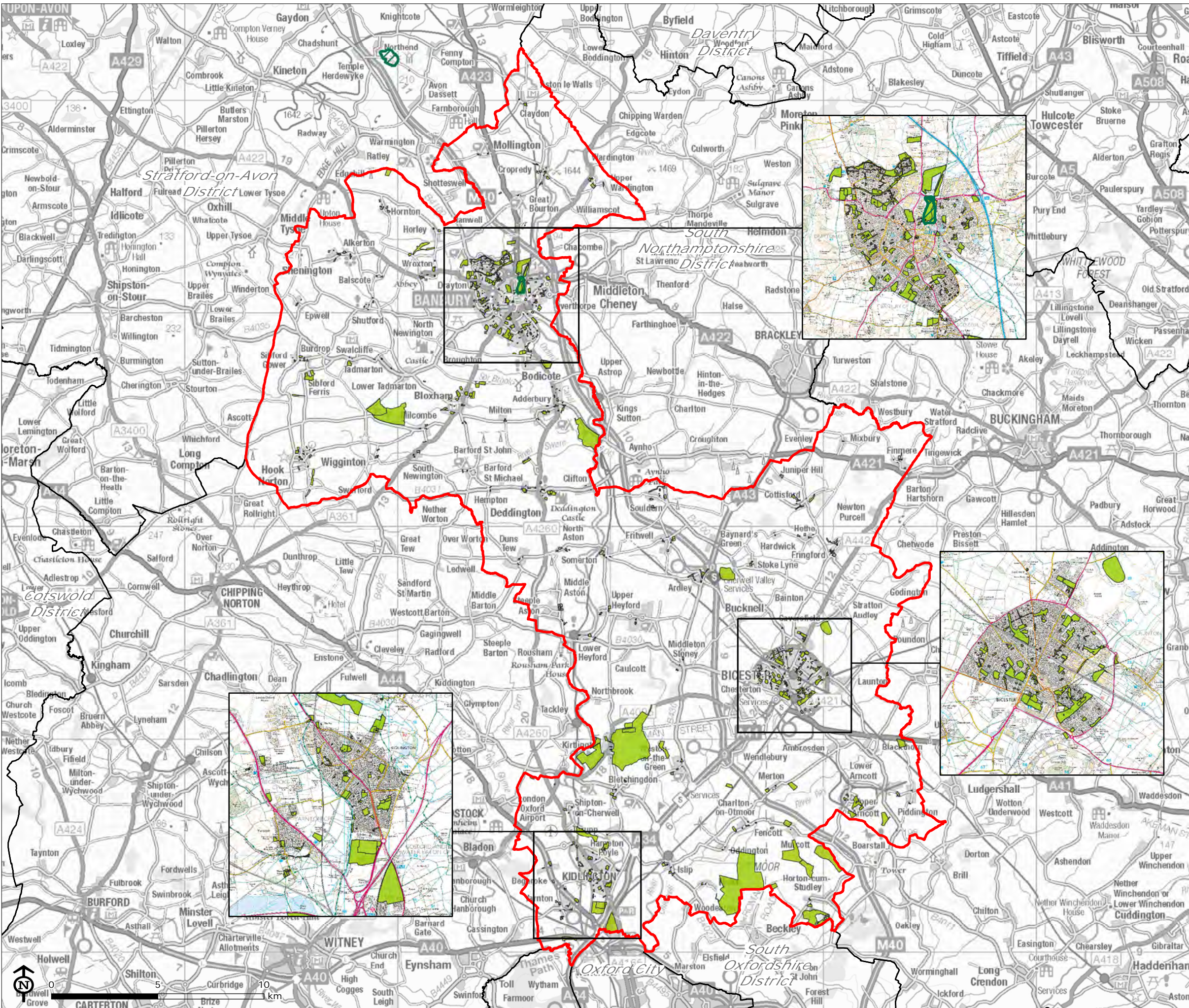


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Figure 3.9  
Recreation - Green and Open Space

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Country park
- Existing green space

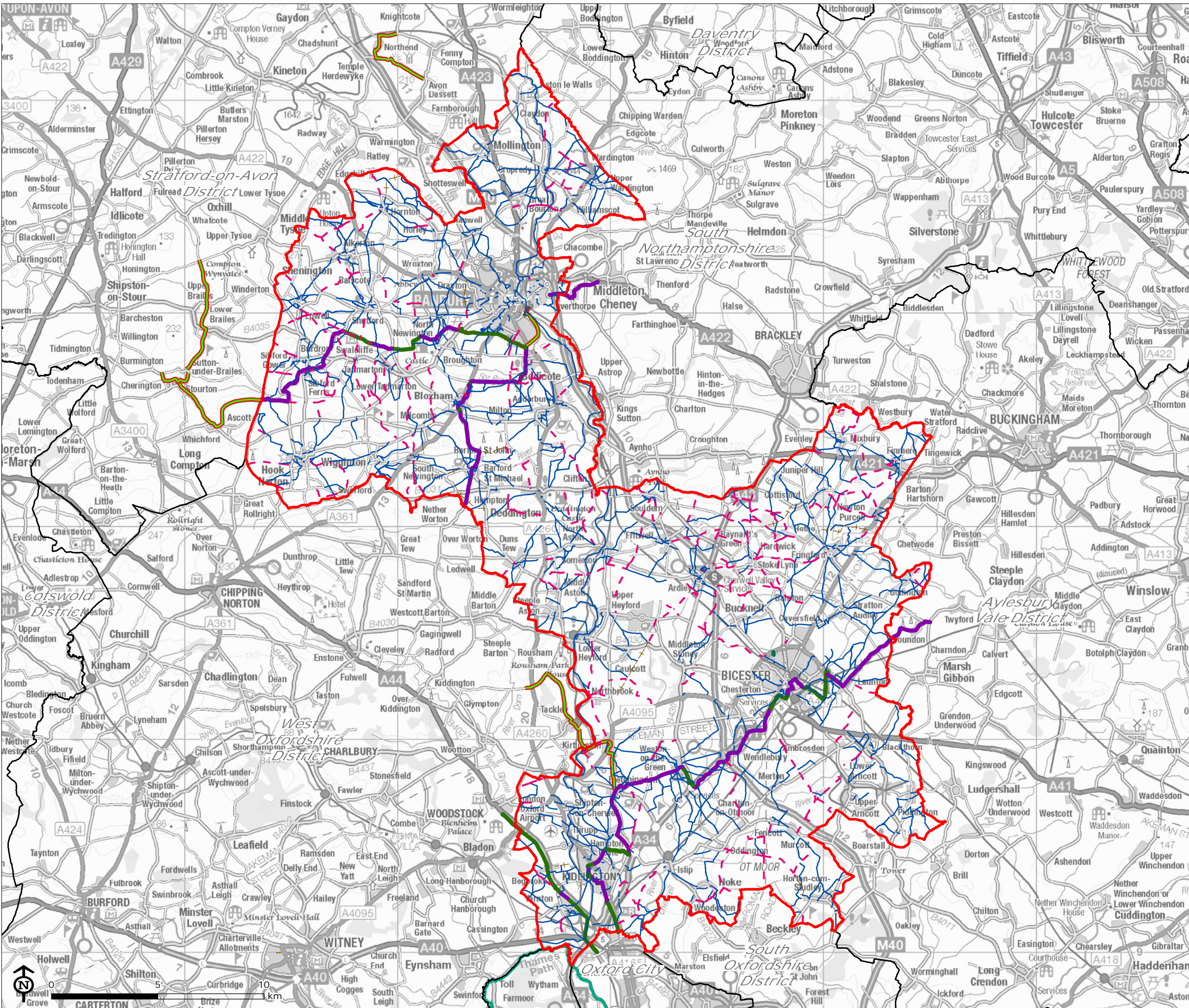


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Figure 3.10  
Recreation - PROW and Cycle Routes

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- National trail
- Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Public footpath
- Public bridleway
- Restricted byways
- Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)
- National and regional cycle routes
- Traffic Free
- On Road
- National Cycle Network link



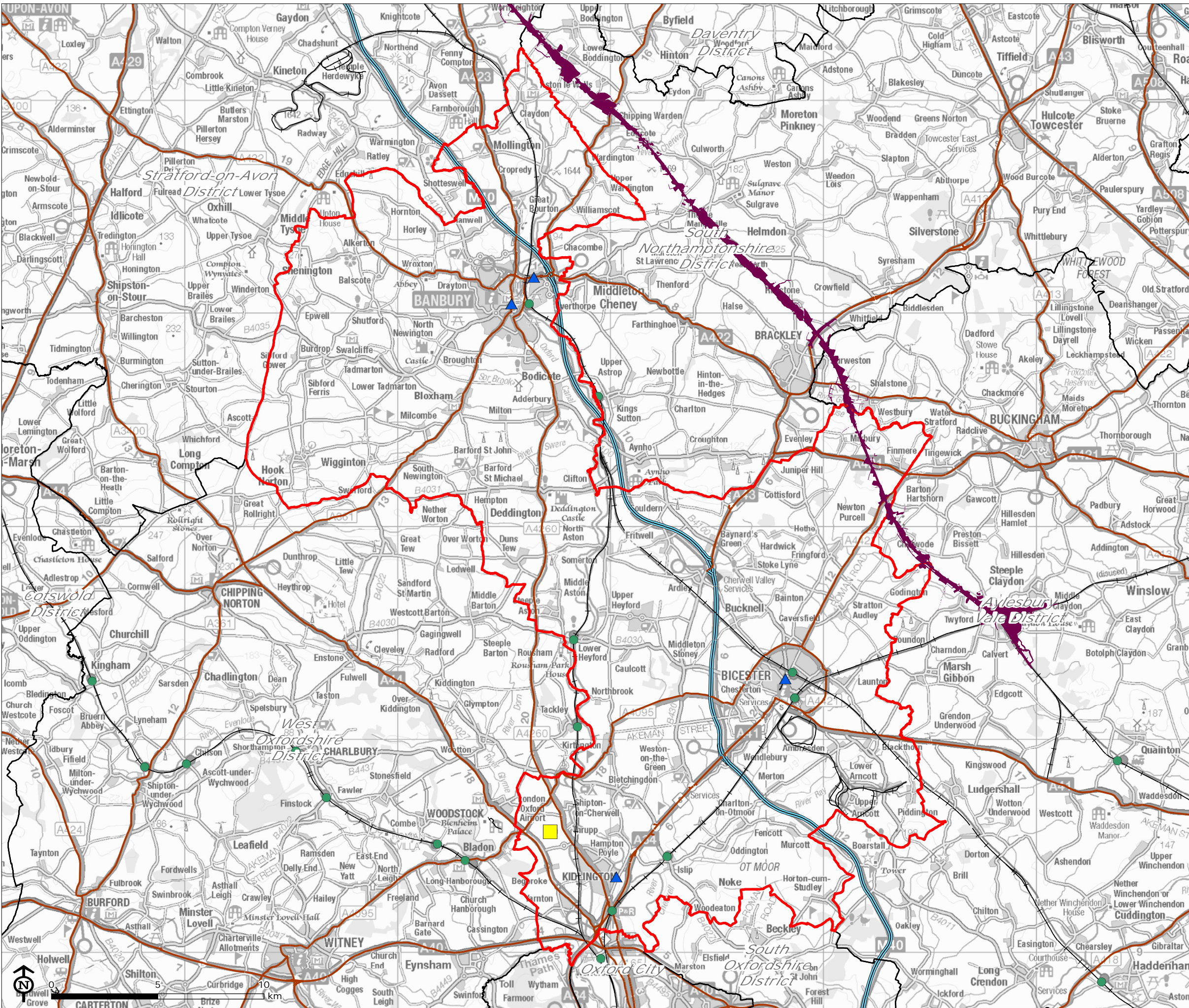
Map Scale @ A3: 1:175,000



Figure 3.11

Transport Links

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Motorway
- A Road
- Railway track
- Railway station
- London Oxford Airport
- ▲ Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
- Proposed HS2 route and safeguarding zones



Map Scale @ A3: 1:175,000

