

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW:
PLANNING FOR CHERWELL TO 2040

A Community Involvement Paper

July 2020

Draft for Executive



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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1 Purpose of this Document

Introduction

1.1 As your local council we have to make planning decisions to meet our future development needs and to protect our built and natural environment. These decisions enable new places of employment to be built and new homes, infrastructure and facilities to be provided. It is important that we get these decisions right as they result in change to our towns and villages, their settings and the countryside more generally.

1.2 We need to ensure that development is 'sustainable' and does not cause unacceptable harm. Our decisions need to take into account national planning policy and objectives for responding to a changing climate, for improving biodiversity, for sustainable transport, for design quality, for avoiding pollution and many others.

1.3 To do this, planning decisions must be made in a local 'plan-led' context. We prepare Local Plans and other planning guidance to identify where new development should take place, how it should be provided in the interest of sustainability, and to make clear where the protection of environmental, social or other assets is necessary. We need to meet local, as well as national objectives, retain and protect what is important to Cherwell's distinctiveness, and to its environmental, social and economic health whilst also ensuring that provision is made for development needs.

1.4 Local plan policies must be considered when we determine planning applications. Our main strategic policies are currently found in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted in 2015. It is that plan that identified the development sites that can be seen today at the edges of Banbury and Bicester and at Heyford Park. It also sets the policies for the distribution of new housing in our rural areas. You will no doubt have an opinion on these new developments. We are also nearing the end of a process that undertook a 'Partial Review' of that Plan to help meet Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs, something which the Council committed to back in 2015. Finally, we have some policies dating back to a Local Plan adopted by the Council in 1996.

1.5 We prepare local plans in the public interest to provide a framework for guiding development and informing decision making. To do this successfully we need to ensure that our planning policies are kept up to date. We have therefore decided that we need to undertake a review of our current local plan policies and also look to address the needs of Cherwell up to 2040. This plan will be called the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040.

1.6 It is essential that we involve you, our local communities, partners and stakeholders in this 'review' process. We want to hear your comments on the effectiveness of our existing planning policies, and on what new policies might be needed for the future. We would like your thoughts and feedback on, for example,

the developments you have seen constructed in recent years and how changes to our policies might encourage developers, including the volume housebuilders, to do things differently in the future.

Tell us what you think

COVID-19 Impact

1.7 We have prepared this Paper during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The full impact of the pandemic on the international, national and local economy has yet to be seen. Uncertainty about how long and how severe the effect on our economy will be makes it a greater challenge. At least in the short-term the UK economy is forecast to shrink, with unemployment forecast to rise. Recovery, for the economy and for our communities, will need our support.

1.8 It is impossible, at the present time for us to predict the post COVID-19 economic landscape. For Cherwell one of the key challenges will be seeking to maintain our usually high levels of employment. The business environment will be difficult, particularly for small, local companies. The tourism, retail and hospitality sectors are likely to be adversely affected by social distancing restrictions for some time. At least initially, there will be lower consumer and business confidence and lower disposable incomes. This may have a profound effect on our already squeezed town centres. In 2019 the tourism sector accounted for 11% of jobs in the District and the value to the local economy was over £450m.

1.9 We can anticipate that the economic, cultural and social consequences of the pandemic are likely to be felt differently across our main centres and high street businesses. During the outbreak the Government has introduced temporary measures to help safeguard the high street and businesses affected by the pandemic but once the public health crisis ends it will be important that the Local Plan includes objectives and policies that help town centres and the retail industry to recover and thrive.

1.10 The importance of good quality market and affordable housing has become more apparent during the current COVID-19 outbreak with the restrictions on movement, self-isolation, and social distancing. This has placed a spotlight on the importance of our internal and external home space, our access to green space, and has highlighted societal inequalities and the potential repercussions for the health and well-being of many individuals and families.

1.11 'Stay at home' measures can have physical and mental health consequences for many but in particular for those living in poor-quality housing and the homeless. Those living in shared housing may find shielding, self-isolation and home working more difficult and children may lack the space and environment to do schoolwork. Confining people within the same home is likely to compound underlying social problems such as domestic abuse. These are not new housing and social challenges,

but they are made more acute by the restrictions of COVID-19. We will need long term thinking on the affordability, quantity, quality, space and safety of our homes and our outdoor spaces.

1.12 The difficulty of maintaining social distancing on public transport and the increase in popularity of cycling during this period has been recognised by central government by providing additional funding to local authorities to improve cycle routes. In the short term this will have the immediate effect of improving fitness in addition to aiding social distancing. In the longer term, if we can maintain and grow the attractiveness of cycling for commuting this could lead to lasting improvements in health. A reduction in the number of petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles on our roads could contribute to the improvement in air quality which will also benefit all our health.

1.13 The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of developing strong, resilient communities where we know our neighbours and support each other. The way we design the places where we live, and the provision of public spaces and community venues impacts on how easy it is for people to connect with one another. We should also not forget the role that community and voluntary groups have in supporting our sense of social cohesion and belonging. The COVID-19 crisis has seen a great resurgence in volunteering and the provision of mutual aid. Our Local Plan will need to support the sustainability of such activities, as far as it can through planning measures, as they are vital in creating and maintaining sustainable, resilient communities.

1.14 COVID-19 has forced us into a different way of living and working and a recent YouGov poll indicated that only 9% of Britons want life to return to “normal” after the outbreak is over. We may need to change the way we plan and design for our communities in the future, and the impact of the pandemic has emphasised the importance of creating safe green spaces and an urban public realm that can accommodate social distancing.

Question 1

What planning policies might we need to help us if COVID-19 persists? What lessons can we learn to help us plan for the future?

Cherwell Today

1.15 Cherwell today remains a predominantly rural District although it is one of the fastest growing areas in the South East. It currently has a population of approximately 150,000 people mainly concentrated in the three urban centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. Banbury is the largest settlement with 32% of the population, Bicester has 24% and Kidlington 13%. The rural areas, with its many small villages, accounts for approximately 31% of the overall population.

1.16 In the last twenty years the population of Cherwell has grown by over 16% and it is forecast to grow further to approximately 170,000 by 2043. Much of this increase is as a result of significant housing and employment growth at Banbury and Bicester. In support of this population growth we have sought the provision of new and improved community facilities. We are investing in our town centres and seeking improvements to our transport infrastructure.

1.17 Cherwell lies at the heart of the country and has excellent transport links. The M40 motorway passes through Cherwell close to Banbury and Bicester, and there are direct rail links from Banbury and Bicester to London, Birmingham and Oxford. The rail link from Oxford to Bicester has recently been upgraded as part of wider east-west rail objectives, and a new station at Water Eaton (Oxford Parkway) linking Oxford and London Marylebone via Bicester opened in 2015.

1.18 Some routes are still, however, problematic. For instance, the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), the Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England have recently examined the effect of poor east-west connectivity across the region as a major barrier to housing and economic growth. The resulting NIC report on the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc published in November 2017 included recommendations to the Government linking east-west transport improvements with wider growth and investment opportunities along this corridor.

1.19 Cherwell's position within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and its excellent transport links provide us with significant opportunity to secure further economic growth. It lies at the fulcrum of two strong and growing knowledge intensive economies, both of which influence the scale, form and nature of economic activity in our area. These are the strong north-south drive from the Oxford economy, and east-west influences from the corridor to Milton Keynes.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc



1.20 Those of you who live and work in the district will be familiar with our distinctive and diverse towns and villages. Our settlements were traditionally built of materials sourced locally such as ironstone and limestone. As transport improved with the construction of the Oxford Canal and later the railways other materials such as brick and slate appeared. Today we want to promote good sustainable design and the maintenance of our local distinctiveness. Quality environments are attractive to people who want to invest in our local economy and help make Cherwell a great place to live and work.

1.21 Most of our villages and hamlets retain their traditional character. There are approximately 2,300 listed buildings, 60 conservation areas, 59 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 11 nationally recognised registered parks and gardens, and a historic civil war battlefield in the District. In some areas the MOD's presence has influenced the built environment, with Bicester Airfield and former RAF Upper Heyford being of historic importance.

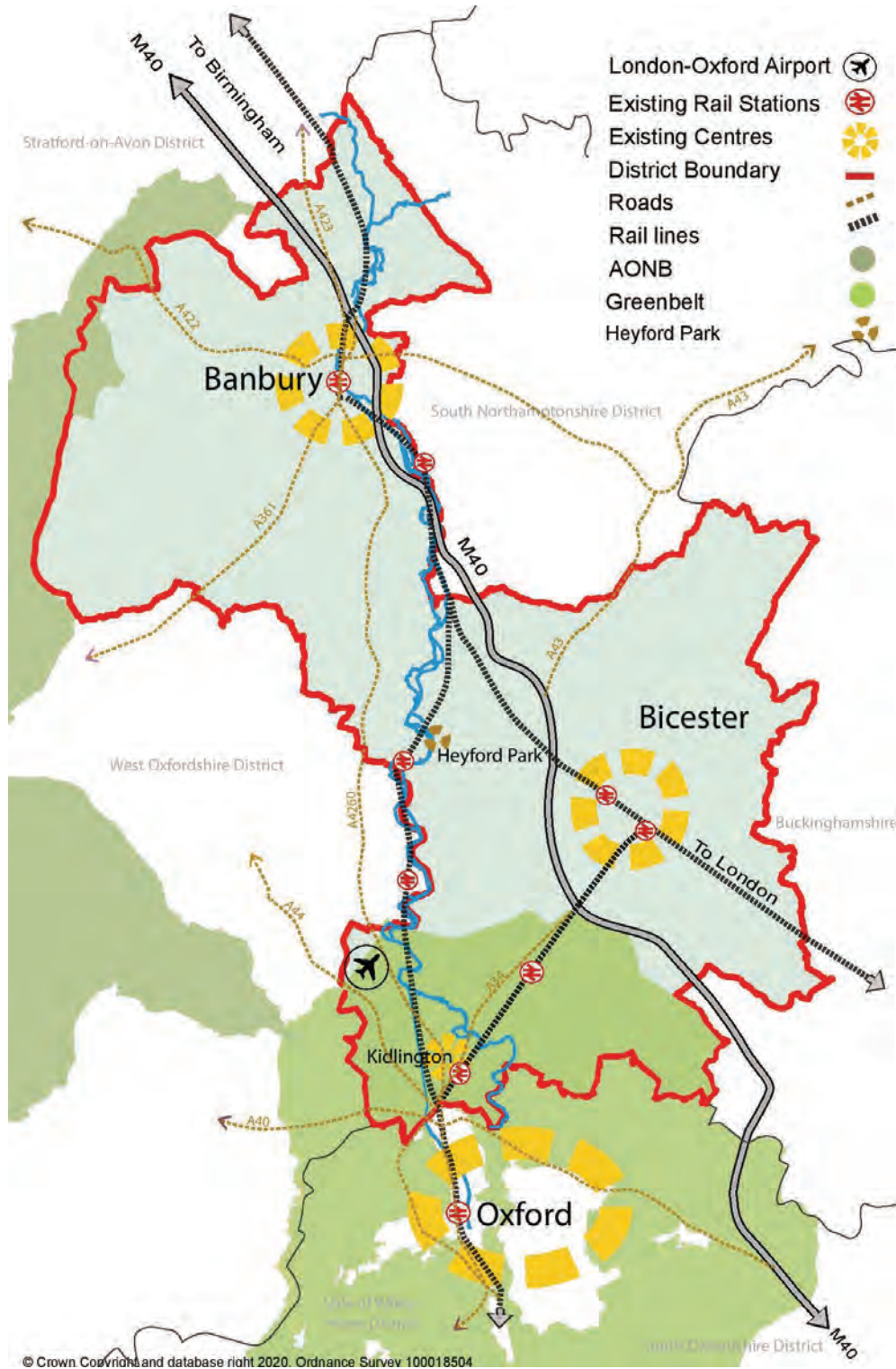
1.22 Cherwell's natural environment is also varied. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal run north-south through the District. There are Ironstone Downs in the north west, which includes a very small area within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Ploughley limestone plateau is in the east and the Clay Vale of Otmoor in the south.

1.23 Part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation lies in the south west of the District, north of the boundary with Oxford City. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other designated areas of ecological or geographical interest, including Otmoor. Much of the southern part of the District lies within the Oxford Green Belt.

1.24 We will look at our places in more detail later in this Paper.

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Cherwell District Diagram



Why do we need a new Local Plan?

1.25 We have an existing adopted Local Plan, approved in 2015, that provides a framework for growth across the District up to 2031.

1.26 This adopted Plan is now 5 years old and there is a new national context emerging. Whether it is the continuing telecoms revolution, new Government policy and guidance on the environment, on design, regional planning issues, or the response to the climate emergency and the need for action, we think there is a need for our Local Plan to reflect this different context. Government policy requires us to look ahead for a minimum of 15 years so that we can anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities. Our new Plan will extend the period covered to 2040.

1.27 Furthermore, although we do not know yet what COVID 19 will mean for how we live in the future and for the economy generally, we do know that our world, at least in the short term, has changed. A new Local Plan will be a key mechanism in responding and adapting to this.

How is a Local Plan produced?

1.28 A Local Plan is a land use or spatial plan that responds to identified issues and needs. It must be evidence based and informed by community engagement, cooperation with prescribed partners and organisations. Preparation of a local plan must conform with legal requirements and national planning policy.

1.29 A Plan must:

- Understand the development needs to be met
- Understand the social, environmental and economic issues and context
- Establish a vision for responding to those needs and issues
- Identify objectives for meeting that vision
- Establish planning policies for meeting those objectives
- Set out a framework for monitoring the implementation of those policies and ensuring that the policies are effective.

1.30 In addition to specific evidence, the plan preparation process is underpinned and informed by a process of sustainability appraisal (SA) that considers the environmental, social and economic effects of the plan. The SA will ensure that all reasonable options are considered in preparing a plan, and that policies are refined in the interests of achieving sustainable development.

Why are we publishing this Paper?

1.31 We wish to engage with our local communities, partners and stakeholders. We want to ensure that a wide cross-section of views are obtained to help us identify, understand and examine the main social, environmental and economic issues and needs that we will have to consider when we plan for Cherwell's future development needs. This Paper therefore does not contain any proposals or policy options, but highlights needs and issues simply to stimulate discussion and debate and to invite your contributions. We are also making a 'call for sites' to inform our technical work. These might be potential development sites, sites for community facilities, sites you wish to suggest as 'Local Green Spaces'. You will see references to these later in the Paper.

Relationship with the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan

1.32 A countywide plan is also being prepared. As part of the 2018 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with the Government, the six Oxfordshire authorities – Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council – have committed to producing a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire (a joint Local Plan) to be known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. You may have already made comments in its early consultation stages.

1.33 The aim of the Oxfordshire Plan is to provide an integrated strategic planning framework and evidence base to support sustainable growth across the county to 2050. This will include the planned delivery of new homes and economic development, and the anticipated supporting infrastructure needed.

1.34 The Oxfordshire Plan will set out the overall development requirement and identify broad areas for growth across the County. It will then be for us in Cherwell to establish detailed planning policies and site allocations at a district level.

1.35 The Oxfordshire Plan Scoping Document published in October 2018 indicated that it will include:

- County-wide housing requirements, including the requirement for affordable homes and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
- County-wide employment growth figures
- Broad proposed growth areas
- Green Belt strategies
- Strategy for biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and strategic environmental allocations

- Strategy for transport
- Strategy for infrastructure
- Retail hierarchy
- Strategy for place-making and the built environment

1.36 However, as work progresses the scope of the Oxfordshire Plan is being refined and it may be that there will be issues raised in this Paper that will ultimately be addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan or vice versa. We will continue to monitor and advise as the plans progress.

1.37 The Oxfordshire Plan is being prepared under the same regulations for plan preparation and consultation as our Cherwell Local Plan Review. Up to date details of progress on the Oxfordshire Plan can be found on their website: <https://oxfordshireplan.org/>

The overall level of housing, including the requirement for affordable housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and employment growth for Cherwell District is expected to be set by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

2 Identification of Issues and Needs

2.1 How we will identify our Issues and Needs

2.1 In identifying Cherwell's issues and needs we firstly need to take in to account national, regional and local strategies and programmes. Our Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which accompanies this consultation paper outlines the main, relevant strategies and policy documents.

2.2 The feedback we receive to this consultation and the technical evidence we prepare and commission, will help identify what needs and issues we need to address. We will also need to respond to what emerges from preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan.

2.3 We set out some national, county and local context below before turning more specifically to planning issues for the district and our urban and rural areas.

National Context

2.4 The Government is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.5 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching interdependent objectives. These are:

- a. An **economic** objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b. A **social** objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and green spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c. An **environmental** objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low-carbon economy.

2.6 We will also need to consider other existing and emerging Government policy including new guidance on design, the requirements of the Environment Bill currently passing through Parliament and a new Planning White Paper that the Government has said will be published shortly.

Oxfordshire Context and Beyond

2.7 Economic growth strategy across Oxfordshire is led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). It prepares a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The current SEP encourages economic investment across a 'Knowledge Spine' which includes the Science Vale in the south of the County, Oxford and Bicester. The SEP also highlights the importance of other projects in our market towns and rural areas. This includes providing rural broadband and providing local residents with sustainable jobs.

2.8 OxLEP has also prepared an Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy which sets out an ambitious plan to build on Oxfordshire's strong foundations and world-leading assets, to deliver transformative economic growth which is clean and sustainable and delivers prosperity for all communities across the county.

2.9 OxLEP is one of the strategic partners to the Oxfordshire Growth Board which is a joint committee of all the Oxfordshire councils. One of Board's functions is to oversee the projects set out in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The Deal involves Oxfordshire receiving up to £215 million of central government funding to help support infrastructure provision and the delivery of 100,000 homes across the county by 2031, the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the provision of additional affordable housing and enhanced economic productivity.

2.10 We cooperate with all our Oxfordshire councils and other key partners on cross-boundary strategic matters, including on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, and on joint projects such as the Oxfordshire Strategic Infrastructure Strategy. The County Council is producing a new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which will be a key influence for the Local Plan. As Local Highway Authority, the County Council engages with adjoining authorities and the Highways Agency in developing its proposals

2.11 The Oxfordshire Growth Board provides a collaborative means of engaging with our neighbours in adjoining regions on planning and infrastructure issues and in discussing the Government's ambitions such as those for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. It provides a collective voice to best represent Oxfordshire's interests in wider strategic discussions.

2.12 This cooperation and joint working will support our evidence and understanding of issues, needs and requirements for the new Local Plan.

Local Context

2.13 We already have a wealth of information that can help us with the Plan including the Council's own strategies and programmes such as Cherwell's Housing Strategy – a key document for the provision of affordable homes.

2.14 The Housing Strategy has three strategic priorities, these are:

- Increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing to ensure the right types of housing are available in the right places
- Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and build thriving, healthy communities.
- Enhance opportunities for people to access suitable homes and have housing choices

2.15 A Cherwell Industrial Strategy is being produced following stakeholder engagement undertaken in 2019 and early this year. The strategy will:

- contain a long-term economic vision
- set out the Council's economic ambitions for the next 10 years
- establish an economic framework for priorities such as business retention and growth, infrastructure for business, the development of skills, generating enterprise, inward investment and the visitor experience.

2.16 We have been monitoring the effectiveness of our current Local Plan policies to inform our new Plan. We have also started to engage with other council services and our colleagues at the County Council to understand their priorities.

2.17 We will need to gather substantial new information and evidence on many subjects including climate change, green infrastructure (including biodiversity, natural capital, ecosystems, open space and playing fields), transport, health and wellbeing challenges, town centres and retail, economic development, infrastructure provision, land availability, site suitability and deliverability. We will publish this evidence as the Local Plan Review progresses.

Question 2

What evidence do you think the Council needs to prepare the Cherwell Local Plan Review?

2.18 From the work we have already undertaken in reviewing Government policy, national, regional and local strategies and policies, local priorities and engagement we have started to identify some key issues for discussion which we have set out in the following paragraphs.

2.2 District-Wide Issues and Needs

Housing

2.19 The affordability and availability of suitable homes to meet the needs of our residents is a major issue. Average property prices in the District are consistently higher than in England. In September 2019, the average property price in Cherwell (£315,000) was 31% higher than across England (£240,000). The mean affordability ratios are now 10.43 times workplace-based earnings in Cherwell, compared with 10.12 in South East England and 7.83 times in England.

2.20 We already require new affordable housing provision on all major developments and because of the higher level of residential development we have seen in recent years, its provision has increased accordingly. However, the affordability of both market and rented housing, particularly social rent tenure, remains a key issue for us. The important contribution that community led housing and self-build and custom housebuilding can make will need to be considered in developing new planning policies.

2.21 We recognise that many Cherwell residents look to Oxford for work and leisure activities. Banbury has its own hinterland which extends into South Northamptonshire and to a lesser extent West Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. In our rural areas, villages are now predominantly places to live and commute from as the traditional rural economy has declined. London has a significant commuting influence, although we recognise that working from home will increase and may become the norm for many.

Graven Hill



We don't know yet what proposals and policies the new Plan will need to contain. But in the table below and in subsequent sections we provide tables of issues and ideas to think about.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
<i>Housing</i>	
<p>To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.</p>	<p>By having a strategy to meet the assessed housing requirements of the district and identifying enough housing sites to meet those requirements.</p>
<p>The need to ensure that location, dwelling size, tenure, provision of affordable housing, specialist housing (including supported living for older people and community-led housing) meets the needs of Cherwell.</p>	<p>By setting out the mix of homes to be achieved on sites around the district having regard to identified needs in the local area.</p> <p>Undertaking a review of affordable housing requirements, taking into account viability.</p> <p>Secure mixed tenure, mixed size developments to enable the provision of balanced new neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Supporting developments that include supported living accommodation for the elderly and those with physical or learning disabilities.</p> <p>Promoting the development of a range of property types and sizes that include accessible and adaptable, and wheelchair accessible homes.</p> <p>Securing homes with flexible living space and adequate outdoor amenity space to allow for increased home working.</p>

Affordable housing for key workers.	Undertaking a review of affordable housing requirements, taking into account viability and exploring opportunities for employers to provide accommodation for key workers.
Do we need to support modern and future building techniques, including modular and off-site construction whilst promoting good design?	Recognising and promoting new modern construction techniques whilst ensuring good design quality and protection of heritage assets.
The need to recognise the contribution of specialist housing models, including but not limited to self-build, custom-build and community-led housing projects.	Promoting self-build, custom-build and community-led housing schemes.
Sites of less than 11 homes do not currently make any affordable housing provision.	Reviewing existing policy on affordable housing thresholds.
The district's rapidly ageing population creates a pressing need for housing to meet the needs of older people in particular.	Supporting developments that include supported living accommodation for the elderly and those with physical or learning disabilities.
New homes often do not meet the nationally prescribed space standards.	Setting out space standards for new developments.
The requirement to meet the needs of travelling communities, including travelling show people and boat dwellers.	Identifying suitable sites for travelling communities.

Economy

2.22 The strength of Cherwell's economy is crucial to prosperity and job creation. Cherwell provides 34% of the total of 6.5 million square metres commercial floorspace in Oxfordshire. Over the last 10 years the District has had an economic activity rate of 80%, which is above the regional and national averages. Unemployment has continued to fall in line with national trends.

2.23 It has a slightly smaller scientific, technical and education sector when compared to Oxfordshire as a whole and wage levels remain lower than surrounding areas. However, Cherwell's work-based earnings are comparable to Oxfordshire and earnings have risen in the last 5 years. Evidence for the previous Local Plan highlighted the need for a range of employment B use classes to be provided in the District, including for B1 and B8 use classes.

2.24 Tourism is a vital component of the national and local economy and can help support local services and facilities, provide employment, promote regeneration and help preserve the natural and historic environment. It can include day visits by local people through to visits from overseas. Tourism spending in Cherwell continues to increase and there is the opportunity to expand this sector further by, for example promoting the unique heritage and landscape of the District.

2.25 Agriculture and food production still form an important part of the local economy. The importance of resilience in the food supply chain has been highlighted by the pandemic. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that the provision of community gardens, and allotment provision to enable people and communities to produce their own food contributes to improvements in health and wellbeing.

2.26 In 2018 there were approximately 77,000 jobs (52,000 full time and 25,000 part time) in Cherwell. This is an increase of 6.9% (5,000 jobs) since 2015 which is more than the percentage increase in jobs experienced in the south east (1.9%) and England (3.7%) over the same three-year period.

Employment at South East Bicester



2.27 Having the right planning policies to support the local economy will now be even more important as we look to 'Re-Start, Re-cover and Re-New' following the pandemic. We want to help sustain businesses, create new opportunities and ensure that jobs are provided.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
<i>Economy</i>	
The need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.	Including positive policies for economic growth and productivity building on our strengths, countering any weaknesses and addressing the challenges of the future, including the direct and indirect implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.
Lower average wages than the rest of Oxfordshire and pockets of deprivation and lower educational attainment.	Encouraging and facilitating higher skilled/higher wage jobs and encourage skills and training.
Meeting the needs of different sectors and companies in the District.	Recognising the locational requirements of different sectors of the local economy.
The need to rejuvenate and improve the District's older employment areas and District centres.	Facilitating the regeneration of the District's older employment areas and centres.
The need to support the District's tourism industry in recognition of its importance to the local economy.	Including policies which understand the needs of a diverse tourism industry and supports sustainable growth, where appropriate.
The need to support local agriculture and food production, particularly in the context of changing subsidies and regulations; and recognise the importance of farm diversification to the long-term viability of this sector.	Including policies that support agriculture and food production; and sustainable farm diversification.

Town Centres and Retail

2.28 Retail is one of the top employment sectors in Cherwell and retail premises make up 18% of Cherwell's total business floorspace (338,000 m² in 2019). From 2000 to 2019 Cherwell experienced a 36% growth on retail floor space (89,000 m²), performing strongly when compared to retail growth in Oxfordshire, and England. Along with Oxford City, Cherwell provides 30% of the floorspace for the retail sector in Oxfordshire.

2.29 Our town centres are already under pressure and they have now been particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and whilst planning may be unable to provide all the answers for ensuring the future viability and vibrancy of our centres it will certainly have a critical role. However, the continuing shift to on-line retailing and

the impact of the pandemic will hit some businesses harder than others and further change how we use our town centres. We need to do all that we can to support them but may also need to consider land uses other than retail. Should we be encouraging leisure, residential, community and business space in our town centres? Take residential, for example, town centres are accessible to public transport and the residents of new homes support the vitality of existing and new services.

2.30 The public spaces and appearance of our town centres is also important to their success. We have recently seen the effects of having less traffic in our streets on air quality and ambience. We do not know how long social distancing will be necessary but making our streets and public spaces as attractive as possible to pedestrians and wheelchair users will help our quality of life. We may see more demand for retailing activities and from food and drink establishments to operate outside in some of these spaces. We will need to look at our planning policies and work with the County Council as Highway Authority to consider the issues.

Bicester town centre



Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
<i>Town centres and retail</i>	
The need for improvements to the provision, appearance and maintenance of our public realm.	Focusing on design principles which help secure effective interventions in our public spaces. Responding to the changing functions of our town centres. Helping to create a local identity and sense of place.
Preservation and enhancement of heritage in town centres.	Supporting town centre specific solutions. Matters to consider include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking, transport and movement. • preservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness of our town and local centres with locally specific solutions. For example, urban fabric, street patterns, shop fronts and signage.
Improve the vibrancy of the daytime and evening economy.	Supporting the use of town and local centres as places for entertainment and social interaction.
Provision and development of accessibility to help improve the overall vitality and character of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington town and village centres.	Supporting easy access to our local centres by all, including active travel and car parking infrastructure. Location and design as well as function to be locally specific to each centre.
Cherwell alongside Oxford has the highest concentration of fast food establishments in Oxfordshire.	Facilitating the creation of healthier food environments, including discouraging clustering of fast food outlets.

Community Facilities, Outdoor Sport, Indoor Recreation and Open Space

2.31 The current pandemic has reinforced our understanding that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for our health and well-being. It is also important that we have good quality and accessible community buildings where neighbours can meet, and where social networks and support can be fostered.

2.32 Since our last Local Plan some work has been carried out to assess open space, sport and recreation and community provision in Cherwell and identify deficiencies. Further work will be needed especially as we will need to take into account best practice advice on the benefits of multi-functional, flexible green space, centralised sports hubs and facilities. Nationally and locally there is an increased emphasis on healthy place shaping and the need to secure green infrastructure. Recent studies have also highlighted the need to consider some other issues, for example, whether fewer, larger all-age areas of play are more beneficial than more numerous but smaller, separate areas of play for younger children and whether more centralised sports provision should be sought.

2.33 Fragmented outdoor sports and pitch provision can result in poor quality underused pitches whilst existing club development is constrained by lack of suitable sites/facilities. The Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy 2018 highlighted a number of clubs in the district searching for new sites or in need of additional space in order to accommodate demand.

2.34 We recognise that loss of existing services and facilities has been a particular issue in recent years, particularly in the villages. Parish Councils and defined community groups can request that the Council lists as an Asset of Community Value (AVC) a building or land which contributes to the social well-being of the community. If an asset is listed, and then goes up for sale, the community can be given 6 months to submit a bid.

2.35 Government guidance also provides the opportunity for communities to identify green areas of particular importance to them. If these spaces meet certain criteria set by Government, they can be protected by being designated as a Local Green Space (LGS) in Local and Neighbourhood Plans. Some LGSs have already been designated in the Adderbury, Bloxham and Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plans but you may know other areas worthy of protection. There may be areas in your town or village that you think meet the criteria and ought to be considered.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
<p><i>Community Facilities, Outdoor Sport, Indoor Recreation and Open Space</i></p>	
<p>Need to ensure adequate provision of the right type of community facilities.</p>	<p>Including standards that ensure that new developments provide sufficient community facilities of the right type, (including during the early phases of development) and community support workers.</p> <p>Providing land for new community facilities provision where justified.</p> <p>Protecting local village services and indicate that listed 'Asset of Community Value' status will be a material consideration in planning applications.</p>
<p>Need to secure adequate formal sports provision and consider whether outdoor sports provision should continue to be secured on site on larger strategic developments or more centralised sports provision sought.</p>	<p>Seeking to secure centralised outdoor sports facilities at the three main settlements with contributions from all development, in lieu of on-site provision for outdoor sports on strategic sites.</p> <p>Providing more informal kickabout areas as part of general amenity open space provision for everyday use by residents.</p>

<p>Need to increase community use of school sports facilities to help meet deficiencies in provision.</p>	<p>Seeking community use of new school facilities where proposed.</p>
<p>Need to ensure that all new developments provide high quality, appropriately located areas of amenity space and that children’s play areas meet the needs of the communities they serve.</p> <p>The importance of quality outdoor spaces has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Encouraging fewer, larger all age areas of play in preference to smaller separate local areas of play for young children.</p> <p>Seeking high quality general green spaces within housing developments for casual recreation and amenity value.</p>
<p>The need to consider whether Local Green Spaces (which are green spaces of particular importance to local communities) are identified.</p>	<p>Designating areas of green space nominated by members of the local community for Local Green Space designation which meet the criteria set by Government policy.</p>
<p>The need to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and access.</p>	<p>Protecting and enhancing public rights of way, and ensuring that where they cross proposed development sites, they are incorporated in situ wherever possible, rather than being diverted.</p> <p>Taking opportunities to strengthen the network by ensuring new links are secured through development schemes.</p>

Transport

2.36 The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan, which is currently being reviewed by the County Council provides the strategic framework for transport across the County. Its aim is to support the local economy, growth and competitiveness. It seeks to reduce the impact of transport on the environment, help mitigate against climate change and promote healthy, safe and sustainable travel.

2.37 The County Council is developing its next transport plan as a ‘Local Transport & Connectivity Plan’ recognising connectivity as a key factor enabling sustainable growth with an emphasis on the role digital communications have in a dynamic local economy. The Covid-19 pandemic makes this more important. The County Council has been publicly engaging on its Plan which will be a key strategy to help inform the Local Plan.

2.38 The need to place climate action, healthy place shaping and addressing air quality at the heart of our thinking will be important for both plans in the interest of moving towards a zero-carbon economy and improving well-being.

2.39 We will need to consider how new Local Plan policies can complement those of the transport plan: how we can reduce traffic and support greener transport technology such as the increasing demand for electric vehicle charging points, how we can provide new green spaces for leisure and travel and encourage the provision of new infrastructure for cycling, walking and wheelchair users. Supporting active travel will lead to health benefits and connected communities and will be even more important if social distancing requirements persist.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Transport	
The need to promote sustainable transport.	<p>Encouraging a mix of land uses which minimise the need for motorised travel, particularly by private petrol/diesel fuelled car.</p> <p>Improve walking and cycling accessibility of existing and new development and particularly accessibility to our local centres and key employment areas.</p> <p>Ensure greater integration of transport and Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>Identify and address barriers to improved walking and cycling at a local level.</p>
Traffic congestion.	Aiming for a greater shift to sustainable modes of transport and where necessary facilitate highway improvements to improve movement and accessibility.
Poor air quality caused by vehicle emissions.	Maximising the opportunity for travel without reliance on fossil fuel powered vehicles.
Less than optimum accessibility to rail stations.	Looking for opportunities to maximise the use of rail particularly for longer distance journeys including for freight.

Commercial bus services and routes need to be protected and improved.	Providing opportunities and requirements for bus infrastructure improvements.
Need for new and improved routes for walking, cycling, and wheelchair users.	Ensuring walking, cycling and wheelchair access is central and prioritised in planning for new development.
Noise, vibration and safety issues caused by HGVs.	Working with the County Council in identifying unsuitable routes in planning for new development.

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

2.40 Maintaining and enhancing a healthy and stable natural environment contributes to the District's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit and is also important to its economic prosperity. The natural environment provides crucial services of value including fertile soils, clean water, flood prevention and flood storage and access to nature can contribute to people's health and wellbeing. It is important that the value of the natural environment is fully recognised in planning for future development and Natural Capital Mapping recently produced for the district can assist in this.

2.41 Wild Oxfordshire's 'State of Nature in Oxfordshire 2017' report highlighted the need for investment in nature and wildlife and conservation action to help recover species and habitats in the County. Our existing Local Plan seeks to secure net gains to biodiversity through development, with 'Conservation Target Areas' (CTAs) being identified as the most important areas to target strategic biodiversity improvement. Emerging government policy is likely to require development to secure biodiversity net gain in a more measured way and in response to the DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan the Wildlife Trusts are currently developing a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire (incorporating CTAs) to protect, join up and enhance the most important natural habitats. At a more local level there are various measures that can be incorporated into new development to ensure that it can be constructed in a more nature friendly way to produce environments where people and nature can thrive together.

2.42 Tranquil areas can be beneficial to our health, helping to reduce stress, and may also benefit the economy in attracting visitors to the area. The CPRE's tranquillity map (2007) indicates that our most tranquil areas are concentrated in the north-west of the district in the ironstone downs, including part of the Cotswolds AONB, and in the south of the district in Otmoor. In preparing our new Plan we will need to consider whether to identify and protect those areas which are relatively undisturbed by noise and are valued for their recreational and amenity value.

2.43 Light pollution mapping shows high levels of light pollution above Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Yarnton, however there are still significant areas of the district with relatively low levels of light pollution, with the CPRE estimating that Cherwell is the 103rd darkest district out of 326 in England. Whilst artificial light can in some cases

be necessary and beneficial it can also be the source of annoyance, have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside, the tranquillity of an area and the enjoyment of the night sky, and be harmful to wildlife. Do you have a view on whether we should seek to limit the impact of light pollution?

2.44 We will need to consider what new policies are needed to secure biodiversity gain and protect and enhance the natural environment in Cherwell.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
<i>Biodiversity and the Natural Environment</i>	
Need to ensure that an ecosystems approach is taken to development.	Use Natural Capital Mapping to inform the review of the Plan and include a policy requirement for an ecosystems approach be taken in the consideration of planning applications to ensure that the wider benefits of natural capital are taken fully into account.
The need to promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species, and the identification and pursuance of opportunities for securing net measurable biodiversity gain.	Measures for biodiversity enhancement could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requiring net gain percentages to be achieved by development. • establishing a method for measuring net gain. • the specification of a mitigation hierarchy. • biodiversity offsetting. • a requirement for developers to use the Building for Nature tool. • supporting the provision of Green Infrastructure networks.
The need to identify where development would be inappropriate. For example, identification of ‘valued landscapes’, areas of environmental or historic significance, and areas of tranquillity.	Protecting areas where development is inappropriate.
Impact of light pollution on the environment.	Including a policy on light pollution.

Soil protection and enhancement including land contamination and land instability.	Requiring developments to have soil management plans, appropriate surveys and mitigation measures.
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Heritage

2.45 Our heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of international significance. We also have Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site on our doorstep. We are all familiar with listed buildings and churches, but heritage assets also include historic parklands and gardens such as those at Rousham and Wroxton, and historic battlefields, such as at Cropredy. Many of our important heritage features are hidden underground and these are often designated as ancient monuments. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and we need to conserve them in a way that is appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to our quality of life and that of future generations.

Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Heritage	
The need to protect, preserve or enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets.	<p>Provide a local framework for the assessment of development proposals that impact heritage assets.</p> <p>Identify locations for development that enable us to protect or enhance our assets</p> <p>Examine the potential to assist the appreciation of our heritage assets, for example by supporting the development of Green Infrastructure networks and active travel routes</p>

Question 3

Do you have any observations on the district-wide issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Banbury

2.46 With a population of 47,600 (2018) Banbury is the largest of the three main centres in Cherwell. It plays an important role as a market town supporting its wider rural hinterland and attracts employees and shoppers from a broad catchment of surrounding towns and villages.

2.47 Banbury has a notable history, which is particularly evident in its attractive town centre. The quality and distinctiveness of the town centre, its residential areas, heritage, green spaces and employment areas are all important to the health and well-being of existing and future residents and in attracting new businesses and visitors to the town.

Economy

2.48 Banbury's economy is focused on manufacturing, distribution, service industries, local government and health. Generally, in recent years it has enjoyed low levels of unemployment, but we still think there is a need to diversify its economy further, attract more highly skilled businesses and continue to increase the levels of education, training and ambition in the town.

2.49 The Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy identifies the town as an important Industrial area for motorsport, building on its links to Silverstone Park in neighbouring Northamptonshire. Familiar, high profile companies include Prodrive, Haas and Arden International.

2.50 The economy of the town benefits from its location on the M40, and its excellent transport links to Oxford, the south east and the Midlands. It has the most employment floorspace in Cherwell, with sectors including distribution, retail, motorsport, food production, manufacturing and office development.

2.51 Our last Local Plan recognised the importance of Banbury to the local economy and so we included policies which allocated approximately 60 hectares of employment land and aimed to:

- Create new job opportunities and investment in the local workforce
- Promote the town as an important location for higher technology and knowledge-based industries
- Build on its manufacturing base and encourage high-end manufacturing

Banbury town centre



- Maintain an increase in motorsport industries
- Encourage retailing and commercial leisure development
- Encourage higher-value distribution companies
- Maximise the town's location and transport links

2.52 The Council's Banbury Masterplan published in 2016 embraced these aims and highlighted how, by driving the engineering economy and investing in infrastructure and skills, economic growth in Banbury could be achieved.

2.53 We have subsequently seen a mix of new employment proposals, typically contained within large buildings in the vicinity of the M40 junction. This has included companies involved in the space industry and motorsport, manufacturing and food distribution. Banbury's more traditional industrial estates continue to see a turnover of companies and take up of floorspace.

Town centre

2.54 The historic and attractive town centre is anchored by the Castle Quay shopping centre which contains a number of national retailers. Independent retailers are also well represented in the town particularly in the High Street and along Parsons Street. There is a vibrant night-time economy with a wide selection of bars and restaurants.

2.55 We are currently witnessing significant improvements to the town centre, most notably the construction of Castle Quay 2 to the east of the existing centre. This major investment by the Council will provide a new hotel, cinema, restaurants, retail and car parking and will transform this part of the town.

2.56 Previous local plan policies have also recognised the need to respond to issues in the Canalside area of the town, including the need to improve access to the railway station and provide improvements to the public realm, particularly along the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors. We have made some significant progress but there is still more to do.

2.57 If there are any other areas of the town centre that you think need improvement, then please let us know.

Transport

2.58 The M40 junction 11 connects the town to the wider national road network, but access is limited to this one junction which causes pollution and congestion problems

2.59 Congestion and air pollution is further exacerbated by the limited number of distributor routes across the town which concentrate traffic onto a small number of roads. In recognition of the pollution problems Air Quality Management Areas in North Bar Street/South Bar Street and along the A422 Hennef Way, have been declared. Congestion is also not helped by the fact that lorry parking in the town is limited which sometimes leads to parking in inappropriate locations.

2.60 Whilst the town centre and residential areas are well served by public transport many of the employment areas to the north and east of the town have a poor service particularly outside peak times. Many also have poor quality cycle and pedestrian links. Is this something we should look to improve?

Community and Social Issues

2.61 Banbury is a thriving and successful town, but we recognise that it does face some challenging community and social issues. In particular, some areas fall within the 10% most deprived wards in England. Indicators of deprivation include educational attainment, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse, health and life expectancy, child well-being, access to services and facilities, and access to good quality affordable housing. There are also issues with isolation and loneliness. Our last local plan sought to expand and diversify the town's economic base, reduce levels of deprivation, provide new services and facilities including for culture and recreation in response to some of these long-term issues, but again we think we can do more.

Landscape setting

2.62 Banbury essentially lies in a 'bowl' in the landscape. Local residents value the attractive countryside surrounding the town. To the west is the historic landscape, typified by steep sided valleys and attractive villages, the Cherwell Valley runs north south and to the east, beyond the M40, the rising landform runs in to the South Northamptonshire countryside.

Banbury	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
The need to support the vitality and viability of the town centre and improvements to the public realm.	Include flexible policies that strongly support the town centre and achieve improvements to the public realm.
Improve daytime, evening and night-time use of the town centre.	Include policies that provide a positive framework for the growth, management and adaption of the town centre.
Encourage new businesses to occupy vacant shops and introduce initiatives to expand vacant shops use	Provide flexible policies to encourage the reuse of vacant shops and buildings within town centres.
High concentration of fast food establishments (Banbury Cross and Neithrop ward)	Explore relationship of fast food establishments and deprivation and health and if required include a policy restricting the clustering of fast food establishments in parts of the town.
Growth potential of the town	Review landscape studies to help consider the long-term growth potential of the town
The need to build on Banbury's location on the M40 and its diverse economic base.	Provide sufficient employment land to meet the locational requirements of different sectors.
The need to provide sufficient employment land.	Assess whether there is a need for further employment land and provide appropriate sites and policies.
The need to continue to improve training and skills.	Include policies that promote improved training and skills.
High levels of isolation and loneliness	Include policies that recognise the importance of mechanisms to facilitate social interaction, such as the provision of well-managed community facilities.
Need for additional secondary school provision.	Continue to identify land for secondary school provision at south Banbury.

<p>Need to address identified deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision through enhancement of existing facilities or securing new provision.</p>	<p>Include policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect existing provision. • secure contributions from all development to enhancement of existing provision. • include positive planning policies towards new open space, sport and recreation provision. • secure new on-site provision as part of larger strategic developments. • allocate sites for open space, sport and recreation provision.
<p>Shortage of burial space.</p>	<p>Continue to include a policy requiring developer contributions towards additional cemetery provision and include a site allocation for cemetery provision.</p>
<p>Need to improve green infrastructure provision in the town.</p>	<p>Review current adopted policies to include the key component parts of and approach to green infrastructure in the town.</p> <p>Allocate sites to contribute to the GI network.</p>
<p>Need to protect and enhance the canal and river corridors through the town in terms of ecological connectivity.</p>	<p>Include a policy which seeks to enhance the River Cherwell Conservation Target Area (CTA) and the objectives of the emerging Nature Recovery Network.</p>
<p>Need for a South East Link Road to improve access to employment areas and relieve traffic congestion along the central corridor/Bridge Street area.</p>	<p>Explore with the County Council road links from the south of the town to the employment areas adjacent to the M40 and if necessary, safeguard a proposed route.</p> <p>Include policies to improve pedestrian cycleway links to employment areas.</p>
<p>Lack of overnight lorry parking.</p>	<p>Investigate possibility of providing facilities for overnight lorry parking.</p>
<p>Need to protect views of St Mary's Church</p>	<p>Undertake a review of current policy which protects the views of the church.</p>

Ensure continued delivery and implementation to meet existing objectives	Develop new policies that complement and do not undermine existing commitments.
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Question 4

Do you have any observations on the Banbury issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Bicester

2.63 Bicester is a rapidly expanding historic market town with a long-standing military presence. The town has a current population of approximately 35,500 (2018).

2.64 In 2009 Bicester was chosen as a location for the development of an Eco-town. The vision for Eco or North West Bicester, is one of a low-carbon community, including 40% green space where 50% of journeys from new development are made by sustainable modes, rising to 60% over time.

2.65 In 2014 Bicester was awarded Garden Town status by the Government and it is now acknowledged as a key area for growth in the UK, receiving central government funding to provide a range of new homes, located in well planned, healthy communities, with plenty of access to green spaces. The project enables local people to choose how and where they work. Businesses are being attracted to the area providing good local jobs, easily accessible by sustainable transport links. Excellent road and rail routes connect the town to London, Birmingham and Oxford. Coworking sites have been established to enable people to choose an alternative to the lengthy daily commute.

2.66 Garden Town status brings Government funding to carry out studies to enable the town’s managed growth. These studies support bids to fund the delivery of infrastructure and improvements allowing for the expansion of Bicester and creating a balanced, progressive town.

2.67 In 2016 Bicester was selected as one of 10 exemplar healthy new towns. The Healthy Bicester Programme aims to enable people who live or work in Bicester to live healthier lives and to prevent ill health in the future.

2.68 Bicester has seen great change in recent years with town centre improvements, the development of the Kingsmere urban extension and Vendee Drive perimeter road, a new cottage hospital, new superstore and new highway infrastructure along the A41 and other commercial developments.

2.69 Our last local plan allocated land for over 10,000 new homes, of which over 2,400 have already been constructed. Graven Hill, with up to 1,900 homes, is the largest self-build scheme in the country. The first phase was released in 2016 and the development is growing fast with a new primary school, community centre, shops, cafes and a local pub planned.

Retail and leisure

2.70 Bicester has an historic market and retail centre. Its attraction for retail, leisure and tourism has grown enormously. In recent years redevelopments have resulted in the opening of Pioneer Square with a new seven screen cinema, large supermarket, multi-storey car park, smaller retail outlets, civic buildings including a library and a new hotel.

2.71 First opened in 1995, Bicester Village designer shopping outlet, comprising boutique stores along open-air pedestrianised lanes, has grown to become one of the UK's top internationally significant tourist attractions, with over 7 million visitors in 2019.

2.72 Bicester Motion (formerly Bicester Heritage) based at the former RAF Bicester site has developed to become a key employment, heritage and tourism centre as encouraged by the last Local Plan. Former RAF Bicester is an inter-war airfield described by Historic England as "the best-preserved bomber airfield dating from the period up to 1945". It is now home to specialist businesses in the historic motoring industry with over 90% of the buildings restored or re-activated for modern business use. The original grassed flying field has been retained and the site hosts an annual 'Flywheel' event with crowds visiting to see motoring, aircraft and military displays.

Economy

2.73 Bicester's economy benefits from its location close to Oxford within the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The town's economic base includes defence activities, distribution, retail, motorsport and office development. The Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy identifies Bicester as an Eco Zone & Corporate HQ Hub providing an opportunity for 'living labs' - user-centred facilities where research and innovation is concurrently integrated with the active operational/economic use of the building often as part of a public-private partnership. They can help develop real-world solutions to users' problems.

Knowledge Spine



2.74 Our last local plan proposed significant employment growth at Bicester with the following aims:

- Creating new job opportunities, skills and investment in the local workforce
- Becoming an important self-sustaining economic centre as a location for higher technology and knowledge-based industries
- Encouraging higher value distribution companies
- Development of a low carbon economy
- Improvement of existing employment areas
- Maximising its location and transport links including rail opportunities
- Expanding the town centre
- Promoting Bicester through methods such as the Bicester Marketing Board

2.75 This Plan made a step change in the amount of employment land identified at Bicester by allocating over 140 hectares of employment land as part of a strategy to increase the supply of jobs to match housing growth, in order to reduce out commuting and improve the self-sufficiency of the town.

2.76 A significant proportion of this allocated land now has planning permission, but completions are generally lower than in Banbury. We have sought to attract higher-technology and knowledge-based businesses to the town, but the predominant new employment use is large warehousing (B8). However, it is encouraging that planning permission has also been granted for office and light industrial development on allocations to the south of the town where some limited commercial leisure uses are also being developed. New heavy industry has been very limited at Bicester. It maybe that you have a view on the type of employment buildings being built in the town?

2.77 Bicester’s traditional industrial estates continue to see a turnover of companies and take up of floorspace with some loss of employment space to commercial leisure uses (such as play centres) and to new homes.

2.78 Bicester is generally less constrained than Banbury in terms of landscape sensitivity. The challenge for us is to continue the success achieved to date and support the transition from a small market town to a thriving Garden Town that remains attractive for both public and private investment.

Bicester	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
The need to continue to support the vitality and viability of the town centre and improvements to the public realm.	Include flexible policies that strongly support the town centre and achieve improvements to the public realm.
Improve daytime, evening and night-time uses in the town centre.	Include policies that provide a positive framework for the growth, management and adaption of the town centre.
Encourage new businesses to occupy vacant shops and introduce initiatives to expand vacant shops use	Include flexible policies to encourage the reuse of vacant shops and buildings within town centres.
Continuing out commuting from the town.	Assess whether there is a need to identify new employment land in the town to meet the needs of the local population and provide appropriate sites and policies.
The need to attract more high-tech knowledge-based industries building on the location of Bicester within the Oxford Knowledge Spine.	Provide sufficient employment land to meet the locational requirements of these sectors.

The supply of sufficient employment land.	Assess whether there is a need for further employment land and provide appropriate sites and policies.
Need to address identified deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision through enhancement of existing facilities or securing new provision.	<p>Include policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect existing provision • secure appropriate contributions from all development to enhancement of existing provision • include positive planning policies towards new open space, sport and recreation provision • secure appropriate new on-site provision as part of larger strategic developments • allocate sites for open space, sport and recreation provision
High levels of isolation and loneliness in Bicester Town.	Include policies that recognise the importance of mechanisms to facilitate social interaction, such as the provision of well managed community facilities.
Need to continue to improve green infrastructure, including those components that are valuable for wildlife, in the town.	Review current policy to include the key component parts of, and approach to green infrastructure in the town.
Requirement for the Eastern Peripheral Road.	Continue to require existing and proposed development sites to financially contribute to this critical scheme in accordance with the CIL Regulations.
Need to discourage unnecessary car trips within the town centre.	Include policies that encourage park and ride, park and cycle/walk and other means of active travel.
London Road level crossing.	Provide a policy context to ensure delivery of a solution to the major severance of the town centre for residents in south-east Bicester caused by the level crossing.
Ensure continued delivery and implementation to meet existing objectives	Develop new policies that complement and do not undermine existing commitments

Question 5

Do you have any observations on the Bicester issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Kidlington and Surrounding Villages

2.79 Kidlington is Cherwell's smallest urban centre but proudly its largest village with a population of about 15,000. Together with its neighbouring villages of Yarnton and Begbroke, it has an immediate and close relationship with Oxford. The Cherwell parish of Gosford and Water Eaton comprises the area north of Cutteslowe in Oxford, but it also includes part of the built-up area of south-east Kidlington.

2.80 Kidlington functions as a local shopping and employment centre. The wider Kidlington area includes London-Oxford Airport (the Thames Valley area's primary regional and business aviation airport), and the University of Oxford's Begbroke Science Park, which has a focus on high-tech science-based business linked to the University. Langford Lane (north Kidlington) is a further economic growth area.

2.81 Our last district-wide local plan seeks to strengthen Kidlington's village centre and to maximise the economic opportunities presented by the village's location on the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine'.

2.82 It identified the need for some small-scale employment growth at Kidlington with the following aims:

- Exploiting its position in the Oxford Cambridge Arc
- Allowing for growth of the Science Park, Langford Lane and London Oxford Airport
- Creating opportunities in the village centre for retail, leisure and cultural activities

2.83 The subsequent Kidlington Framework Masterplan (2016) highlights how important Kidlington is to the Cherwell economy with its significant employment areas, schools, retailing, public services and transport infrastructure such as the recently opened Oxford Parkway station.

2.84 We are awaiting a Planning Inspector's Examination Report on the Partial Review of the Local Plan - a Plan prepared to help Oxford with its unmet housing need. Should the Council adopt that Plan, having considered the Inspector's Report,

Kidlington



it would allow for 4,400 homes to be developed in the Kidlington/Gosford/Yarnton and Bebroke area. That Plan has been consulted upon previously and been the subject of public hearings. It is not the subject of this consultation.

2.85 Nevertheless, implementation of that Plan will lead to significant change in the area with new residential neighbourhoods and accompanying community facilities, open spaces, green infrastructure, public transport connections and routes for walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users.

2.86 As this area develops, you may have views of what additional planning policies may be required to guide future development or protect key assets in meeting Cherwell's needs.

2.87 Just under 14% of Cherwell lies within the Oxford Green Belt. We anticipate that any new countywide strategic matters and issues relating to the Oxford Green Belt will be addressed by all the Oxfordshire authorities working collaboratively through the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. More information on that Plan is available at <https://oxfordshireplan.org/>.

Kidlington and Surrounding Villages	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Need to encourage and support economic activity in the village centre.	Consider the scope for detailed planning policies having regard to the recommendations of the Kidlington Framework Masterplan and development opportunities within the existing built-up area.
Need to improve connectivity between the existing village centre and the civic, community and green open space at the Exeter Hall area.	
Desire to improve the character and appearance of the village centre, the public realm and the built environment more generally.	
Review whether sufficient community facilities are being provided to support local need (e.g health)	Work with authorities including the Oxfordshire Clinical Commission Group to objectively identify any specific needs that could be planned for
Local Green Belt policy for the longer term	Review local policy requirements once the Partial Review of the Local Plan has concluded and in light of the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan

<p>Provision of affordable housing in the context of Green Belt constraints</p>	<p>Review opportunities within the existing built-up area and whether rural exception site policy could provide a means of supply</p>
<p>Promote beneficial uses of the Green Belt to support access to the countryside and healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>Consider policies that would encourage opportunities, for example for improved access, informal recreation and retention and enhancement of landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.</p>
<p>Address identified deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision through enhancement of existing facilities or securing new provision.</p>	<p>Where required, include policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect existing provision. • secure appropriate contributions from development towards the enhancement of existing provision. • include positive planning policies towards new open space, sport and recreation provision. • secure appropriate new on-site provision as part of larger strategic developments. • allocate sites for open space, sport and recreation provision.
<p>Continue to improve connectivity for sustainable modes of transport including buses, cycling and walking.</p>	<p>Include policies that continue to promote healthy and sustainable modes of travel.</p>
<p>Continue to improve green infrastructure provision.</p>	<p>Consider policy that sets out the key component parts of, and approach to green infrastructure in the area.</p>
<p>Need to protect and enhance the canal and river corridors, particularly for ecological connectivity.</p>	<p>Include a policy which seeks to enhance the River Cherwell Conservation Target Area (CTA) and the objectives of the emerging Oxfordshire – wide Nature Recovery Network.</p>
<p>Support innovation and research capacity in the local economy; implement planning policies to secure high value employment in the vicinity of key assets such as Begbroke Science Park and London Oxford Airport.</p>	<p>Consider how the new Plan can assist the implementation of existing objectives; explore other appropriate opportunities within the area, subject to Green Belt considerations.</p>

Provision of a new park and ride on the A44 at London -Oxford Airport.	Review whether a policy is needed to safeguard this site for delivery.
Localised flooding and drainage issues.	Where possible seek solutions to reduce flood risk from all sources including ground and surface water.
Ensure continued delivery and implementation to meet existing objectives.	Develop new policies that complement and do not undermine existing commitments.

Question 6

Do you have any observations on the Kidlington issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Heyford Park

2.88 Within the rural area of the District lies the 500 hectare former RAF Upper Heyford site vacated by the US Air Force in 1994. Since 1996 we have been supporting residential and commercial development on this extensive site to secure our aim of achieving environmental improvements and the conservation of this internationally significant former Cold War airbase.

2.89 Located at the top of a plateau and set within open countryside the site is not without landscape and environmental constraints. The land to the west falls sharply to the Cherwell Valley. The Grade 1 listed Rousham Park is located in the valley to the south-west. The Rousham, Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford Conservation Area adjoins the site, whilst the former airbase itself is a designated conservation area. There are also a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of national importance on site. Much of the airfield is of ecological importance and includes a Conservation Target Area, and a Local Wildlife Site.

2.90 The current Local Plan provides for the development of a community of approximately 2,300 new homes of which nearly 600 have been built. Today the area is our newest parish and the community is now known as Heyford Park. The site currently has over 120,000 square metres of commercial accommodation and it has established itself as one of Oxfordshire's leading business parks, attracting a broad range of occupiers.

2.91 We continue to support the implementation of the Local Plan policy to ensure that this new community is provided with the appropriate local education, recreation and other facilities required and that the policies relating to heritage and environmental

objectives are met. A planning application is being considered by the Council which includes a masterplan for the site providing for the additional homes, new employment opportunities and facilities. It is expected to be determined soon.

2.92 Without prejudice to the determination of that planning application (which must be separate from this consultation), you may have views on the key issues for the future – whether this is about supporting what is already committed (e.g providing for additional facilities such as a cemetery as has been highlighted by the Parish Council) or about the longer term (e.g the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy identifies the site as providing the opportunity to deliver a creative city for film and television).

2.93 In May 2019 a Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan was completed and made part of the statutory Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan area comprises 11 parishes which surround Heyford Park and includes planning policies to encourage the use of brownfield sites, to resist the loss of countryside, to reinforce a sense of rurality and to help control development at the villages building upon policies in the existing local plan.

2.94 Whilst we presently expect the steer for future broad locations of growth across the county to come from the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, we would welcome your views on the key issues we may need to consider. We will need to ensure that our existing Local Plan commitment is delivered, and we believe that the time has become to consider how Heyford Park fits into our settlement hierarchy – our categorisation of villages. But will there be wider development, community, heritage, sustainable transport and environmental issues that we need to consider in the next Local Plan?

Heyford Park	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Need to consider the categorisation of the settlement.	Undertake a review of Policy Villages 5 which currently sets out the level of growth at the settlement up to 2031.
Need to assess potential for future employment growth within environmental and accessibility constraints.	Provide an appropriate policy basis for future employment development.
Need to address any identified deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision through enhancement of existing facilities or securing new provision.	Undertake review of the existing policy to determine appropriate open space, sport and recreation provision. Protect existing provision, where appropriate secure contributions from development towards enhancement of existing provision.

	<p>Include positive planning policies towards new open space, sport and recreation provision.</p> <p>Where appropriate, secure new on-site provision as part of any larger developments.</p>
Need to consider the impact of development on the newly designated Conservation Target Area (CTA).	Review existing policy for the area to ensure that the CTA is taken in to consideration.
Need to continue to improve green infrastructure, including those components that are valuable for wildlife in the parish.	Review current policy to include the key component parts of and approach to green infrastructure in the parish.
The need to provide local services and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population.	Seek appropriate contributions from development towards improving local services and facilities.
Need to improve bus, rail, pedestrian and cycling connections.	Include policies to promote healthy and sustainable modes of travel.
Impact of HGV traffic on surrounding villages.	Include a policy to mitigate against this impact.
The need to recognise the historic significance and character of the Cold War site as a whole when considering future development proposals.	Continue to include policies which require development proposals to preserve and enhance this internationally significant heritage asset.
Need to provide public access and interpretation of the historic significance of the former Cold War site.	Continue to include policies which require public access and interpretation of the former Cold War site.
Identified need by the parish council for the provision of burial space within the settlement.	Seek to facilitate the provision of burial space within the parish.
Ensure continued delivery and implementation to meet existing objectives.	Develop new policies that complement and do not undermine existing commitments.

Question 7

Do you have any observations on the Heyford Park issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Rural Areas

2.95 There are over 90 villages and hamlets in the District. Bloxham in the north with a population of just over 3,000 is the second largest village after Kidlington. Adderbury, Deddington, Hook Norton and Bodicote all have populations in excess of 2,000. In total approximately 31% of the District's population live outside the three main urban areas.

2.96 Each of Cherwell's villages has its own unique character and many have conservation areas which help to conserve and enhance their historic core. All villages have seen growth over the centuries, and some have grown significantly in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Bloxham



2.97 In general Cherwell's villages can be characterised as having a relatively limited range of services and facilities, although we recognise that there are significant differences. Larger villages often have some or all of the following; a post office, primary school, shop, pub, bus service, and recreation and community facilities. Some also have local employment opportunities. Unfortunately, in recent years some of these facilities have been lost. In particular, a number of pubs have closed, and rural bus services have been significantly reduced.

2.98 We recognise that although the area is relatively affluent, high house prices and lack of public transport mean that those on limited incomes, and those seeking to live, work and access services locally, can be disadvantaged.

2.99 Government rural housing policy seeks to be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. In order to promote sustainable development this new housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Our last Local Plan reflected this approach by defining a hierarchy of settlements which considered the following factors:

Balscote



- The availability of services and facilities including shops and post offices
- Primary and secondary school provision

- Public transport availability
- Accessibility to the towns and other villages
- Employment sites
- Population size

2.100 Whilst minor infilling and conversions is supported (in principle) in many villages, larger developments are restricted to the more sustainable settlements, (known as Category A settlements). There are currently 24 Category A villages however, we are aware that since the last surveys informing village categorisation levels of services and facilities may have changed.

2.101 We therefore intend, with the assistance of parish councils and the local communities, to re-survey each village to fully understand current levels of services, facilities and accessibility. We will also need to review and define our approach for distributing any future rural housing and employment growth, once that has been defined. In formulating this approach, we will be mindful of the levels of growth experienced by some villages and explore the pressures placed on local infrastructure, including the local road network, primary health provision and school places. Planning appeal decisions affecting some areas of the district have been controversial locally and led to calls from some for village categorisation to be re-examined and rural housing distribution to be re-considered.

Station Road, Bletchington



2.102 Cherwell's rural areas have a diverse economy, including village centres, employment sites accommodating a wide range of industries, military bases and other previously developed land and operations. These may provide opportunities for redevelopment and expansion for local business and community needs. We also recognise that agriculture and food production still form an important component of the local economy.

2.103 The last Local Plan seeks to limit employment growth in the rural areas whilst promoting:

- Farm diversification
- Development on appropriate small-scale employment sites
- Re-use of existing sites
- Home working

2.104 The character of the rural area is varied and includes land of significant landscape and biodiversity value. A small part of the Cotswolds AONB lies within the north-eastern part of the District and to the south lies the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. This environment helps attract tourists to the area to destinations such as the Hook Norton Brewery, the Cropredy Festival and the Oxford Canal. The District's economy also benefits from having major attractions on its doorstep including Blenheim Palace, Warwick Castle and Stratford-upon-Avon.

2.105 Whilst Cherwell has many attractive villages with valued built and natural environments, high house prices and a reliance on commuting by private car could disadvantage those of limited means, and those seeking to live, work and access services locally. There are also some pockets of deprivation in Cherwell's rural areas.

2.106 The current Local Plan seeks to protect and where possible enhance local services and facilities. There are policies to protect the natural and built environment.

2.107 In addition to Cherwell's local plans a number of rural parishes in the District have prepared or are in the process of preparing Neighbourhood Plans. These Plans, prepared by the community, provide the opportunity for local concerns on social, environmental and economic issues to be addressed through spatial planning policies. Currently there are neighbourhood plans for Bloxham, Adderbury, Hook Norton and Mid Cherwell (covering the parishes of Ardley with Fewcott, Duns Tew, Fritwell, Kirtlington, Lower Heyford, Middle Aston, Middleton Stoney, North Aston, Somerton, Steeple Aston and Upper Heyford). Weston-on-the Green Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced. Plans are also progressing for Deddington and Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp. The Local Plan Review will need to have regard to the policies in these neighbourhood plans.

Oxford Canal, Cropredy



Map of Neighbourhood Areas



Rural Areas	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Many residents have poor access to services and facilities.	Include policies that help protect vital local village services.
Changes to the level of services and facilities in villages.	Undertake review of village categorisation to reflect the current provision of services, facilities and other sustainability criteria more widely and explore the need for flexibility in policy to take in to account future changes.
The need to provide housing to meet local need and to support the rural economy.	Allocate sufficient housing in the rural areas to meet local need.
The need to sustainably support and diversify the rural economy.	Provide policies for sustainable rural employment to meet the needs of the local population.
Need to address any identified deficiencies in open space, sport and recreation provision through enhancement of existing facilities or securing new provision.	<p>Protect existing provision.</p> <p>Where appropriate secure contributions from development towards enhancement of existing provision and include positive planning policies towards new open space, sport and recreation provision.</p> <p>Where appropriate secure new on-site provision as part of any larger developments and determine appropriate level of provision depending on size and character of settlement.</p>
Need to identify and protect important gaps and avoid coalescence of settlements.	<p>Review existing policy to protect important settlement gaps and avoid coalescence.</p> <p>Consider introducing settlement boundaries.</p>

Need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.	Review existing policies that seek to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.
Need to protect local distinctiveness and settlement pattern of villages when assessing development proposals.	Review existing policies that seek to protect local distinctiveness and settlement patterns.
Need to protect countryside from unnecessary development.	Review existing policies that seek to protect the countryside from unnecessary development.
Localised flood risk.	Ensure development helps to remove existing flood risk from all sources. Utilise natural flood alleviation measures wherever possible.

Question 8

Do you have any observations on the rural issues we have identified? Are there any others you would like to raise?

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3 Key Themes

3.1 We are proposing that there are three central overarching themes that will influence and shape the future of Cherwell District. These themes, which are consistent with the Government's three objectives for the planning system to achieve sustainable development are:

1. maintaining and developing a **Sustainable Local Economy**;
2. meeting the challenge of **climate change**;
3. **healthy place shaping**.

Question 9

Do you agree with the Key Themes identified? Are there other Key Themes the Plan should address?

Theme 1: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

3.2 Government planning policy has the economic objective of building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

3.3 In 2017 the government produced the National Industrial Strategy which seeks to boost productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and increase the earning power of people throughout the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

3.4 The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) (2019) produced by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) sets out an ambitious plan to build on Oxfordshire's strong foundations and world-leading assets, to deliver transformative growth which is clean and sustainable and delivers prosperity for all communities across the county. It highlights how Oxfordshire has a well-balanced, resilient economy which has been instrumental to its track record of continued growth. Output growth has continued to be strong since the financial crisis (3.9 per cent per annum since 2007), well above national averages and even during the last recession Oxfordshire continued to grow.

3.5 Oxfordshire's LIS Vision Statement is; 'To position Oxfordshire as one of the top three global innovation ecosystems by 2040, building on the region's world leading science and technology clusters to be a pioneer for the UK in emerging transformative technologies and sectors.'

3.6 The emerging Cherwell Industrial Strategy, which is informed by the National and Oxfordshire Industrial Strategies will replace the Council's current Economic Development Strategy which informed our last Local Plan. It is intended that the new strategy and its economic priorities will be supported by a delivery plan setting out

annual delivery projects. The emerging cross-cutting themes include inclusive prosperity, the climate emergency and healthy place-shaping and it too will cover the three main urban centres (Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington) and the rural economy. Re-imagining the town centres and high streets and economic recovery from COVID-19 are likely to feature strongly.

3.7 The Local Plan was prepared to support economic growth as expected by national planning policy. The creation and maintenance of a broad, diverse and resilient economy was a fundamental objective. Much has and continues to be achieved from the Plan's delivery focused policies and the allocation of employment land.

3.8 The Council recognises the valuable sectors and companies that are already in the District and that it will be important to sustain an environment that can help them to grow. This positive environment will also help to attract new companies in sectors such as; manufacturing, engineering, the low carbon economy, high-tech knowledge-based industries and distribution, thereby supporting prosperity and growth. The maintenance and development of a diverse and resilient economy will be required to support a range of jobs for local people.

3.9 We also recognise the strategic importance of the food and farming industry to the local economy particularly in our rural areas. This sector can help us deliver thriving rural communities, providing jobs and growth both in food production but also in diversified industries such as renewable energy and tourism.

3.10 Our town, village and local centres play a central role on the life of our communities and the future of our local economy. Their prosperity determines how well they serve our community's needs, shape people's perceptions of the District and influence future investment in the wider area. Town centres across the country have faced, for some time, serious economic and social challenges ranging from changes to the way we shop to shifts on investment with concentration on fewer larger centres.

3.11 Actions to plan for the future of our local centres and high streets depend on strong partnerships and measures taken with local business and residents, local authorities, suppliers and infrastructure providers. The Local Plan Review will have a role to play by setting flexible planning objectives and policies which facilitate town centre growth, management, and helps their ability to adapt over time and facilitate positive change.

3.12 Improving Cherwell's economic future also requires consideration of how we manage and reduce the environmental impact of existing and proposed development and how we ensure that it is of sufficient quality, sustainable, and respects the urban and rural character of the District.

3.13 Supporting and protecting the role and function of our existing town centres and employment areas as well as enhancing our natural and built environment will enable Cherwell to continue to be as business-friendly as possible thereby supporting jobs and prosperity. Improving our town centres, historic environment, and the public realm will also encourage the expansion of our tourism economy.

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Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Meeting the challenges and opportunities posed by COVID-19, climate change, 'Brexit' and globalisation for the local economy, local resilience, supply chains, agriculture, jobs and trends.	Formulating policy which understands the challenges to the local economy, including agriculture, and provides a spatial context to support sustainable, inclusive economic growth, resilience and flexibility.
Understanding the importance of the Oxfordshire and Cherwell economy within the national context, linking the National Industrial Strategy with Oxfordshire and emerging Cherwell Industrial Strategies.	Include policies which support and enhance the strengths in the local economy identified by the local industrial strategies.
Implementation of central government and the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) policies and initiatives encouraging sustainable economic growth and the raising of the value of the economy.	Take account of policies and initiatives including their location in formulating a strategy to secure sustainable economic growth including high tech knowledge-based and low carbon sectors.
Ensuring the character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services are recognised.	<p>Ensure the economic benefit of agricultural land, trees, woodland and other features are recognised by following an ecosystem services approach.</p> <p>Ensure natural capital mapping is used to inform preparation of the plan including the distribution of uses within a development site.</p>
Ensuring that the importance of preserving and enhancing the historic environment to the local economy is recognised.	Ensure that policies recognise the importance of preserving and enhancing the District's historic environment to the local economy.
Inclusive growth and prosperity.	Considering policy approaches that will enhance the opportunities for economic self-sufficiency by fostering education, training and skills development and local business growth.

Question 10

**Do you have any observations on the issues we have identified on this theme?
Are there any others you would like to raise?**

Theme 2: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

3.14 Climate change is perhaps the greatest long-term challenge facing society; a challenge recognised by Cherwell District Council when it declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.

3.15 Climate Change is already evident in the form of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, longer droughts and heatwaves, and retreating polar ice and glaciers. The UK's ten hottest years on record have all been since 2002, and six of the ten wettest years since 1998. Summers are likely to become 30% drier by 2050 and 40% drier by 2080. The central and south-east of the UK will experience the most extreme temperature peak rises in coming decades, while the catchments of major rivers – e.g. the Thames basin, which includes the River Cherwell, will be most under threat from increased flood in winter.

3.16 Direct greenhouse gas emissions from buildings accounted for 19% of the total UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2017. In Cherwell this is estimated to be as high as 21%. 40% of emissions in Cherwell are caused by transport.

3.17 The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a statutory target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and in 2019 the Government adopted a legally binding target for the nation to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Cherwell District Council is legally bound to ensure that its local plan contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to climate change.

3.18 There are many ways the local plan can do this, including policies on the location, construction methods, scale, mix and character of development (as well as density and layout, including building orientation, massing and landscaping).

3.19 We can also help Cherwell and the UK meet its emissions reduction targets through direct influence on energy use and emissions (by, for example, encouraging renewable energy and promoting low-carbon modes of travel). In addition, we can encourage economic growth and improve energy security by identifying renewable and local sources of energy and by reducing the amount of energy used.

3.20 Our last Local Plan included a suite of policies which seek to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change. We intend to review and update these policies to ensure that they continue to help us to:

- Secure cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by planning new development to:

- Deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy;
- Reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car; and
- Secure the highest possible number of trips by sustainable travel.
- Actively support and help drive the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy generation and grid infrastructure
- Shape places and secure new development to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change. For example, extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves
- Encourage community-led initiatives such as the promotion of decentralised renewable energy use or securing land for local food sourcing
- Increase sustainable transport use and local transport solutions

3.21 Our open spaces and green infrastructure will also play an important role by, for example, providing urban cooling, local flood risk management, sustainable drainage systems, carbon sequestration, local access to outdoor shady space, and assist species/biodiversity to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Risk of flooding in parts of the district and increase in flash flooding frequency and severity due to climate change.	<p>Ensure the latest allowances for climate change are taken in to account in considering development proposals.</p> <p>Seek to re-establish and enhance natural river corridors, including natural flood management.</p> <p>Safeguard land required, or likely to be required for current or future flood management.</p> <p>Encourage the reuse of 'grey water' by capturing rainwater for purposes other than drinking.</p>

<p>Flooding from sewers in parts of the District.</p>	<p>Ensure foul and surface water drainage systems are kept separate and that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are used wherever possible.</p>
<p>Water supply/demand deficit in the District from 2022/23.</p>	<p>Ensure policies help to achieve a water neutral position by requiring reduced water use/high water efficiency measures in new development.</p>
<p>Need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport.</p>	<p>Ensure policies reduce the need to travel/encourage active and healthy travel.</p> <p>Ensure provision of new EV infrastructure in new developments.</p>
<p>Need to minimise essential energy demand in new developments and increase renewable generation to meet demand.</p>	<p>Include policies that require sustainable construction techniques and promote the use of renewable energy including local energy systems.</p>
<p>In 2019 the UK government adopted a legally binding target for the nation to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and the Council has committed to be carbon neutral by 2030.</p>	<p>Include policies that require climate change mitigation and adaption, including working towards the goal of zero carbon developments.</p>
<p>Existing sports / community centres and other non-residential buildings perform relatively poorly in terms of energy efficiency.</p>	<p>Include policies to ensure new /refurbished buildings are constructed to high energy efficiency standards.</p>
<p>Need to protect and enhance the green infrastructure network to help address the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>Include policies to protect and enhance existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network.</p> <p>Secure new provision to improve sustainable connectivity between sites and reduce the effects of development on the microclimate.</p>
<p>Need to protect and enhance strategic ecological networks and seek the enhancement of natural capital.</p>	<p>Require developments to include ecological corridors as a component of green infrastructure provision to ensure habitat connectivity.</p>

	<p>Include a policy on the Nature Recovery Network including specifying what types of development are likely to be acceptable within it.</p> <p>Ensure developments secure biodiversity/environmental net gain.</p>
Need to ensure that new developments are designed to avoid overheating.	Include appropriate design, orientation and landscaping policies.
Need to recognise the benefits to climate change of re-using existing buildings and the use of finite resources sustainably and responsibly.	Include policies to seek reuse of existing buildings and ensure that finite resources are used sustainably.
Need to preserve and enhance heritage assets when considering new development and adaptations to climate change. For example, retrofitting renewable technologies.	Include climate change policies that recognise the need to preserve and enhance heritage assets.

Question 11

Do you have any observations on the issues we have identified for this theme? Are there any others you would like to raise?

Theme 3: Healthy Place Shaping

3.22 Evidence from the Health Foundation suggests that only 10% of our health and wellbeing is determined by access to health care. The rest is influenced by housing, the quality of our work, income, education and skills, the food we eat, access to green space and nature, transport, family, friends and communities.

3.23 We consider that significant benefits for local people can be achieved through bringing together planning for housing, infrastructure and the economy with planning for residents' health and wellbeing. No single aspect of people's lives determines their health and wellbeing. Factors as varied as employment status, transport options, quality of housing, sense of belonging, and access to green space and nature all affect people's health outcomes.

3.24 Healthy place-shaping is therefore a practical way to create healthier communities through planning.

‘Healthy place-shaping is a collaborative process which aims to create sustainable, well-designed communities where healthy behaviours are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging and safety, a sense of identity and a sense of community. It is also a means of shaping local services, infrastructure and the economy through the application of knowledge about what creates good health, improves productivity and benefits the economy, thus providing efficiencies for the tax-payer.’

3.25 Healthy place-shaping is based on 3 concepts:

1. Shaping the built environment, green spaces and infrastructure at a local level to improve health and wellbeing.
2. Working with local people and local organisations, schools etc to engage them in planning places, facilities and services through ‘community activation’.
3. Re-shaping health, wellbeing and care services and the infrastructure which supports them to achieve health benefits, including health services, social care, leisure and recreation services, community centres etc.

3.26 Crucially, healthy place-shaping is not just about new developments; it applies to any geographical area experiencing significant change or growth so that all residents can benefit in terms of health and wellbeing which includes happiness and prosperity.

3.27 It also applies to how we connect new developments to existing communities. Loneliness and social isolation (often transport related or due to commuter towns) are impacting the health of rural populations across the UK, and not just for the elderly.

3.28 Housing plays a major role on the health of an area and its people. The quality and affordability of housing can impact on the health status of residents. It is estimated that 20% of the UK’s housing stock is substandard and that the cost to the NHS of poor-quality housing is £2.5 billion per annum. Living in good quality and affordable housing is associated with many positive health outcomes for the population generally and particularly those from vulnerable groups and those with specific needs.

3.29 Moreover, the provision of affordable housing and diverse house types has been associated with a reduction in the perception of crime risk and increased physical activity. The provision of suitable and affordable housing for homeless households and those whose current accommodation is unsuitable to meet their needs has consistently been shown to increase engagement with healthcare services, improve quality of life and increase employment. It has also been shown to contribute to improvements in mental health.

3.30 Access to nature and green space can also improve people's health and well-being. Recent work in Bicester undertaken by the University of Oxford on the value of green space in the town illustrated the benefits they provide to health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

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Healthy Place Shaping	
Key Issues	How the Cherwell Local Plan Review might address these key issues
Cherwell has an increasingly ageing population.	Include policies which plan positively for the ageing population, including a wider housing choice for the over 65s, and the design of the public realm that recognises the needs of the elderly and infirm.
Cherwell has a higher number of deaths from cancer, respiratory diseases and circulatory disease in under 75s than the rest of Oxfordshire.	Include district-wide policies that encourage physical activity and healthier lifestyles more generally across all ages. For example, by improving existing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure; improving the food environment for both consumption and production of healthier food options. Include policies that address air pollution. Include policies that prioritise active travel in new development and the infrastructure that supports it. Include policies that promote good quality street design standards. Include policies to support and expand local jobs and the economy, ensure the provision of good quality, affordable housing, and provide training and learning opportunities accessible to all. Ensure the provision of healthcare facilities to meet the demand from an increasing population.
Cherwell has the highest number of serious injuries from road accidents in Oxfordshire.	
63.2% of adults in Cherwell are classified as overweight or obese (2017/18). This is the worst in Oxfordshire and higher than the figures for the South East and England.	
Adult and child physical activity is the lowest in Oxfordshire.	
The proportion of adults who participate in active travel in Cherwell is lower than in Oxfordshire and England.	
23% of children in Cherwell are living in poverty (2017/18).	
Data from 2003-2018 suggests that 27% of deaths in Cherwell were due to socio-economic inequality.	
Achieving safe and accessible high-quality public space which encourages active and continual use of public areas.	

	<p>Ensure green infrastructure is considered and provided as an integral part of new developments and seek to enhance existing areas of public space.</p>
<p>Need to enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.</p>	<p>Include policies to secure safe and accessible green infrastructure, access to nature and, provision for sport and recreation facilities including allotments.</p> <p>Ensure new developments include measures to encourage walking and cycling and include walking and running routes as part of provision in new parks and areas of open space.</p> <p>Secure wayfinding to support connectivity between new and existing developments.</p>
<p>Embed green infrastructure network considerations into the planning of new development.</p>	<p>Provide an overall strategy for GI provision, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting existing sites and features forming part of the GI network. • securing new GI provision through development. • allocating new sites/footpath cycle routes. • standards for GI provision including for natural accessible green space.
<p>Lack of large areas of natural accessible green space in the district.</p>	<p>Include policies that seek provision as part of new strategic developments and allocate sites for natural accessible green space.</p>
<p>Affordability, quality, quantity, and safety of homes for all and specifically for those most vulnerable.</p>	<p>Include policies to deliver housing to meet identified local need including supported housing, wheelchair accessible and adaptable dwellings.</p> <p>Include policies supporting provision of social housing in general and to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</p>

	<p>Include policies supporting safe, high quality and affordable homes.</p> <p>Include policies to protect and improve housing quality and space standards across all housing types.</p> <p>Include policies to support housing to meet the needs of the local economy and key workers.</p> <p>Include policies to guide permitted development and conversions to residential use which protect quality and space standards.</p> <p>Include policies to encourage the reuse and renovation of historic buildings for housing.</p>
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Question 12
**Do you have any observations on the issues we have identified for this theme?
Are there any others you would like to raise?**

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4 Establishing a Vision and Objectives

4.1 Once we understand the needs and issues facing the District, we can then begin to establish the vision and objectives for the Plan and formulate detailed policies.

4.2 As yet we do not know what this vision will be, but it will be distinctive to our local area and be realistic and achievable.

4.3 Our last Local Plan has a vision which may be a good starting point. However, since we established the vision for the adopted Cherwell Local Plan the Government has updated its planning policies as set out in its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These policies focus on:

- Promoting high quality design of new homes and places
- Stronger protection for the environment
- Building the right number of homes in the right places

4.4 Our new local plan will need to take in to account government policy and reflect the wider countywide aims in the emerging Oxfordshire Local Plan 2050.

Question 13

Do we need a new vision for the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040? What should be its key priorities?

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5 Call for Sites

5.1 The Cherwell Local Plan Review will make site specific allocations for housing and employment. We are therefore, as part of this consultation, also publishing an open invitation (for the duration of the consultation period) for an initial submission of such sites within Cherwell District for development.

5.2 This 'Call for Sites' invitation is an opportunity for everyone from developers, landowners, residents and other stakeholders to help shape the Local Plan. It will also ensure that the Council has up-to-date information relating to potential development sites before it moves to the next stages of the Local Plan preparation.

Question 14

Do you wish to propose any sites for the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040? Provide us with a location plan and details of your proposals. We have prepared a site submission form to help you.

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6 Preparing the Plan

6.1 We are also consulting on a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report. The SA Scoping Report includes a comprehensive assessment of baseline information relating to Cherwell District. This Paper relies and builds upon this baseline information.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

6.2 It is a legal requirement for the Cherwell Local Plan Review to be the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) throughout its preparation to ensure that the plan proposes sustainable development. The SEA and SA will be integrated in to a single process referred to as SA which will assess the environmental, social and economic effects of the plan proposals.

6.3 The first stage of the SA is the preparation of a Scoping Report. The Scoping Report involves reviewing relevant plans, policies and programmes, an assessment of the current state of the environment in the plan area ('the baseline'), the identification of key environmental issues, and then the establishment of the 'SA Framework'. This SA Framework sets the specific objectives against which the likely effects of plan policies and development proposals can be assessed.

6.4 The SA Scoping Report accompanies this consultation paper. We are inviting comments on it, particularly on the scope of the work to be undertaken and the level of detail of the appraisal work.

6.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is also required where there is potential for a significant effect on a wildlife site of European importance. As this Issues Paper does not identify potential site options an HRA Screening Report is not considered necessary at this stage.

Question 15

Do you have any comments specifically on the Sustainability Appraisal scoping report that accompanies this consultation paper?

Health Impact Assessment

6.6 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Local Plan will also be undertaken to test the impact both positively and negatively on the health and wellbeing of our current and future residents. The HIA will be conducted when detailed options are available for appraisal. Changes to the Plan may result in the interest of seeking good outcomes for overall health and well-being.

Community Engagement

6.7 We are required to have a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how and when the Council will carry out community engagement and consultation with the general public and key stakeholders when preparing a Local Plan.

6.8 The Council adopted its SCI in 2016 which is available at: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/33/planning-policy/383/statement-of-community-involvement>

6.9 As a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak we have had to make temporary changes to our existing Statement of Community Involvement (2016) on how we publicise planning policy documents in particular. The Addendum to the Statement is also available on our website.

6.10 Whilst there is no formal requirement to consult when reviewing or updating a Statement of Community Involvement, we would like to provide the opportunity for you to comment on our methods of engagement for preparing the Local Plan. We will consider these comments in updating the SCI.

Question 16

Are there any specific methods of engagement you would like us to consider in preparing the Local Plan and updating our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)?

Duty to Co-operate

6.11 When preparing its local plan, the Council has a legal 'Duty to Co-operate' with other local planning authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

6.12 Government policy requires effective and on-going joint working between these authorities and bodies to help ensure that plans are positively prepared and justified. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.

6.13 In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, we will need to prepare and maintain a publicly available statement(s) of common ground which will document the strategic cross boundary matters being addressed in preparing the Local Plan, and the progress made in cooperating to address them.

7 Be Involved

You may wish to speak to us about the Cherwell Local Plan Review. If so, please contact the Planning Policy Team.

If you represent a Parish Council or community group we may be able to arrange a remote meeting to discuss any specific issues for the new Local Plan.

Interest groups may wish to speak to us about new approaches to policy making and any specific needs or concerns you have for protecting and enhancing the district's assets.

It would be helpful to hear from service & infrastructure providers about the local issues you face.

Representatives of the homebuilding, commercial development, retail and leisure industries may wish to speak to us about the challenges and opportunities you have, particularly in the context of economic recovery.

We will do what we can to accommodate these requests and engage with you on the plan-making process.

Please note that all comments and submissions received may be made publicly available.

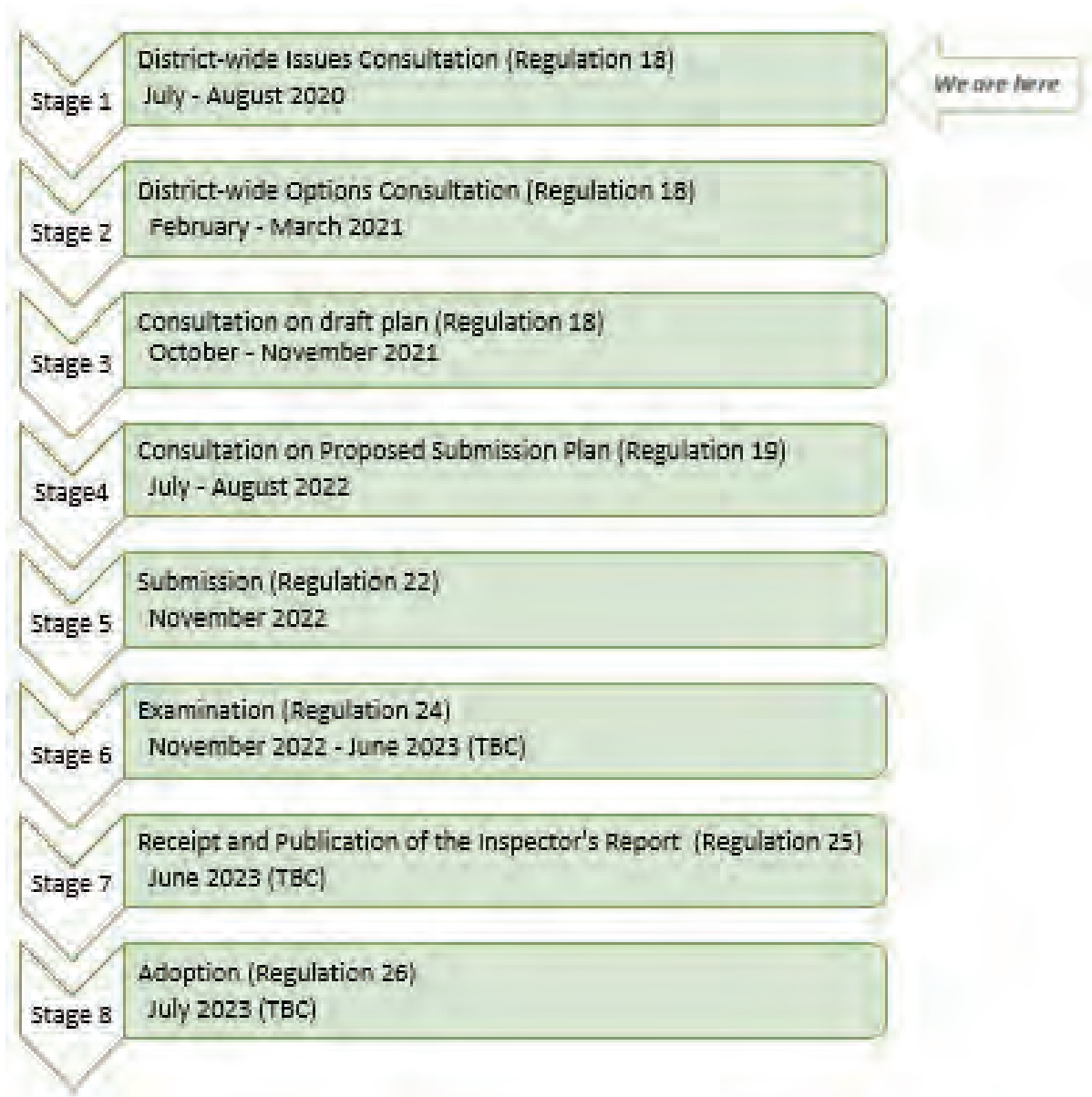
We will consider all the comments and contributions received in response to this Consultation Paper. They will be used to inform the next stage of the Local Plan process.

Once we have a good understanding of the issues that the Plan needs to address, we will prepare a Consultation Paper on options for a vision, objectives and potential policy areas and seek your input. We will need to consult with you on all reasonable options for the Plan before preparing draft proposals and policies.

We will then consult on a draft Plan and consider all the comments received. Our final proposed Plan will also be consulted upon before we submit to the Government for an independent examination by an appointed Planning Inspector.

Our programme for preparing the Plan is shown below:

Programme



How to Comment

We would prefer it if you could email your comments and submissions.

They can be emailed to: PlanningPolicyConsultation@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

If you prefer to post your comments, please address them to:

Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
Planning & Development
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote
Banbury, OX15 4AA

Thank you for taking an interest in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040

Contact Details

To speak to a member of the Planning Policy Team, please telephone 01295 227985 or email planning.policy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

DRAFT