

Executive

Local Development Framework Core Strategy

1 February 2010

Report of Head of Planning & Affordable Housing Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of the Executive for a Draft Core Strategy and to seek approval for the Council to undertake a period of public consultation on this document

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve the Draft Core Strategy (appendix 1 to this report) as the Council's draft proposed development strategy for the district for the period to 2026 and as the basis for public consultation.
- (2) To approve that the Council undertakes a public consultation on this Draft Core Strategy broadly in accordance with the proposals in paragraph 2.25 below.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The term "Local Development Framework" (LDF) is given to the range of documents prepared by Cherwell District Council to provide planning policies to control the future of the District. The Core Strategy is the most important document within the LDF as it sets the broad context within which all other documents in the LDF are prepared.
- 1.2 The Council has been preparing its Core Strategy since 2005. This Draft Core Strategy which is presented to members today represents the culmination of a large amount of work that the Council has carried out since this time. This work includes the following:-
 - Preparation of, and subsequent public consultation on, a number of documents and reports which have formed important building blocks for the Core Strategy (see para. 2.9 below)
 - The gathering of a large amount of technical evidence to support the proposals in the Core Strategy (see paras. 2.12 – 2.15 below)

- Liaison between officers and councillors, particularly through the Council's LDF Advisory Panel.
 - Consideration of the implications for the Core Strategy of the Government's eco-town programme, and in particular the decision by Government to allocate an "eco-town" at North West Bicester (see paras. 2.16 – 2.19 below).
 - Liaison with colleagues from across the Council and with our partner organisations to make sure that as far as possible the Core Strategy reflects other plans and programmes. This is particularly the case with the Sustainable Community Strategy (see paras. 2.20 – 2.22 below)
 - Liaison with other local authorities, including the County Council, and various Government departments including the Government Office for the South East.
- 1.3 In preparing the Core Strategy, it must be remembered that the LDF does not exist in a planning policy vacuum. At both national and regional level, legislation, regulations, planning policy guidance and regional planning policy set a framework within which the LDF, and this Core Strategy in particular, must operate.
- 1.4 One of the most important elements of this framework is regional planning policy. This is set out in the South East Plan, which was issued by the Secretary of State in May 2009 and has the status of Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England. This document, amongst many other matters, sets the housing targets which Cherwell District must deliver by 2026.
- 1.5 The proposals which follow in the Draft Core Strategy must reflect this context. In considering the proposed policies in the Draft Core Strategy, members are asked to be mindful of the following considerations.
- We must produce a Core Strategy that is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. The South East Plan sets broad targets for particular areas of the district (the northern and southern halves of the district, and Bicester town), and whilst there is some flexibility over these figures, this is limited. We need to propose a development strategy for the district that meets our obligations in terms of identifying sufficient land for new development.
 - We must prepare a development strategy that is, as far as we can be sure, deliverable. We should recognise where there are risks associated with bringing forward key sites that we identify, and we should consider what we would do if these sites, for whatever reason, fail to come forward. In this Draft Core Strategy, we are recommending that we do this by identifying "reserve" sites that can be brought forward only if they are needed.

Proposals

- 1.6 The Draft Core Strategy is contained in appendix 1 to this report. In view of its size, it is being sent under separate cover to councillors.

Structure of the Draft Core Strategy

- 1.7 The structure of the Draft Core Strategy seeks to make clear the context within which the policies it contains have developed. In accordance with Government policy and guidance, and good practice elsewhere in the country, the Draft Core Strategy contains a number of elements:-
- A portrait of Cherwell District today
 - A review of the key planning issues facing the district
 - A spatial vision for the district and a spatial strategy for achieving this
 - A set of key objectives outlining how we will meet our objectives
 - A set of core strategic policies
- 1.8 Importantly, the Draft Core Strategy is also set out to distinguish between those objectives and policies that are district-wide and those which are particular to parts of the district. It contains specific sections, and specific policies, to cover Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and the rural areas.
- 1.9 The version of the Draft Core Strategy that is before members today will be improved in appearance prior to being issued for public consultation. The Head of Planning & Affordable Housing Policy has delegated authority to make non substantive updates and corrections to policy documents such as this, and he will do this prior to publishing it. This will include the addition of an “executive summary” at the front of the document that will provide an overview and guide readers to the key policies and the inclusion of appropriate appendices.

The policies in the Draft Core Strategy

- 1.10 The Draft Core Strategy contains a large number of policies that will be important in shaping the future development of the district. A few of the key policies are set out below.

The overall distribution of development across the district

- 1.11 The South East Plan requires us to deliver 13,400 new homes across the district between 2006 and 2026. As mentioned above, it defines (broadly) how these should be distributed. As a consequence of the decision to identify North West Bicester as a strategic allocation for Bicester (see paras. 1.14 - 15 below), there will be more housing directed to Bicester than was anticipated in the South East Plan (approximately 600 homes). In order not to exceed the overall target for the district set out in the South East Plan, an equivalent level of housing should therefore be taken away from another part of the district.
- 1.12 The Draft Core Strategy proposes that this housing should be taken from the rural areas, and that the overall target for new housing in rural areas be accordingly reduced by 600. Within this, it further proposes that there should be a particular reduction in the target for villages in southern (Central Oxfordshire) part of the district. This is principally because many of these

villages are constrained by the Green Belt and therefore any additional rural housing allocation will need to be distributed between fewer villages.

- 1.13 The proposed overall development strategy for the Draft Core Strategy is therefore as set out in table 1. This table also shows the “residual housing requirement” for Cherwell District at 1st April 2009. The housing figures in this column recognise that the Council has already made significant progress in identifying sites for new homes and therefore it is only this figure (totalling 5,606) that will need to be identified in the Core Strategy.

Table 1. Proposed overall development strategy in the Draft Core Strategy			
	South East Plan requirement	South East Plan as adjusted for Core Strategy	Residual housing requirement (April 2009)
Bicester	4,900	5,500 (+ 600)	2,989
Rest of Central Oxfordshire	1,500	1,140 (- 360)	393
Bicester & Central Oxfordshire total	6,400	6,640 (+ 240)	3,382
Banbury	4,800	4,800 (n/c)	1,492
Rest of North Cherwell	2,200	1,960 (-240)	732
Banbury & North Cherwell total	7,000	6,760 (-240)	2,224
Total	13,400	13,400	5,606

Strategic allocations at Bicester

- 1.14 In accordance with previous decisions of this Council to support North West Bicester through the government’s eco-town programme, and the subsequent inclusion of North West Bicester in the Government’s Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns published in July last year, this Draft Core Strategy proposes that **North West Bicester** is identified as a strategic allocation to meet the housing needs of Bicester.
- 1.15 As mentioned above, the level of new housing proposes at North West Bicester means that more housing will be directed to Bicester than was anticipated in the South East Plan. Of the 5,000 homes that will eventually be built here, approximately **3,000** are expected to be built by 2026. There is therefore no need to identify any further strategic sites to meet the needs of Bicester.
- 1.16 As mentioned in para. 1.5 above, however, we should consider what we would do if this site, for whatever reason, fails to come forward at the rate we anticipate. It is accordingly recommended that the Draft Core Strategy includes a “reserve” allocation of land that would be released only if and when it becomes clear that North West Bicester will not deliver the level of housing by 2026 that we are currently projecting. The site that is recommended as this “reserve” allocation is **South West Bicester phase 2 (capacity 650 – 750 homes)**. This is the remaining land that lies within the proposed perimeter road that will be constructed for the main South West Bicester development. The Draft Core Strategy propose that should this land come forward, measures will be put in place to provide long term protection for the land between the perimeter road and Chesterton village to maintain the

setting of the village.

Strategic allocations at Banbury

- 1.17 The Council has already expressed its strong support for the regeneration of the canalside area. We are currently preparing a Supplementary Planning Document which would identify a capacity of up to **1,200 homes** on this site. The **canalside** site is accordingly allocated in the Draft Core Strategy.
- 1.18 This requires a further c800 homes to be identified to meet Banbury's needs (the residual figure in table 1 above already assumes that approximately 500 homes will be built at canalside). It is a requirement of regenerating the canalside area that a new home is found for Banbury United Football Club and this has informed the choice of other strategic sites.
- 1.19 Two sites are proposed to meet Banbury's housing requirement.
- **Land south of Bankside (capacity 400 homes)**. This would form an extension to the c1,100 homes already approved for this site. Importantly, it would allow the provision of a **new site for Banbury United Football Club** on land adjacent to the existing Rugby Club. This area is therefore proposed for open space, sport and recreation use in the Draft Core Strategy.
 - **Land west of Bretch Hill (capacity 400 homes)**. This site offers an opportunity to improve the mix of housing in this area and provide for social and community facilities and services which would be of wider benefit. In view of the sensitive landscape setting of the site and its proximity to the Drayton conservation area, the presence development boundary of this site will need to be carefully considered.
- 1.20 In the same way as we are proposing for Bicester (see para. 1.16 above), it is also considered necessary to identify "reserve sites" for Banbury. The sites identified are land at **North West Banbury (capacity 800 homes)**. This comprises two parcels of land where there is already significant developer interest and these could be brought forward if required. Members will recall that the northern part of this allocation (land north of Hanwell Fields) was the subject of a planning inquiry in 2007. Although on that occasion the appeal was dismissed, the Secretary of State took the view that the development of the site would not harm the character of the Hanwell conservation area. Furthermore, she did not consider that the site is unacceptable on sustainability grounds and that development here would be in an unsustainable location. For these reasons, the site is considered a potential reserve allocation.

Directing growth within the rural areas

- 1.21 As identified in para. 1.13 above, and in table 1, the Draft Core Strategy proposes that the rural area takes approximately 600 fewer homes as a consequence of the additional growth being directed towards Bicester arising from the North West Bicester allocation. Of these, 360 will come off the target for the Central Oxfordshire rural area (the southern part of the district) and 240 off the target for the North Cherwell rural area. Accordingly, the rural areas will have a target of approximately 1,125 homes (732 in North Cherwell and 393 in Central Oxfordshire).

- 1.22 The role of the Core Strategy in the rural areas is not to identify all of the sites where this housing will go. Rather it is to give a broad indication of where allocations will be made. The document that will allocate sites in the rural area is the “Delivery DPD”, and the Council will be publishing a draft of this document in early 2011. The importance of the Core Strategy is that it will set the context within which site specific allocations can then be made.
- 1.23 The Draft Core Strategy does not propose that targets be set for individual villages. This is (a) because it would be unduly prescriptive for a DPD which seeks to set out strategic planning policy for the district to give a precise figure for each village, and also (b) because detailed local decisions about where rural housing allocations should be made (and consequently exactly how much housing should go to any individual village) should, quite properly, be informed by detailed considerations of the relative merits of individual sites. Instead, the Draft Core Strategy proposes to identify a target figure that is to be distributed between groupings of villages. The precise distribution of this will be determined by the Delivery DPD.
- 1.24 The proposed classification of suitable villages is shown on table 2.

Table 2: Proposed classification of suitable villages in Draft Core Strategy			
North Cherwell		Central Oxfordshire	
Villages	Total no.	Villages	Total no.
Adderbury, Bodicote, Bloxham, Deddington	350	Ambrosden, Launton	180
Cropredy, Hook Norton, Sibford Gower / Ferris, Fritwell, Steeple Aston	250	-	0
Finmere, Fringford, Milcombe, Wroxton	130	Arncott, Bletchingdon, Chesterton, Kidlington, Kirtlington, Middleton Stoney, Weston on the Green, Yarnton,	220

- 1.25 The Draft Core Strategy will also include policies to guide the approach that will be taken towards windfall housing proposals across the rural area.

Affordable housing

- 1.26 Following on from the direction given in the South East Plan, and more local work undertaken by the Council to consider what are viable levels of affordable housing, the Draft Core Strategy proposes a broad approach towards maximising opportunities to provide affordable housing in the district as part of wider market housing schemes. There are two elements to this approach. Firstly, the policy includes both a percentage affordable housing requirement and a minimum threshold below which a contribution towards affordable housing will not be sought. Secondly, the policy recognises that a higher percentage of affordable housing is deliverable in some parts of the district over others, recognising the different land values and house prices seen across the district.
- 1.27 The policy towards seeking a contribution towards affordable housing can be

shown diagrammatically in table 3.

Table 3: Affordable housing policy as set out in Draft Core Strategy		
	Requirement	Threshold
Banbury & Bicester	30%	10
Kidlington	35%	10
Rural Areas	35%	3

Urban Centres

1.28 The Core Strategy sets a strategic framework for the three urban centres in the district; **Banbury, Bicester** and **Kidlington**. It contains policies which set out the boundary of these centres and also identifies strategic allocations in the following locations:-

- Banbury – Cultural Quarter (improved arts centre, new library, open space, car parking)
- Banbury – Bolton Road (retail-led development)
- Bicester – Bure Place (new food and non-food shopping, cinema, additional car parking and other town centre uses)

Other policy areas

1.29 The Draft Core Strategy contains a wide number of other strategic policies that will support the major strategic allocations. These include the following:-

- Supporting economic growth
- Mitigating the impact of climate change (renewable energy, supporting sustainable construction, managing flood risk, etc)
- Protecting our natural assets (Cotswold AONB, local landscape protection, water quality, Green Belt, biodiversity)
- Promoting good, locally distinctive design
- Meeting housing needs (housing mix, extra care housing, gypsies and travellers, etc.)
- Green infrastructure (open space, sport and recreation provision, built sports provision, etc.)
- Meeting identified community needs (cemeteries, etc.)

Conclusion

1.30 The Draft Core Strategy provides a comprehensive series of strategic policies which will help shape the growth and development of the district over the next 16 years. It makes some difficult decisions on the locations for new development and provides a basis upon which the Council can consult with

local people. It is therefore recommended that the Executive approves this document and authorises that a full public consultation be carried out on it.

Background Information

What is a Core Strategy?

- 2.1 The term “Local Development Framework” (LDF) is given to the range of documents prepared by local planning authorities to provide planning policies to control future development in within their administrative areas. Although an LDF can include a wide range of different types of documents, there are certain key elements which all LDFs have in common.
- Where there is a **Regional Spatial Strategy** in place this provides a regional context within which local planning policy must be developed. Within the South East of England, our Regional Spatial Strategy is the South East Plan.
 - All planning authorities must prepare a **Core Strategy**. This report is all about the Cherwell Core Strategy.
 - All planning authorities must prepare a **Annual Monitoring Report** (AMR). We prepare this every year and submit it to the Secretary of State by the end of the year. Our most recent AMR was submitted in November 2009.
 - All planning authorities must prepare a **Local Development Scheme** (LDS). This should be kept under review and updated where necessary. Our most recent LDS was brought into effect in November 2009.
- 2.2 The LDF is not prepared in isolation. At a national level, the Government has published legislation and regulations that direct both the contents of documents in the LDF, and the procedures that they must follow. At a regional level, the LDF must conform with the Regional Spatial Strategy (see above) and must identify sufficient land to meet the growth targets set out in it. At a local level, the LDF should have regard to other plans, programmes and strategies that the Council and partner organisations have prepared. Most notably here is the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) (see para. 2.20 – 2.22 below).
- 2.3 The Core Strategy is arguable the most important document within the LDF. Its purpose is to set out the strategic policies that will guide the future development of the district. It is not intended to contain a large number of very detailed planning policies; these can and should be included in other LDF documents if the Council wishes to have them. The Government has set down a number of features which should be contained in any Core Strategy. As the Core Strategy is a land-use planning document, there should be a spatial element to what it says. The key elements of the Core Strategy are:-
- a description, or spatial portrait, of the district.
 - a vision for the district
 - a spatial strategy for how development will be distributed
 - a series of key strategic policies
- 2.4 The proposed Draft Core Strategy for Cherwell District includes all of these elements.
- 2.5 Although the Core Strategy is a fairly “high level” document, not going into the level of detail that, for example, a Local Plan would once have done, the Government is keen that it should make all the necessary key strategic

decisions that will affect the growth and development of the district. This includes making allocations of land where this is considered strategic to the successful delivery of the Core Strategy. For this reason, the Cherwell Core Strategy does make a number of important allocations of land for housing and employment uses, and within town centres.

- 2.6 Like all important planning documents, the Core Strategy has to go through a number of stages. Some of these are laid down by Government; others are at the discretion of the Council. The following section describes these stages further.

Preparing the Core Strategy

- 2.7 Work on the Cherwell Core Strategy began early in 2005 following the decision of the Council to abandon work on its Local Plan. This in turn followed the enactment of major legislation in 2004 whereby Government introduced a new system of development plans to be known as the “Local Development Framework”.
- 2.8 Since that time, the Council has been working on its Core Strategy and other documents within the LDF. Despite our desire to move quickly to prepare the Core Strategy, progress has been held up by a couple of key factors.
- In 2008 the Government changed the procedures by which Core Strategies should be prepared, and revised advice on their contents. This followed the experience of a small number of councils who were in the first wave to submit their Core Strategies for Examination, only for them to be found “unsound” by the inspector. Government regulations on the process that Core Strategies should follow were revised and clarified, and more advice given on the nature of evidence that councils should gather and different development options that we should be testing. A further key change related to the advice that Core Strategies could include “strategic allocations”.
 - The Government eco-town programme, which was launched in July 2007 and only concluded in July 2009, created uncertainty within Cherwell following the developer-led proposal for an eco-town of 15,000 homes at junction 9 of the M40 (known as Weston Otmoor). It was only when this proposal was rejected by the Government in July 2009 (and, as it happens, replaced by the proposal at North West Bicester) that Cherwell could move forward with any confidence with its Core Strategy.
- 2.9 Despite these delays, good progress was made on the Core Strategy during this period and a number of key documents were prepared, all of which were subject to public consultation:-

Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper	February 2006
Banbury and North Cherwell Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) Issues & Options (*)	July 2006
Bicester and Central Oxfordshire Site Allocations DPD Issues & Options (*)	June 2007

Banbury and North Cherwell Site Allocations DPD Issues & Options (supplementary consultation) (*)	November 2006
Site allocations Issues & Options (supplementary consultation) (*)	February 2008
Core Strategy "Options for Growth" (reasonable alternative directions of growth and strategic sites)	September 2008

(*) These consultations are part of other Development Plan Documents being prepared by the Council, however they have informed the choice of strategic allocations in the Core Strategy.

2.10 This Draft Core Strategy is the first occasion when the Council is setting out its proposed strategy for the district. The section "What happens next?" below sets out what will now happen to the Core Strategy.

2.11 Within the Council, a Local Development Framework Advisory Panel was established in 2007. This is a group of councillors representing all political parties and all parts of the district who have met with officers on a regular basis to advise on the progress of the LDF. This group has provided a good sounding board for considering some of the difficult decisions that the Core Strategy has to make.

The Evidence Base

2.12 Some of the problems that have beset Core Strategies in other parts of the country (see paragraph 2.8 above) have highlighted the importance of making sure that the decisions that the Core Strategy will be making are based on the best available evidence. If the council wishes the Core Strategy to be ultimately found to be "sound" by an Inspector at a Public Examination, it will need to demonstrate that it is making reasonable decisions in the Core Strategy based upon good evidence.

2.13 The main pieces of evidence that the Council has gathered to inform this draft Core Strategy are as follows. Some of these were prepared in by officers within the Council, others by independent consultants commissioned by us and others in conjunction with other neighbouring authorities and/or the County Council.

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Gypsy & Traveller Assessment
- Affordable Housing Viability Study
- Banbury Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (BanITLUS)
- Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (BicITLUS)
- Cherwell Rural Areas Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (CRAITLUS)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Assessment
- Habitat Regulations Assessment
- PPG17 Open Space Sport and Recreational Facilities Needs Assessment and Audit

- Greenspace strategy
 - Playing Pitch Strategy
 - Tourism Study
 - Climate change / renewable energy study
 - PPS6 (retail and town centres) Study
 - Supplementary Planning Document on Canalside area
 - Town (and Village) Centre Health Checks for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
 - Employment Land Review
 - Public consultations on previous stages of the Core Strategy and related documents.
- 2.14 It should be noted that some of this evidence is still being gathered, and has not been published in its final form. An example of this is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Others (such as the PPS6 Assessment) are being reviewed to make sure they are appropriately up-to-date. All the key parts of the evidence base will be completed before the final Core Strategy is published later this year (see “What happens next?” below).
- 2.15 An important part of the evidence base is the Sustainability Appraisal. A Draft Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared and this is available for members to view in the members’ room. It will be made available as part of the public consultation.

The Core Strategy and the “eco-development” at North West Bicester

- 2.16 Members will be well aware of the eco-town location at North West Bicester that is named in the Government’s Planning Policy Statement (issued in July 2009). This identifies a general location capable of accommodating an “eco-town” of c5,000 homes and an equivalent number of jobs.
- 2.17 The Council took the decision to support the inclusion of North West Bicester as an “eco-development” in March 2009 when it responded to the Government’s formal public consultation on the Draft Eco-towns PPS. In giving this support however, it laid down ten caveats. One of these stated:-
- “Development at the NW Bicester location is to be planned in detail, and brought forward for implementation, within a context set by Cherwell’s Local Development Framework (LDF), thus allowing for cohesive and sustainable planning of Bicester as a whole. This approach does not rule out other housing, (including eco housing) developments being assessed through the LDF.”*
- 2.18 At the same time, the council sought reassurances from government that any housing at North West Bicester would count towards the overall figures for Cherwell District within the South East Plan. The Council has subsequently received assurances from the government on this matter.
- 2.19 It therefore now falls to the Council to embed the eco-development at North West Bicester within the Core Strategy. Accordingly, North West Bicester becomes one of the Council’s strategic development allocations in this Draft Core Strategy. Our current best estimates are that approximately 3,000 of the 5,000 homes at North West Bicester will be built by 2026 and therefore all of these will count towards the district’s overall requirement in the South East Plan.

The Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.20 As noted earlier in this report, the LDF must have regard to other plans, programmes and strategies that the Council and partner organisations have prepared. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is one of the most important of these. The Government's intention is that "*spatial planning objectives for local areas, as set out in the LDF, should be aligned...with the shared local priorities set out in Sustainable Community Strategies where these are consistent with national and regional policy*" (PPS12, para. 1.6).
- 2.21 We have worked closely with the Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership to:-
- ensure that from the outset, the process of preparing the SCS has been fully informed by the strategic planning context within which it sits;
 - share the information and evidence base gathered to inform both documents; and
 - consider the emerging vision, ambitions and objectives of the SCS and ensure that they align, as far as is possible and reasonable, with the Core Strategy.
- 2.22 The SCS covers a longer period (to 2030) than the Core Strategy. This is because it needs to align with the Oxfordshire Partnership's "Oxfordshire 2030 Strategy". Nevertheless, the two documents have been aligned and can both work towards achieving a common vision for the district. The Draft Core Strategy that is published for public consultation will include an appendix that identifies the key objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Public consultation

- 2.23 In all previous documents produced by the Council to inform the Core Strategy, public consultation has been undertaken. The most recent of these was the public consultation on the "Options for Growth" document that took place between September and November 2008. The responses to this consultation have been considered and have helped inform this draft Core Strategy. Full copies of all the representations can be viewed at <http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/ldf/cs/ofg>. Alternatively a hard copy of all the representations is available to view in the members library
- 2.24 As stated above, this Draft Core Strategy is the first opportunity that the Council has had to publish its proposed development strategy for Cherwell District for the period up to 2026. Accordingly, it will be important that full public consultation is carried out following the approval of the draft document by the Executive. This is particularly the case as the Draft Core Strategy makes a number of strategic allocations that will directly impact upon local communities and sets out a categorisation of villages that will, very broadly, determine the number of new homes that different villages are likely to receive over the next 16 years.
- 2.25 It is proposed, therefore, that a full public consultation is carried out on this Draft Core Strategy. This public consultation is likely to include the following elements.
- Production of a summary leaflet on the contents of the Core Strategy
 - Workshops with Parish and Town Councils

- Extensive publicity through the local media
- Public Exhibitions
- Use of the website
- Offers to attend public meetings hosted by parish and town councils

What happens next?

2.26 Following the completion of the public consultation on this Draft Core Strategy, we will need to undertake two tasks. Firstly, we will need to complete work on the evidence base for the Core Strategy. A number of studies need to be completed to ensure that all the necessary evidence is available to allow the Council to make its final decision on the Core Strategy. Secondly, we will need to consider carefully the comments that people have made.

2.27 Following the completion of both of these, the Council will:-

What?	When?
Publish the Core Strategy. The Council will need to approve a “final” version of the Core Strategy which reflects the completed evidence base and reflects the outcome of the public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy.	September 2010
Allow a period for formal comments on the published Core Strategy. This will be a statutory six week period as set down by regulations.	September – October 2010
Submit the Core Strategy (along with any formal representations made during the prescribed period) to the Secretary of State.	December 2010
Hold a Public Examination into the Core Strategy. This will allow an independent inspector to consider whether the Core Strategy is “sound” in accordance with regulations. At this Examination, the Inspector will invite some of those who object to the Core Strategy to appear. The Inspector will produce a report following this Examination. This report (which will be binding on the Council) is not anticipated until September 2011.	May 2011
Adopt the Core Strategy (assuming the Inspector considers that the Core Strategy is “sound”).	November 2011

2.28 It is important to note that at this stage the Draft Core Strategy needs only to be approved by the Executive. When the final Core Strategy is published by the Council for submission to the Secretary of State however, it will need the approval of the Full Council.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 The key issue before members today is whether they can support the proposed development strategy as a basis for public consultation. It will require the Executive to support (1) the overall distribution of development across the district, (2) the principle of development on all of the strategic sites identified, (3) the approach to development across the rural areas, and (4) the broad approach of all of the other many policies contained within the Draft Core Strategy.
- 3.2 In doing so, it is fully recognised that this is a Draft Core Strategy, and as such the Council is publishing it with the express purpose of carrying out a public consultation to hear the views of local people and all relevant stakeholders. Members are asked to recognise that the work in preparing the Core Strategy is still underway, and certain elements of the evidence base are incomplete. Officers and members will use the period between now and September to fully consider any outputs from the public consultation exercise, as well as further technical evidence as this is gathered, to inform the “final” Core Strategy that the Full Council will be asked to approve for submission to the Secretary of State later this year.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** Approve the Draft Core Strategy as the basis for public consultation.
- Option Two** Amend the Draft Core Strategy prior to approving it as a basis for public consultation.
- Option Three** Do not approve the Draft Core Strategy at the present time, and reconsider the overall development strategy for the district.

Consultations

- LDF Advisory Panel** The Panel has no decision making powers however have met on numerous occasions to advise officer on the development of the Draft Core Strategy.
- Evidence base** A number of the pieces of the evidence base (see para. 2.13 above) have been subject to their own public consultation.

Implications

- Financial:** Budget provision has already been made to undertake public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy. There is wider ongoing budgetary provision for the work on the LDF within the Council’s wider budget planning.
- Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant, 01295 221552

Legal: The preparation of this Draft Core Strategy and subsequent public consultation is part of the ongoing public participation (regulation 25) stage of preparing the Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document. There are no direct legal implications arising from this.

Comments checked by Pam Wilkinson, Principal Solicitor, 01295 221688

Risk Management: As noted above, the preparation of, and public consultation on, this Draft Core Strategy is part of the ongoing public participation (regulation 25) stage of preparing the Core Strategy. It is important that public consultation under regulation 25 is properly carried out in order that the Council can demonstrate that the Core Strategy is “sound” in this respect. Failure to do so would risk the possibility of the Core Strategy being found “unsound” by an Inspector at an Examination. This would mean wasted work and resources and an inevitable significant delay in adopting the Core Strategy.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Equalities The Core Strategy will assist in delivering a number of matters in relation to equalities. The Equality Impact Assessment of the planning service highlighted the need for Development Plan Documents to consider issues of race and in particular the needs of gypsies and travellers. The Core Strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment prior to submission.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Community & Corporate Planning Manager, 01295 221563

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

Cherwell – A district of opportunity
A safe and healthy Cherwell
A cleaner, greener Cherwell

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Portfolio Holder for Planning & Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Core Strategy
Background Papers	
South East Plan	

Report to Executive on 4th August 2008 “Cherwell Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Identification of Reasonable Alternatives for Directions of Growth and Strategic Sites”
Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report
Furthermore, the Draft Core Strategy has been informed by the preparation of a large number of pieces of technical advice. These are available on the council’s web site and can be accessed at: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3244>

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