

**Draft Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
Consultation Draft
(Regulation 18)**

September 2023

About this Consultation

We are preparing a new Local Plan for Cherwell and would like your views. We are presenting a draft of the Plan for consultation so that you can consider our emerging proposals.

We have some key questions we would like you to consider:

- What is welcome / unwelcome and why?
- Have we missed anything?
- Could the plan be improved?
- Does the draft Plan meet Cherwell's needs?

Please help us develop the Local Plan further by providing your comments. We will then consider these alongside our technical work in developing a proposed Plan which we will also make available for comment.

For more information on how to respond to this current consultation please visit www.cherwell.gov.uk .

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Summary

We are producing a new Local Plan to meet Cherwell's needs, protect its environment and secure sustainable development.

This consultation draft of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040 has been prepared to prompt discussion and feedback on new planning policies to guide the delivery of sustainable development across the district.

We are inviting comments on an emerging set of policies and development proposals to help us consider:

- What is welcome/unwelcome and why?
- Have we missed anything?
- Could the plan be improved?
- Does the draft Plan meet Cherwell's needs?

The draft Plan is supported by technical evidence made available alongside this consultation. More will follow the consultation as we consider all the comments received.

We have had regard to national policy and guidance and feedback we received from two earlier consultations in 2020 and 2021. 'Statements of Consultation' summarising the comments and suggestions made are also available to support the current consultation.

We have sought to consider the needs of the district and the issues it faces. Our planning policies must respond by facilitating and guiding development so that it helps support our communities, create opportunities for all, improve our places to live and work, respond to challenges such as climate change and protect our environment, landscape and built heritage.

The draft Plan sets out a vision and proposes homes, employment land, infrastructure and other essential services required to support the local community over the Plan period.

The emerging Plan has three overarching themes:

1. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development

2. Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy, and
3. Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

The draft Plan suggests a series of objectives for meeting the vision and addressing these themes.

It presents a draft strategy, draft policies, and proposals for meeting these objectives and delivering the vision.

In summary the draft strategy is to:

- Ensure that our committed growth is delivered;
- Focus new development at Bicester and to a lesser extent at Banbury;
- Revitalise our urban centres and encourage investment;
- Raise the design quality of our built and 'green' environments;
- Minimise carbon emissions and achieve set net gains in biodiversity; wherever possible in delivering new development.

The strategy is supported by area strategies for Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Heyford Park, and our Rural Areas.

We are also proposing a number of strategic development policies to complement the core policies. Most will apply across the district and will inform and guide development to ensure it is well-designed and reflects the overarching themes and Plan objectives.

1. Introduction

What is the role of a Local Plan?

1.1. A Local Plan is the statutory starting point for making planning decisions. It provides a vision and a policy framework for the future development of an area. It provides for new development to meet the needs of the district and establishes planning policies to guide that development such that it delivers the vision and meets national and local objectives.

How is the Local Plan Prepared?

1.2. A Local Plan is prepared by considering the economic, environmental and social context of the district and its development needs. We have national planning policy to comply with and national guidance to consider. We engage early in the process on the issues and options we need to examine and do this with the benefit of technical evidence.

1.3. We must consider strategic priorities that extend beyond the district's boundaries and consider the wider context for the Plan. We cooperate with neighbouring authorities and partners and consult with infrastructure providers. We seek the input of our local communities and all those with an interest in the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the district.

1.4. We consult on the proposed Plan before it is submitted to the Government for independent examination. The final Plan is presented to the Council for adoption, at which point it becomes part of the statutory 'Development Plan' which includes Neighbourhood Plans and the County Council's Minerals and Waste Plans.

What stage of preparation are we at?

1.5. We are still preparing, gathering evidence and considering our options. However, we are consulting now on emerging proposals to help us prepare a robust Plan. We are at what is known as ‘Regulation 18’ stage – a reference to the Local Plan regulations which we must comply with.

1.6. Following this consultation, we will prepare the proposed or pre-submission Plan – the ‘Regulation 19’ stage. That will also be published for comment and all observations received will be submitted with that Plan to the Government for consideration as part of the Plan’s examination.

What consultation has there been so far?

1.7. There were two public consultations prior to the current one:

- Planning for Cherwell to 2040 – A community involvement paper (July 2020);
- Planning for Cherwell – Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options (September 2021).

What time period does the Plan cover?

1.8. The draft Plan covers the period 2020-2040. However, the Plan should include at least fifteen years’ supply of new housing from the point at which the Plan is adopted by the Council. There is some uncertainty when exactly that will be and so we may need to extend the Plan period beyond 2040, perhaps to 2042 or 2045.

QUESTION 1: Do you have a view on the Plan period?

How is this consultation draft of the Plan structured?

1.9. This initial consultation draft of the Plan has:

- A proposed vision;
- Proposed objectives for meeting that vision;

- A strategy and area strategies;
- Suggested core policies and more specific policies for achieving those objectives including potential allocations of land for development;
- A suggested delivery framework including a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

1.10. There are also three themes running through this emerging Plan:

| Theme One: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development | Theme Two: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy | Theme Three: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity and Transport • Sustainable design and construction and Renewable Energy • Flood Risk • Natural Resources • Landscape • Green Infrastructure • Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Tourism • Town Centres & Retail • Education • Utilities and Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving Well Designed and Healthy Places • Housing • Historic Environment |

Figure 1: Overarching themes set out within the Cherwell Local Plan Review

1.11. We are still developing the Plan and would welcome comments on its presentation.

QUESTION 2: How could we improve presentation of the Plan?

How will the Local Plan be implemented?

1.12. Determining planning applications is the main way in which the Local Plan will be implemented. Planning decisions must have regard to the statutory Development Plan. Planning permissions for major developments are often accompanied by legal agreements which secure the necessary infrastructure for a particular development. We are also working on a Community Infrastructure Levy which is another means of securing funding.

1.13. We can only require infrastructure necessary and appropriate for the development proposed and the economic viability of its provision must be considered by the Local Plan. A viability assessment of the final, proposed Plan will support the next consultation. Wider infrastructure needs must be met by the relevant infrastructure providers themselves. Government funding can sometimes be accessed to support the delivery of critical, strategic infrastructure. The Plan's draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the current thinking of what will be needed to support the Plan.

How will we know if the Local Plan is successful?

1.14. We produce monitoring reports each year on the delivery of new development and the effectiveness of our Local Plans. We can review the Plan if there is a significant change in circumstances and we should, in any case, review it at least every five years.

How does the emerging Plan affect existing Local Plans?

1.15. We have existing planning policies in three Local Plans:

1. The remaining saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996;
2. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031;
3. The Partial Review of the Local Plan 2020.

1.16. In preparing a new Plan, we wish to develop new planning policies to put us in the strongest position to respond to challenges associated

with climate change, to enhance biodiversity, to meet our development needs and strengthen our local economy.

1.17. When we prepare our final, proposed Plan we will need to determine which policies from existing Plans continue to help us in meeting our vision and objectives and which should be retained / saved.

1.18. We start to do that with this draft Plan and summarise our current thinking in Appendix 1 – Retained Policies List.

QUESTION 3: Do you agree with our draft proposals for retaining/saving existing policies?

2. Plan Vision and Objectives

Our Vision for Cherwell 2040

The Cherwell Local Plan Review will ensure that by 2040:

We achieve our climate action targets. Our energy production will be sustainable and new developments are built to high energy efficient standards.

There is a choice of well-designed market and affordable homes to meet our needs and neighbourhoods are sustainable, healthy, vibrant and cohesive communities, that promote good health, wellbeing and equality. They respond positively to their local social and natural context and seek to address the challenges of our growing and ageing communities.

Working with our partners, investment in social and physical infrastructure related to development is timely. Residents of new development have convenient access to excellent health, education, open space, sport and recreational activities when and where they need it. The Plan has helped to reduce inequalities in health, along with poverty and social inclusion and supported well-being. Poverty and social exclusion have been reduced.

The Plan has supported a sustainable, flexible and resilient economy that is vibrant, inclusive with good transport links and sound infrastructure, supported by excellent educational facilities to foster the workforce skills required for the future. The economy has grown to provide more diverse employment for our increasing population and reduce the need for our residents to travel outside the district for work.

Our urban areas will build on their ongoing economic success, take full advantage of new technologies and the green economy and by sharing knowledge and common resources to take an important role in the regional and national economy.

Cherwell continues to be a caring place known for fostering and retaining young talent, attracting business and investment and reducing poverty and social isolation.

Our distinctive natural and built environment and our rich historic heritage is cherished, protected and enhanced. Cherwell maintains its rural character where its landscapes, its vast range of natural and built heritage and its market towns define its distinctiveness.

The district's biodiversity resource is enhanced. Our natural environment is more diverse. Social, economic and ecological resilience provides the capacity to adapt to change, including minimising flood risk. Our heritage assets, visitor economy and vibrant cultural offer are further enhanced with improved access.

Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington have re-shaped and adapted with an improved public realm and a greater mix of uses to maintain their roles as attractive, vibrant, retail, cultural and social centres for our communities and visitors.

Heyford Park and other areas of planned growth benefit from enhanced community facilities, sustainable transport links and other infrastructure investment required to support their existing and new neighbourhoods.

Our rural communities are realising their potential by making the most of new technologies, supported by small business growth and transport services that are more responsive to their needs. New rural models of transport and service provision complement existing services for a more sustainable and well-connected (including digital) rural living. Our villages are places where communities thrive, as well as benefitting from being well connected to our towns, and major employment and service centres.

QUESTION 4: Do you have any comments on the draft Vision?

Strategic Objectives



Theme 1: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development

SO 1: Promote net-zero carbon new developments, with high sustainable construction standards, and low embodied carbon to ensure new developments deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy; and support a local zero-carbon energy system that reduces Cherwell's reliance on global fossil fuels and prioritises community energy.

SO 2: Deliver developments that efficiently use local natural resources (particularly water), that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves.

SO 3: Improve air quality. Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of Cherwell's natural capital assets, such as soils, woodlands, hedges and ponds in order to capture and store carbon.

SO 4: Maintain and improve the natural and built environment including biodiversity, landscape, green Infrastructure and waterways by ensuring new development achieves high-quality design standards and conserves and enhances the natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets of Cherwell.

SO 5: Prioritise active travel and increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport, ensuring high standards of connectivity and accessibility to services for all. Reduce dependency on the private car as a mode of travel, facilitating the creation of a net-zero-carbon transport network.



Theme 2: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

SO 6: Support a strong and sustainable economy within the district, including the visitor economy and agriculture, and ensure sufficient land is allocated to meet our identified needs.

SO 7: Increase education, training and skills, and encourage investment in the local workforce; improve and enhance digital connectivity and infrastructure, to support a sustainable and resilient economy, reduce inequality and help to reduce unnecessary transport.

SO 8: Support Cherwell's urban centres, including where beneficial, redevelopment and renewal, to maintain and enhance their vitality, viability, distinctiveness and safety.

SO 9: Recognise the economic benefits of preserving and enhancing the character and beauty of Cherwell's built and natural heritage, and landscape, and the wider benefits from its natural capital and ecosystem services to ensure Cherwell remains attractive to business and as a place to live, work and visit for current and future communities.



Theme 3: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities.

SO 10: Meet the housing needs of all sectors of Cherwell's communities, in a way that creates sustainable, well-designed, safe, inclusive and mixed communities, promoting inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods.

SO 11: Create sustainable, well-designed, distinctive places where healthy behaviours (being active, having opportunities to access a healthy diet, and having good social connections) are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging, safety, and a sense of community.

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>SO 12: Focus development in Cherwell’s sustainable locations, making efficient and effective use of land, conserving and enhancing the countryside, landscape, the natural environment, and the setting of its towns and villages.</p> <p>SO 13: Protect and enhance the historic environment, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and archaeology, and promoting inclusive access to local assets where appropriate.</p> <p>SO 14: Provide sufficient accessible, well maintained good quality services, facilities and infrastructure, to meet health, education, transport, open space, sport, recreations, cultural, social and other community needs.</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 2: Strategic Objectives informing the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040

QUESTION 5: Do you have any observations on our objectives?

3. Our Strategy for Development in Cherwell

Spatial Strategy

3.1. Our draft spatial strategy below encompasses what we are seeking to deliver to achieve our vision and objectives for Cherwell. It would be implemented through the area strategies and policies that follow.

| Spatial Strategy | |
|-------------------------|--|
| District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise carbon emissions and achieve set net gains in biodiversity wherever possible in delivering new development; • Raise design standards and improvements to the built environment to elevate the attractiveness of our towns and villages; • Ensure that new development improves well-being wherever possible through design, accessibility, social interaction, the provision of amenities and facilities and opportunities for active travel and recreation; • Encourage new development that improves opportunity for all and in particular provides access to housing to meet all needs; |
| Banbury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver committed development and provide for some limited additional growth reflecting the topographical, landscape and rural character constraints of the town's edge; • Revitalise, appropriately repurpose and seek further investment in the town centre, continue to improve its built and 'green' environment and public realm and further develop the nighttime economy. • Continue to support and strengthen the town's economy and diversify its skill base; • Encourage development proposals that will support education and help reduce deprivation; |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek strategic transport improvements to encourage active travel, reduce congestion and pollution, and reduce cross town traffic by motorised vehicles. |
| <p>Bicester</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver committed development and be the focus for additional development reflecting the town’s on-going growth and transformation as a sustainable Garden Town and its regional and sub-regional location on the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor including and East-West Rail route; • Continue to maximise the benefits of having key international and national destinations and economic activity to support further business investment; • Support the continued improvement of the town’s centre, its facilities, its public realm and ‘green’ environment; • Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and encourage active travel. |
| <p>Kidlington</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Kidlington’s role as a Local Service Centre; • Continue to support investment in key economic assets including the Village Centre, London-Oxford Airport, Begbroke Science Park and at Langford Lane; • Improve the built and ‘green’ environment of Kidlington Village Centre; • Ensure the successful implementation of the committed 4,400 homes to help Oxford’s housing needs so that the planned benefits for the communities of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton are delivered. |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <p>Heyford Park</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the implementation of the committed growth at Heyford Park to fully establish the new settlement already planned; • Provide for the future expansion of Heyford Park to meet future housing and infrastructure needs should highway capacity limitations be resolved. |
| <p>Rural Areas</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas and avoid unplanned development in the open countryside; • Provide for limited development to meet local community and business needs and help support the vitality of these more rural settlements and the viability of existing businesses and farms; • Direct the development of new housing to the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well-connected to our urban areas than the smaller villages; • Maintain the designated Green Belt but consider a limited release at Kidlington to meet local housing needs if there are exceptional circumstances to do so; • Protect the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). |

Figure 3: Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 – Spatial Strategy

QUESTION 6: Do you have any comments on our strategy?

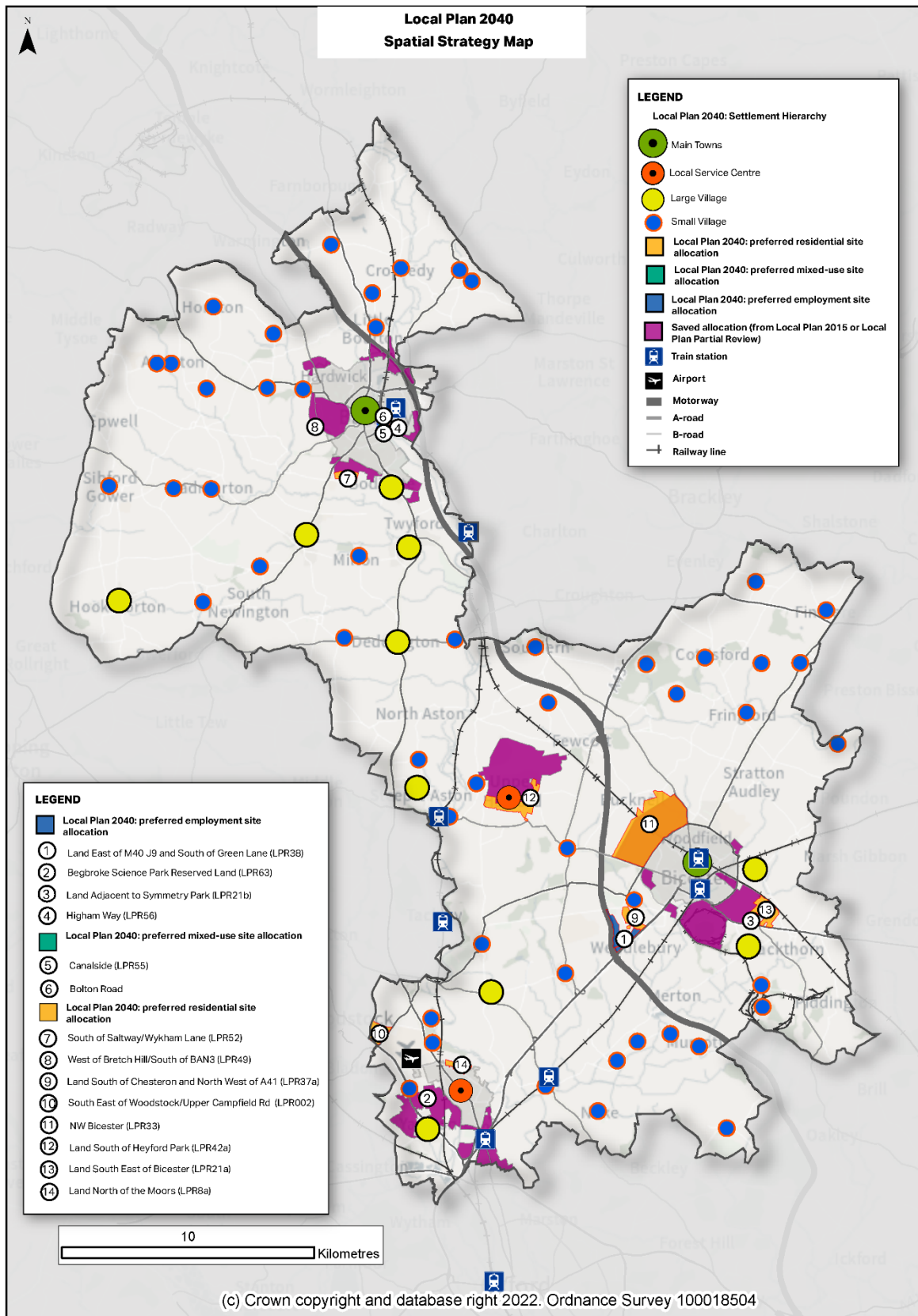


Figure 4: Key Diagram – Cherwell’s Spatial and Areas Strategies

District Wide Policies

Theme 1: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development

Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

3.2. Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing society. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030. Climate change impacts how we live now and in the future. Its impacts are already evident locally in the form of extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and extreme temperatures. The UK's ten hottest years on record have all been since 2002, and six of the ten wettest years have occurred since 1998.

3.3. It is estimated that the centre and south-east of the UK will experience the most extreme temperature peak rises in coming decades. At the same time, despite being an area of water stress, the catchments of the region's major rivers (e.g. the Thames basin, which includes the River Cherwell) will be most under threat from increased flooding in winter, increasing flood risk in Banbury and some of our villages.

3.4. Cherwell's Climate Action Framework confirms the Council's commitment to become a carbon neutral organisation via a range of actions including reduced/cleaner travel, reduced electricity use, the addition of solar panels, and retrofit council buildings with clean heat such as heat pumps or networks.

3.5. The Framework reiterates the commitment to enable the whole district to be net zero carbon by 2030. Recognising that the Council cannot achieve this alone, it commits to work with businesses, the other Oxfordshire District Councils and County Council (via Oxfordshire's Local Connectivity & Transport Plan, and OxLEP's Energy Strategy). Quoting the OxLEP Energy Strategy, Cherwell's Framework document recognises that to halve emissions by 2030, Oxfordshire needs:

- A 5x increase in solar electricity generation;

- 40% of heating to be renewable;
- New housing to meet very high energy standards;
- Retrofitting 4,000 existing homes each year to achieve C-grade Energy Performance Certification;
- Electric and active travel to become the new normal.

3.6. The above suite of actions was identified to realise the OxLEP Energy Strategy's goal of halving the County's emissions by 2030. To realise the rest of Cherwell's goal of net zero by the same date, Cherwell would need to go proportionally further on all of the above actions, or expand the suite of actions to include more sectors and carbon sequestration as well as cutting emissions at source.

3.7. In December 2022, the Council also resolved to support the One Planet Oxfordshire shared vision and committed to review its operations and activities using the One Planet Living Framework.

3.8. In recognition of the importance of mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change this Local Plan is focused on achieving sustainable development, as far as this is possible.

3.9. We recognise that the Local Plan will not be able to address all climate issues alone. We will need to work alongside other stakeholders to help meet the obligations of the Climate Change Act 2008 and the legally binding targets to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

3.10. Across Oxfordshire, there are various existing and emerging strategies to help meet these targets including the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy (2019) prepared by OxLEP and, more recently, the 2021 Pathways to a Zero-Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO).

3.11. Whilst we have made progress in recent years, our biggest challenges remain how to decarbonise transport, reduce reliance on fossil fuels for heating, and protect and enhance carbon stored in the natural environment. We also need to invest more in retrofitting our existing housing stock, install cleaner heating systems, and replace petrol and

diesel vehicles with electric ones. Encouraging individual behavioural changes such as active travel, dietary changes and reducing our energy demand can help too.

3.12. Similarly, it is important to ensure that we adapt our buildings and the environment to the inevitable changes to our future climate.

3.13. With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 20% of CO2 emissions in the UK there is also an increasing recognition that constructing new buildings using sustainable construction techniques is essential in addressing climate change.

Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing buildings) will be required to ensure and demonstrate that development is resilient to climate change impacts and that the impact of the development on climate change is mitigated. This will include:

- i. **Distributing growth to the most sustainable locations as defined in this Plan;**
- ii. **Making the most efficient use of land and buildings, having regard to the character of the locality;**
- iii. **Delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which prioritises sustainable travel options, including active travel;**
- iv. **Designing and delivering developments that, wherever possible, have zero carbon emissions and use resources efficiently, including water. All new residential development will be required to meet a water efficiency of no more than 110 litres/person/day mains water consumption;**
- v. **Promoting the use of decentralised and renewable energy where appropriate;**
- vi. **Taking account of known physical and environmental constraints when considering locations for development;**

- vii. Delivering developments that are designed to be resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling;
- viii. Minimising the risk of flooding and using sustainable drainage methods;
- ix. Minimising the effects of development on the microclimate through the provision of green infrastructure, including open space, water, planting and green roofs;
- x. Minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology;
- xi. Using recycled and energy efficient materials, and
- xii. Minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality.

Core Policy 2: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources

3.14. We will expect developers to consider all available zero or low-carbon energy sources so that the energy used in development causes the minimum possible carbon emissions. Options could include on-site renewable energy and low-carbon energy generation for individual buildings. Examples are solar photovoltaics, solar thermal systems and heat pumps, direct, off-grid connections to local offsite renewable energy sources such as solar farms or wind turbines, or large-scale sources of energy/heat such as a direct connection to low carbon heat networks.

3.15. Within the definition of ‘zero carbon technologies’ we will not accept speculative technologies whose transition to zero carbon relies on highly uncertain energy sectoral changes that are technically unproven at scale or whose trajectory is likely to be highly localised for the near future. Examples of technologies that would not count are:

- ‘Hydrogen-ready’ gas boilers (unless it is demonstrated that the development site is in an area earmarked for imminent development of a green hydrogen grid);

- Fossil-fuel powered CHP, unless there is a concrete credible and funded plan to imminently transition the system to an electrical or fossil-free energy source, and
- Fossil-fuel powered heat system that relies on future carbon capture technology, unless at the time of the development it is proven that this technology is available, viable and suitable within the near future at the system supplying the development.

3.16. By contrast, any highly efficient electrically powered technology would count as ‘zero carbon ready’ as there is a credible timeline for the national electricity grid’s transition to net zero carbon.

Core Policy 2: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000 sqm or more should deliver zero and low carbon energy technologies on-site to achieve on-site net zero operational carbon (regulated and unregulated energy) wherever possible. This energy demand to be met with renewable technologies should be calculated using the following methodologies:

- **Regulated energy: SAP or SBEM methodologies (latest versions available);**
- **Unregulated energy: SAP Appendix L or BREDEM (homes) or CIBSE TM54 (non-residential buildings), and/or**
- **Alternatively, total energy demand may be calculated using CIBSE TM54 or the Passivhaus Planning Package.**

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable proposals must:

- Demonstrate through the energy statement that additional renewable, zero and low carbon energy technologies have been provided to the greatest extent feasible and viable, and**
- Incorporate ‘zero carbon ready’* (as opposed to immediately providing ‘low/zero carbon’) technologies.**

***This may include off site existing or planned zero, low carbon or renewable energy generation or heat network provision where there**

is a direct off-grid connection to the development which has capacity to serve the development.

Core Policy 3: The Energy Hierarchy and Energy Efficiency

3.17. We will use the Energy Hierarchy to assess proposals against our climate change objectives. It should inform the design, construction and operation of new buildings. The priority is to minimise energy demand, and then address how energy will be supplied and renewable technologies incorporated.

3.18. We require any calculations to use the latest SAP methodology.

3.19. Proposals should provide data that is consistent with the building performance metrics set out in the Government's response to the Future Homes Standard consultation (January 2021) or any subsequent set of metrics required through the Building Regulations.

3.20. On all new dwellings and commercial development over 1,000 sqm we will expect the development to be tested through the most up-to-date SAP calculations to demonstrate the performance gap between design and construction. For sites of over 10 dwellings where standard house types are used, a sample of at least 20% of all dwellings (and including all house types) shall be tested.

Core Policy 3: The Energy Hierarchy and Energy Efficiency

All new development will be expected to achieve net zero carbon emissions from total operational energy use (regulated and unregulated) by incorporating measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in operation and minimising both annual and peak energy demand in accordance with the following energy hierarchy:

- i. Be lean: use less energy and manage demand during operation;**
- ii. Be clean: exploit local energy resources (such as secondary heat) and supply energy efficiently and cleanly;**

- iii. Be green: maximise opportunities for renewable energy by producing, storing and using renewable energy on-site, and
- iv. Be seen: monitor, verify and report on energy performance.

All major development proposals will be required to be supported by a detailed energy statement that demonstrates how the net zero-carbon target will be met within the framework of the energy hierarchy.

For steps i-ii. of the energy hierarchy, all new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more should deliver:

- v. Residential: achieve a Part L Fabric Energy Efficiency metric of no more than 15-20kWh/m²/year;
- vi. Non-residential: a 19% reduction in carbon emissions compared to Part L 2013 through energy efficiency measures (fabric efficiency, efficient services and efficient energy supply)

Performance against the above targets should be using the latest version of SAP.

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate through the energy statement that carbon reductions to the greatest extent feasible through energy efficiency measures have been considered and incorporated.

Core Policy 4: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development

3.21. Wherever possible, all developments should maximise opportunities for on-site electricity and heat production from solar technologies (photovoltaic and thermal) and use innovative sustainable building materials and smart technologies. This approach will reduce carbon emissions, reduce energy costs to occupants, improve energy resilience, and support the growth of green jobs.

3.22. As a minimum, energy statements, should contain the following information:

- a. A calculation of the energy demand and carbon emissions covered by Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from any other part of the development, including plant or equipment, that are not covered by the Building Regulations (i.e., the unregulated emissions), at each stage of the energy hierarchy.
- b. Proposals to reduce carbon emissions and energy use beyond the respective standards set by the Building Regulations Part L2021, through the energy-efficient design of the site, buildings and services, whether it is categorised as a new build, a major refurbishment or a consequential improvement.
- c. Proposals to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low-emission decentralised energy where feasible.
- d. Proposals to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site.
- e. Proposals to address air quality risks, where a separate air quality assessment has not been undertaken.
- f. Proposals for demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage, as well as consideration of smart grids and local microgrids where feasible.
- g. A plan for monitoring and annual reporting (for major development) of energy demand and carbon emissions post-construction for at least five years.
- h. Proposals explaining how the site has been future-proofed to achieve zero carbon on-site emissions by 2050.
- i. Confirmation of offsetting arrangements, if required.

- j. A whole life-cycle carbon emissions assessment, and actions to reduce lifecycle carbon emissions.
- k. Analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy.
- l. Proposals that connect to or create new heat networks should include details of the design and specification criteria and standards for their systems.

3.23. In 2021, the Government tightened building regulations on energy and carbon as a first step towards the implementation of the Future Homes Standard planned to be introduced in 2025. Homes built under the Future Homes Standard should produce 75-80% fewer carbon emissions compared with the standard set by pre-2021 building regulations, and eventually become net zero as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise (because the Future Homes Standard is designed to rule out gas boilers). The Future Homes Standard also comes with a higher standard of fabric thermal performance compared to today's building regulations (2021). The Government's intention is that homes built to the Future Homes Standard will not need to be retrofitted with any additional measures or technology to reach the energy and carbon performance standards that are needed as part of the UK's overall transition to net zero carbon in 2050.

3.24. Developers will be required to perform SAP or SBEM calculations at pre-planning, using design values and submitted within the planning application energy statement; and post-construction and preoccupation, using figures from the building constructed.

3.25. Calculations should be performed using the latest available version of the SAP methodology (currently SAP 10.2). If the completed building fails to meet the conditioned standard, the developer must take reasonable remediation measures. Any residual operational carbon emissions (regulated and unregulated) will be required to be offset whether identified at application stage or pre-occupation stage, unless this is demonstrated to be unviable.

3.26. To ensure the energy performance gap is minimised we recommend the use of a recognised quality assurance process that ensures the ‘as built’ performance (energy use, carbon emissions, indoor air quality, and overheating risk) matches the calculated design performance of buildings. Examples of these include BEPIT (Building Energy Performance Improvement Toolkit), the Passivhaus accreditation process and the Assured Performance Process (NEF/GHA).

Core Policy 4: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000 sqm or more should achieve net zero operational regulated carbon emissions by implementing the energy hierarchy.

- i. **For new dwellings, a minimum 63% reduction in carbon emissions should be achieved by on-site measures (before the addition of renewable electricity measures), as compared to the baseline emission rate set by Building Regulations Part L 2021;**
- ii. **In new non-residential buildings, at least a 35% reduction in carbon emissions through on-site measures compared to the rate set by Building Regulations 2013 (or equivalent percentage reduction on Building Regulations 2021) should be achieved before addition of renewable electricity measures;**
- iii. **Subsequent to points (i) and (ii) above, deliver sufficient renewable energy generation to comply with Core Policy 37: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources;**
- iv. **Where any residual operational carbon emissions remain (over the course of 30 years; regulated and unregulated), these should be calculated and offset to zero. Offsetting will only be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that achieving net zero operational carbon development via on-site measures (and near-site renewables) is demonstrably unfeasible or unviable.**

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate through the energy statement that carbon reductions

to the greatest extent feasible have been considered in accordance with the energy hierarchy.

Core Policy 5: Carbon Offsetting

3.27. Carbon offsetting will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated that it is the only feasible and viable option available to enable necessary development to be brought forward. As such we consider offsetting to be an option of final resort. Using the most up to date Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) or SBEM, planning applications will be required to set out in full the anticipated annual operational carbon emissions from the development for each of the 30 years after completion. The sum of this will be the amount of carbon to be offset over the 30-year building life.

3.28. Further details of how this policy will be implemented will be set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD.

Core Policy 5: Carbon Offsetting

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more that cannot achieve net zero carbon (regulated and unregulated energy uses) will be required to address any residual carbon emissions forecast over a period of 30 years, by a financial contribution to the Council's carbon offsetting fund.

Contributions to an offsetting scheme shall be secured through Section 106 Agreements and will be required to be paid prior to the occupation of the development.

Core Policy 6: Renewable Energy

3.29. The way we produce energy has evolved with increasing renewable energy generation, particularly solar and offshore wind. There has also been a move to de-centralisation and smaller, community, renewable energy schemes are becoming more common.

3.30. Cherwell is Oxfordshire's second largest renewable energy producer. Except for a small dip in 2019, renewable energy generation in the district has increased every year since 2015. We need to consider the land use implications of meeting future renewable energy generation requirements necessary for local and national carbon reduction targets.

3.31. We recognise the need to provide a positive framework for renewable and low carbon energy generation and also acknowledge that national policy makes clear that such schemes are no longer required to justify the need for them. However, development, including wind and solar energy developments, within the district needs to be managed carefully to maximise their potential contribution towards energy needs, whilst at the same time ensuring that the important characteristics of our environment and landscape are not unacceptably harmed.

3.32. In 2019 we commissioned a study to identify areas of potential suitability for wind energy development within the district. The study involved two key tasks, firstly, an assessment of the technical potential for wind energy within the area, and secondly, an analysis of the sensitivity of the landscape within the district to wind turbines. The Study concluded that the potential for wind generation sites within the district was very limited. We therefore do not propose to identify specific sites for commercial wind generation in this Plan.

3.33. The Study did, however, conclude that there may be scope for some limited development for turbines of less than 50 metres (to tip). Any proposals for such turbines will therefore be considered on their merits having regard to national advice, the findings of the 2019 Study, together with a site-specific assessment and design considerations.

3.34. When assessing proposals for renewable energy the cumulative impacts of existing operational consented and proposed developments will need to be considered and, if necessary, suitable mitigation measures proposed, to minimise impacts on biodiversity and landscape character, public rights of way and users, and quality. Applicants will need to demonstrate that cumulative effects do not become a significant or defining characteristic of the wider landscape. Special attention and

protection will, in particular, need to be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

3.35. Community energy has the potential to deliver significant long-term benefits to local communities including reduced energy bills and increased energy sustainability and security. Community energy can also help foster greater support and acceptance of renewable energy development. Renewable energy developments that are genuinely led by or meet the needs of local communities will be encouraged and supported. The neighbourhood planning process provides a good opportunity for the detailed consideration of such community energy schemes.

Core Policy 6: Renewable Energy

The Council supports renewable and low-carbon energy provisions providing any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.

Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative impact, on the following issues, which are considered to be of particular local significance in Cherwell:

- i. **Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas;**
- ii. **Visual impacts on local landscapes;**
- iii. **Best and most versatile agricultural land;**
- iv. **The historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings;**
- v. **The Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness;**
- vi. **Aviation activities;**
- vii. **Public rights of way and pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians;**
- viii. **Highways and access issues, and**
- ix. **Residential amenity.**

Core Policy 7: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

3.36. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 assigns Local Authorities with responsibility for managing flood risk. In Cherwell, Oxfordshire County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), with the District Council having an important supporting role to play as a Risk Management Authority.

3.37. The probability of flooding can be reduced through the management of land, river systems and flood defences, and the impact reduced by controlling the type of development allowed to be located in flood-risk areas.

3.38. Our Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides the framework for applying the sequential and exceptions tests in the district. The SFRA identifies and maps the risk of flooding across the district based on a range of data and taking into account the predicted climate change impacts and is a useful source of information in undertaking site-specific flood risk assessments particularly in relation to specific locations across the district. The SFRA also highlights the biodiversity opportunities associated with the use of sustainable flood risk management techniques, for example in enhancing or creating priority habitats such as grazing marsh, wet grassland, wetlands and aquatic habitats (particularly so in the Conservation Target Areas).

3.39. We are also preparing Level 2 SFRA's to assess the level of Flood Risk for some proposed site allocations in more detail. These assessments will provide site-specific guidance for flood risk assessments, policy recommendations and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance.

Core Policy 7: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the district using a sequential approach to development, and where necessary, the exceptions test in accordance with national policy and guidance and locating vulnerable development in areas at lower risk of flooding. Any residual risk will be managed taking account of the impacts of climate change. Development will only be permitted in areas of flood

risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and the benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding.

In addition to safeguarding floodplains from development, opportunities will be sought to restore natural river flows and floodplains, increasing their amenity and biodiversity value. Building over or culverting of watercourses should be avoided and the removal of existing culverts will be encouraged.

Existing flood defences will be protected from damaging development and where development is considered appropriate in areas protected by such defences it must allow for the maintenance and management of the defences and be designed to be resilient to flooding.

Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals in the following situations:

- All development proposals located in flood zones 2 and 3;
- Development proposals of 1 hectare or more located in flood zone 1;
- Development sites located in an area known to have experienced flooding problems;
- Development sites located within 9m of any watercourse.

Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood risk and demonstrate that:

- There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 storm event with an allowance for climate change (the design storm event);
- Developments will not flood from surface water up to and including the design storm event or any surface water flooding beyond the 1 in 30 year storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.

Development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water

will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.

Core Policy 8: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

3.40. Potential flooding and pollution risks from surface water can be reduced by reducing the volume and rate of water entering the sewerage system and watercourses. Managing drainage more sustainably in this way can ensure that developments are better adapted to the predicted impacts of climate change.

3.41. SuDS seek to manage surface water as close to its source as possible, mimicking surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development. Typically, this approach involves a move away from piped systems to softer engineering solutions. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required to be submitted to accompany development proposals these should be used to investigate how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

3.42. In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect water quality must be considered, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, multiple benefits including for recreation and wildlife should be delivered. Proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the drainage structures.

3.43. Advice on SuDS and their various techniques is provided in our Level 1 SFRA.

Core Policy 8: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off.

Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality and biodiversity must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution, and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features. Advice should be sought from Oxfordshire County Council, the relevant lead local flood authority, including reference to the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.

Sustainable Drainage Systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive.

Core Policy 9: Water Resources

3.44. In considering development proposals, we will seek to reduce the impact of development on the water environment, maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use. Some development can also remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on controlled water and human health.

3.45. Cherwell District lies within an area of serious water stress and the Upper Cherwell area, including Banbury, has been over abstracted. We will seek to ensure that new development is located in areas where adequate water supply can be provided from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. We will also ensure that new development incorporates water efficiency measures, thereby reducing overall demand.

3.46. We will seek to protect and enhance water quality including surface water and groundwater; ensure adequate water resources, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity; and, and promote sustainable water

use. Water quality will be protected and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

3.47. In 2015, the Government updated Building Regulations Part G, introducing an 'optional' requirement of 110 l/p/day for new residential development, which should be implemented through local policy where there is a clear evidential need.

Core Policy 9: Water Resources

Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted. Where it is likely that a proposal would have a significant adverse impact on water quality then a more detailed assessment will be required. The assessment should form part of the Environment Statement.

Development that has the potential to reduce water quality will not be permitted in sensitive areas, particularly those within the vicinity of drinking water supplies and those protected under the Water Environment Regulations 2017.

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment. Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted.

Development will only be permitted where adequate water resources exist or can be provided without detriment to existing uses. Where appropriate, phasing of development will be used to enable the relevant water infrastructure to be put in place in advance of the development commencing.

New developments are required to be designed to a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/head/day (l/h/d) for new homes.

Core Policy 10: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC

3.48. The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located in the southwest corner of the district. The SAC receives statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

3.49. It has been designated as internationally important due to the lowland hay meadow habitats it supports. The site includes vegetation communities that are potentially unique in the world (due to the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting). The site has been traditionally managed for several centuries and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. It is also designated as internationally important as it supports creeping marshwort, being one of only two known sites in the UK that support this plant species. The River Thames flows through the centre of the site and the hydrological regime makes an important contribution to the integrity of the site in supporting these habitats and species.

3.50. The SAC receives groundwater supplies from the River Cherwell and the River Thames (and their catchments). Alteration to adjacent rivers or obstruction of natural groundwater flows may alter the flooding regime of the SAC and lead to a degradation of the internationally important habitats and biodiversity that it supports. However, the current groundwater recharge could be maintained using Sustainable Drainage Systems, including porous surfacing, which maintains infiltration of groundwater without exacerbating flood risk.

3.51. If new development is situated next to watercourses that flow into the River Thames upstream of the SAC, it is possible that there could be a decrease in water quality flowing through the SAC during the construction and the operation of the development. This could potentially alter or prevent the nutrient enrichment of the habitats and species that the SAC supports, leading to degradation or loss.

3.52. Our aim is to prevent any obstruction of groundwater flows and to preserve water quality, to maintain the stability of the hydrological regime within the SAC and therefore its integrity as a site of international importance.

Core Policy 10: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC

Developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- i. **During construction of the development there will be no adverse effects on the water quality or quantity of any adjacent or nearby watercourses;**
- ii. **During operation of the development any run-off of water into adjacent or surrounding watercourses will meet Environmental Quality Standards (and where necessary oil interceptors, silt traps and Sustainable Drainage Systems will be included);**
- iii. **New developments will not significantly alter groundwater flows and hydrological regime of the Oxford Meadows SAC is maintained in terms of water quantity and quality, and**
- iv. **Run-off rates of surface water from the development will be maintained at greenfield rates.**

Core Policy 11: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

3.53. Cherwell has a number of areas of high ecological value including sites of international and national importance. The district is home to many legally protected species as well as priority species and habitats. Much of this biodiversity resource is mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and this is used as an information source by local authorities and conservation organisations. The data has also been used to identify Conservation Target Areas and the emerging Nature Recovery Networks across Oxfordshire. 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.

3.54. Other sites of national importance include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs). There are 18 SSSI's wholly or partly within Cherwell covering approximately 1.1% of the district.

3.55. Sites of regional/local importance include Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), non-statutory nature reserves and other sites of importance for nature conservation including District Wildlife Sites (DWSs – value at a district level due to the presence of important habitats and species), ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees, and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats (habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act). Cherwell contains 13 LGSs, 4 LNRs, 89 Local Wildlife sites (completely or partly within the district), 13 proposed LWSs and proposed extensions 27 DWS's and 37 proposed DWS's (as of October 2022). A live list of Local Wildlife Sites and associated maps are available at <https://www.tverc.org/cms/>

3.56. It is not just designated sites that are of importance to the biodiversity resource of the district. Areas adjacent to designated sites can be of value as they can form part of the overall ecological unit and may provide important linkages. Moreover, landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, trees, rivers/riverbanks, ponds and floodplains can be of importance both in urban and rural areas, and often form wildlife corridors and steppingstones. Similarly, it is not just greenfield sites that can be of value; previously developed land can also make an important contribution to biodiversity. Some development can remediate contaminated land that may be having an adverse impact on ecology.

3.57. It is important that any features of value are identified early in the planning process so that adequate measures can be taken to secure their protection. Developers will be expected to incorporate and enhance such features within a site wherever possible and adequate measures should be taken to protect them from damage during construction. Networks of habitats including trees will be protected from development and where possible strengthened by it.

3.58. This Plan seeks to create a net gain legacy, in perpetuity. There are a number of features which can be incorporated into developments to encourage biodiversity including green and brown roofs, green walls, SUDs, using native and locally characteristic species in landscaping schemes, using landscaping to link up existing areas supporting biodiversity, and including features such as bird and bat boxes. Further guidance on incorporating features into residential development to encourage biodiversity can be found in the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD and BBOWT's "Homes for People, Homes for Wildlife" which was endorsed by the Council in 2018.

3.59. Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site of known biodiversity value or the biodiversity/natural environment of the local area. A biodiversity survey and report will also be required where it is likely that previously unrecorded biodiversity interest may be present which, could be affected by the development. All developments around Bicester will require surveys carried out for the brown hairstreak butterfly. Surveys should include consideration of the site's value as a wildlife corridor and the contribution it makes to ecological networks. In addition to identifying biodiversity impacts, biodiversity surveys and reports should identify opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements.

3.60. The emerging Nature Recovery Network (NRN) reflects the hierarchy of sites, identifying three zones:

- Core zone comprising the most important sites for biodiversity including all nationally and locally designated sites, nature reserves, priority habitats and ancient woodland. The focus is to protect and manage these important sites to support the greatest amount of biodiversity and ecosystem services, restore them to favourable condition, and avoid habitat damage to or increase fragmentation;
- Recovery zone comprising Conservation Target Areas, (CTAs) important freshwater areas, areas to provide improved habitat connectivity and linkages to buffer and connect core sites or provide stepping stones between them. New development will be

expected to contribute to the target habitats and species of the CTAs and specific projects identified in Nature Recovery Plans and Projects, and

- Wider landscape zone comprising the remainder of the district, where the focus is on strengthening the character of the landscape, including agricultural and urban landscapes, and making nature accessible, including restoration or creation of hedgerows and other landscape features, managing farmland or improving access to the countryside.

Core Policy 11: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

All new development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to Cherwell's nature recovery through the protection, restoration and expansion of protected sites, habitats and species. Facilitating their adaptation to climate change and improving connections between wildlife corridors and protected sites at a landscape scale, in line with the hierarchy of designations set out in legislation and the NRN zones:

- i. **Development which is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and/or Ramsar site will not be permitted*;**
- ii. **Development which is likely to have a significant adverse impact on nationally important sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs and NNRs and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity, and**
- iii. **Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance, in addition to irreplaceable habits such as ancient woodland, and aged or veteran trees, will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site.**

Any development with the potential to impact on a SAC, SPA and/or Ramsar site within the district will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the international site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, or that effects can be mitigated to avoid any effect on integrity.

Development that would compromise the favourable condition or make it less likely that a favourable condition can be reached, of a SSSI, will only be permitted if the need for and the public benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss.

Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to enhance biodiversity such as green and brown roofs, green walls, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), soft landscaping and nest boxes, in addition to retaining and where possible enhancing existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks including those identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy should be maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation and ensure habitat connectivity.

Relevant habitat and species surveys proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed will be required to accompany planning applications that may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value.

Where, having followed the mitigation hierarchy, there is an unavoidable requirement for offsite biodiversity compensation to offset any harm as a result of the development, this should be proportionate in scale to the proposed development.

Planning conditions/obligations will be used to help deliver the Conservation Target Areas habitat and species targets and the wider Nature Recovery Network where appropriate.

Any new development will be required to secure the long-term management and monitoring of biodiversity features created on-site and those created off-site to compensate for development impacts, through a Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan.

***Unless it meets the relevant subsequent legal tests (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and No Alternatives) and provides adequate compensation.**

Core Policy 12: Biodiversity Net Gain

3.61. Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from November 2023. BNG will be measured using Defra's biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

3.62. In line with the requirements of the Environment Act, the Council will expect all development proposals to demonstrate a minimum 10% increase in BNG and will encourage applications to consider achieving higher net gains.

3.63. Development proposals will need to be supported by a statement outlining how BNG has been addressed.

3.64. Other biodiversity principles also need to be considered alongside BNG that does not replace existing protections and does not apply to irreplaceable habitat.

3.65. In assessing BNG the Council will firstly consider proposals against the 'mitigation hierarchy' as illustrated by Figure 5.



Figure 5: Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy

3.66. Net gain is additional to the hierarchy and will only be applied once the impacts of the development on biodiversity have been avoided, mitigated and compensated.

3.67. The net gain mitigation hierarchy takes the following approach:

- Avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout;
- Enhance and restore biodiversity on-site;
- Create or enhance off-site habitats (either on other land which the developer owns, agreements with other landowners, or through the purchase of biodiversity units from third party habitat banks), and
- Use national statutory biodiversity credits (as a last resort where there is no viable local alternative).

3.68. Where off-site delivery of BNG is required, this should take place as close as possible to the development site, focused on opportunities identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy or within the core or recovery zone of the NRN, with measures put in place to ensure biodiversity net gain is maintained long term.

Core Policy 12: Biodiversity Net Gain

Development will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity (measured using the DEFRA biodiversity metric 3.1 or successor) by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value or geological value and soils, in addition to recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. At least 20% biodiversity net gain will be sought in the Nature Recovery Network Core and Recovery zones, and new urban extensions will be required to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain.

All major applications should be accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Ecological Enhancement Scheme, setting out how the site will be improved and maintained over a thirty-year period.

Delivery of biodiversity net gain should follow the mitigation hierarchy with gains delivered on site as first preference.

Where the required delivery of biodiversity net gain is not possible on-site, gain should be delivered as close as possible on projects identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy or within the core zone or recovery zone of the Nature Recovery Network, where they can secure the greatest benefits to Oxfordshire's wildlife and ecosystems.

QUESTION 7: Should we seek more than 10% biodiversity net gain if this means sacrificing other requirements?

Core Policy 13: Conservation Target Areas

3.69. Conservation Target Areas form a key part of the emerging NRN recovery zone. The Target Areas were identified to focus work to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of UK BAP priority habitats (habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act),

and this is their principal aim. Addressing habitat fragmentation through the linking of sites to form strategic ecological networks can help species adapt to the impact of climate change and represent areas of greatest opportunity for strategic biodiversity improvement in the district. Development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the target habitats and species of the target areas through avoiding habitat damage/ fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.

3.70. Sixteen Conservation Target Areas lie wholly or partly within Cherwell District. The boundaries of the Conservation Target Areas are shown by the map (Appendix 9). General targets for maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats have been set for each area, to be achieved through a combination of biodiversity project work undertaken by a range of organisations, agri-environment schemes and biodiversity enhancements secured in association with development.

3.71. Biodiversity enhancements sought in association with development could include the restoration or maintenance of habitats through appropriate management, new habitat creation to link fragmented habitats, or a financial contribution towards biodiversity initiatives in the Conservation Target Area. Further guidance on the approach to be taken is expected to be developed as part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Core Policy 13: Conservation Target Areas

Where development is proposed within or adjacent to a Conservation Target Area, biodiversity surveys and a report will be required to identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Development that would have an adverse impact on the target habitats and species of a CTA will not be permitted. Where there is potential for development, the design and layout of the development, planning conditions or obligations will be used to secure biodiversity enhancement of the target habitats and species of the Conservation Target Area.

Core Policy 14: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

3.72. One approach to understanding the value of the natural environment for people is through an approach known as 'natural capital' and identifying the 'ecosystem services' it provides. We recognise the value of natural capital assets in terms of the ecosystem services they provide and will ensure that this is taken into account in the consideration of planning applications so that the wider benefits of natural capital are delivered.

3.73. The Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire (2021) presents the natural capital assets present in Cherwell, whilst Cherwell's Natural Capital Assets report (2021) provides a preliminary register of natural capital assets present in the district. Where an environmental impact assessment is required, planning applications will be expected to provide an assessment of the long-term impacts of the proposed development on natural capital and ecosystem services to enhance the design of new buildings and spaces across the site.

Core Policy 14: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

The Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire will be expected to be used to inform the planning of development sites to ensure the protection of those areas with high value natural capital assets.

All new major development proposals will be supported by a natural capital assessment to demonstrate the impact of the development on the environment and any environmental net gain to be secured.

Core Policy 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure

3.74. The district's green and blue infrastructure network is made up of many features. These can include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green spaces, green and blue corridors (including cycleways, rights of way, canals and rivers), outdoor sports facilities, amenity green

spaces, allotments, cemeteries/ churchyards, woodlands, green roofs and walls. Together, these assets offer a range of health and quality of life benefits for local communities and provide refuges for wildlife species inhabiting these environments. Establishing new linkages and reinforcing existing connections between these assets will often benefit the network as a whole.

3.75. Green and blue corridors consist of canals, rivers, woodland and hedgerows, together with public rights of way which offer routes for sustainable travel options as well as providing opportunities for wildlife migration. By enabling species to explore new habitats and by enhancing green and blue corridors; species can adapt more easily to habitat loss. Development proposals will be expected to retain and enhance existing green and blue corridors and maximise the opportunity to form new connections between existing green and blue infrastructure assets.

3.76. A draft Oxfordshire-wide Nature Recovery Network and Strategy has been produced. This will identify key locations for biodiversity gain that will build on the principles of Conservation Target Areas to focus efforts on habitat restoration and enable wildlife species to migrate over wider areas.

3.77. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022) provides guidance to developers and other stakeholders on how to integrate green and blue infrastructure enhancements into proposals. It also spatially represents the current green and blue infrastructure network and provides recommendations to address challenges and opportunities to improve existing green and blue infrastructure provision.

Core Policy 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Council will promote the protection and enhancement of sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network and will support improving sustainable connections between sites in accordance with relevant policies within this Plan. The Council will work with developers and other relevant parties to encourage the inclusion of meaningful and integrated GBI in development proposals.

Regarding the planning of major developments, priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

Both strategic and non-strategic developments will be required to demonstrate strategies to both protect and enhance existing GBI and to also incorporate new GBI in the design approach for each site. Where applicable, applicants will be expected to demonstrate:

- i. How existing GBI identified on-site will be protected and incorporated into the layout, design and appearance of proposals;
- ii. Where connection(s) proposed between existing and new GBI on-site can be established including identifying opportunities for connectivity with off-site GBI;
- iii. How restored or re-created habitats can be accommodated within the proposed development and how biodiversity net gain can be achieved;
- iv. How existing trees and hedgerows will be protected both during and after development and the opportunities for increasing tree cover through new planting;
- v. How the existing and proposed built and natural landscape can be improved through the provision of GBI including for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment;
- vi. How GBI will be provided along movement corridors for all modes of transport on-site (including motorised and non-motorised means of travel);
- vii. Where multi-functioning GBI can be achieved on-site, including to adapt and mitigate against climate change impacts, to protect and enhance biodiversity, manage flood risk, to improve air quality, and to promote health and well-being in the local community;
- viii. How the appropriate use and permanence of the Green Belt will be maintained and enhanced by existing and new GBI on-site, and

ix. **How existing and new GBI will be maintained and managed post development.**

Financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where it has been agreed that it will not be possible to provide on-site net biodiversity gains.

Core Policy 16: Air Quality

3.78. Development proposals that are likely to have an impact on local air quality, including those in, or within relative proximity to, existing or potential Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) will need to demonstrate measures/mitigation that are incorporated into the design to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

3.79. Where sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and/or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment will be required.

3.80. We will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development.

3.81. Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

3.82. Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition and/or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

Core Policy 16: Air Quality

Development proposals that are likely to have an impact on local air quality, including those in, or within relative proximity to, existing or

potential Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) will need to provide design mitigation measures to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

Where development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and / or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment will normally be required. The Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development.

Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan. Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition and / or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

Core Policy 17: Pollution and Noise

3.83. Pollution can take many forms including chemical, dust, light, noise, fumes, smell and vibration, all of which can have detrimental impacts on the environment and quality of life. These potentially adverse effects must be carefully considered in the assessment of any planning application and can be the basis for the refusal of an application if not adequately addressed. Developers are encouraged to have pre-application discussions with the Council to be advised on the specific requirements.

3.84. Assessments should:

- Identify the sensitive receptor(s) which may be affected by the proposed development, including residents, businesses, land users and sensitive environmental assets
- Consider the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or approved development, and

- Demonstrate the measures which would be implemented to ensure adverse impacts would be avoided at source or, where this is not possible, outline the proposed management and mitigation measures to reduce effects to an acceptable level; and identify the significance of any residual effects.

3.85. Developers are expected to proactively monitor impacts and emissions to enable issues to be addressed swiftly. Close liaison with communities can support this approach, enabling feedback and dialogue on the need for and effectiveness of any mitigation measures.

Core Policy 17: Pollution and Noise

Development will not be permitted if it results in an unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the environment, general amenity or existing uses due to the potential of air pollution, noise nuisance, vibration, odour, light pollution, surface / ground water sources or land pollution.

In order to reduce, manage and mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life, residential and other development proposals should manage noise by:

- i. **Avoiding significant adverse noise impacts on health and quality of life;**
- ii. **Mitigating and minimising the existing and potential adverse impacts of noise on, from, within, as a result of, or in the vicinity of new development without placing unreasonable restrictions on existing noise-generating uses;**
- iii. **Separating new noise-sensitive development from major noise sources (such as road, rail, air transport and some types of industrial use) through the use of distance, screening, layout, orientation, uses and materials – in preference to sole reliance on sound insulation;**
- iv. **Where it is not possible to achieve separation of noise-sensitive development and noise sources without undue impact on other sustainable development objectives, then any potential adverse effects should be controlled and mitigated through applying good acoustic design principles, and**

- v. Promoting new technologies and improved practices to reduce noise at source, and on the transmission path from source to receiver.

Development should be designed to ensure that established noise and other nuisance-generating uses remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them. Development proposals that have not clearly demonstrated how noise and other nuisances will be mitigated and managed will not be permitted.

Core Policy 18: Light Pollution

3.86. 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. Cherwell is ranked the 103rd darkest district out of 326 in England.

3.87. Artificial lighting is necessary in many circumstances including for public safety and enabling nighttime activities. Yet artificial lighting also has the potential to harm local amenity and wildlife, whilst also undermining people's enjoyment of the open countryside, areas of tranquility and dark skies.

3.88. Careful location and design of lighting can minimise the above impacts. Lighting schemes should therefore use best practice for the reduction of light pollution.

Core Policy 18: Light Pollution

In determining planning applications, the Council will seek to avoid unnecessary light pollution. Proposals for any external lighting scheme that requires planning permission will need to demonstrate that:

- i. The lighting scheme is the minimum required for its intended use;
- ii. Light pollution is minimised, and

- iii. There is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity, the character and appearance if the landscape, nature conservation or highway safety.

Core Policy 19: Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability

3.89. Contaminated land is land that has been polluted with harmful substances to the point where it now poses an unacceptable risk to health and the environment. Cherwell District has a history of industrial and defence land uses and we want to ensure that the impacts of these past and current land uses do not affect the health of people and the environment. Any site which is potentially contaminated will be required to carry out a site investigation and agree a scheme of mitigation with us to ensure that contaminated land issues are considered at the planning application stage.

3.90. A verification report will be required through condition in order to provide confirmation that the remediation work has been undertaken properly in line with best practice.

3.91. The term 'poor ground conditions' referred to in Core Policy 49 may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Poorly consolidated made ground and fill material;
- Soft, weak and wet natural soils, or
- Areas of shallow mine-workings and mineshafts.

3.92. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil. These factors together with the interactions between them form the basis for classifying land into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside of these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'land predominantly in urban use'. The NPPF defines Grades 1-3a as 'best and most versatile' and states that planning

policies should recognise the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile land.

Core Policy 19: Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability

Development proposals will not be permitted where the land is contaminated and not capable of appropriate remediation without compromising development viability or the delivery of sustainable development. For sites where land contamination is suspected, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrate that land contamination issues have been fully addressed or can be satisfactorily addressed through the development.

Development proposals will not be permitted in locations where there are risks from land instability. Development proposals within areas known or suspected to be at risk of slope instability or poor ground conditions will need to demonstrate the following:

- i. Its structural integrity will not be compromised by slope instability;**
- ii. The development does not exacerbate any instability on the site or elsewhere;**
- iii. The development can tolerate ground conditions by special design, and**
- iv. There is long-term stability of any structured built on made, filled or mined ground.**

For sites suspected of land instability, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrates that land instability issues have been fully addressed.

Applications for development on best and most versatile agricultural land will be resisted where the site has not been allocated in the development plan.

Core Policy 20: Hazardous Substances

3.93. In considering proposals for development which, may involve hazardous substances, we will need to be completely satisfied that the proposal will not constitute a hazard to our existing communities or the local environment. Similarly, existing consents will be an important consideration in the determination of sensitive uses such as housing.

3.94. Advice will be sought from the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) competent authority concerning off-site risks to the public arising from any proposed development which would introduce hazardous substances, or of existing hazardous installations to proposed developments. Careful consideration will be given to the degree of risk and the likely hazard or consequence of an accident occurring.

Core Policy 20: Hazardous Substances

Proposals for development involving the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances, will only be permitted where the relevant authorities are satisfied that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure there is no unacceptable risk on human health, safety and the environment.

Development of a site in the vicinity of where hazardous substances already exist, will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that development will not constitute an unacceptable risk to human health, safety and the environment. Where necessary, appropriate measures to protect the public and the environment will be required.

Development Policy 1: Waste Collection and Recycling

3.95. To minimise waste and pollution, and to reduce the impact of waste on climate change, we expect future developments to support the application of the waste hierarchy (Figure 6).

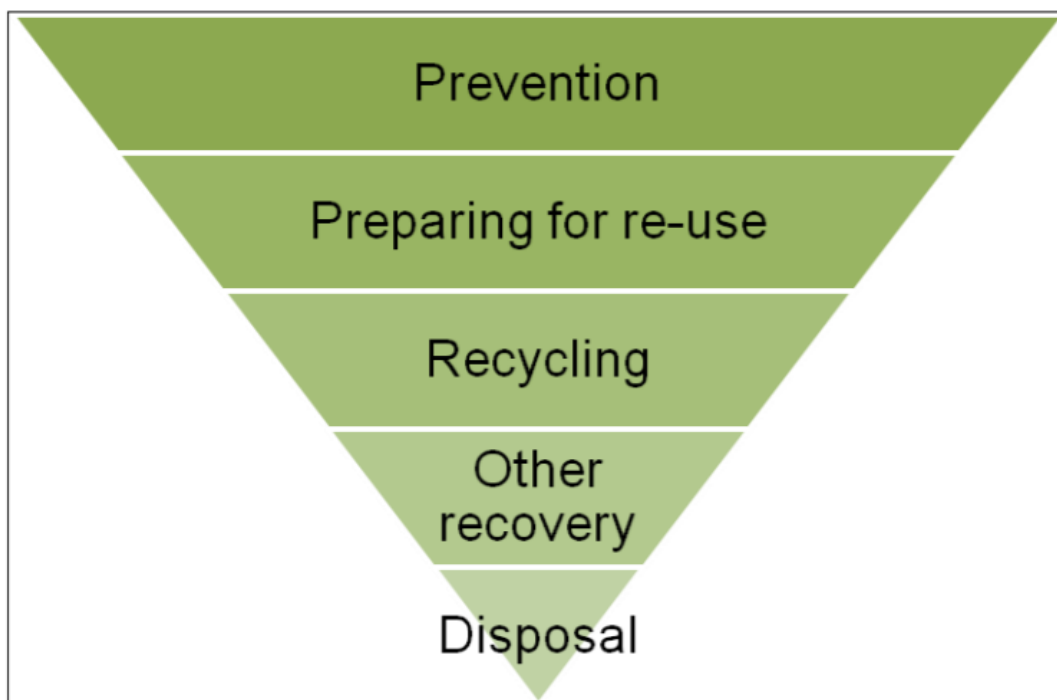


Figure 6: Waste Hierarchy

3.96. Given the pressing urgency of climate change and the need to embed the principles of the circular economy into all areas of our society, we encourage developers to consider including community spaces that help reduce waste and build community cohesion through assets such as community fridges, space for the sharing economy (library of things), refill stations, space for local food growing etc.

3.97. In order to facilitate the sustainable management of waste in the future it is essential that all developments provide adequate facilities for the separation of waste and recyclables and for its satisfactory storage prior to collection. On-site facilities for separating or storing waste should be adequate to meet the needs of occupiers of any proposed new development. Such facilities should be well-designed so that they do not result in harm to the local environment, for example in terms of amenity or local character.

3.98. Specifications for the minimum standards for the type and scale of facilities and vehicular manoeuvrability needed for new commercial and mixed-use developments will be informed by the ADEPT report 'Making Space for Waste' (June 2010). All applications will be assessed against

this guidance. Residential development should be designed in accordance with waste management policies in Cherwell District Council's waste planning guidance. Bin storage areas must be able to accommodate the correct number of mixed recycling, refuse and food recycling bins; be safe and easy to use for residents and waste collection crews and meet the requirements of the waste collection authority.

Development Policy 1: Waste Collection and Recycling

Proposals for new development should include adequate facilities into the design to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery unless existing provision is adequate. Such facilities should be well designed having regard to published guidance including (but not limited to) ADEPT 'Making Space for Waste' Designing Waste Management in New Developments: A Practical Guide for Developers and Local Authorities (2010).

The Council will support residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals that:

- i. **Provide adequate internal storage space within their premises to enable the occupiers to separate, store and recycle their waste;**
- ii. **Provide adequate, secure, external or communal storage facilities on site that allow for the separate storage and collection of waste, reusable items, recyclable materials and compostable waste;**
- iii. **Include on-site waste management, which minimises the need for waste transfer, where it is feasible to do so;**
- iv. **Allow for convenient and safe access to manage waste, including for older persons or persons with disabilities;**
- v. **Allow for convenient and safe access for waste collection services;**
- vi. **Implements high quality design solutions to minimise the adverse visual impact of waste facilities on site;**
- vii. **Enable waste from mixed-use schemes to be segregated in separate secured areas; and**
- viii. **Provide innovative solutions to reduce waste at source, and**

- ix. **All major development proposals must be accompanied by a Waste Management Plan which demonstrates how the criteria set out above will be achieved.**

Core Policy 21: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements

3.99. One of our key objectives for meeting the challenge of climate change is to ensure that housing and employment are located within sustainable locations. Encouraging sustainable transport modes, low-carbon technologies, and living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities can lead to reduced travel, reduced carbon emissions and generally more sustainable communities.

3.100. We have described earlier the benefits of Oxfordshire's and more specifically, Cherwell's good transport connections. However, Oxfordshire also experiences severe congestion in many places. Emissions originating from transport account for 20% of the County's total emissions, made worse due to the high numbers of people who live in rural areas. In addition, traffic congestion is a major cost to the local economy and has the potential to constrain future growth. If traffic growth continues due to an overreliance on the private car, many more of the district's urban and interurban routes will become increasingly congested.

3.101. Since our last Local Plan there have been improvements to rail infrastructure in Cherwell. This has included:

- A direct link from Oxford to Bicester via a new station at Oxford Parkway;
- A new station at Islip
- Improvements to Bicester Village Station, and
- Fast services from Banbury and Bicester to London Marylebone.

3.102. Over the period to 2040, further improvements are planned to East-West Rail between Oxford and Milton Keynes, in particular, re-opening passenger services between Bicester and Bletchley, thus opening up this east-west corridor between Oxford and Cambridge. As

well as passengers, our railways carry significant amounts of freight. There is an expectation that over the life of the plan some freight will be transferred to rail, and rail investments such as those identified in the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (2021) could help support a shift of freight movements to rail.

3.103. The County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 (LTCP) sets out the transport strategy for the county. In addition, three initial supporting strategies for freight and logistics, active travel, and innovation were produced in 2021 and more are in production. The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive, while also protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. It proposes to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.

3.104. Substantial investment and funding will be required to support net-zero carbon growth in Cherwell and across Oxfordshire. Our updated IDP, sets out how we intend to secure investment from the government, transport operators, the development industry, and other sources.

Improved Sustainable Transport & Connections

3.105. Making a difference to current travel patterns will require quality infrastructure for sustainable travel modes to make them our first choice. Proposals will therefore be required to plan for improved walking, cycling and public transport and provide these at an early stage of the development.

3.106. We will seek better connectivity, quality, accessibility and capacity of public transport and active travel. Our main transport corridors and facilities will need upgrading to enable efficient use of public transport and safe walking and cycling routes. We will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways, Network Rail, and other public providers to bring forward improvements to infrastructure, services

and freight movements. Development should support and enable these projects, where appropriate.

3.107. We will apply 20-minute neighbourhood principles and as well as a 'Healthy Streets Approach' to development and infrastructure provision to facilitate trips by walking and cycling alongside reducing health inequalities.

Core Policy 21: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements

The Council will support measures identified in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the area travel plans and work with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that transport improvements contribute positively to the attractiveness and safety of our places, quality of life in Cherwell, and respond sensitively to our natural and historic environment.

Area strategy policies for Bicester, Banbury, Kidlington and Heyford Park and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify specific schemes addressing sustainable transport and connectivity.

All major development should take a 'decide and provide' approach to manage travel demand by reducing the need to travel, planning for sustainable travel modes, and providing for zero emission vehicle use. Development is expected to follow the transport hierarchy set out below.

The Council will give priority to the movement of people according to the following hierarchy and this should be reflected in development proposals and infrastructure provision:

- i. **walking (including running, mobility aids, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters)**
- ii. **cycling and riding (bicycles, non-standard cycles, e-bikes, cargo bikes, e-scooters and horse riding)**
- iii. **public transport (bus, scheduled coach, rail, and taxis)**

- iv. motorcycles
- v. shared vehicles (car clubs and carpooling), and
- vi. other motorised modes (cars, vans, and lorries)

All strategic developments will be expected to provide direct bus access, rapid electric charging points, car and electric vehicle community sharing clubs and mobility hubs in accessible locations, preferably close to public services/amenities on site.

Cycle, motorcycle and car parking provision, including electric charging points, in new development should be made in line with Oxfordshire County Council parking standards and street design guidance and, where relevant, the Area strategies for Cherwell's Places and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Core Policy 22: Assessing Transport Impact/Decide and Provide

3.108. This Plan seeks to increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport. It has a strong focus on reducing the need to travel by private car and encouraging use of other modes of transport (travel choices), especially for shorter trips. It is important that new development can be accessed safely and that, to help manage car use, development is accessible by means of transport other than the private car. We will expect large-scale sites to should provide access for public transport vehicles.

3.109. Proposals will need to quantify the likely transport impacts that they will have and describe any mitigation measures to reduce them. Proposals that will generate significant amounts of transport movements will need to be accompanied by a transport assessment, and potentially a travel plan.

3.110. Further details can be found in Oxfordshire County Council's 'Decide and Provide': Requirements for Transport Assessments (September 2022).

3.111. The promotion of travel plans is essential to encourage residents and employees to make use of sustainable transport networks, and to inform them of the travel choices available. A key element of this is the marketing of public transport, cycling and walking.

3.112. We will seek infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles where appropriate and viable, with reference to the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy.

Core Policy 22: Assessing Transport Impact/Decide and Provide

The Plan supports Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 'decide and provide' approach to help the delivery of public transport and active travel improvements as well as to manage the County's road network in a manner which reduces traffic and congestion.

Development that generates a significant number of trips will be required to be located in an area with an appropriate level of public transport accessibility and where public transport capacity can accommodate the proposed increase in the number of trips, or where capacity can be increased to an appropriate level through contributions, or other infrastructure funding.

These developments will be required to submit a Transport Assessment or a Transport Statement and where relevant a Travel Plan. Transport Assessments should follow latest guidance from Oxfordshire County Council.

Development proposals should:

- i. **Contribute towards the improvement of public transport and the improvement and delivery of walking and cycling routes that serve the site. This could be achieved through the design of development and/or through financial contributions appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;**

- ii. Be expected to provide, or contribute to the provision of, new and/or improved public transport infrastructure and services proportionate to the projected number of additional trips arising from the development and considering cumulative impacts of other approved developments in the area;
- iii. Limit motor vehicle trips and identify and deliver highway safety measures at and around the development site, including temporary measures during the construction phase. This measure should reduce road danger and facilitate safer movements for all users and transport modes;
- iv. Comply with the latest Oxfordshire guidance on design, parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure.

Proposals to improve or provide new public transport infrastructure and facilities will be supported subject to:

- v. Being acceptable in terms of impact on the environment including townscape, public realm and amenity of adjoining areas;
- vi. Being designed to be safe, convenient, attractive and accessible for use especially for people with disabilities and specific mobility needs, and
- vii. Providing adequate cycle parking and ease of access on foot, including consideration of pedestrian desire lines.

Core Policy 23: Freight

3.113. The Council will work with partners to minimise freight trips on the road network and promote safe, clean and efficient freight movements.

Core Policy 23: Freight

Development proposals for logistics and distribution, that generate a significant number or intensity of transport movements, will be required to demonstrate that:

- i. **They are conveniently located to enable direct routing to the strategic road network; and**
- ii. **There is no unacceptable impact on residential areas, local air quality, local amenity, or the highway network**
- iii. **There would be no unacceptable impact on landscape, local character and biodiversity.**

Local delivery hubs that reduce traffic will be supported particularly where it would lead to a reduction in noise and emissions from local freight trips and enable sustainable last-mile movements.

Core Policy 24: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density

3.114. The NPPF requires that planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses and include minimum density standards. Managing the use of previously developed land is important in minimising the use of greenfield land, maintaining the appearance of our towns and villages and in assisting the well-being of our communities. It can also provide opportunities for enhancing biodiversity. This means ensuring that land is not underused and that we make the most of vacant and derelict land and buildings.

3.115. We will support the redevelopment of previously developed land within the built areas of our Main Towns, Local Services Centres and Larger Villages where there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. We will strive to ensure that any identified 'brownfield' regeneration sites are brought forward. The Council produces a Brownfield Land Register that identifies sites the Council considers to be suitable, available and achievable for residential development. It contains previously developed sites across the district with planning permission as well as sites without. We will continue to update and take into account its Brownfield Land Register in considering whether to identify land for new homes on previously developed land.

3.116. Housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. In order to help achieve this, in general, we are proposing that new housing should be provided at a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. However, the density of housing development will be expected to reflect the character and appearance of individual localities and development principles that are appropriate to the individual circumstances of sites.

Core Policy 24: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density

Housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. The Council will encourage the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations.

On all new housing developments, the following minimum densities (hectares – net) will be required unless specific local circumstances indicate that this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area, highway safety or the amenity of neighbours. Higher densities will be encouraged in locations where it will result in the optimum use of land, where there is good access to services and public transport routes, and where it would contribute to enhancing the character and legibility of a place.

- **45/ha within existing settlements of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, and Heyford Park;**
- **40/ha urban extensions (less than 50 ha);**
- **30/ha urban extensions (more than 50 ha), and**
- **30/ha rural and other areas.**

Theme 2: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

Employment

Core Policy 25: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

3.117. Cherwell has a diverse economy with strengths in manufacturing, retail, health, and science and technology. The district is at the northern point of the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine' linking the Science Vale Enterprise Zone and Oxford to Kidlington and Bicester. Cherwell also sits at the intersection between the Knowledge Spine and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which is recognised as hosting one of the fastest growing economies in England.

3.118. Our key commercial centres are Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. The rural commercial market in the district is relatively small with only limited availability of industrial or storage units.

3.119. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) identifies a need for between 274 and 283 ha of employment land in Cherwell over the period 2021 to 2040. Our last local plan identified a significant amount of employment land and whilst much of this has been developed there still remains substantial areas of land available. In addition, we will need to take account of other permissions in place and development that has been completed on unallocated sites. We have completed an Employment Land Review (October 2022) and we have identified a number of additional potential employment sites across the District. We may need to plan for more and would welcome your views on this.

QUESTION 8: Should we identify further land for employment?

QUESTION 9: We would welcome information from local businesses and landowners that would like to expand or potentially relocate. It will help inform an Employment Land Review and the further consideration of employment land needs.

Core Policy 25: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

74.8 hectares of land is identified for future development on the following strategic and retained Local Plan 2015 allocations:

| <u>Site Name</u> | <u>Type of Site (Uses Class)</u> | <u>Available Development Land (Hectares)</u> |
|--|---|--|
| <u>Higham Way – Banbury</u> | <u>Mixed Use B2, B8 and E (g)</u> | <u>3.0</u> |
| <u>Canalside – Banbury*</u> | <u>Mixed Use B2, B8 and E (g)</u> | <u>7.5</u> |
| <u>Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane – Bicester</u> | <u>Mixed Use B2, B8 and E (g)</u> | <u>40.0</u> |
| <u>Land adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41 – Bicester</u> | <u>Mixed Use B2, B8 and E (g)</u> | <u>6.3</u> |
| <u>Bicester Business Park (Bicester 4)**</u> | <u>Saved 2015 LP Allocation for B1 (a) and E (g)(i)</u> | <u>3.3</u> |
| <u>Begbroke Science Park</u> | <u>Science Park - E (g) (ii)</u> | <u>14.7</u> |

Table 1: Local Plan 2040 Employment Allocations

*** the precise quantum of employment land at Canalside may be updated in the Publication Plan.**

****Bicester Business Park is an existing 2015 Local Plan allocation with residual capacity of 3.3 ha that is saved through this Local Plan.**

Planning Applications for employment and business development will be supported at the allocated sites where they meet the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by Appendix 3, and in accordance with the Area Strategies.

Proposals for employment-related development on unallocated sites will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 27: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites.

In addition to the strategic allocations identified above, an allowance of 15ha is made for non-strategic employment site allocations. These will be included within the Publication version of the Plan or through Neighbourhood Plans.

QUESTION 10: Do you agree with our approach of focusing employment development on strategic sites at Banbury and Bicester?

Core Policy 26: Development at Existing Employment Sites

3.120. We believe it is important that we protect our existing employment sites to help ensure that an appropriate level of employment provision is provided across the district.

3.121. In seeking to protect our existing employment sites, we are proposing that where a site no longer has a reasonable prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present, or any other realistic and suitable, employment use. They must demonstrate that the site has remained un-sold or un-let for at least 12 months. In addition, applicants will need to provide evidence relating to the marketing of the site for its present use for a minimum period of 12 months up to the date at which the planning application was lodged. This should demonstrate that despite genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let a site on reasonable terms for employment use, they have failed to do so.

3.122. The site's potential contribution to the local and wider economy must be considered, both currently and in the long term, taking proper account of the economic cycle and the likely future needs of the economy. The Council will need to be satisfied that the change of use of the employment site would not jeopardise the provision of sufficient employment land across the district to meet the identified need.

Core Policy 26: Development at Existing or Allocated Employment Sites

Proposals for alternative uses to B2, B8 and E(g) uses on existing employment sites must demonstrate that the site has been marketed for the current permitted employment use for a minimum period of 12 months and has remained unsold or unlet.

Where there is no demonstrable prospect of land or premises being used for continued employment use, a mixed-use enabling development which incorporates employment space should first be considered. If a mixed-use scheme is not viable, the extent to which the proposed use generates new employment will be considered.

QUESTION 11: Do you agree with our proposed approach to the protection of employment sites?

Core Policy 27: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites

3.123. This Plan proposes a number of employment allocations with a strong focus on Banbury and Bicester. In addition, we want to support appropriate employment development on unallocated sites across the district, where there is a demonstrable need.

3.124. More widely, we are proposing that new employment activities can be accommodated with least impact on the landscape through the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings. However, there is some flexibility for new employment buildings to come forward in

the rural areas if there are no suitable existing buildings available for re-use subject to certain criteria being met.

Core Policy 27: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites

Proposals for new employment development (Use Classes E(g), B2 or B8) will be supported on unallocated sites in or on the edge of, the built-up area of Main Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages, where there are exceptional circumstances, provided that the benefits are not outweighed by any harmful impacts, taking into account the following:

- i. A demonstrable need for the employment that cannot be accommodated on existing allocated sites;**
- ii. The effect on the amenity of nearby residents and businesses;**
- iii. The provision of safe site access for pedestrians and cyclists and for all types of vehicles likely to visit the sites, and measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible;, and**
- iv. The scale, nature and appearance of the employment development on, and its relationship with, the settlement, its character and its landscape setting.**

Other proposals in Small Villages and the open countryside will be considered, provided that the following criteria are met in addition to criteria (i)-(iv) above:

- v. The proposal cannot reasonably be accommodated on existing employment land identified as vacant or developable, and**
- vi. It can be demonstrated that the proposal will benefit the local economy and will not undermine the delivery of the strategic employment allocations.**

QUESTION 12: Do you agree with our proposed approach for new employment development on unallocated sites?

Core Policy 28: Ancillary Uses on allocated Employment Sites

3.125. Providing facilities ancillary to the main business uses on large employment sites can help to make them more attractive to incoming firms and improves the quality of the working environment for employees. Ancillary facilities also help employment sites to develop sustainably by reducing the need for traffic movements.

3.126. It is important that any ancillary uses are necessary to support the main employment uses. The provision of larger scale retailing, such as food superstores and non-food retail warehouses, will not be supported.

Core Policy 28: Ancillary Uses on existing or allocated Employment Sites

Proposals for uses other than E(g), B2 and B8 business uses on allocated employment sites will only be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- i. **The development serves the occupiers of the employment site;**
- ii. **The use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site, and**
- iii. **The use, either alone or combined with other existing or proposed uses, would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centre or shopping centre (including local centres) or the social and community vitality of a nearby village.**

Conditions may be imposed to limit the scale of the operation and to restrict the range of activities proposed or goods sold, where necessary, to ensure that the criteria set out above are met.

QUESTION 13: Do you agree that ancillary uses should be allowed on employment sites?

Core Policy 29: Community Employment Plans

3.127. We believe that development should deliver the greatest benefit for local communities by maximising opportunities for local employment and education. Providing jobs and training for the local community offers the opportunity to generate and share increased economic prosperity.

3.128. Community Employment Plans (CEPs) prepared in partnership with developers, the Council, and training providers can play an important role in achieving this. A CEP is an employer-led initiative which can form part of planning obligations for significant developments. The measures contained within a CEP seek to mitigate the impacts of development through ensuring local people can better access employment, skills, and training opportunities arising from development. CEPs can also help to create the proper alignment between the jobs created and a local labour force with the appropriate skills.

3.129. CEPs can also reduce the need to source employees from outside of the area, reducing the need for longer distance commuting and thus helping our commitments towards addressing climate change. CEPs can support green skills training within construction and development by identifying opportunities on site for greener apprenticeships and work placements.

3.130. We are proposing to seek the preparation of CEPs for major development. Where a CEP is required, developers will be provided with a template as a basis. Through discussion with the Council, working in partnership with the LEP, appropriate targets and outcomes for the site-specific CEP will be agreed. The CEP will then be subject to regular review and monitoring meetings with the Council. We will provide assistance to identify appropriate local partner agencies and organisations to work with and support the developer to facilitate the timely delivery of the CEP.

Core Policy 29: Community Employment Plans

Proposals for major development should demonstrate how opportunities for local employment, apprenticeships, and training would be created, and seek to maximise the opportunities for sourcing local produce, suppliers and services, during both construction and operation.

The Council will require the submission of a site-specific Community Employment Plan (CEP) for the construction and operation of significant * development sites, using a planning condition or legal agreement. The CEP should be prepared in partnership with the District Council and any other partners to deliver the agreed CEP.

The CEP should cover, but not be limited to:

- i. **Local procurement agreements;**
- ii. **Apprenticeships, employment and training initiatives for all ages and abilities, and**
- iii. **training and work experience for younger people including those not in education, employment, or training.**

***Significant' is defined in the context of this policy as sites over 1,000 dwellings or 4,000m² of employment floorspace (Classes E(g), B2 and B8).**

Core Policy 30: Rural Diversification

3.131. Diversification provides opportunities to generate additional income for rural businesses, reduces reliance on a single income stream, as well as reduce risk. It can contribute to a prosperous and viable rural economy in the rural areas. Our aim is to ensure that farm holdings can remain viable, and agricultural buildings can remain in use, without causing harm to the environment by new construction, and without increasing traffic hazards on rural roads.

Core Policy 30: Rural Diversification

In rural areas, proposals for economic activities that bring about rural diversification shall normally be permitted, providing that:

- i. The development is operated as part of a viable rural business (including farm holding) and contributes to the viability of the holding;
- ii. It is not detrimental to the character and appearance of existing buildings and their setting within the landscape;
- iii. Existing buildings are used in preference to new buildings or extensions;
- iv. Utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided, and
- v. There is access by means of an existing road; no highway hazards are created or increased; and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required.

QUESTION 14: Do you agree with our proposed approach to rural diversification?

Tourism

Core Policy 31: Tourism

3.132. Tourism is a major contributor to Cherwell's economy with nearly 9,000 local jobs provided in the sector. In 2019, there were approximately 8.2 million visitors to the district contributing £495 million to the local economy.

3.133. The district's attractive countryside, historic villages and market towns, and the Oxford Canal contribute to its distinctive tourism offer. It also benefits from its location between London and Birmingham and its proximity to national attractions such as Blenheim Palace, Stratford upon Avon and Warwick Castle. However, Bicester Village is the largest visitor attraction in the district with more than 6 million visitors annually.

3.134. We recognise the significant contribution that tourism makes to the wider Cherwell economy, and we want to support further sustainable tourism developments, particularly those that can demonstrate direct benefits for the local 'visitor' economy, and which will sustain the rural economy.

3.135. Since our last Local Plan, a number of new hotels have been built in the district and new major visitor attractions currently being developed include Bicester Motion, a major attraction based on motorsport and aviation on the site of the former RAF Bicester. A Great Wolf Resort comprising a waterpark and 498 room hotel is currently under construction at Chesterton.

3.136. Tourism also benefits local programmes of events, including the arts, sports and festivals, where local traditions can be shared with visitors, including Banbury Canal Festival and Bicester Food Festival. These activities help to build local pride and provide opportunities for new businesses, business growth and development.

3.137. As a catalyst for economic growth and employment, tourism provides opportunities for an increase in demand for businesses as well as tourist attractions for both visitors and residents. It is important to ensure tourism works to the advantage of the district by attracting and dispersing visitors to discover and experience the wide range of attractions the district has to offer and to maximise opportunities to increase the number of overnight stays, length of visitor stay, and visitor spending.

3.138. Whilst supporting proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, larger new attractions, which generate significant visitor numbers, we think are most appropriately located in or adjacent to our main towns. These locations have good public transport links and support active travel opportunities. We will also apply a town centre first approach for other visitor facilities, including for hotels and restaurants although other locations maybe acceptable taking into account specific locational and functional requirements.

3.139. In our rural areas visitor-related facilities may offer benefits to existing local communities, such as supporting local food producers, shops and pubs, or new recreational opportunities. Locating new visitor related development within or close to existing settlements will enable the potential wider community benefits to be realised whilst minimising the

spread of development into the open countryside. In some cases, tourism development in the open countryside may be justified if associated with a particular countryside attraction or a farm diversification scheme. Existing buildings should be utilised wherever possible although replacement buildings should be considered where this would result in a more sustainable development.

3.140. There are a number of camping and touring caravan sites throughout the district. New or extensions to existing sites will need careful consideration to minimise visual or environmental impacts. Wherever possible, existing buildings should be used for associated facilities, such as club houses and shower blocks.

3.141. The location, scale and design of any new visitor related development must be appropriate to the area and its environmental impact will be carefully assessed and weighed against any economic and community health and wellbeing benefits. Where tourist accommodation is proposed in locations where new dwellings would not normally be permitted, we will impose planning conditions or require legal agreements restricting buildings to holiday accommodation use.

Core Policy 31: Tourism

New tourist and visitor facilities, including hotels, will be supported in accordance with the ‘town centre first’ principles and should be located within or adjacent to town or service centres and reuse appropriate existing buildings wherever possible.

New tourism and visitor facilities will also generally be supported in villages and the open countryside where they:

- **Have a functional linkage with a specific countryside attraction, or;**
- **Secure the diversification of an agricultural enterprise, or**
- **complement the rural character of the area and deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community or nature conservation benefits, or**
- **Are unable to be reasonably located within or close to a town or service centre by the nature of the facility.**

QUESTION 15: Do you agree with our proposed approach to tourism development?

Town Centres and Retail

Core Policy 32: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses

3.142. Retail is very important to the local economy, being one of the top employers in Cherwell. Retail premises make up nearly a fifth of Cherwell's business floorspace and from 2000 to 2019 Cherwell experienced a 36% growth in retail floorspace (89,000sqm), performing strongly when compared to retail growth in Oxfordshire, and England.

3.143. In particular, Banbury and Bicester Town Centres, and to a lesser extent Kidlington village centre, are the main focus for shopping, commerce, leisure and other facilities serving Cherwell's communities, businesses and visitors. They also play an increasingly important role as places to live.

3.144. However, notwithstanding recent growth, in common with many town centres across the country our urban centres have come under pressure in recent years, particularly with competition from other centres, and the shift to online retailing, which has been accelerated by the pandemic.

3.145. We are committed to supporting our town centres and to enhancing and strengthening their vitality and viability. In doing so we also recognise the important role that further residential development, in appropriate town centre locations, can play in strengthening vitality and viability in the longer term.

3.146. In addition to our traditional high streets, there are also significant retail provision at out of centre locations, particularly at Banbury and Bicester. Many residential areas across the district are also served by

small parades of local shops, restaurants and other community-based facilities.

3.147. Cherwell is home to Bicester Village Outlet Centre. Bicester Village is the district's most visited tourist destination. The Council recognises the role Bicester Village performs in the local economy and will continue to support its role as a major national and international destination, whilst at the same time ensuring that the vitality and viability of Bicester Town Centre is enhanced and protected.

3.148. In our villages and rural areas local shops provide a vital service for local communities and contribute significantly to their sustainability. The Council will seek to resist the loss of these vital local facilities.

3.149. In order to fully understand the retail and leisure development needs of the district, we commissioned a Town Centre and Retail Study in 2021. This study concluded that there was an over provision of comparison retail floorspace, in both Banbury and Bicester, and that overall, there was no additional need for comparison or convenience floorspace across the district up to 2040. The study also concluded that any further out of centre expansion to Banbury or Bicester's comparison fashion offer would be seriously detrimental to the vitality and viability of each of the town centres.

3.150. We are proposing that new retail development will continue to be focused on our town centres and all new development will be required to be built to high design standards. Town centre uses are those defined by the NPPF and include retail, leisure, cultural and community uses. We will also support the role that new restaurants and cafes can have in attracting people into our town centres and we will support uses that contribute to the evening economy in appropriate locations.

3.151. Based on the conclusions of the 2021 Town Centre and Retail Study we will resist further major out of centre retail development, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of our urban centres, particularly Banbury and Bicester.

3.152. We will continue to work with our local communities and other stakeholders to promote and enhance the attractiveness of our urban centres. Particular priorities highlighted by the Town Centre and Retail Study include the need for improvements to the public realm, accessibility, signage, publicity and design.

3.153. Outside the main shopping centres of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Heyford Park, local shopping requirements are met by a number of local shopping centres. These provide for the day to day convenience shopping needs of the population and complement the range of shopping facilities offered by the main centres.

Core Policy 32: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses

The Council will promote the continued role and functions of its town/urban centres to positively contribute towards their viability, vitality, character and public realm. The hierarchy of centres in the district is:

- **Main Towns (Town Centres): Banbury, Bicester**
- **Local Service Centres (Local/Village Centre): Kidlington, Heyford Park**

The boundaries of the Town Centres' and their respective Primary Shopping Areas are defined on the Policies Map and by Appendix 10.

To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the Town Centres, the Council will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services and other main town centre uses in accordance with the established hierarchy of centres.

Retail and other 'Main Town Centre Uses' will be directed towards these centres. Where such uses are proposed outside these centres the Council will apply the sequential approach as set out in the NPPF.

Where planning permission is required for any retail or leisure proposal outside these centres, they will be subject to an impact

assessment, appropriate to the use. In Banbury, the threshold for such an impact assessment is over 2000 sqm (gross), 1500 sqm (gross) in Bicester and 350 sqm (gross) elsewhere.

The Council will support the provision of new local centres containing a small number of shops of limited size within the allocated strategic housing sites set out in this Local Plan and as specified within the Indicative Site Development Templates (Appendix 2).

The Council will support proposals for new small shops or extensions to existing shops within or adjacent to existing settlements that are required to serve local needs.

QUESTION 16: Do you agree with our proposed approach to retail development and town centres?

Core Policy 33: Primary Shopping Areas

3.154. Several changes to the Permitted Development Rights affecting change of use to and from retail have been introduced. Where prior approval is needed, the Council will interpret 'key shopping areas' referred to in the General Permitted Development Order as being designated Primary Shopping Frontages.

Core Policy 33: Primary Shopping Areas

Where planning permission is required, proposals resulting in the loss of an E Class Use at ground floor level within a primary shopping area must demonstrate that:

- i. The unit has been proactively and appropriately marketed for at least 12 months and it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a realistic prospect of the unit being used for E Class uses in the foreseeable future;
- ii. The proposal meets the needs of residents within the local neighbourhood, and

- iii. **The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.**

QUESTION 17: Do you agree with the town centre and primary shopping frontage boundaries shown on the plans?

QUESTION 18: Do you agree that only within the primary shopping frontage area E use classes should be protected?

Development Policy 2: Outdoor Markets

3.155. Outdoor markets add to the vibrancy, social value and character of our towns and villages. Cherwell's markets are well established and popular with local communities and visitors and help support local businesses. However, if poorly designed and managed they can cause harm to surrounding areas in terms of congestion of local roads and pavements, generate rubbish storage and noise issues, and impact on access and accessibility.

3.156. We wish to see all of the outdoor markets in the district continue to thrive and will encourage a coordinated approach to their development and management.

Development Policy 2: Outdoor Markets

Proposals for new off-street permanent street markets, car boot sales, and temporary markets will be supported provided that:

- i. **The scale, nature, and location would not harm existing shopping facilities or markets located within town centres;**
- ii. **There would not be an unacceptable impact on local amenity or the general environment;**
- iii. **Adequate provision is made for traders' parking, deliveries and servicing, set-up and storage of stalls, power supply and storage and disposal of refuse, and**
- iv. **There would not be an unacceptable impact on traffic flow or increase in traffic congestion in the area.**

We will seek to maintain, and support the enhancement of, existing outdoor markets within the district. Developments that would adversely affect existing outdoor markets will not be permitted.

Where construction of a development could adversely affect an outdoor market, applicants should assess this impact and propose mitigation measures to ensure the outdoor market can continue to operate.

Development Policy 3: Shopfronts and signage

3.157. Outdoor advertisements and signs can impact on amenity and public safety, and therefore sometimes require advertisement consent. Well-designed signs and advertisements will integrate well with buildings and the character of an area as well as meeting the commercial need for the advertisement. However, obtrusive designs and inappropriately sited signs and advertisements can cause clutter and have a detrimental effect on visual amenity or on the character of an area, particularly in Conservation Areas.

3.158. The Council will ensure that new or changed shopfronts that require planning permission (or listed buildings consent) and adverts and signs that require advertisements consent are of a design, size and materials that complement the character of the host building and the surrounding public realm. Compromises may need to be made to 'corporate' designs in particularly sensitive areas to meet the requirements of the policy. For example, internally illuminated box fascias and projecting signs will not generally be appropriate in Conservation Areas.

Development Policy 3: Shopfronts and Signage

Proposals for new or altered shopfronts and advertisements, where consent is required, will only be permitted where the design, positioning, materials, colour, proportion and illumination are not detrimental to heritage significance, or visual or residential amenity. In particular:

- i. The design should respond to, and positively contribute to, the character and design of existing buildings and surroundings; and
- ii. Public accessibility and safety should not be prejudiced; and
- iii. Visual pollution and clutter should be avoided, and
- iv. Historic shop fronts should be retained.

Theme 3: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Housing

Core Policy 34: District Wide Housing Distribution

Assessing Housing Need

3.159. The new Local Plan needs to be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using a 'standard method' in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.

3.160. In addition to the local housing need figures any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

3.161. The 'standard method' is a formula based on nationally projected household growth for the local area and the housing affordability of the area (based on a house price and workplace earnings ratio). Some adjustment is required depending on local circumstances.

3.162. Under the standard method, Cherwell has a need for some 742 new homes per annum which would equate to 14,840 homes for the period 2020-2040. Oxford has a 'capped' need of 762 homes per annum.

3.163. Government guidance highlights that the standard method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour.

3.164. It states that there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates. This includes but is not limited to situations

where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends because of:

- Growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g. Housing Deals);
- Strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or
- An authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground.

3.165. An Oxfordshire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA, 2022) was commissioned jointly by the Council with Oxford City Council to examine these issues. The Assessment recommends that housing need be understood on the basis of the projected share of employment across the county by 2040. It then presents four different alternative scenarios for housing need distributed according to that share of employment.

| Area | Projected Percentage of need | Scenario 1: Standard Method | Scenario 2: Census Adjusted | Scenario 3: Cambridge Econometrics economic baseline | Scenario 4: Economic Development Led |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Oxon | 100% | 3,388 | 4,721 | 4,406 | 5,830 |
| Cherwell | 22.9% | 776 | 1,081 | 1,009 | 1,335 |
| Oxford | 30% | 1,016 | 1,416 | 1,322 | 1,749 |
| South Oxon | 18% | 610 | 850 | 793 | 1,049 |
| Vale of White Horse | 16.2% | 549 | 765 | 714 | 944 |
| West Oxon | 12.8% | 434 | 604 | 564 | 746 |

Table 2: Distribution of Housing Need by Distribution of Employment in 2040

3.166. The Assessment concludes that its evidence points to an overall scale of housing need above the minimum level of need arising

from the Standard Method'. It states that the Standard Method underestimates housing need by not capturing demographic data post 2014, and not allowing for sufficient housing to match the level of job creation expected to 2040.

3.167. The Assessment also considers that the Economic Led scenario is overly optimistic in the present economic conditions.

3.168. Of the two middle scenarios, Cherwell and Oxford officers presently agree that Scenario 3 in the above table is most appropriate in current circumstances - a level of housing needed to support the level of workforce implied by an updated projection of economic growth for Oxfordshire.

3.169. The new projection, while accounting for the county's strong past performance, also reflects the negative shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, the subsequent recovery, and the economic uncertainties surrounding 'Brexit'. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment is available to view alongside the draft Plan.

QUESTION 19: Do you have comments on the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment?

Calculating Overall Housing Need

3.170. Our current assumption is that Cherwell has need for some 1,009 homes per annum to meet its own projected needs. We also assume that Oxford has a need for some 1,322 homes per annum. Oxford City Council published its own consultation paper on housing need in from February to March 2023. In that paper, it considered that Oxford had capacity to accommodate 457 homes per annum having regard to its administrative boundaries and constraints.

3.171. This may change. But on that basis, Oxford could have an unmet need of some 865 homes per annum.

3.172. Were that unmet need to be distributed to the other districts to the same percentages as previously occurred in 2014, Cherwell would accommodate approximately 33% of the unmet need.

3.173. Overall housing need could therefore be as shown below:

| Projected Housing Need | |
|---|-----------------|
| Cherwell's housing need | 1,009 per annum |
| Oxford's housing need | 1,322 per annum |
| Oxford's current housing capacity | 457 per annum |
| Oxford's current unmet need | 865 per annum |
| Indicative % of unmet need to Cherwell | 32.8 % |
| Unmet need potentially distributed to Cherwell | 284 per annum |
| Housing need to be met in Cherwell | 1,293 per annum |
| Housing need to be met in Cherwell 2020-2040 | 25,860 |

Table 3: Projected Housing Need

3.174. The suggested figure of 1,293 homes per annum compares to a current figure 1,362 per annum (1,142 for Cherwell's needs plus an average of 220 per annum for Oxford over 20 years).

3.175. We will keep this under review as the Plan process continues and continue to discuss the strategic priority of housing need across Oxfordshire with our neighbouring Local Planning Authorities.

Establishing a Potential Housing Requirement

| Plan period | 2020-2040 |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Draft Plan requirement | 25,860 |

Table 4: Draft Housing Requirement

3.176. We would need to deliver 25,860 homes by 2040 to meet our own needs and make a significant contribution to Oxford’s potential unmet housing need.

3.177. But the housing requirement in a Local Plan is not necessarily the same as the housing need identified.

3.178. A Local Plan process needs to test whether housing need can be met and whether there are reasons to propose a different housing figure.

3.179. We have begun by examining our existing housing supply.

Understanding Existing Housing Supply

3.180. We already have a very significant level of housing supply. The Local Plan adopted in 2015 allocated land to meet Cherwell’s need at the time and in 2020 we adopted a Partial Review of that Plan to help meet Oxford’s needs. We have granted planning permissions for many homes and we expect others to be provided over the period to 2040.

3.181. Our last district-wide Local Plan was adopted in 2015. Housing delivery since then has generally been over Cherwell’s requirement of 1,142 homes per annum.

| Housing Delivery 2015-2022 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Year | District | Banbury | Bicester | Elsewhere |
| 2015/16 | 1425 | 353 | 367 | 705 |
| 2016/17 | 1102 | 408 | 371 | 323 |
| 2017/18 | 1387 | 616 | 355 | 416 |
| 2018/19 | 1489 | 654 | 437 | 398 |
| 2019/20 | 1159 | 598 | 284 | 277 |
| 2020/21 | 1192 | 443 | 476 | 273 |
| 2021/22 | 1175 | 511 | 341 | 323 |

Table 5: Housing Delivery

3.182. Our assessment of housing supply for the future may change but our current assessment for 2020-2040 is provided below:

| | Housing Completions 2020-22 | Deliverable Supply 2022-2040 (Appendix 3) | Developable Supply 2022-2040 (Appendix 3) | Totals |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---------------|
| Banbury | 954 | 2,273 | 1,871 | 5,098 |
| Bicester | 817 | 4,391 | 5,588 | 10,796 |
| Heyford Park | 136 | 643 | 1,103 | 1,882 |
| Kidlington | 109 | 32 | 0 | 141 |
| Rural Areas | 351 | 538 | 0 | 889 |
| Partial Review Sites | 0 | 1,090 | 3,310 | 4,400 |
| Windfall Projection | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Totals | 2,367 | 9,967 | 11,872 | 24,206 |

Table 6: Housing Supply 2020-2040

3.183. Indicatively, this would suggest that we only need to identify a further 1,654 homes to meet the housing need identified (a need of 25,860 minus a current supply of 24,206).

3.184. However, there are a number of issues we need to consider:

- Can all our existing housing supply be reliably delivered within the suggested Plan period?
- Do we have larger scale developments with longer time frames for delivery?
- What does this supply tell us about meeting housing needs at Kidlington?
- Is there sufficient supply in the longer term to meet housing need arising from our rural areas?

3.185. North-West Bicester is our largest development site and is currently planned to provide for some 6,000 homes. We consider that

about 3,000 of those homes may actually be delivered beyond 2040. We would not seek to preclude earlier delivery but need to be realistic about future delivery expectations.

3.186. This means that our existing supply falls from 24,206 to 21,206 homes by 2040.

| Existing Housing Supply 2020-2040 | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 2020-2040 | Remaining Draft Requirement |
| 21,206 | 4,654 |

Table 7: Existing Housing Supply 2020-2040

Assessing New Housing Supply

3.187. We have more work to do to assess housing land availability and housing potential. Work so far has suggested that the following development options may be appropriate.

| Potential New Development Sites / Supply | |
|---|--------------|
| Banbury | |
| North of Wykham Lane | 600 |
| Withycombe Farm (conditionally approved) | 230 |
| Bicester | |
| South-East of Wretchwick Green | 800 |
| South of Chesterton / North-West of A41 | 500 |
| Kidlington | |
| North of The Moors | 300 |
| South-East of Woodstock | 450 |
| Heyford Park | |
| South of Heyford Park | 1,235 |
| Rural Areas | |
| Indicative allocation | 500 |
| Total | 4,615 |

Table 8: Potential Development Sites / Supply

3.188. We suggest potential policies in the area strategies that follow later in the draft Plan. At Appendix 2 we also provide summaries of the site opportunities and constraints.

3.189. A number of questions require consideration:

- Do we have the sites available to meet housing need whilst achieving sustainable development?
- Do we have demonstrable exceptional circumstances for the potential release of land North of The Moors at Kidlington?
- Would the suggested sites for Bicester enable continuity of supply whilst the existing North-West Bicester and Graven Hill sites are built-out?
- What additional allowance do we make for the delivery of non-strategic sites in our urban areas?
- Do we have sufficient contingency?
- Could we ensure a steady supply of new homes over the plan period?
- We are not suggesting any ring-fencing of supply for Oxford in the way that we did in the 2020 Local Plan Partial Review. Is this appropriate?
- How would we deliver sufficient affordable housing that we would expect to be provided as a percentage of new market housing?

3.190. Later in this emerging Plan, we suggest the replacement of two existing Local Plan policies – those for the Canalside redevelopment area and for Higham Way at Banbury. This could result in the loss of 168 and 150 homes from our existing housing supply. We will need to replace this supply in the next, proposed version of the Local Plan.

3.191. We also later suggest that an additional 1000 homes could be provided at North-West Bicester by replacing the existing Local Plan policy. However, these are not presently expected to contribute to overall housing supply by 2040.

Core Policy 34: District Wide Housing Distribution

Cherwell will provide 25,860 homes from 2020 to 2040

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Banbury</u> | <u>5950</u> | <u>Bicester</u> | <u>9100</u> |
| <u>Kidlington</u> | <u>900</u> | <u>Heyford Park</u> | <u>3120</u> |
| <u>Rural Areas</u> | <u>1390</u> | <u>Partial Review Sites</u> | <u>4400</u> |
| <u>Windfall Projection</u> | <u>1000</u> | | |

A further 4,000 homes will be provided at North-West Bicester beyond 2040.

| Current Summary of Housing Supply | | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Completions | Existing Supply to 2040 | New Supply | Totals |
| Banbury | 954 | 4,144 | 830 | 5,928 |
| Bicester | 817 | 6,979* | 1,300 | 9,096 |
| Kidlington | 109 | 32 | 750 | 891 |
| Heyford Park | 136 | 1,746 | 1,235 | 3,117 |
| Rural Areas | 351 | 538 | 500 | 1,389 |
| Partial Review Sites | 0 | 4,400 | 0 | 4,400 |
| Windfall Projection | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Totals | 2,367 | 18,839 | 4,615 | 25,821 |
| *plus 4,000 beyond 31 March 2040 | | | | |

Table 9: Current Summary of Housing Supply

3.192. We will review these emerging proposals in light of further evidence on land availability and site suitability. We are also keen to know which Parish Councils might be interested in a specific allowance for Neighbourhood Plans.

QUESTION 20: Do you have comments on our emerging housing distribution?

QUESTION 21: Are there are any Parish Councils seeking a specific housing requirement for Neighbourhood Plans?

Core Policy 35: Settlement Hierarchy

3.193. Our proposed Settlement Hierarchy is based on an assessment of a number of factors including population size, number and range of facilities and services, settlement characteristics, accessibility, local employment opportunities and the functional relationship with other settlements. Each defined settlement tier has a different role. We are proposing that the hierarchy has four main tiers as follows:

- Main Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Larger Villages, and
- Smaller Villages

3.194. Our strategy seeks to protect and enhance the services and facilities provided by our Main Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages. It focuses new homes, jobs and community facilities at these settlements.

3.195. In defining the Settlement Hierarchy, we have taken the opportunity to review the categorisation of villages.

Core Policy 35: Settlement Hierarchy

Development will be approved in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and Settlement Classifications set out below:

Main Towns

Main Towns have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Main Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development to provide the jobs and homes to help sustain, and where

appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.

Local Service Centres

Local Service Centres are large villages with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside the Main Towns.

Larger Villages

Larger Villages have a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unplanned development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.

Smaller Villages

Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs.

The Settlement Classifications are:

| <u>Classification</u> | <u>Settlement</u> | <u>Type of Development</u> |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| <u>Main Towns</u> | <u>Banbury, Bicester</u> | <u>Presumption in favour of sustainable development</u> |
| <u>Local Services Centres</u> | <u>Kidlington(*), Heyford Park</u> | <u>Development beyond existing built limits will only be permitted on allocated sites</u> |
| <u>Larger Villages</u> | <u>Adderbury, Ambrosden, Bletchington (part *), Bloxham, Bodicote, Deddington, Hook Norton, Kirtlington, Launton, Steeple Aston, Yarnton (*)</u> | <u>Development at settlements within the Green Belt will be considered against National Policy.</u> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p><u>Smaller Villages</u></p> | <p><u>Arncott, Balscote, Begbroke (*), Bourtons, Charlton on Otmoor (GB), Chesterton, Clifton, Cottisford, Cropredy, Drayton, Epwell, Fencott (GB), Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Godington, Hardwick with Tusmore, Hempton, Lower Heyford, Upper Heyford, Horley, Hornton, Horton cum Studley (GB), Islip(GB), Mercott (GB), Middle Aston, Middleton Stoney, Milcombe, Milton, Milcombe, Mixbury, Mollington, Newton Purcell with Shelswell, Noke (GB), Oddington (GB), Shenington with Alkerton, Shipton on Cherwell (GB), Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower, Souldern, Swalcliffe, Tadmarton, Thrupp (GB), Wardington, Weston on the Green (part GB), Wiggington, Wroxton,</u></p> | <p><u>Limited infill development within existing built areas or on allocated sites. Proposals will be supported where they are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>i. In keeping with local character, and</u> <u>ii. Proportionate in scale, and</u> <u>iii. Meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities</u> |
| <p><u>Open Countryside</u></p> | <p><u>Those villages not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the Open Countryside.</u></p> | <p><u>Development will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other local or national planning policies.</u></p> |

(GB) These settlements are washed over by Green Belt. (*) These settlements are inset to the Green Belt. (part GB) These settlements are partly in the Green Belt.

QUESTION 22: Do you agree with our settlement hierarchy proposals?

Core Policy 36: Affordable Housing

3.196. Cherwell has a high level of need for affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF as comprising housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market, including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers.

3.197. Our Housing Strategy (2019-2024) has identified three strategic priorities, which includes the need to increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing.

3.198. There are a number of ways that affordable homes can be delivered. 'First Homes' are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing designed for first time buyers. First Homes are the government's preferred type of discounted housing for ownership and its planning practice guidance explains that they should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. They must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value and the discount, as a percentage of current market value, is passed on for each new occupier. Local authorities can apply a higher minimum discount of either 40% or 50% if a need can be demonstrated. The HENA analyses how first homes could be provided for and suggests that a 30% discount is reasonable, with the expectation that most First Homes will be 2-bedrooms.

3.199. The HENA analyses the need for affordable housing in terms of social/affordable rented housing and affordable home ownership. It identifies a significant need for affordable housing with a need of 660 social rented/affordable rented homes per year in Cherwell and 193 homes to meet affordable home ownership needs. The Council's interim Viability Assessment tested a range of requirements for affordable

housing from 0 to 50% and for First Homes provided at 25%. It recommends an overall 30% affordable housing requirement on all sites.

3.200. We are proposing that all proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings, or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings, will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

3.201. There were 178 net affordable housing completions during 2021/22. In recent previous years the number of affordable homes completed has been above the Council's affordable housing target of 190 dwellings per year, for example 295 in 2020/21. From the 178 affordable homes completed there were 101 were affordable rented, 7 social rented and 70 in shared ownership. There continues to be limited delivery of social rented homes. The Council's Housing Strategy explains how housing for social rent is the only truly affordable housing option for many people in Cherwell. The HENA does not recommend that there is a rigid policy for the split between social and affordable rented housing, although the analysis shows that both tenures of homes are likely to be required. The interim viability assessment tested a 70/30 split (affordable/social rent and affordable home ownership). We are proposing that 70% of affordable homes coming forward should be affordable/ social rented.

3.202. Housing proposals (for residential use type C3) will need to provide affordable housing where they meet the thresholds in the Policy. Where the number of dwellings proposed falls below the relevant threshold, or the number of dwellings is not specified, the Council will consider whether sites reasonably have capacity to provide the number of dwellings that would trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing. The purpose of this is to ensure that the policy requirement is not being avoided through inappropriate planning such as ineffective or inefficient use of land or a mix of dwellings that does not reflect other housing policies or local needs.

3.203. We are proposing that affordable housing be met on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can

be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

3.204. We will support proposals for community self-build or custom-build affordable housing particularly where it will result in suitable empty properties being brought into residential use.

3.205. There are requirements set out in the Partial Review policies (PR2, PR6 to PR9) for affordable housing, mix, house type and size. There is a separate mechanism (part of the Councils Housing Strategy) in place for ensuring that any affordable homes will be provided as part of the Cherwell contribution to unmet need for Oxford. It is proposed that at least 50 % of any additional unmet housing for Oxford being provided within this plan will be affordable homes.

Core Policy 36: Affordable Housing

All proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

First homes should make up 25% of all homes on sites and should have a discount of 30%. The majority of first homes should be 2 bedroom.

Affordable housing is expected to be met on site unless there are exceptional circumstances and where off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified.

Where this policy would result in a requirement that part of an affordable home should be provided, a financial contribution of equivalent value will be required for that part only. Otherwise, financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances. All qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable

housing as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of affordable homes. It is expected that these requirements will be met without the use of social housing grant or other grants.

QUESTION 23: Do you agree with the suggested policy for affordable housing?

QUESTION 24: Would you support maximising the delivery of affordable housing, and in particular the delivery of more social rented housing, if sacrifices were made in respect of other requirements?

Core Policy 37: Housing Mix

3.206. Another of our Housing Strategy priorities is to improve the quality and sustainability of our homes, building thriving, healthy and inclusive communities and enhancing opportunities for people to access suitable homes and to have housing choices.

3.207. This Local Plan aims, not only to increase the supply of housing, but to encourage an appropriate mix to enable households to more easily find and move to housing they can afford and that better suits their circumstances. The housing mix needs to enable movement through the market from one house type to another as the needs of households change. This movement frees up housing that might otherwise be unavailable. There is a need to provide a mix of housing that reflects the needs of an ageing population, a growth in smaller households, and that meets the requirements of families.

3.208. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) examines the mix of homes that are needed by tenure and identifies the following mix:

| Type | 1- bedroom | 2- bedrooms | 3- bedrooms | 4+- bedrooms |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Social/Affordable Rented | 35-40% | 25-30% | 20-25% | 10-15% |
| Affordable Home Ownership | 20-25% | 40-45% | 25-30% | 5-10% |
| Market Housing | 5-10% | 35-40% | 35-40% | 15-20% |

Table 10: Mix of housing by size and type

3.209. The evidence shows that more people are working from home than has historically been the case and this trend is expected to continue despite the impacts of Covid 19 reducing. It is important we enable people to work from home and to set up businesses in their homes, as this will help to reduce costs and reduce the need for travelling. The Council will therefore encourage live/work units to be provided in new developments forming part of the dwelling mix. Live/work units can help to create vibrant communities. The employment uses provided in these units will need to be ancillary to the residential use and have regard to residential amenity.

3.210. Providing for a mix of homes and helping to increase affordability could also include building modular homes, which are homes where sections are constructed at a factory and transported to the development site rather than being constructed on site.

Core Policy 37: Housing Mix

New residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed, vibrant and inclusive communities. This should be in accordance with the Council’s current evidence unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate through the Housing Register or where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints agreed through ‘open book’ scrutiny.

Information provided by developers on local market conditions and the characteristics of development sites will also be considered.

The Council will encourage live/work units in new developments to help create vibrant communities.

Where appropriate, the provision of alternative building techniques including modular homes will be encouraged.

Core Policy 38: Specialist Housing

3.211. The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. The evidence in the HENA shows a significant increase in people in older age groups and a significant need for all types of specialist housing for older people.

3.212. 'Extra care' housing, in particular, will be important in meeting the housing needs of an older population across all tenures. Extra care housing comprises self-contained accommodation for older and disabled people, which facilitates healthy, independent living for longer, by providing a range of support facilities on the premises and 24-hour care services. It can help people live longer in their own homes either securely alone or with partners or friends. It meets a need between traditional sheltered housing and residential care and can be purpose-built or adapted accommodation. People have their own front doors but also have the opportunity to benefit from communal facilities. Extra care can also contribute to achieving more social cohesion by providing an opportunity for community living and a better mix of housing within residential areas.

3.213. Our Housing Strategy identifies that 14.1% of Cherwell residents have a long-term limiting health issue or disability and 22% of households in Cherwell include someone with a long term health issue or disability. There is a need for a diverse range of supported housing including for people with learning disabilities, with physical disabilities and for vulnerable young people, including young parents. There is also scope for technology to be provided in new homes to enable individuals of varying ability and older people to live more independently.

Core Policy 38: Specialist Housing

Housing sites will be expected to provide extra care dwellings (C3 use class) as part of the overall mix. The proportion of extra care housing units is to be agreed with the Council based on the nature of the site and proposals in question and having full regard to the evidence of need for these units.

Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing (use class C3) for older people will be required. Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older and/or disabled people and those with mental health needs and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities.

We will support residential care homes (C2 uses classes) and developments which provide for a mix of use classes C3 and C2 where the appropriate infrastructure is provided.

Core Policy 39: Residential Space Standards

Accessible and Adaptable Housing

3.214. There is a focus on supporting older people and those with a disability to live more independently at home. Supporting healthy independent living for longer can help to reduce preventable burdens of poor health, and the costs to health and social services. Providing more housing options for older people can free up homes that are under occupied.

3.215. Given the ageing population and the identified levels of disabilities amongst the population it will be essential for new housing to be built to accessibility standards to help people to maintain independence for longer. The HENA indicates that there will be an increasing demand in

the future for specialist housing to meet the needs of the elderly and those with physical or learning disabilities and recommends that 10% of homes could meet M4(3) standards.

3.216. Category 1 requirements are mandatory within the Building Regulations and are classed as a visitable dwelling. Reasonable provision should be made for people to gain access to and use the dwelling and its facilities. A Category 2 dwelling is classed as accessible and adaptable and is optional in the Building Regulations. Provision must be sufficient to meet the needs of occupants with differing needs including some older and disabled people and to allow adaptation of the dwelling to meet the changing needs of the occupant over time. A Category 3 dwelling is classed as for a wheelchair user and is optional in the Building Regulations.

3.217. We are very keen to support people to live independently therefore such developments should be located in places where there is an opportunity to access services and facilities so that people feel less isolated and part of a community.

3.218. The most suitable locations are those closest to the centres of our main urban areas, although there may be other locations that are appropriate, such as within some of our larger villages. Housing schemes for older people and for people with disabilities should be located on sites within convenient reach of shops, community facilities and frequent public transport services. We will have regard to the overall need for this type of development and the use class that is proposed when considering planning applications.

Internal residential space

3.219. The quality of buildings and places, and how they integrate with the natural environment, have been shown to affect how people interact with them. Good quality development can create environments that promote wellbeing and happiness, as well as provide functional, well-built places.

3.220. Internal space within new dwellings is an important factor in creating homes that support a high quality of life and allow households to meet their current needs whilst also being flexible enough to accommodate changes in their circumstances.

3.221. The government has set out appropriate nationally described space standards for new developments. These space standards are predicated on the number of bedrooms and the number of people each new dwelling is intended to accommodate.

3.222. They are mandatory for all new homes developed under permitted development rights. This is in recognition of the fact that many have fallen below these standards in the past and created inappropriately sized homes. To be consistent with this approach we are proposing that all new dwellings, including newly formed dwellings through conversion, conform with nationally described space standards. The requirement to meet these space standards will ensure that all new housing provides good room sizes and levels of storage to provide a decent standard of living, enable people to live in their homes for longer and to maximise the occupancy of affordable homes.

3.223. Separate Regulations apply to sleeping accommodation floor areas in licenced Homes in Multiple Ownership (HMOs).

External residential space

3.224. Outdoor amenity space can make an important contribution to improving the quality of life and well-being of residents, supporting and enhancing local biodiversity, moderating temperature, and assisting with flood prevention. Connecting with the natural environment has been further shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, whilst improving psychological wellbeing and inclusivity and encouraging physical activity with lifelong benefits.

3.225. Gardens provide a semi-natural habitat supporting a range of species and corridors for movement of wildlife through the local environment. Garden plants and trees help cool the air, combating high temperatures in summer and providing shelter and insulation in winter,

thus helping to reduce heat stress and energy consumption. Vegetation and trees intercept intense rain, slowing runoff and so reducing the pressure on urban drains. Unlike hard surfaces, the soil in gardens naturally absorbs rainwater, helping to mitigate fluvial and surface water flooding, and builds community resilience to climate change.

3.226. We are proposing that external amenity space should be sufficient to accommodate:

- A table and chairs suitable for the size of dwelling;
- Where relevant, provision of a garden shed for general storage (including bicycles if cycle storage is not provided elsewhere);
- Space for refuse and recycling bins;
- An area to dry washing;
- Circulation space, and
- An area for children to play in.

3.227. External residential space does not include car parking or turning areas. Suitable arrangements for access to refuse and recycling bins should be made to prevent bins being transported through dwellings and for scooter storage and charging facilities.

3.228. One-bedroom dwellings would not be expected to provide space for children to play due to the lower likelihood of children occupying these units. Dwellings with more than one bedroom would need to take space for children to play into account.

3.229. Where it is appropriate and viable to do so, flatted developments will need to provide high-quality shared amenity areas on-site to meet the needs of residents, including play space for children, in addition to private amenity space and cycle storage.

Core Policy 39: Residential Space Standards

Internal Residential Space

All new dwellings will achieve compliance with the nationally described space standards (or any successor standards/policy) as a minimum.

External Residential Space

New residential dwellings will be expected to have direct access to an area of private and/or communal amenity space. The form of amenity space will be dependent on the form of housing and could be provided as a private garden, roof garden, communal garden, courtyard balcony, or ground-level patio with defensible space from public access. The amount of outdoor amenity space should be appropriate to the size of the property and designed to allow effective and practical use of and level access to the space by residents.

Core Policy 40: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

3.230. Self and custom-build is the process by which an individual or association builds housing for their own use, either by undertaking the whole process themselves or by commissioning architects or builders to assist.

3.231. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local councils in England to keep a register of people who are interested in self-build or custom-build projects in their area. This register helps the Council understand the level of demand for self-build and custom-build plots in the district. During 2020/21 there were 35 self-build affordable housing completions in the district that took place at the Graven Hill site.

3.232. We are keen to encourage further provision of self and custom build housing in appropriate locations to aid in housing delivery, assist with affordability and to allow for innovative design solutions particularly where they support equality opportunity. We will monitor the demand for this type of housing and where possible will assist in the delivery of sites. Development proposals that involve the creation of low-cost or affordable

housing, for instance via Registered Social Landlords or community groups, would be particularly supported as these would provide additional opportunities to meet the demands for affordable homes in the district.

Core Policy 40: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

Proposals for custom and self-build housing will be approved in suitable, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant policies of this plan.

The Council will require all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings to include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for self-build which can include the partial completion for self-finish. This will be reviewed through the Council's Monitoring Report considering the need shown on the register.

Plots must be made available and marketed for an appropriate time (to be agreed with the local planning authority through the granting of planning permission for the site). If, following this marketing these plots have not sold, and sufficient evidence is provided that there is not likely to be market interest in the plot(s), the applicant will be able to develop the land for further market housing.

Core Policy 41: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership

3.233. With high house prices and the significant need for affordable homes in the district, the conversion of existing housing to flats or maisonettes makes a relatively small but important contribution to the housing stock and meeting housing needs. However, sub-division can have negative impacts on amenity due to the increased occupancy that normally results from sub-division. The design and/or location of some residential areas within our urban areas has meant that houses in these areas have attracted higher levels of sub-division leading to concerns about parking and traffic congestion and loss of local character. It is also

important the living conditions of residents of Home in Multiple Ownership (HMO) is satisfactory.

3.234. Subdivision of a building, including any part it, used as a dwellinghouse for use as two or more separate dwelling houses constitutes development and planning permission is required. However, planning permission is not required when converting from a dwelling house or flat to an HMO property, which is a small-shared house of up to six unrelated individuals.

Core Policy 41: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership

Proposals for the conversion of existing dwellings to provide two or more self-contained units of accommodation or to a large HMO will be permitted provided that they would be unlikely to cause demonstrable harm to the amenities and privacy of neighbouring properties.

The Council will expect proposals to comply with parking standards. When considering proposals, the Council will have regard to the sites location in relation to the town centre and public transport provision, and the existing street parking conditions in the locality.

Development Policy 4: Residential Caravans

3.235. A caravan may be required for a temporary period for example to house a key worker or a family member while they construct or renovate their own house. In such cases, provided there are no overriding planning objections on highway, amenity or servicing grounds, a planning consent may be granted on a temporary basis and will only be granted on the understanding that alternative permanent accommodation is sought. Planning permissions may not automatically be renewed at the end of the specified time-period.

Development Policy 4: Residential Caravans

Planning permission will be granted for residential caravans to be located for a temporary period within the curtilage of a house or in close association with an existing land use provided that:

- i. The proposal does not cause demonstrable harm to the amenities of adjacent residents, or the character and appearance of the surrounding area;**
- ii. The proposal can provide a safe and convenient access, and**
- iii. It is the intention of the applicant to seek alternative permanent accommodation prior to the expiration of the temporary consent.**

Core Policy 42: Travelling Communities

3.236. We are required to plan for different groups in the community including for travellers. In August 2015, the Government published its amended Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) with its overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers (gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople, boat dwellers). It emphasised the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development for these groups. Gypsies, Travellers and travelling show people are entitled to specific types of accommodation that allow them to continue with their traditional and nomadic way of life.

3.237. The 2015 National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires Local Planning Authorities, in producing their Local Plan, to identify a 5-year supply of deliverable sites. In 2016 the Government also published draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for boat dwellers and caravans.

3.238. The Cherwell Local Plan (2015) Policy BSC 6: Travelling Communities provides a sequential and criteria-based approach for considering planning applications and sets out targets for the provision of pitches and plots. The targets in the policy are to provide 19 (net) additional pitches to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers from 2012 to 2031 and 24 (net) additional plots for Travelling Showpeople from 2012 to 2031. The Council's 2022 AMR shows that as at 31 March 2022, the

total supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches was 65, which is a net gain of 8 pitches since 1 April 2017, however there are no pending planning applications.

3.239. The most up to date assessment of need is the 2017 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). A new study is being completed and will be published along-side our proposed Submission Plan next year which will set out the Council's confirmed Policy approach, including the updated identified need for the plan period up to 2040. This will also include information about the needs of boat dwellers.

3.240. We think it is important that sites have access to services, facilities and potential sources of employment, promoting inclusive communities but which will not be out of scale with nearby settled communities. The distances set are considered a reasonable walking/cycling distance and limit the distance needed to travel by private car if this is necessary.

Core Policy 42: Travelling Communities

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers should be within 3km road distance of the built-up limits of our Main Towns, Local Service Centres or Larger Villages. Other locations will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Locations within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Oxfordshire Green Belt are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

The following criteria will be considered in assessing the suitability of sites:

- i. **Access to GP and other health services;**
- ii. **Access to schools;**
- iii. **Avoiding areas at risk of flooding;**
- iv. **Access to the highway network;**
- v. **The potential for significant noise and other disturbance;**
- vi. **The potential for harm to the historic and natural environment;**
- vii. **The ability to provide a satisfactory living environment;**

- viii. The need to make efficient and effective use of land;
- ix. Deliverability, including whether utilities can be provided cost effectively and without significant impact;
- x. The existing level of local provision, and
- xi. The availability of alternatives to applicants.

QUESTION 25: Do you agree with our approach for assessing the suitability of sites for travelling communities?

Landscape

Core Policy 43: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape

3.241. Cherwell enjoys a varied and distinctive local landscape character that is greatly valued by the community. A small part of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) is within the north-west of the district. We will use the policies in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan to assess any development proposals within the designated area.

3.242. The character of the Cherwell landscape is formed by many different factors including landform, drainage, geology, farming practices, land uses, ecology, settlement patterns and forms of enclosure. It is important that those features that positively add to the local character are protected wherever possible.

3.243. Cherwell falls within three areas of Natural England's National Character Areas, which it uses to define a specific combination of landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, history, culture and economic activity in the area. These are:

- NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands
- NCA 107 Cotswolds
- NCA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales

3.244. The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) defines 19 landscape character types across Cherwell. It identifies the

'forces for change' in a particular location and includes landscape/biodiversity strategies that set guidelines for how developments can contribute towards landscape character. Further landscape sensitivity character assessments have been undertaken to inform this Local Plan. Further landscape character assessments will also be prepared to inform our final plan.

3.245. We also recognise that local landscape features are important elements of our local landscape character and identity. Insensitive development can cause harm to the character and setting of such features and the surrounding countryside. Such important features include Muswell Hill, Crouch Hill, Madmarston Hill, the River Cherwell and Otmoor. Many form landmarks valued by our local communities.

3.246. Other key landforms and landscape features identified, particularly around Banbury and Bicester are:

- The open and agricultural setting and identity of the outlying villages surrounding Banbury and Bicester, many with locally distinctive historic cores;
- Ironstone ridges and valleys;
- Medieval ridge and furrow;
- The historic villages and parkland of Hanwell and Wroxton;
- Broughton Castle and Grade II Registered Park;
- Crouch Hill, an important landmark overlooking Banbury and the surrounding area:
- The landscape to the east of the M40 motorway at Banbury which retains a distinct historic pattern;
- Salt Way and other ancient routeway and their setting;
- The Sor Brook Valley;
- The setting of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridor;
- Specific features at Bicester noted for their value include those showing notable 'time depth' including Former RAF Bicester, Wretchwick deserted medieval village, Bignell Park and the Roman roads;
- Graven Hill and Blackthorn Hill that contrast with the relatively flat surrounding landform;

- The River Ray floodplains, and
- Cropredy Bridge Historic Battlefield.

3.247. Inward investment into the district should not come at the expense of the valued landscapes that make the district a pleasurable place to live and work. We recognise the need for landscape enhancement and that innovative changes to landscapes are sometimes required in order to reinforce aspects that make areas special. Development proposals should demonstrate how they represent a sensitive and contextual response to the landscape to ensure they respond positively to landscape areas and features.

3.248. Many of our settlements are located within or adjacent to landscapes valued by their local communities. There is therefore particular significance placed on the fringe areas of these settlements to ensure a sensitive transition is achieved between built environments and the open countryside. Development proposals set in close proximity to these fringe areas will need to give special regard to their impact on landscape character of nearby rural areas. Greater emphasis in terms of visual impact will be placed on proposals that would extend the boundaries of a settlement into the open countryside.

3.249. Development proposals will be expected to justify any loss of woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features that are important to the character of local landscapes as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value. Retention of these features should be prioritised, and any harm should be minimised and appropriately mitigated against.

3.250. Our most up to date landscape evidence and design guidance will be used to assess development proposals in terms of design and appearance to ensure that the type of development, scale and design enhance their immediate and wider setting with the landscape. Innovative design proposals using contemporary construction techniques and architectural styles will be assessed in terms of how they complement the landscapes in which they are located.

3.251. When considering the effect on landscape character, development proposals should not be viewed in isolation. The introduction of numerous clusters of built forms across a landscape can change the way the landscape is perceived and enjoyed. We will consider the cumulative impacts of developments on the landscape when considering development proposals to assess if the combined impact would cause excessive harm to the landscape and, therefore, be regarded as unacceptable.

Core Policy 43: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape

Development proposals will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the landscape through the restoration, management and enhancement of existing areas, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- i. **Cause an unacceptable visual intrusion into the open countryside;**
- ii. **Be inconsistent with local character;**
- iii. **Introduce disturbances to areas with a high level of tranquillity;**
- iv. **Cause coalescence between settlements;**
- v. **Harm the setting of natural and built landmark features, or**
- vi. **Reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.**

All major developments proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

In determining development proposals within or adjacent to the Cotswolds National Landscape, great weight will be given to

conserving and enhancing the area's scenic beauty and landscape qualities, including its wildlife and heritage.

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan will be used as supplementary guidance in decision making relevant to the National Landscape.

Development proposals within the National Landscape will only be permitted if they are small scale, sustainably located and designed, and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of the area.

Green Belt

Core Policy 44: The Oxford Green Belt

3.252. Part of the district falls within the Oxford Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; with the most important attribute of Green Belts being their openness.

Core Policy 44: The Oxford Green Belt

The Oxford Green Belt boundaries within Cherwell District will be maintained in order to:

- i. Preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;**
- ii. Check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl;**
- iii. Prevent the coalescence of settlements;**
- iv. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and**
- v. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with current government policy and other relevant Development Plan policies.

Core Policy 45: Settlement Gaps

3.253. Each of our towns and villages has its own separate identity. It is important that development on areas of open land between them is avoided where this would lead to coalescence. Some gaps are more vulnerable than others and some rural communities may feel particularly threatened where they are in close proximity to urban areas. An example might be between Banbury and Bodicote. In addition, there are villages that are separated by small stretches of open land that should be preserved to maintain the villages' identity. An example of this might include the gap between Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower.

Core Policy 45: Settlement Gaps

Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the settlements character is retained, and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements.

Development proposals, will only be permitted where:

- i. **The physical and visual separation between the two separate settlements is not diminished;**
- ii. **Cumulatively, with other existing or proposed development, it does not compromise the physical and visual separation between settlements, and**
- iii. **It does not lead to a loss of environmental or historical assets that individually or collectively contribute towards their local identity.**

Design

Core Policy 46: Achieving Well-Designed Places

3.254. Our places are at the heart of everything we do, whether for work, shop, for leisure and recreation, to visit and for living. It is therefore essential we support high quality and healthy places that are accessible

and inclusively designed for people at different stages of life and with different abilities, including, children, young people, adults, families and the elderly. All new development should contribute to the creation or enhancement of well-designed and well-built places that are inclusive and benefit people and communities through all aspects of their life.

3.255. The National Design Guide, first published by government in 2019, addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities in the form of ten characteristics that are shown by **Figure 7**.

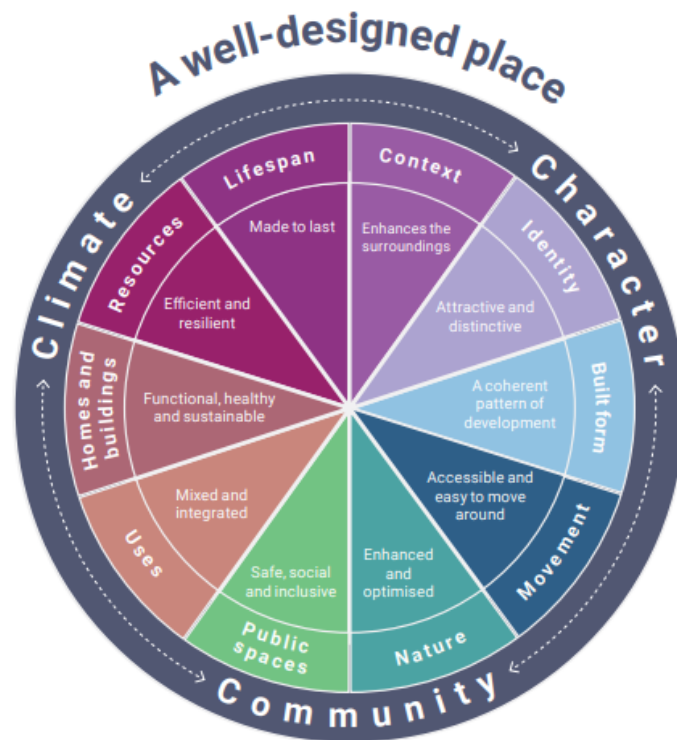


Figure 7: The ten characteristics of well-designed places (National Design Guide)

3.256. We are committed to securing exemplary standards of design across the district that contribute positively to vibrant, sustainable, safe and attractive places for our communities, whether in an urban or rural setting.

3.257. We also recognise that innovation and sustainability can provide the foundation to creating healthy and sustainable places. We will therefore promote exemplar architectural innovation in appropriate locations, for example, within our strategic site allocations.

3.258. Buildings are an important component of places and proposals for development. However good design also involves careful attention to other important components of our places. These can include:

- The context and setting of proposed places and buildings;
- The existing and proposed hard and soft landscape;
- Technical infrastructure, such as transport, utilities, and drainage, and
- Social infrastructure that supports social, commercial, and leisure activities.

3.259. A well-designed place is therefore unlikely to be achieved by just focusing on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including the layout, the form and scale of buildings, their appearance, landscape, materials, their detailing, and supporting infrastructure.

3.260. Where appropriate, proposals should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the district. The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD, Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Appraisal, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds National Landscape guidance documents are all key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

3.261. Masterplans are an important tool used by designers to set out the strategy for a new development and to demonstrate that the general layout, scale and other aspects of the design are based on good urban design principles. The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD sets out the principles of good design that must be demonstrated through the preparation of a masterplan as part of applications for major development and development of allocated sites. These, and other masterplans, should

be produced in partnership with Cherwell District Council, the community and other stakeholders. For smaller developments, proposals need only be supported by a design and access statement which should provide a detailed design assessment proportionate to the scheme proposed.

Residential Extensions

3.262. The quality of both the urban and rural environments can very often be adversely affected by residential extensions. Insensitive designs and styles, together with the use of discordant materials, often detract from traditional street scenes within which modern developments may have otherwise been sympathetically introduced. The Council, in dealing with planning applications for house extensions, will therefore pay particular regard to details of scale, design and materials so as to ensure that the character of an area is maintained.

Public Realm

3.263. Investing in the quality of the public realm and the space between buildings is as important as investing in the quality of new buildings, all of which together, create the places in which we live, work, visit and enjoy. Design should always be inclusive, and the design of the public realm and outdoor spaces should cater for all potential users.

3.264. Good quality landscaping is a fundamental part of successful outdoor spaces. It is essential that landscape schemes/designs evolve alongside the architectural designs to ensure that there is a strong relationship between buildings and spaces. Trees and plants are important elements of any landscape scheme as they provide visual interest, add colour, shape and texture that help to frame outside spaces and make them more attractive. The careful choice of hard surface materials can have a big impact on the success and overall quality of outdoor spaces. In selecting materials for hard surfacing, thought should be given to their durability, compatibility with the local context, and relationship with the overall design vision. It is also important to consider practical issues of any landscape scheme, such as lifespan and climate

resilience, it is important that the benefits are long term, and how maintenance requirements will be managed over time.

Public art

3.265. Public art is an excellent way to add interest, create a sense of place and provide a focal point. The Council will work with developers to bring about the incorporation of public art into schemes where this is important to establish or reinforce a sense of place and identity. Public art should not be seen as an embellishment of a scheme or appear as an add-on or afterthought. Rather, it should be part of design considerations from the start and integrated into the overall design concept. Opportunities to reflect local culture and heritage should also be explored.

Secure by design

3.266. High quality design means creating places that are safe for all, and where crime and disorder, including terrorism, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. New developments should be designed to meet the principles and physical security standards of the Secure by Design scheme. Secure by Design is proven to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and provides a well-established approach for designing safer developments to minimise opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour, and for creating spaces that reduce the fear of crime for everyone.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods

3.267. The 20-minute neighbourhood is about creating attractive, interesting, safe, walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively for short distances from home to the destinations that they visit and the services they need to use day to day, such as for shopping, school, community and healthcare facilities, places of work, green spaces, and more. These places need to be easily accessible on foot, by cycle or by public transport, and accessible to everyone, whatever their budget or physical ability, without having to use a car. This is partly why the strategy set out within this plan focuses

development to the most sustainable and accessible places and where there are maximum opportunities for delivering enhancements, especially by using sustainable modes of transport. The 20-minute neighbourhood idea is also about strengthening local economies by keeping jobs and money local and thus facilitating local food production, to help create jobs and the supply affordable and healthy food, more locally for all.



Figure 8: The 20-Minute Neighbourhood

The Circular Economy

3.268. In addition to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, the Local Plan also supports a ‘circular economy’ principle, that aims to keep resources in use as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them, minimising waste and promoting resource efficiency. This approach helps to minimise the use of new materials, and we will therefore encourage circular economy principles to be taken into account throughout the design process. These principles are:

- Building in layers – ensuring that different parts of the building are accessible and can be maintained and replaced where necessary;
- Designing out waste – ensuring that waste reduction is planned in from project inception to completion, including consideration of

- standardised components, modular build and re-use of secondary products and materials;
- Designing for longevity;
 - Designing for adaptability or flexibility;
 - Designing for disassembly, and
 - Using systems, elements or materials that can be re-used and recycled.

Core Policy 46: Achieving Well Designed Places

All new development will be expected to complement and enhance its surroundings through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. Poorly designed developments will not be permitted.

New development proposals should:

- i. **Be designed to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and healthy places for living and working;**
- ii. **Be designed to improve the quality, function, and appearance of its locality;**
- iii. **Deliver buildings, places and public spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions, including resilience to the effects of climate change;**
- iv. **Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and densities;**
- v. **Adopt the principles of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods where appropriate;**
- vi. **Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within Conservation Areas and their setting;**
- vii. **Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing**

- streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages;
- viii. Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette;
 - ix. Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through actively and sustainably, and have recognisable landmark features;
 - x. Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high-quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed;
 - xi. Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space;
 - xii. Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation;
 - xiii. Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation consider sustainable design and layout at the outset, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also refer to the climate change policies set out within this plan);
 - xiv. Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Core Policy 53: Green Infrastructure). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro-climate, and air pollution and provide

attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality ;

- xv. Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible;
- xvi. Demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced, and
- xvii. Not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties.

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, masterplans and Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.

Active Travel

Core Policy 47: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling

3.269. Prioritising active travel infrastructure, including connections between town centres, villages and to transport hubs is vital to reducing emissions from transport, especially the private car. Reducing dependence on the private car will help the creation of a net-zero carbon transport network, and help tackle traffic congestion.

3.270. To increase uptake in active travel modes, specifically walking and cycling, we will give greater priority to walkers, cyclists, and public transport within our road space. We will also seek improvements to our public realm making our places more attractive for walking and cycling. Our objective of creating public spaces and green routes that are open and accessible to all help will also play a role in encouraging active travel.

3.271. The IDP (2022) outlines the planned improvement works to the district's transport network, including walking and cycling routes. Oxfordshire County Council's Active Travel Strategy supports the LTCP in its vision to create an inclusive and safe net-zero transport system, with a focus on active travel modes.

3.272. Additional guidance on encouraging walking and cycling is provided in Cherwell's Residential Design Guide SPD. The design criteria for accommodating pedestrians and cyclists are detailed in Oxfordshire's Walking and Cycling Design and Street Design guides.

Core Policy 47: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling

The Council will support the delivery of public realm improvements and infrastructure designed to create attractive places that make walking and cycling a safer, healthier, and more attractive as a travel choice.

New development and infrastructure proposals should:

- i. **Promote walking and cycling by ensuring proposals give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability;**
- ii. **Deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs;**
- iii. **Ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and public rights of way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate;**

- iv. Identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicted active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements;
- v. Reduce road danger from other transport modes;
- vi. Be expected to enable and contribute towards improvements and delivery of local and strategic active travel routes and links as identified in the Bicester, Banbury Kidlington and Heyford Park Area Strategies and associated IDP and LCWIPS, and
- vii. Ensure provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Oxfordshire County Council latest guidance.

Core Policy 48: Public Rights of Way (PROW)

3.273. Cherwell benefits from many hundreds of miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW). They are a valuable resource for local people to support healthy and active lifestyles and they form an important component of our strategy for sustainable transport. PROW are protected in law. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for managing and maintaining this extensive network alongside local councils and land-managers. It prepares an Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Plan, and a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

3.274. We will expect new development to contribute towards mitigation measures for any part of the PROW network negatively impacted by development proposals.

Core Policy 48: Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way will be protected and enhanced to ensure access to public rights of way and the connectivity of these networks.

Any development that will result in the loss of a Public Rights of Way or significant reduction in amenity or connectivity will not be permitted. In exceptional cases, development that negatively affects

a public right of way may be permitted where it is essential that an alternative route is provided or where an altered public right of way provides better access for users or more connections to wider networks. Any changes to public rights of way requires a separate legal process.

Health

Core Policy 49: Health Facilities

3.275. The provision of health services in the district is overseen by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS), which has recently been formed to replace the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG). It works in partnership with others across the health and care system to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.

3.276. A Health and Wellbeing Board for Oxfordshire also exists to ensure effective joint working and cooperation throughout the system. The strategic focus of Oxfordshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023 is to:

- Prevent avoidable illnesses;
- Reduce need for treatment, and
- Lower the impact of illness by supporting independence and delaying the need for care.

3.277. As part of their work the Health and Wellbeing Board regularly produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) a study looking at current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of residents. The JSNA (2021) is a snapshot of local health circumstance, priority and need that can be directly applied to inform vision statements, healthy place-shaping and prioritise healthy urban design features to ensure developments are supportive of public health and the Local Plan Vision.

3.278. To ensure that development promotes and contributes to a healthy living environment, proposals should consider health outcomes as early as possible, including at the vision document and pre-application stage. All major development proposals will be required to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to maximise the opportunities for promoting healthy lifestyles within new development in accordance with Core Policy 50. HIAs should be prepared following the methodology set out in the Oxfordshire HIA toolkit.

3.279. We will continue to work closely with healthcare providers, partners and the NHS across its delivery bodies to:

- Ensure the provision of additional and reconfigured health and social care facilities;
- Identify the anticipated primary care needs of local communities;
- Identify the capacity needs of local communities, and
- Meet the healthcare requirements of local communities.

3.280. Our last local plan identified a need for more GP provision in Bicester and some progress has been made in securing expanded facilities for the growing town. We do, however, recognise that further additional provision is required.

3.281. Primary care facilities for Banbury, the Kidlington area, and the rural areas more generally are also at or nearing capacity and this Plan seeks to address these capacity issues by supporting new health facilities in appropriate locations.

Core Policy 49: Health Facilities

The Council will support the provision, extension and co-location of health facilities in sustainable locations.

Facilities should:

- Be designed to accommodate a range of health-related services through multifunctional and adaptable facilities;**
- Be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. and**

- iii. **Be informed by discussion with relevant health providers to ensure facilities meet the identified health needs of the communities they are intended to serve.**

Core Policy 50: Creating Healthy Communities

3.282. Evidence suggests that only 10% of our health and well-being is determined by access to health care. The rest is largely influenced by our lifestyle, behaviours and interaction with urban and green and blue environments, which in turn influences our social, mental and physical health and wellbeing.

3.283. We know planning influences health, but do we really appreciate just how much? Cancer, mental health and dementia are things we will all experience directly or indirectly in our lives, and when they happen, there isn't anything we wouldn't give to have prevented it. The Local Plan, the policies it contains and the influence it has on planning will have more power to prevent these conditions than the NHS will ever be able to treat, and yet we often don't communicate it, and the opportunities to prevent them, and the often-disproportionate distribution to our most vulnerable members of society are lessened as a consequence.

3.284. We therefore consider that significant benefits for local people can be achieved by adopting the principles of Healthy Place Shaping as we plan for housing, infrastructure and the economy together with planning for our residents' health and well-being.

3.285. The principles of healthy place shaping are based on the following three concepts:

1. Shaping the built environment, green spaces and infrastructure at a local level to improve health and well-being;
2. Working with local people and local organisations, schools etc to engage them in planning and enjoying the health benefits of places, facilities and services through 'community activation', and

3. Re-shaping health, well-being and care services and the infrastructure which supports them to achieve health benefits, including health services, social care, leisure and recreation services, and community facilities.

Core Policy 50: Creating Healthy Communities

The Council will support and promote developments that aim to reduce health inequalities, promote healthier lifestyles and improve the health and well-being of our existing and new communities more generally by requiring all major developments to:

- i. **Include health and wellbeing as a key section in Vision Documents and pre-application discussions and outline planning applications, communicating how the project supports the delivery of local health objectives, priorities and needs (as detailed in the JSNA);**
- ii. **Be supported by an appropriate and proportionate Health Impact Assessment;**
- iii. **Contribute towards shaping healthy communities by demonstrating that they adhere to the following principles to deliver high-quality sustainable places:**
 - a. **Address the projected health and wellbeing needs of an area, including addressing health inequalities and avoiding and mitigating any adverse health and sustainability impacts;**
 - b. **Design in opportunities for people to be more active e.g. street layout and public realm to encourage walking and cycling as modes of transport, open spaces/green spaces for play and recreation, sports and leisure;**
 - c. **Enable good mental wellbeing through reducing social isolation and loneliness by encouraging social community infrastructure and opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another;**
 - d. **Enable access to green spaces and connection with nature to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing and to deliver multiple benefits for people, place and the environment;**

- e. Provide diversity in the residential offer that improves accessibility, affordability and promotes inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods, and
- f. Make it easier for people to make healthier food choices by promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally sourced food, for example by providing opportunities for food growing.

Services and Facilities

Core Policy 51: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

3.286. Our proposed Spatial Strategy aims to focus development in the most accessible parts of the district thus helping to ensure that development is well served by public transport links and the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure.

3.287. Our approach to infrastructure planning will seek to identify the infrastructure required to meet growth, and support site allocations. We will ensure delivery by:

- Working with partners, including central Government, and other local authorities, to provide physical, community and green infrastructure;
- Identifying infrastructure needs and costs, phasing of infrastructure delivery, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery;
- Updating our Developer Contributions SPD, and
- Ensuring that development proposals demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.

3.288. The Area Strategies provide details about our key infrastructure requirements.

Core Policy 51: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from development proposals. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by developers and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.

Where infrastructure will serve more than one site, developers will be expected to collaborate to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the shared supporting infrastructure. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all other relevant policies of this plan.

If infrastructure requirements could render a development unviable, proposals should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council, and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence the Council will:

- i. Prioritise developer contributions having regard to the detailed requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and/or**
- ii. Use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, or**
- iii. As a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements, taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere, including CIL.**

The Council's Delivering Infrastructure Strategy will include a CIL Charging Schedule and a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document that will provide more detail about its approach

to securing developer contributions and how it will balance infrastructure funding through CIL and Section 106 agreements.

Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.

Where not funded by CIL, infrastructure and services, including maintenance of the infrastructure, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, levy, undertaking and/or other agreement as secured through the planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.

Core Policy 52: Meeting Education Needs

3.289. The provision of new or extended primary and secondary education together with early years, tertiary and lifelong learning provision will be required during the plan period to meet the needs of our growing population.

3.290. We will support the growth plans of schools across the district and we recognise the important role that viable schools have to play in maintaining and contributing to community cohesion.

3.291. Oxfordshire County Council, as the Local Education Authority, has a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places to meet demand across the district.

3.292. We will work with the County Council and others to provide nursery, primary and secondary schools, further and higher education facilities, community learning facilities, special schools, free schools and other educational facilities. This will include appropriate provision for the strategic site allocations set out in this plan.

3.293. Our support for education may include seeking the provision of new schools, contributions towards these facilities, or contributions towards expanding existing facilities. Our previous adopted Local Plan identified a need for a new secondary school at Banbury and a site to the south of the Longford Park development has been proposed. Oxfordshire County Council has advised that this school is still required, therefore we will continue to safeguard this land.

3.294. We will seek to ensure that new and extended schools are built to the highest sustainable construction standards. New facilities should also be designed to be flexible enough to accommodate the future changing needs of users and the communities they serve. Where appropriate, the use of school and college buildings and land after hours, will be encouraged to support learning across the wider community and community use of education facilities, for example sport and recreation facilities, will be supported.

3.295. Any new school buildings not identified within this plan should be located in sustainable locations on the edge or within the built-up limits of settlements.

3.296. The district has historically had a relatively low education and skills base. We will therefore encourage development that will diversify and develop the skills base of the district in the future. This will include the requirement for developers to produce and implement Community Employment Plans when developing major sites.

3.297. The Council's Developer Contributions SPD provides further details on how developer contributions for education facilities will be sought.

Core Policy 52: Meeting Education Needs

The Council, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and others, will ensure the provision of pre-school, school, community learning, and other facilities that provide for the education needs, and skills development, of our communities. New educational buildings should be located in sustainable locations and built to net

zero standards as required by Core Policy 4. Wherever possible, schools should be located within close proximity to other services and facilities to create community hubs.

Education facilities should be designed to:

- i. **Achieve a high degree of environmental efficiency to minimise running costs;**
- ii. **Provide a safe, secure and pleasant learning environment;**
- iii. **Be located to promote sustainable and active modes of travel, and**
- iv. **Be designed to enable future expansion, if required.**

Core Policy 53: Public Services and Utilities

3.298. Securing investment in strategic infrastructure such as water, waste, sewerage, electricity and digital connections helps address both current and future needs.

3.299. Gas, electricity and heat supply and investment in electricity infrastructure is provided by the private sector and the Council will continue to work with providers to ensure the necessary services to strategic sites are available. Developers should consult with the relevant utility companies in identifying the infrastructure requirements and constraints to a development site. Developers will need to take account of the location of existing services and will need to contribute financially to their relocation on development sites.

3.300. Thames Water, Anglian Water, and Severn Trent Water provide the majority of the water supply and waste services in the district. The Council will work with the water companies to plan the delivery of specific projects. The County Council are the Planning Authority for waste-water services in the County. The management and disposal of waste-water and sewage sludge is contained within Policy W10 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy. Planning application for waste-water treatment are also determined by the County Council in consultation with the district. The Oxfordshire Minerals

and Waste Local Plan is part of the development plan, against which the District Council must consider planning applications.

3.301. The internet provides an opportunity to reduce the need to travel as recommended in the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Good internet connectivity means that location is increasingly less important for businesses and enables greater possibilities for home-working. The Local Plan therefore recognises the role of the internet and seeks to promote it as a means of reducing the need to travel and supporting the economy. The provision of high-speed broadband will support new and relocating businesses as well as facilitating home-working for residents.

3.302. Increasing provision of gigabit capable broadband coverage across the district in line with the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Programme will help deliver the rollout of next-generation mobile broadband particularly in rural areas. Development proposals will ensure there are connections to a number of internet providers offering high speed broadband and the latest mobile data connectivity where possible.

3.303. Oxfordshire currently has good levels of superfast broadband connectivity. Between 2014 and 2021 the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme has increased superfast broadband availability from 69% to 98% of premises across the county. In March 2022, approximately 22% of premises in the county had full fibre connectivity. The digital infrastructure program aims to achieve 99% superfast coverage and 23.5% gigabit capable coverage by the end of 2022.

3.304. We will ensure the provision of gigabit capable broadband connectivity to all new developments, and supports network enhancements including supporting infrastructure, to provide high speed broadband to all existing homes and businesses in the district. It is essential that the strategic site allocations provide appropriate infrastructure to ensure all properties can be connected to high-speed broadband without any further works post development.

Core Policy 53: Public Services and Utilities

The Council will support proposals that involve new or improvements to public services/utilities if they are required to enable the delivery of sites and where they accord with other relevant policies in the Development Plan.

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to promote faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications and allow businesses and residents to access services and information more effectively, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel.

All new developments will be required to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to enable access to high-speed broadband and mobile data connectivity from a range of providers.

Core Policy 54: Local Services and Community Facilities

3.305. Local services and community facilities make a significant contribution towards the health, wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. They also assist in maintaining healthy and inclusive communities, sustainable travel patterns and local employment opportunities. Such facilities include town, village and neighbourhood shops, post offices, pubs, community centres and halls, theatres and museums, sports and leisure facilities, schools, libraries, doctor's surgeries and health centres, places of worship and other facilities which meet people's day to day needs.

3.306. The sustainability and social cohesion of our communities can be harmed when these facilities are lost, particularly in the rural areas.

3.307. In recognition of this, the Government, through the Localism Act, has introduced the Community Right to Bid whereby communities can apply for services and facilities which further the wellbeing or social interest of the local community to be listed as Assets of Community Value.

We will have regard to these designations when considering planning proposals for a change of use.

3.308. We will resist the loss of local services and community facilities. In considering such proposals, the Council, in consultation with the local community, will take into account the importance of the facility to the local community particularly in meeting day to day needs.

3.309. To justify the loss of facilities, it will need to be demonstrated that they are no longer viable and are no longer required because equivalent or alternative provision will remain, or will be provided to meet local needs.

3.310. For commercially run facilities such as local shops and pubs, the Council considers that a robust marketing exercise is the most transparent way of demonstrating that such facilities are no longer viable. This allows local communities to consider making a bid to run or acquire premises of value through the Community Right to Bid.

3.311. In seeking to justify the loss of local services or community facilities, applicants will also be required to consider whether existing premises or sites can be adapted to retain a viable community facility or service. In the case of the potential loss of any healthcare facilities, the Council will have regard to relevant circumstances including any programme of modernisation/rationalisation by the NHS.

3.312. In 2016/2017 the Council commissioned a 'Cherwell Community Spaces and Development Study (CCSDS) to provide evidence and policy proposals to inform community development and community indoor space provision in relation to new housing developments. The CCSDS Study recommended a local minimum standard of provision for community hall facilities required to meet the needs of residents generated by new development. That minimum standard is 0.185m² per person. The Study also supported the value of having a Community Development Worker available at an early stage in a new development to 'kick start' the process of bringing people together, developing new activities and putting in place the building blocks of a

strong community. We will therefore seek financial contributions towards the provision of a community activation fund and community development worker for its strategic allocations.

3.313. We will apply this standard to all residential developments of 10 or more dwellings which generate a requirement for additional or improved community hall provision. This may include financial contributions and/or the provision of land and buildings to enable new community facilities to be provided or for existing facilities to be extended or improved.

Core Policy 54: Local Services and Community Facilities

The Council will support the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities, and will encourage partnership working to ensure that provision is maintained to meet the needs of local communities by;

- i. **Protecting and enhancing the quality of existing facilities;**
- ii. **Improving access to existing facilities, and**
- iii. **Ensuring that development proposals contribute towards the provision of new or improved facilities where the development would generate a need which cannot be met by existing provision.**

Development proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities and services will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that:

- iv. **Appropriate alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, will remain, and**
- v. **In the case of pubs, shops and other commercially run services and facilities, the existing use is no longer viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted to retain a viable service or facility including as a community run enterprise. A robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate that the use or premises is unviable in accordance with separate guidance published by the Council.**

In considering development proposals for the loss of local services and community facilities, the Council will have regard to whether a site or facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Development Policy 5: Hot Food Takeaways

3.314. We are committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for its local residents, and to reduce health inequalities. One of the challenges we face in promoting healthy eating is the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in local neighbourhoods, including the prevalence of hot food takeaways in some areas. We will therefore support opportunities for communities to access a wider choice of healthier food options and resist the proliferation of particular types of hot food takeaways in inappropriate locations, such as adjacent to schools and playgrounds.

3.315. Hot food takeaways also have the potential to cause nuisance to nearby residents due to general activity, particularly during the late evening, cooking odours, increased traffic movements and litter.

3.316. To minimise the likelihood of disturbance, hot food takeaways will be resisted in predominantly residential areas unless the premises are situated within a neighbourhood shopping centre or other commercial frontage. Even in those situations, permission may be refused if an existing residential property is likely to experience nuisance. In predominantly residential areas, we will seek to impose planning conditions to limit the late-night opening hours of hot food takeaways.

3.317. Proposals for hot food takeaways in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington town/village centres are likely to be acceptable without restriction on hours of opening unless the proximity of existing residential property is such that any restriction would be justified in order to protect residential amenity.

Development Policy 5: Hot Food Takeaways

Proposals for hot food takeaways will only be permitted provided they:

- i. **Would not result in significant harm to the amenity of local residents, or highway safety;**
- ii. **Would not result in harmful cumulative impacts because of any existing or consented outlets in the immediate vicinity, and**
- iii. **The proposal is not located within a five-minute walk of a school or playground, unless within an established local shopping centre.**

Core Policy 55: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

3.318. The responsibility for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the district is shared between ourselves, Oxfordshire County Council, local town and parish councils, education providers, and private sports clubs and associations. We will continue to work with these partners to deliver the required facilities to meet the needs of our communities.

3.319. Well designed, attractive and functional open space, including allotments and other community food growing schemes are essential for health and wellbeing, as well as the creation and maintenance of attractive, strong and vibrant communities. It can also play a role in biodiversity enhancement and mitigating the negative effects of climate change.

3.320. Our existing evidence, which is based on surveys undertaken in 2018, for open space and play provision recommended that the standards for play space set out in our 2015 Plan should be retained. This evidence is being reviewed and will inform the next stage of the Local Plan.

3.321. Our emerging Playing Pitch Strategy identifies shortfalls of provision to meet quantitative needs for football, rugby union and hockey (both natural grass pitches and artificial grass pitches) and recommends

qualitative improvements to pitches for all pitch sports and associated facilities. It also identifies capacity shortfalls, particularly for tennis facilities.

3.322. Initial indications from the 2022 Built Facilities Study are that there is a requirement to continue to invest in indoor and built facilities in Cherwell. There is at least a need for new provision in the Bicester area in order to support expected population growth. This could take the form of an expansion of the existing leisure centre provision.

3.323. There is also a requirement for a long-term plan to replace/refurbish/possibly extend the swimming pool facilities at Kidlington and Gosford leisure centre.

3.324. All development proposals should investigate and maximise opportunities to enhance open space, play, sport and recreation facilities, particularly in areas of deficiency in quantity and quality. Where it is not feasible or appropriate to deliver new provision on site, new development can help to enhance existing provision locally.

3.325. All proposals, where appropriate, will be required to comply with the Council's local standards for the provision of open space as set out in Table 11 or any subsequent updates.

3.326. The minimum size of provision and thresholds for on-site provision are intended to act as a guide to developers. The precise composition of the provision will depend on the details of the proposal and its location. For example, combined play area schemes or other innovative proposals may be preferable to the provision of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in some cases.

3.327. The underlying principles are that all new dwellings should contribute towards the provision of open space. Where on-site provision is not achievable or appropriate a financial contribution will be sought from developers towards the improvement of provision elsewhere in the locality. It may also be appropriate to seek green space provision or a

contribution towards such provision in association with non-residential development.

3.328. In addition, we encourage developers to design schemes that provide ‘play friendly’ environments, such as pocket parks and play streets. Such schemes will need to be considered at the initial design stage and we will take measures to ensure that well maintained, attractive and safe environments for children’s play.

| Type of Provision | Accessibility Standard | Minimum Size of Provision | Threshold for on-site provision |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Play space (combining provision for younger and older provision, including MUGAs) | 5 minutes walk (400m) except for NEAPs | LAP – 100 sqm activity zone; 400 sqm including buffer zone | 10 dwellings |
| | | LEAP – 400sqm activity zone; 3600 sqm including buffer | 50 dwellings |
| | | NEAP – 1000 sqm activity zone; 8500 sqm including buffer | 100 dwellings |
| | | In some cases a combined all-age area of play will be preferable to the provision of LAPs/LEAPs/NEAPs. In addition, the provision of pocket parks, play streets and other innovative provision of pay will be encouraged in appropriate locations. | |

| Type of Provision | Accessibility Standard | Minimum Size of Provision | Threshold for on-site provision |
|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| General green space (parks and gardens, natural and semi natural/amenity green space) | 5 minute walk (amenity open space) (400m) | 200 sqm | 10 urban dwellings |
| | 15 minute walk other (1200m) | | 6 rural dwellings |
| Allotments/Community Gardens | 10 minute walk (800m) | 0.2 ha | 275 dwellings |

Table 11: Local Cherwell Standards for Leisure Provision

3.329. The requirements from developments for new sports and recreation provision will be based on the Council's up to date evidence in conjunction with the Sport England's Playing Pitch Demand Calculator. This calculates a development's playing pitch requirements, associated costs for providing the required pitches and associated ancillary facilities (such as changing rooms and car parking) to meet the demand generated by the development.

3.330. Similarly, the requirements for built sports facilities will be assessed using Sport England's Built Facilities calculator and local evidence.

3.331. Sport England will be consulted on proposals which would result in the loss of sports and recreation facilities.

Core Policy 55: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

All open spaces, sport and recreation facilities will be protected and where necessary enhanced to ensure access to a network of high-quality sport, play and recreation provision within the district.

The loss of open spaces, sports, play and recreation provision, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. An assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the provision and the function it performs is surplus to requirements, or**
- ii. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable, accessible location within the local catchment area, or**
- iii. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.**

New development is required to maximise opportunities to incorporate new publicly accessible, high quality and multi-functional open space and/or, where appropriate, enhance existing provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.

In determining the nature of new or improved sports and recreation provision the Council will be guided by the most up to date evidence and Sports England's Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Calculators. The Council will also consult with Town and Parish Councils, together with potential users wherever possible, to ensure the provision meets local needs.

The Council will require children's play, and general green space to meet the minimum standards set out in Table 11.

Where it can be clearly demonstrated that proposals are not able to incorporate new provision or enhance existing provision to serve the new community, then an appropriate financial contribution may be requested, where such contributions will provide alternative or enhanced and conveniently accessible off-site open space provision.

Development proposals on open space will only be permitted where it:

- iv. Improves the quality of the open space and promotes inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests;**

- v. Is demonstrably ancillary to the use of open space and its primary function, e.g., play/sports fields;
- vi. Contributes to both the character and amenity of the area and are appropriate and proportionate to the function and nature of the open space, and
- vii. Does not have a detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space.

Maintenance plans should be submitted at planning application stage for all new facilities to ensure their long-term quality and management.

Core Policy 56: Local Green Space

3.332. Local Green Space designation affords local communities the opportunity to identify and protect green spaces of particular importance to them, subject to criteria being met as set out in national policy.

3.333. Once designated, the level of protection given to Local Green Space is similar to that given to the Green Belt, thereby preventing inappropriate development other than in very special circumstances.

3.334. There are a number of existing designated Local Green Spaces in the district that have been created by Neighbourhood Plans. We will continue to encourage future Neighbourhood Plans to consider whether it is appropriate to designate further local green spaces.

3.335. Several proposals for Local Green Space have been received through the preparation of this plan and these have been evaluated against the criteria contained in Government guidance.

3.336. Local Green Space does not have to be publicly accessible, or in public ownership, and designation does not confer any rights of public access. However, it is important that development proposals do not compromise the community value of a space, and that opportunities are taken to enhance any community use of the site wherever possible.

QUESTION 26: Would you like to propose any sites for consideration as Local Green Spaces?

Core Policy 56: Local Green Space

Development will not be permitted within a designated Local Green Space unless consistent with the national policy approach to development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development within a designated Local Green Space will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.

The following sites are identified as Local Green Space as shown on the Policies Map and Appendix 7:

- **Derwent Green - Bicester**
- **Gavray Drive - Bicester**
- **Langford – Bicester**

The community value of a designated Local Green Space should be maintained and where appropriate, enhanced through improvements in access and community use, whilst also protecting the character of the space.

Any new development adjacent to a designated publicly accessible Local Green Space should provide active frontages to facilitate natural surveillance, as well as maintaining access points and the use of sensitive boundary treatments.

Historic Environment

Core Policies 57 - 59: Historic Environment and Archaeology

3.337. The conservation of our historic environment is key to protecting and enhancing the character of the district and ensuring that it continues to be an attractive place to live and work.

3.338. The district enjoys an extremely rich and varied historic environment, which contributes significantly to its culture, economy and tourism. This historic environment is not just limited to our built environment and archaeological sites, but also includes landscapes identified because of their history, archaeological, architectural, cultural or artistic interest.

3.339. Our 1995 Cherwell District Landscape Assessment identified four distinct landscape character areas in the district, with each displaying distinct settlement patterns, building materials and vernacular architecture to create a strong, locally distinctive urban and rural environment.

3.340. Throughout Cherwell, there are numerous designated heritage assets that enjoy statutory protection. These include approximately 2,300 Listed Buildings, 60 Conservation Areas, 38 Scheduled Monuments and 11 nationally recognised registered parks and gardens that fall fully or partially within the district, and one historic civil war battlefield. The district also contains over 200 recorded archaeological sites. In some areas the MOD's presence has influenced the built environment with Bicester Airfield and the former RAF Upper Heyford recognised as being of national historic importance. The Oxford Canal Conservation Area runs north-south through the district.

3.341. In addition, there are many non-designated heritage assets, which although not having statutory protection, represent an important aspect of the district's heritage and play a significant role in defining the local character of our towns, villages and countryside. Not all significant heritage assets are formally designated, and nationally important non-designated heritage assets are of equal importance to designated heritage assets such as schedule monuments and listed buildings.

3.342. Non-designated heritage assets of particular local importance are known as Local Heritage Assets (LHA's), these include built structures formerly known as 'locally listed' buildings and significant landscape features such as village ponds. Many Local Heritage Assets have been identified as important within Conservation Area Appraisals. We anticipate that more examples will be identified as we undertake further appraisals

and local communities, and other stakeholders will continue to have a role in identifying heritage assets.

3.343. Details of non-designated heritage assets, Local Heritage Assets, locally important historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites and find spots, are held on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.344. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a critically important part of sustainable development and a key element of this Local Plan. At the national level there is a presumption that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced in a manner that is appropriate to their significance and also enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to current and future generations.

3.345. We have a rolling programme of reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals and may use Article 4 Directions to maintain the character of our historic environment, where appropriate.

3.346. When considering development proposals there will be a strong presumption in favour of protecting, sustaining and enhancing the significance of our heritage assets and their settings. The weight to be attached to that presumption, when assessed against meeting other needs, will be dependent on a variety of factors, including:

- The significance of the heritage asset: whether it is a designated heritage asset or a non-designated heritage asset, and;
- The contribution of that part of the asset to be affected by the proposed development to the significance of the heritage interest, appearance and setting of the asset as a whole;
- Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which have equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered against policies for designated heritage assets.

3.347. In order to enable us to positively manage change by determining the appropriate balance between the need for any proposed

development and the need to safeguard the heritage asset and its setting, applicants will be required to submit a Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment which assesses the significance of the asset, and of that part to be affected. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum, and relevant Conservation Area Appraisals or design guidance notes where applicable. The Statement should provide detailed evidence to demonstrate that:

- The proposals have been formulated and any works designed with a full and proper understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and the effect of the proposals on that significance;
- The heritage asset is being put to the optimum viable use consistent with its physical conservation, and the conservation of its character and setting;
- Opportunities to sustain, enhance, to better reveal, or avoid or minimise harm to the significance of the asset have been taken; and
- The need to be met by the development could not be met in a more beneficial or less harmful way.

3.348. Where a development site has archaeological interest, an archaeological desk-based assessment will need to be submitted along with any planning application for a site. Not all heritage assets have currently been identified, so the assessment will need to consider the likelihood of previously unidentified heritage assets being present on the site.

Core Policy 57: Historic Environment and Archaeology

All development proposals should conserve and/or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of Cherwell District's historic environment, including the significance of its designated and non-designated heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation, in accordance

with legislation, national policy and guidance for the historic environment.

In determining applications, great weight and importance will be given to conserving and/or enhancing the significance of designated heritage and non-designated assets, including:

- I. The special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings, with regard to their character, fabric and their settings;
- II. The special architectural and historic interest, character and/or appearance of the District's Conservation Areas and their settings, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historic significance.
- III. The special archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether Scheduled or not), both with regard to their fabric and their settings; and
- IV. The special cultural, architectural and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.

All applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets will be expected to use appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and historic landscape context of the application site, at a level of detail proportionate to the historic significance of the asset or area, using recognised methodologies and, if necessary, a field survey. The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum. The level of assessment should be proportionate to the proposal and shall be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic, architectural and archaeological features, significance and character.

Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation.

Development will not be permitted that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or if appropriate to their significance, a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals.

Where the loss of a heritage asset is considered acceptable, the developer will be responsible for making appropriate provision for a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication that will ensure the site is preserved by record prior to destruction. Such measures will be secured either by a planning agreement or by a suitable planning condition.

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated or undesignated asset will not be approved, unless there is a clear and convincing justification in the form of substantive tangible public benefits that clearly and convincingly outweigh the harm, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

Core Policy 58: Conservation Areas

Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, appearance and setting. In particular special attention will be paid to:

- i. The location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development;
- ii. Views within, into or out of the Area;
- iii. The pattern of development and the effects to important green spaces, and other gaps or spaces between buildings and the historic street pattern which make a positive contribution to the character in the Conservation Area;
- iv. The wider social and environmental effects generated by the development; and

- v. Any loss or harm to features that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the development would make an equal or greater contribution.

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- i. The building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area; or
- ii. The building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and
- iii. Any proposed replacement building makes an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

Core Policy 59: Listed Buildings

Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, should:

- i. Conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting;
- ii. Respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context; and
- iii. Retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets

in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design, details and form.

Core Policies 60 & 61: The Oxford Canal

3.349. The Oxford Canal is an iconic structure running the length of the district through the attractive valley of the River Cherwell, and is of historic, ecological and recreational significance. Following an appraisal, the length of the canal through Cherwell District was designated as a Conservation Area in October 2012. The Conservation Area boundary has been drawn to include the towpath and towpath hedge, canal related earthworks and features including historic wharfs and locks, and woodland.

3.350. The biodiversity value of the canal is reflected in a number of statutory and non-statutory designations along the length of the canal. In terms of recreation, the canal is popular for boaters and anglers. A public footpath runs the length of the canal, and a section of the route is a public bridleway. The canal and towpath are owned and maintained by the Canal and River Trust, but the responsibility for any planning matters lies with the District Council.

Core Policy 60: The Oxford Canal

The Council will protect and enhance the Oxford Canal corridor which passes north to south through the district as a green transport route, significant industrial heritage, tourism attraction and major leisure facility through the control of development. The length of the Oxford Canal through Cherwell District is a designated Conservation Area and proposals that would be detrimental to its character or appearance will not be permitted. The biodiversity value of the canal corridor will also be protected.

The Council will support proposals to promote transport, recreation, leisure and tourism related uses of the Canal where appropriate, as well as supporting enhancement of the canal's active role in mixed used development in urban settings. The Council will ensure that the

towpath alongside the canal becomes an accessible long-distance trail for all users.

Other than appropriately located small scale car parks and picnic facilities, new facilities for canal users should be located within or immediately adjacent to settlements. The Council encourages pre-application discussions to help identify significant issues and opportunities associated with a site and to consider appropriate design solutions to these and we will seek to ensure that all new development meets the highest design standards, and is supportive of health, wellbeing and equality.

Such schemes should not compromise the use or operation of existing navigable waterway features such as junctions or locks.

All new buildings, extensions and alterations to existing buildings adjacent to the Oxford Canal should be designed to a high standard that complements the traditional characteristics of a canalside setting in terms of design, materials and landscaping.

Core Policy 61: Residential Canal Moorings

Proposals for the siting of permanent residential moorings on the Oxford Canal will only be supported when:

- i. The site is within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up limits of a settlement;**
- ii. Adequate car parking is provided;**
- iii. Moorings are compatible with adjacent land uses;**
- iv. The number and density of boats at any one point is not so great that it would act as a barrier separating people from the waterway or be detrimental to the character of the canal. Moorings will not be permitted immediately adjacent to the tow path;**
- v. They do not have negative impacts on navigation and navigational safety or operational requirements of the waterway;**
- vi. The biodiversity of the water, its margins and nearby nature conservation sites will be maintained or enhanced;**

- vii. There is adequate access for emergency services to ensure safety;
- viii. Sites have adequate accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment; and
- ix. There is adequate access to or provision of facilities and servicing, including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste;
- x. Use of any adjacent paths will not be impeded; and
- xi. The proposed development will not cause any significant adverse visual impacts or restrict the ambition for increased access to and opportunities to enjoy enhanced water related infrastructure facilities for all residents.

4. Banbury Area Strategy

Banbury Vision 2040

4.1. In 2040 Banbury will continue to be a thriving, historic market town and an important economic and social focus for its residents, visitors, for business and for a large rural hinterland.

- The town will have a diverse economic base.
- Over 5,000 homes will have been built by 2040 of which 30% will be affordable homes.
- New services, facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been provided.
- The town will be healthier, with levels of deprivation reduced.
- The town centre will be vibrant and at the heart of the town, a place to live, shop and access cultural and community facilities.
- The quality of the public realm and built environment will have been improved and new developments will be designed to a high standard.
- Air quality will have been improved and traffic congestion reduced.
- There will be more opportunities for safe, convenient active travel routes. Public transport will have been improved.
- There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public, including new wooded areas and new linear parks/green corridors.

Banbury Policies

Core Policy 62: Banbury Strategy

4.2. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Banbury is as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Overall Spatial Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver committed development and provide for some limited additional growth reflecting the topographical, landscape and rural character constraints of the town's edge; |
|---------------------------------|--|

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalise, appropriately repurpose and seek further investment in the town centre, continue to improve its built and ‘green’ environment and public realm and further develop the nighttime economy; • Continue to support and strengthen the town’s economy and diversify its skill base; • Encourage development proposals that will support education and help reduce deprivation; • Seek strategic transport improvements to encourage active travel, reduce congestion and pollution, and reduce cross town traffic by motorised vehicles; |
| <p>Banbury Area Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus new development on previously developed land within the existing urban area, particularly in the vicinity of the town centre; • Bring about Canalside regeneration, including enhancing the gateway to the town and improving access to the railway station, for the benefit of the whole town; • Encourage residential development within the town centre on appropriate sites; • Support the role of the town centre by resisting further major out of centre retail developments; • Help reduce the level of deprivation by securing benefits achieved through specific development proposals and by economic growth and diversification; • Secure a site that will provide a permanent home for Banbury United Football Club; • Deliver a new secondary school for the town; • Ensure new developments deliver improved community and health facilities; • Deliver an improved and enhanced green infrastructure network across the town, including access to green spaces, the Oxford Canal and River |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Cherwell corridor, and children’s play space, allotments and community gardens;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver schemes that reduce transport congestion, particularly along Hennef Way and in areas around the town centre; • Ensure new developments strengthen the connection between the town centre and railway station, a key gateway to the town, and • Ensure new developments deliver improved active travel routes in and around the town, radiating to surrounding villages. |
|--|--|

Question 27: What are your views on our aspirations for the Banbury area?

Housing

4.3. Since 2011, there has been an additional 4,123 homes delivered at Banbury (at 31 March 2022), with over a third (43%) of the total completions for the district at Banbury. Most of the new housing has been delivered on several large ‘strategic’ allocations on the edge the town, these include Hanwell Fields, to the north-west, and Longford Park in the south.

4.4. In addition to the houses already built, as of 31 March 2022, there were permissions (either outline or full) for a total of 2,341 additional homes at Banbury. These are primarily on sites allocated for housing in our last local plan. Many of these sites have been built, or are currently under construction.

4.5. In our 2015 Local Plan, less development was identified at Banbury compared to Bicester. Banbury has delivered more of its allocated sites but has not had the same strategic infrastructure challenges as Bicester.

4.6. Recent residential developments in the town centre have provided high quality accessible and affordable housing for those wishing to live in the town centre. It will be important that residential development in the

town centre supports the growth of the town centre economy and complements surrounding areas. It should do this through good design and catering for all those wishing to live in the town centre such as down sizers, those that don't rely on access to a car and those who would prefer to live in the town centre in order to have easy access to services.

4.7. Within this context we think that there is scope for two additional housing allocations on the edge of the town: at Withycombe Farm, and north of Wykham Lane. We are also carrying out further work to understand the capacity for new housing development within the town, particularly within the town centre.

QUESTION 28: Do you think these sites in the Banbury area should be explored further for potential allocation for housing?

QUESTION 29: Are there any alternative housing sites for Banbury you wish to suggest?

The Economy

4.8. Banbury's economy is focused on manufacturing, distribution, service industries, local government, and health. The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy identifies the town as an important industrial area for motorsport, building on its links to Silverstone Park in neighbouring Northamptonshire.

4.9. 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 also benefits from having the most employment floorspace in Cherwell.

4.10. Our last Local Plan (2015) recognised the importance of Banbury to the local economy by:

- Allocating approximately 60 hectares of employment land, most of which has now been developed;
- Promoting the town as an important location for higher technology and knowledge-based industries;

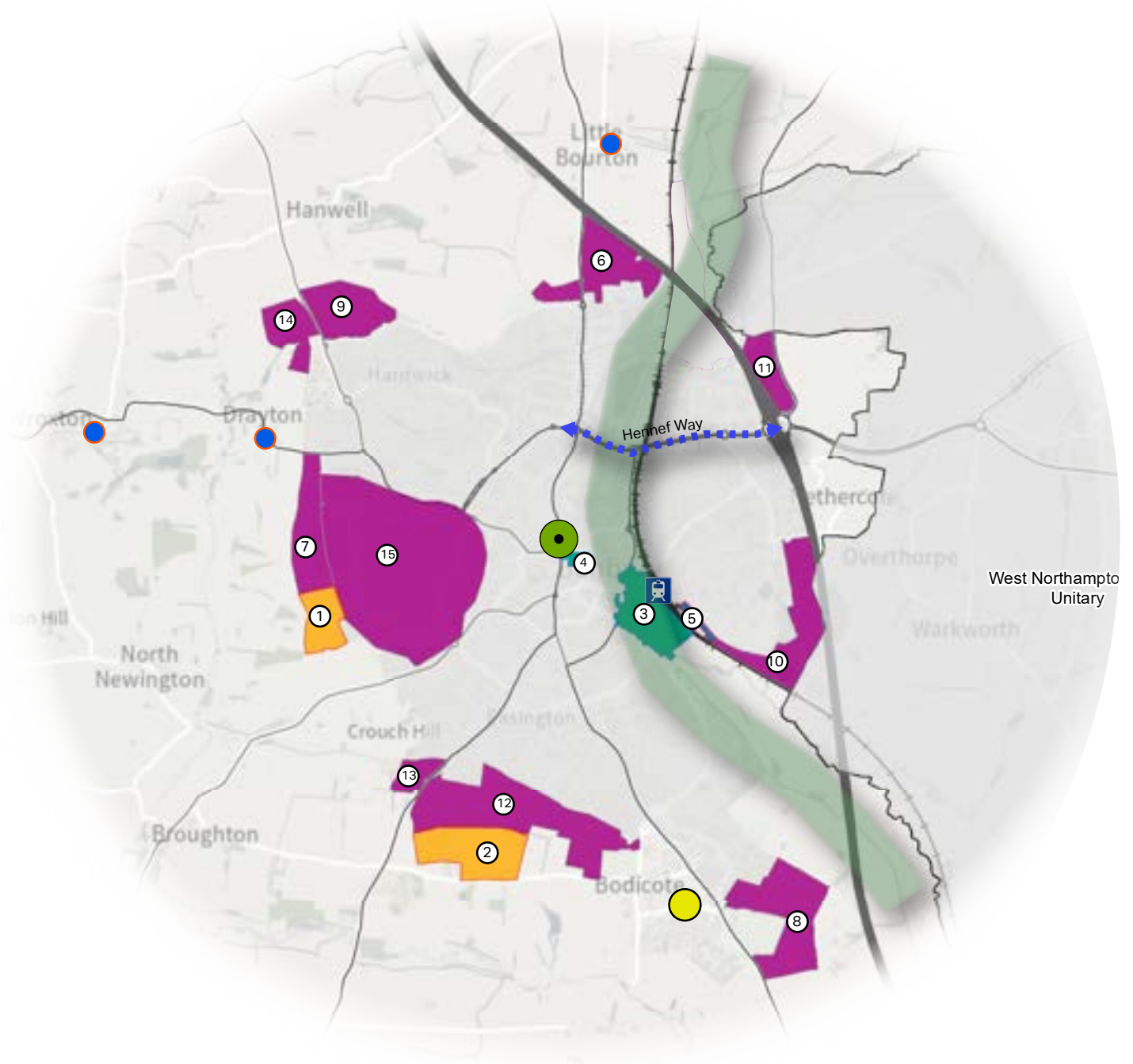
- Encouraging high-end manufacturing;
- Maintaining an increase in motorsport industries;
- Encouraging retailing and commercial leisure development;
- Encouraging higher value distribution companies; and
- Maximising the town's location and transport links.

4.11. The subsequent 2016 Banbury Masterplan embraced these aims and highlighted how, by driving the engineering economy and investing in infrastructure and skills, economic growth could be achieved.

4.12. We have generally been successful in delivering our objectives from 2015. Most of the allocated employment land has now been developed and there continues to be strong interest for employment land in or adjacent to the town. Much of this new development has been in the form of large logistics warehousing, but our evidence indicates that there is a strong unmet demand for smaller employment units to meet the needs of start-up firms, local businesses, or those that wish to expand in the local area.

4.13. To meet this identified need we are supporting a number of existing employment sites at Banbury where there is considerable potential for redevelopment. As we work towards our final plan we will be gathering more evidence to identify and support opportunities for smaller, non-strategic, employment sites.

Figure 9: Banbury Area Strategy Map



LEGEND

- Local Plan Review 2040: preferred residential site allocation**
- ① Withycombe Farm (LPR49)
- ② North of Wykham Lane (LPR52)
- Local Plan Review 2040: preferred mixed-use site allocation**
- ③ Canalside (LPR55)
- ④ Core Policy 14 (Site 2): Bolton Road
- Local Plan Review 2040: preferred employment site allocation**
- ⑤ Higham Way (LPR56)
- Saved Allocations: Local Plan 2030**
- ⑥ Hardwick Farm, Southam Rd (East and West)

- ⑦ West of Bretch Hill
- ⑧ Land at Bankside Phase 2
- ⑨ North of Hanwell Fields
- ⑩ Employment Land West of M40
- ⑪ Employment Land North East of Junction 11
- ⑫ Land South of Salt Way (East)
- ⑬ Land South of Salt Way (West)
- ⑭ Land at Drayton Lodge Farm
- ⑮ Bretch Hill Regeneration Area

- Train Station**
- Road network improvements**
- Green infrastructure improvements**
- Local Plan Review 2040: Settlement Hierarchy**
- Main Towns**
- Local Service Centre**
- Large Village**
- Small Village**

Core Policy 62: Banbury Area Strategy

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development and support town centre regeneration.

Development in the Banbury Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 35:

Housing Delivery

5,950 homes will be delivered at Banbury between 2020 and 2040 including the following strategic site allocations:

| <u>Site</u> | <u>2020-2040</u> | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---|
| <u>North of Wykham Lane</u> | <u>600</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |
| <u>Withycombe Farm</u> | <u>230</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |
| <u>Canalside</u> | <u>-168</u> | <u>Replacing Policy Banbury 1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 with a new allocation including 500 homes</u> |
| <u>Higham Way</u> | <u>-150</u> | <u>Replacing Policy Banbury 19 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 to allow for employment use</u> |

Table 12: Banbury Area Strategy Allocations

The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced.

- Policy Banbury 2: Land to the West of Southam Road
- Policy Banbury 3: West of Bretch Hill
- Policy Banbury 4: Bankside Phase 2
- Banbury 5: North of Hanwell Fields
- Banbury 16: South of Salt Way West
- Banbury 17: South of Salt Way East
- Banbury 18: Land at Drayton Lodge Farm

A further allowance will be made for 'windfalls' of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area.

Employment

10.5 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with Core Policy 25 in the following locations:

| <u>Settlement/ Parish</u> | <u>Site Name</u> | <u>Hectares</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| <u>Banbury</u> | <u>Higham Way</u> | <u>3.0</u> |
| <u>Banbury</u> | <u>Canalside Regeneration</u> | <u>7.5</u> |
| <u>Total</u> | | <u>10.5</u> |

Table 13: Banbury Area Strategic Employment Sites

Core Policy 63: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area

4.14. We need to focus on supporting sustainable connectivity and ensuring new development is located where opportunities for sustainable development and transport can be maximised. Traffic congestion is an issue in Banbury, and so it is important that this Plan minimises and mitigates against additional traffic, and supports development where sustainable transportation and active travel can be utilised to the maximum extent.

4.15. The town's environmental and physical constraints, together with the canal, river and railway line running north-south through the town, make the delivery of a new strategic road network both challenging and costly. New and innovative solutions will be needed, and this work is being led by the County Council through the preparation of updated Area Travel Plans to support the recently adopted Local Connectivity Transport Plan Update (2022).

4.16. The current transport strategy is based on the need to improve connectivity to and from residential areas, employment locations and the town centre. The aim is to deliver infrastructure improvements to promote sustainable travel in and around the town by bus, walking, and cycling, and to increase capacity on the road network.

4.17. There has been investment in electric vehicle charging points in recent years and the take up of ultra-low emission vehicles in Banbury is significantly higher than the national average. Furthermore, Banbury also benefits from the highest share of active travel (23%) in the Oxfordshire towns.

4.18. However, there are still significant transport related issues that we need to address. These include:

- Transport and transport congestion, particularly along Hennef Way and in areas around the town centre;
- Limited options for a new strategic route between the east and west of the town;
- The need to strengthen the connection between the town centre and railway station;
- The need to refurbish or relocate Banbury Bus Station;
- The need for further improvements to bus services and access into and across the town centre; and
- The continued improvement of cycling and walking routes radiating from the town centre to satellite settlements encouraging the adoption of alternative transport methods and easing the existing pressure on the road infrastructure.

4.19. In order to deliver growth in the Banbury Area, highways infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Banbury and the Banbury Area. The package may be further refined through the development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Core Policy 63: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area

Transport infrastructure at Banbury will be required as follows:

- **New M40 junction/ enlarged slip roads at Southam Road in Banbury;**
- **Rejuvenating or relocating Banbury Bus Station;**
- **Re-designing Banbury Station forecourt to improve multi-modal interchange;**
- **Improving capacity of north south routes: Cherwell Street/ Bridge Street/A4620 Windsor Street corridor;**
- **East-west strategic movements: Hennef Way corridor A422 Improvements;**
- **East-west strategic movements: Warwick Road Corridor Improvements;**
- **Review of Banbury Town Centre traffic circulation;**
- **Car parking routing and guidance system;**
- **Potential link road crossing from Tramway to Higham Way or a South East Link Road Promotion of Bankside to include bus services**
- **New spine road and increased level of bus service – east of Bloxham Road.**

Core Policy 64: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Banbury Area

4.20. Our transport evidence to date lists the strategic transport improvements currently identified in the Local Transport Plan area strategies, and Oxfordshire's Infrastructure Strategy for the Banbury area. We will need to test the impact of our Local Plan proposals on the transport network and take a view in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council on whether the schemes should be delivered during the lifetime of this Plan. At this stage we are just highlighting their potential for safeguarding.

Core Policy 64: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Banbury Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes:

- **Enlarged M40 slip roads at Southam Road in Banbury.**

Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified schemes (Appendix 5).

QUESTION 30: Are there any other areas of land that you think should be safeguarded for transport schemes at Banbury?

Development Policy 6 : Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way

4.21. There is a particular need to help reduce emissions and achieve cleaner air in relation to Hennef Way. This Plan's proposed approach to maximising sustainable modes of travel will help with this objective, but we think further action is also required.

4.22. The Banbury Inner Relief Road from Oxford Road to Hennef Way was opened in June 1991. This road provides an important link between the south of Banbury and the motorway link road to the north, helping to reduce traffic congestion within the town centre and Grimsbury.

4.23. As the main purpose of the Inner Relief Road is to ease, as much as is possible, the town centre of local traffic generation and traffic generated by the M40, the function and safety of the Inner Relief Road would be negatively impacted by the creation of unnecessary access points to the road. We anticipate there will likely be improvement works to Hennef Way to address existing congestion issues and support growth within Banbury over the Plan period.

Development Policy 6 : Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way

The creation of new accesses onto the Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way that would affect the function and safety of the inner relief road will not be permitted, unless there is evidence to prove that a new access is essential. Any proposal for new accesses off the Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way will require approval from Oxfordshire County Council and National Highways.

Core Policy 65: Development in the vicinity of Banbury Railway Station

4.24. Banbury Railway Station provides rail links across the country including services to London, Birmingham, Oxford and the South Coast. Banbury Railway Station also offers local rail services from Banbury to Bicester North and Didcot Parkway.

4.25. Demand on the rail network is expected to increase with the move towards increasing use of sustainable transport modes and future developments putting pressure on the rail network. The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study 2021 indicates there will be additional capacity to the rail service between Oxford and Banbury from 2024.

4.26. We want to encourage the use of public transport and improve active travel routes by improving access to the railway station and its facilities. Over the Plan period we therefore intend to work with Network Rail, Chiltern Railways and Oxfordshire County Council to secure improvements to Banbury Railway Station to upgrade the services and support increasing passenger numbers. We recognise the opportunities that these improvements can bring and if required we will safeguard land needed for improvements to the line.

4.27. A significant increase in vehicular use of the Station Approach/Bridge Street junction, north of Canalside, would worsen congestion caused by right-turning movements and threaten the free flow of traffic on the Banbury Inner Relief Road (Cherwell Street) at the Bridge

Street junction. The private roads leading from Station Approach also lack the width and alignment to accommodate a significant increase in traffic.

4.28. Planned Tramway Road improvements will support an improved road layout and facilities around the train station, improve bus journey reliability into the town centre from southern areas of the town, and reduce trips taken using the A4260/Bridge Street junction.

4.29. This scheme will also provide an important opportunity to improve access to the station for buses, cyclists and pedestrians, both generally and in particular between the station and the town centre and should reduce traffic and waiting times on Cherwell Street. All development proposals will be assessed against their impact upon the access to Banbury train station (Tramway Road improvements) scheme.

4.30. To eliminate any risk to railway operations and to ensure the safe operation of the railway, applicants must demonstrate that they have met any requirements set out by Network Rail.

Core Policy 65: Development in the vicinity of Banbury Railway Station

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of improvements to Banbury Railway Station, and in particular, any improvements proposed by Oxfordshire County Council including the Banbury Train Station (Tramway Road Improvements) Scheme (as shown by Figure 10 and the Adopted Policies Map) should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Proposals for improvements to Banbury Railway Station will be supported where they demonstrate how they:

- i. Increase network capacity and access to the station and its facilities and to the town centre;**
- ii. Facilitate and encourage non-car modes of transportation;**
- iii. Improve the design and quality of the station and its facilities; and**

iv. **Achieve an increase to the capacity of the station as a result of the development.**

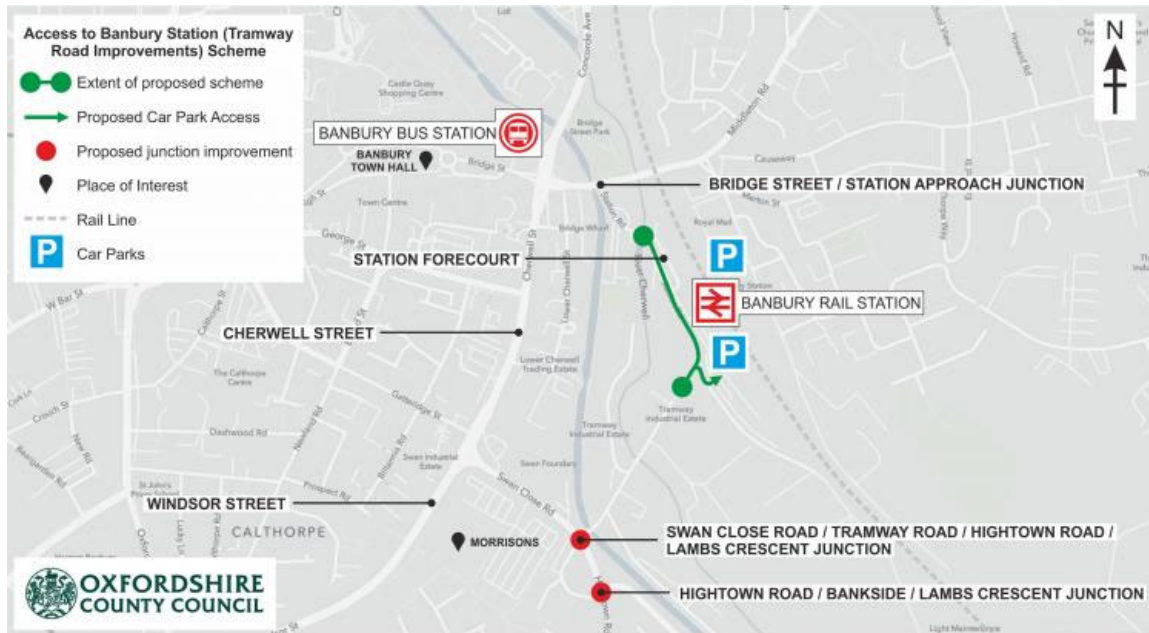


Figure 10: Banbury Tramway Road Improvements

Core Policy 66: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area

4.31. Banbury has a wide range of green spaces including formal sports pitches, play areas, parks and also Spiceball Country Park in the centre of the town. Most of these spaces are maintained and managed by Banbury Town Council.

4.32. The 2015 Local Plan included a long term objective to establish a series of open spaces based on the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors linked by public footpaths/cycleways. This would create a linear park and thoroughfare from the north of the town and Grimsbury reservoir, to a new park at Longford Park south of Bankside.

4.33. The existing Spiceball Country Park forms the central section of the linear park, the new community park at Longford Park provides a focus at the southern end, and the Banbury Country Park provides a major component at the northern end of the town. The whole corridor is included within the North Cherwell Conservation Target Area.

4.34. In reviewing the development proposals for Canalside for this Plan, we now recognise that the canal/river corridor provides an even greater opportunity for an enhanced linear park, which could open up the canal frontage to the town centre, thereby creating a new, attractive public space at a key gateway to the town.

4.35. The corridor also offers potential for flat, traffic free and pleasant footpath/cycleway routes linking residential areas to employment areas, the town centre, railway station and bus station.

4.36. In terms of sports provision, the town has two indoor leisure centres at Spiceball and Woodgreen, together with some private leisure facilities. Local schools, including the North Oxfordshire Academy, also play an important role in providing sports facilities for the community. Our last Local Plan sought to secure a site for the relocation of Banbury United Football Club, adjacent to Banbury Rugby Club to the south of the town, and we continue to support this objective.

Core Policy 66: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Bicester area as shown by maps in Appendix 6 and the Adopted Policies Map. The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Bicester area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- i. **The need for an improved interface between Spiceball Park and the canal/river green corridor linking with the town centre. This should be delivered as part of the town centre enhancements and form a fundamental part of any development proposals;**
- ii. **The continued development of the country park extending the green corridor to the north of the town connecting the urban area with the rural hinterland beyond;**

- iii. The greening of the town centre, improving east – west connectivity from People’s Park to an enhanced green corridor along the river/canal corridor;
- iv. The greening of the primary north – south vehicular route along the South Bar Street/ Horsefair corridor in conjunction with improved traffic solutions to ease congestion in these areas;
- v. The development of a new green, accessible link along the southern edge of the development to the south of Salt Way connecting new development and associated open space adjacent to the Bloxham Road in the west and Longford Park in the east; and
- vi. The connection of Salt Way to the improved north – south green corridor along the canal/ river corridor.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

Core Policy 67: Horton Hospital Site

4.37. The Horton General Hospital in Banbury, which is part of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust (OUHT), is an acute general hospital serving the north of Oxfordshire and surrounding areas. It provides a wide range of services, including the Emergency Department. It is a major employer in the town, employing approximately 1,000 people.

4.38. The OUHT has made a commitment to the long-term future of the hospital and is seeking to make significant improvements to its services and facilities over the plan period. Many of the current buildings on the site are low-quality, single-storey buildings and there is scope for increasing the floorspace by redeveloping some of the buildings at an appropriate density and scale.

4.39. The original Victorian hospital building that fronts the Oxford Road is Grade II listed and so any redevelopment proposals would need to retain these buildings and protect them in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole.

4.40. We will encourage and support improved hospital related facilities on the site to serve our existing and future communities.

Core Policy 67: Horton Hospital Site

Proposals for redevelopment at the Horton Hospital will be supported where they provide:

- i. **Further hospital related uses or improvements to existing medical services at the site; or**
- ii. **Other uses, which have a direct and demonstrable operational link, and provide benefit to the continued provision or improvement of hospital services at the site.**

Improvements to public transport access will be required. Mitigation measures will be required to ensure that proposals do not lead to increased parking pressure on nearby residential streets.

The special architectural and historic interest of the original Grade II listed hospital buildings on Oxford Road will be protected in accordance with the wider Development Plan policies.

Primary Health Care

4.41. Evidence from the Oxfordshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) indicates that there is a pressing need for additional primary care space and associated infrastructure within Banbury. The Council will therefore support proposals for additional primary care facilities in the town, in appropriate locations. Such locations could include the town centre or on the Horton Hospital site. The Council will continue to work closely with the ICB and local GP practices to help secure improved primary care capacity across Banbury to meet the needs of its growing population.

Banbury's Built Heritage

4.42. Banbury has a rich and varied history, which is valued by residents and visitors. The town centre is characterised by its medieval street pattern and across the town there are numerous designated and non-designated heritage assets that contribute to Banbury's character. Within Banbury there are approximately 225 listed buildings. There are also three designated Conservation Areas. Banbury Conservation Area is centred

on the town centre; Grimsbury Conservation Area lies to the east of the railway and canal; and the Oxford Canal is designated along its whole length, including through Banbury. The Council has a legal duty to protect these important heritage assets.

Banbury Town Centre and Areas of Change

4.43. A successful and vibrant town centre is important to the local economy and helps to engender local pride in the town. Independent retailers are well represented in Banbury, particularly in the High Street and along Parson's Street, and these are complimented by Castle Quay with its range of national retailers.

4.44. Since our last Local Plan there has been significant investment in the town centre with the recent opening of Castle Quay 2 to the east of the existing centre. This major investment by the Council provides a new hotel, cinema, leisure facilities, and restaurants in a canalside location.

4.45. We recognise that in recent years, due to changing retail habits and the impacts of the Covid pandemic, the town centre has suffered. As with many towns, the closure of some large high street chain stores has left several vacant units both in Castle Quay and in the wider town centre. Some smaller units have also closed. This has made some areas of the centre feel less vibrant and attractive to visitors.

4.46. To understand the current strengths and weaknesses and health of the town centre we commissioned a town centre and retail strategy to inform this Local Plan. This Strategy made the following recommendations for Banbury Town Centre:

- Contract the extent of the town centre to create a more compact layout and address the identified oversupply of retail floorspace;
- Resist Out of Centre Expansion as any further expansion will be seriously detrimental to the town centre;
- There should be greater encouragement for residential development in the town centre, to increase the vibrancy of the

centre. This will create a stronger in-town community and provide a boost to the local economy from this captive market;

- Support town centre master-planning to ensure a comprehensive strategy;
- Opportunities should be explored to improve the outdoor markets so that they become stand-alone attractions, including by making the market square an attractive destination;
- The centre would benefit from further investment into its public realm and the quality of the environment, to create a more attractive and distinctive space. A Public Realm Strategy would be recommended to raise the profile of the centre;
- Open up the Oxford Canal to the town centre;
- Undertake a review of car parking provisions. Explore partnership options to provide charging points and to meet green agenda targets. Adopt a 'plain English' approach to car park messaging. Consider free car parking on market days to stimulate renewed interest in this struggling but important retail offer; and
- Raise the profile of the centre as a night-time economy destination. There should be a focus on managing the existing leisure-offer, and how the non-leisure-based night-time economy could be supported. Improvements to accessibility (particularly late-night transport), the public realm and the sense of safety are recommended.

4.47. The Study also identifies a number of sites suitable for redevelopment, together with areas that need regeneration. Building on the work of the retail consultants we have undertaken further technical and feasibility work and have identified the following sites as being important to meeting the Plan's objectives.

- Site 1: Banbury Canalside
- Site 2: Bolton Road/Castle Street
- Site 3: Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road
- Site 4: Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue
- Site 5: George Street, Cherwell Street and Bridge Street

Core Policy 68: Banbury Canalside

4.48. The area of land between Banbury railway station and the town centre, and to the east and west of Tramway Road, is referred to as the Canalside site. It is currently occupied by a range of small businesses, railway carparking, some limited residential development, and Banbury United Football Club. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal run through the area.

4.49. It is a prominent site immediately adjacent to the town centre and forms part of the gateway to the town for visitors arriving by train and by road. It is, however, currently a relatively unattractive environment that feels segregated and underused. There are vacant areas, high business turnover and industrial uses immediately adjacent to the river and canal towpath, creating a poor environment and experience for those using the canal and river for leisure purposes. Some have reported this area as feeling unsafe.

4.50. Our previous Plan made provision for a comprehensive residential led scheme for the site including 700 new homes, retail, office and leisure uses, public open space, enhancement of the canal and river corridor, new pedestrian and cycle links and crossings and new carparking. Since 2015, planning permission has been granted on a small number of sites within the wider allocated area, mainly for new apartments.

4.51. Many businesses remain and there continues to be a turnover of commercial uses within existing premises. Unfortunately, no significant re-development has taken place and the general character of the area remains largely unchanged, although Oxfordshire County Council is progressing plans for improvements to Tramway Road which will provide a bus-only link through the site to the railway station.

4.52. This Plan continues to identify this area for a mixed-use redevelopment; however, we now expect the development to be employment-led with residential development focused in the northern section of the site and along the Cherwell Street frontage.

Core Policy 68: Banbury Canalside

Development proposals that contribute towards the comprehensive regeneration of the Canalside Area will be supported, including the provision of 500 homes and around 7.5 ha employment uses.

Proposals for smaller parcels will be supported where the development will positively contribute towards the comprehensive and integrated regeneration of the site as a whole.

Favourable consideration will be given to masterplanned and design reviewed proposals that receive a positive appraisal and demonstrate a high level of integration with the town centre and Banbury Railway Station.

Core Policy 69: Banbury Areas of Change

4.53. In addition to Canalside, we have identified other opportunities for development/regeneration. These opportunities could also help to deliver public realm enhancements as part of a wider vision for Banbury town centre. It is important that any proposals are consistent with the new emerging vision/masterplan for Banbury as part of an aspirational approach to delivering improvements to the public realm, support high quality design and achieve sustainable and successful communities.

Site 2: Bolton Road/Castle Street

4.54. This site lies immediately to the west of the Castle Quay shopping centre and to the north of Parson's Street. It comprises a large public car park, a number of smaller car parks and service areas associated with the commercial units fronting Parson's Street, a former car repair workshop, and a number of historic buildings. A former bingo hall is being redeveloped for housing for older people.

4.55. The 2015 Local Plan allocated this site for retail and other town centre uses and residential. Our recent evidence now indicates that town centre uses would not be appropriate in this location and the site is

therefore allocated is this plan for a residential led mixed use development.

Site 3: Calthorpe Street & Marlborough Road

4.56. The site is within the designated Banbury Conservation Area and is suited for residential development, with the existing retail operators being relocated within the town centre.

4.57. The Council will support comprehensive and sensitive residential-led redevelopment proposals that incorporate the rebuilding of the frontages to Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road. Proposals must preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Banbury Conservation Area. There is a need to provide walking and cycling permeability.

Site 4: Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue

4.58. The site includes the bus station and the eastern end of Castle Quay shopping centre which has a number of vacant units. The site acts as a gateway to the town centre. This site is suited to mixed-use development, including cultural, community, health, and leisure facilities, and residential. Development of this site would require the bus station to be relocated in the town centre.

Site 5: George Street, Cherwell Street & Bridge Street

4.59. The site currently comprises a free-standing bowling alley, adjacent retail unit and car parking accessed from George Street, and retail, commercial and residential buildings fronting Bridge Street. The site is located on a key gateway to the town centre but the built environment, particularly around the Bridge Street/Cherwell Street junction is fragmented and poor. This Plan will support proposals for residential or mixed use proposals on this site which provide a high quality landmark gateway to the town centre.

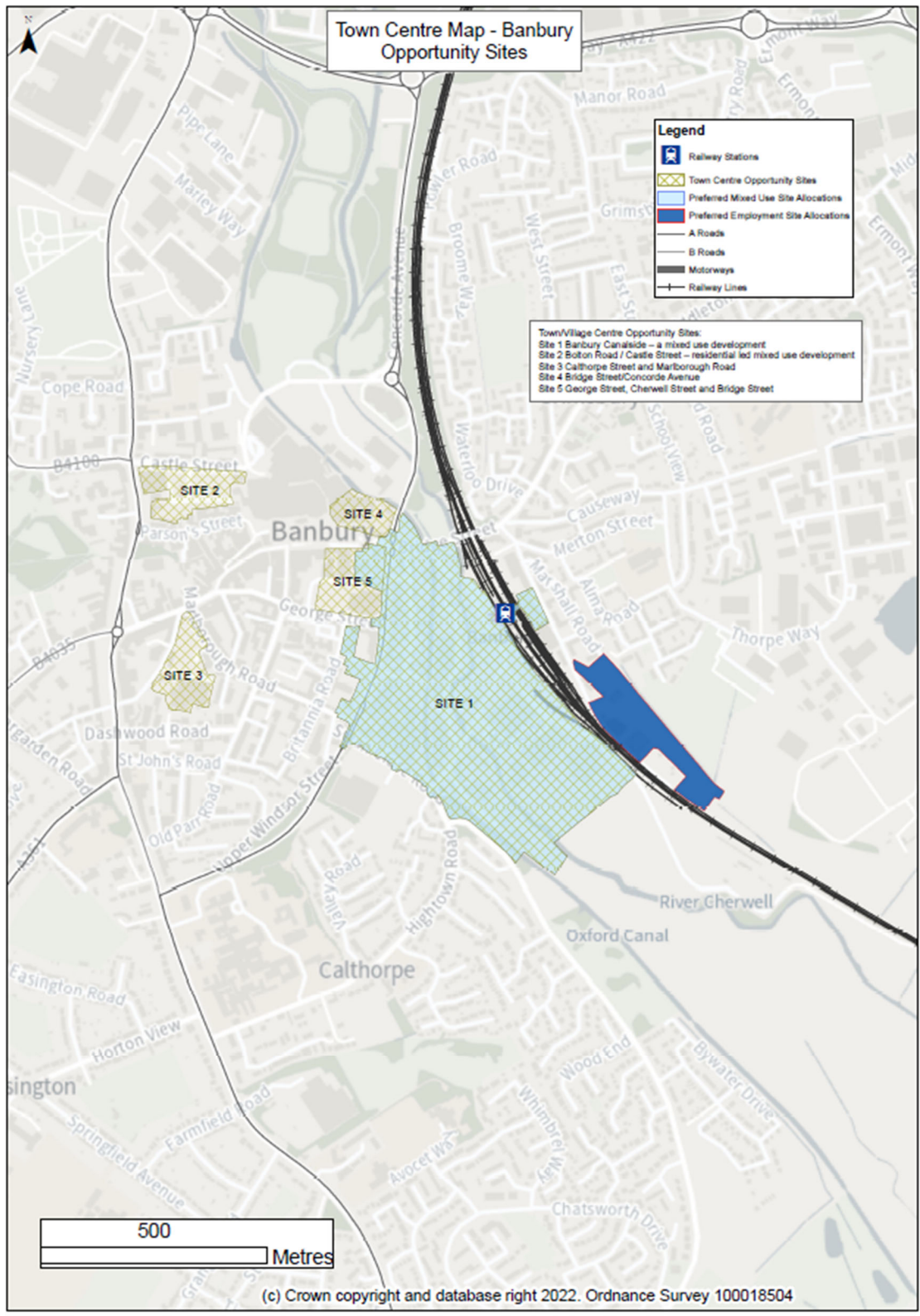


Figure 11: Banbury Town Centre Areas of Change

Core Policy 69: Banbury Areas of Change

In addition to Site 1: Canalside, identified in Core Policy 13, there are four additional areas of change identified within or close to the centre of Banbury as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and Figure 11:

Site 2: Bolton Road/Castle Street*

Site 3: Calthorpe Street/Marlborough Road

Site 4: Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue

Site 5: George Street/Cherwell Street/ Bridge Street

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. Be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Banbury;**
- ii. Proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment;**
- iii. Be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the historic core of the town centre;**
- iv. Make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Banbury, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities and providing for walking and cycling permeability;**
- v. Be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels;**
- vi. Improve the public realm and by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials; and**

- vii. **Residential development will be supported on the identified sites, particularly above ground floors.**

5. Bicester Area Strategy

Bicester Vision 2040

5.1. In 2040, Bicester will continue to be a thriving historic market town and an important economic and social focus for its residents, visitors, and for business, achieving its Garden and Healthy New town objectives:

- The town will have a diverse economic base with 50 hectares of land developed for new employment;
- Over 10,000 homes will have been built by 2040 of which 30% will be affordable homes;
- New services, facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been provided;
- The town will be healthier, with levels of deprivation reduced;
- The town centre will be vibrant and at the heart of the town, a place to live, shop and access cultural and community facilities;
- The quality of the public realm and built environment will have been improved and new developments will be designed to a high standard;
- Air quality will have been improved and traffic congestion reduced;
- There will be more opportunity for safe, convenient active travel routes and public transport will have been improved;
- There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public, including new wooded areas.

Bicester Policies

Core Policy 70: Bicester Area Strategy

5.2. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Bicester is as follows:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Overall Spatial Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver committed development and be the focus for additional development reflecting the town’s on-going growth and transformation as a sustainable Garden Town and its regional and sub-regional location on the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor including and East-West Rail route. • Continue to maximise the benefits of having key international and national destinations and economic activity to support further business investment. • Support the continued improvement of the town’s centre, its facilities, its public realm and ‘green’ environment. • Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and encourage active travel. |
| <p>Bicester Area Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new high quality development helping to achieve climate change objectives. • Provide new jobs and services reducing the need for out-commuting and travel to other locations. • Provide new infrastructure alongside new homes and employment. • Maximise opportunities for new development on previously developed land within the existing urban area, particularly in the vicinity of the town centre. • Bring about coordinated town centre improvements and regeneration including the redevelopment of Market Square. • Support the role of the town centre by resisting further major out of centre retail developments. • Ensure new developments deliver improved community and health facilities. • Deliver an improved and enhanced green infrastructure network across the town, including |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>access to green spaces, children’s play space, allotments, community gardens and a new cemetery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance areas of ecological importance and historic value. • Deliver schemes that reduce transport congestion, including a potential new south east link road. • Strengthen the connections between the town centre and Bicester Village. • Ensure new developments deliver improved active travel routes in and around the town and to surrounding villages. |
|--|--|

QUESTION 31: What are your views on our aspirations for the Bicester area?

Housing

5.3. Bicester has been a key location for housing growth for the District for a number of years. Since 2011, there has been an additional 3,220 homes delivered at Bicester (at 31 March 2022), with 29% of the total houses built in the district at Bicester. Most of the new housing has been delivered on several large ‘strategic’ allocations on the edge of the town, including at Bure Park and South West Bicester.

5.4. In addition to the houses already built, as of 31 March 2022, there were permissions in place for a total of 4,268 additional homes at Bicester. These are primarily on sites allocated for housing in our last Local Plan.

5.5. In our last Local Plan, Bicester was identified as the location to receive the most amount of new development with over 10,000 homes across five strategic housing sites. There has been some progress made on these sites, however Banbury has shown stronger delivery with more of the allocated sites delivering in accordance with the Local Plan targets.

5.6. Fewer new homes have been built in the town centre and we are exploring opportunities for this. We will aim to do this through good design and catering for all those wishing to live in the town centre such as those

who would prefer to live in the town centre in order to have easy access to services.

5.7. This Plan sets out a proposed distribution of new housing across the district and suggests two additional strategic housing sites at Bicester (Figure 12) These are:

i) South of Chesterton/North-West of A41

ii) South-East of Wretchwick Green

5.8. An extension to the existing site at North-West Bicester is also proposed providing for an additional 1,000 homes over that already identified.

5.9. It is proposed to retain other existing strategic housing site policies from the Local Plan 2011-2031.

QUESTION 32: Do you think these sites in the Bicester area should be explored further for potential allocation for housing?

QUESTION 33: Are there any alternative housing sites for Bicester you wish to suggest?

The Economy

5.10. Bicester supports a range of employment sectors, including service industries, distribution, defence, motorsports and manufacturing. The largest employment areas are located in the eastern and southern parts of the town. It has the second largest amount of employment floorspace in Cherwell after Banbury.

5.11. Bicester is identified in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) as a Living Labs Testbed. This involves a cluster of technology companies acting as 'living labs' to help develop technologies for

environmental change, including the advent of connected and autonomous travel, all electric energy, smart homes and sustainable living.

5.12. The Oxfordshire LEP Investment Plan (2020) identifies potential for wider regeneration to transform Bicester from a traditional Oxfordshire County Market Town into a dynamic and vibrant economy drawing on attractions such as Bicester Village and Bicester Motion.

5.13. Our last Local Plan recognised the importance of Bicester to the local economy by:

- Allocating approximately 140 hectares of employment land;
- Encouraging green technology and the knowledge-based and logistics sectors, exploiting its position in the Oxford/Cambridge Corridor;
- Exploiting the towns transport connections;
- Utilising the Ex-MoD land;
- Creating new opportunities for additional retail, leisure and cultural activities in an extended town centre encouraging retailers and visitors to Bicester Town Centre;
- Continuing to promote and expand Bicester Village where complementary to improving the town centre;
- Improving its utilities infrastructure to improve its sustainability and self-sufficiency.

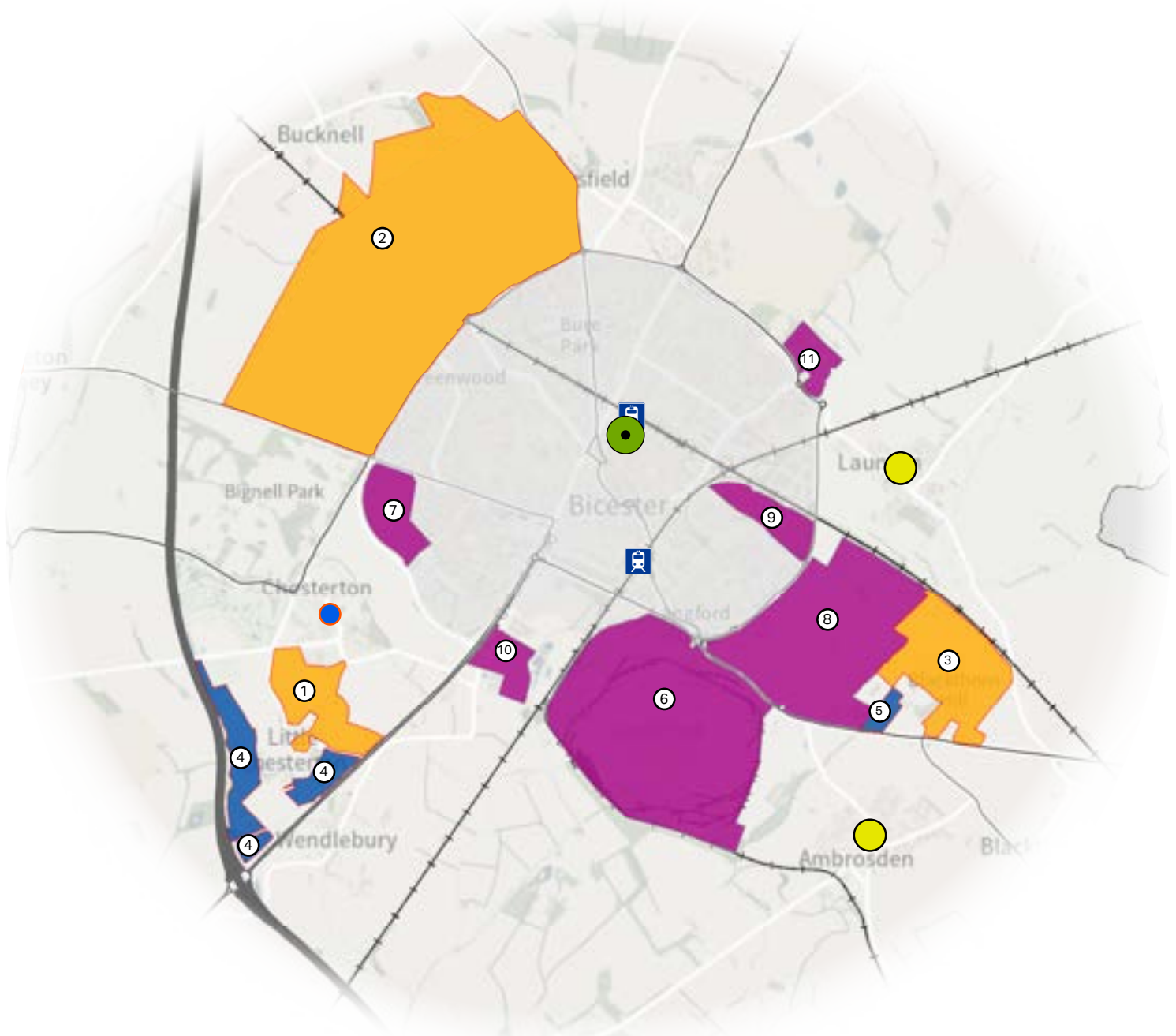
5.14. We have generally been successful in delivering our objectives from 2015. A significant proportion of the allocated employment land has now been developed and there continues to be strong interest for employment land at Bicester. Our updated employment evidence identifies that Bicester is the most suitable location for accommodating identified employment needs to 2040 and we propose to continue to focus new sites here.

5.15. This Local Plan proposes two new strategic sites for employment, at Junction 9 of the M40, and north of the A41 south east of Bicester. The policies for the existing sites identified in the 2015 Plan will be saved.

5.16. The site located adjacent to the M40 junction adjoins land which has recently gained planning consent for employment uses. The site north of the A41 is adjacent to Symmetry Park business park.

5.17. We will also need to consider the need for smaller, non-strategic employment sites to support local businesses and business start-ups.

Figure 12: Bicester Area Strategy Map



LEGEND

- Local Plan Review 2040: preferred residential site allocation**
- ① South of Chesterton and North-West of A41 (LPR37a)
- ② North-West Bicester (LPR33)
- ③ South-East of Wretchwick Green - Site A (LPR21a)
- Local Plan Review 2040: preferred employment site allocation**
- ④ Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane (LPR38)
- ⑤ Land Adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41 (LPR21b)

- Saved Allocations: Local Plan 2015**
- ⑥ Graven Hill
- ⑦ South West Bicester Phase 2
- ⑧ South East Bicester
- ⑨ Gavray Drive
- ⑩ Bicester Gateway
- ⑪ Employment Land at North East Bicester

Local Plan Review 2040: Settlement Hierarchy

- Main Towns
- Local Service Centre
- Large Village
- Small Village
- Train station**

Core Policy 70: Bicester Area Strategy

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development along with supporting the enhancement of the town centre.

Development in the Bicester Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 34:

Housing Delivery

9,100 homes will be delivered at Bicester between 2020 and 2040 including the following strategic site allocations:

| <u>Site</u> | <u>2020-2040</u> | <u>Post 2040</u> | |
|--|------------------|------------------|---|
| <u>South of Chesterton / North-West of A41</u> | <u>500</u> | <u>=</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |
| <u>South-East of Wretchwick Green</u> | <u>800</u> | <u>=</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |
| <u>North West Bicester</u> | <u>2,775*</u> | <u>4,000</u> | <u>Extended Site Allocation to provide an additional 1000 homes</u> <u>Replacing Policy Bicester 1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031</u> |

*225 completions recorded before 1/4/20

Table 14: Bicester Area Strategy Allocations

The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced:

Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill
Policy Bicester 3: SW Bicester
Policy Bicester 12: SE Bicester
Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive

A further allowance will be made for 'windfalls' of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area.

Employment

49.6 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with Core Policy 25 on the following strategic employment sites:

| <u>Settlement/ Parish</u> | <u>Site Name</u> | <u>Hectares</u> |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <u>Bicester</u> | <u>Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane</u> | <u>40</u> |
| <u>Bicester</u> | <u>Land Adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41, South East Bicester</u> | <u>6.3</u> |
| <u>Bicester</u> | <u>**Bicester 4 (Bicester Business Park)</u> | <u>3.3</u> |
| <u>Total</u> | | <u>49.6</u> |

Table 15: Bicester Area Strategic Employment Sites

** Bicester Business Park (Policy Bicester 4 in the 2015 Plan) is an existing allocation with residual capacity of 3.3ha beyond completions and extant planning permissions at 1st April 2022 that is being saved through this Local Plan.

QUESTION 34: Do you agree with the employment sites we have selected at Bicester to accommodate new employment development?

QUESTION 35: Are there any alternative sites to accommodate housing and employment needs that you think are more suitable?

Core Policy 71: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Bicester Area

5.18. Bicester is located near to two motorway junctions on the M40 and has good transport links to Banbury, Oxford, London and beyond. It

currently suffers from some congestion on its main routes, particularly on the A41, and on those that provide access to the town centre.

5.19. The new Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2022) identifies a number of key projects in the Bicester Area Strategy:

- An on-going partnership with Highways England to improve connectivity to the strategic highway (M40 junctions 9 and 10);
- Reviewing key county road links out of Bicester, including those that cross the county boundary (the A41) which is ongoing with Buckinghamshire Council;
- Investigating options for infrastructure improvements and bus priority to enable greater reliability on the A41 corridor to/from Junction 9 to the A41 Bicester Services roundabout, with schemes for accessing Wendlebury;
- Delivery of the bridge under the railway (A4095) as part of the project to deliver effective peripheral routes around the town;
- A41 Study exploring options for the provision of a South-East Perimeter Road;
- Working with the rail industry and the Department for Transport to develop a solution to the likely restrictions affecting the London Road as a result of the East-West Rail project and national rail programme;
- Ongoing work to improve Bicester's bus services along key routes and providing improved public transport infrastructure;
- Continuing to enhance pedestrian, cycle and public transport links on key routes;
- Implementing Bicester town centre highway modifications on through routes in order to reduce through traffic in the town centre, constraining it to the peripheral routes and promoting more sustainable travel options in the town;
- Developing a coordinated parking strategy, including for electric vehicles, in partnership with Cherwell District Council.

5.20. Oxfordshire County Council has also produced the Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP; 2020) which includes a programme of measures to increase cycling and walking, and the Public

Rights of Way Management Plan to 2025 which sets a strategy for the improvement and management of public rights of way in Oxfordshire.

5.21. The County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP; 2021) proposes to create additional flexible bus services to connect rural communities with larger town centres and mobility hubs. New development at Bicester will be required to contribute towards the delivery of these routes and services.

5.22. The key challenges for Bicester's transport network include:

- Addressing the barriers created by the peripheral roads that segregate the town centre from the new residential areas;
- Improving access to Bicester's hinterland by active travel and public transport;
- Addressing capacity of the A41 and identifying a solution for the London Road Level crossing that enables access to and from the town centre;
- Deliver a better environment for walking and cycling in Bicester town centre including at Market Square and for sustainable travel; and
- Improving the scope for and attractiveness of walking and cycling on Bicester's key routes.

5.23. In order to deliver growth in the Bicester Area, transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Bicester and the Bicester Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Core Policy 71: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Bicester Area

All development within the Bicester area will be required to contribute in accordance with Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services. Within the Bicester Area this will include

contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- **A south-east link road north of Wendlebury;**
- **Improvements associated with London Road level crossing changes;**
- **A bus priority route adjacent to the A41, on the Banbury Road; and**
- **The realignment of Howes Lane.**

QUESTION 36: Are there any other transport schemes that you think should be delivered at Bicester?

Core Policy 72: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area

5.24. We are proposing that Bicester accommodate a significant number of new homes and jobs to 2040. It is therefore important to secure highways improvements to accommodate this growth.

5.25. A south-east link road is identified in Oxfordshire County Council's Bicester Area Strategy. The road will connect the two sections of the A41 north of the village of Wendlebury. The exact location and alignment of the road will be confirmed as this Plan progresses.

5.26. Careful consideration will need to be given to ecological constraints, historic assets, the crossing of the railway line, the relationship with employment land and potential impacts on Wendlebury. The link road will be designed to support active travel and include separate walking and cycling routes.

Core Policy 72: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes:

- **Land for a south-east link road north of Wendlebury;**
- **A bus priority route adjacent to the A41, on the Banbury Road;**
and
- **The realignment of Howes Lane.**

Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified schemes (Appendix 5).

QUESTION 37: Are there any other areas of land that you think should be safeguarded for transport schemes at Bicester?

Core Policy 73: Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Bicester Area

5.27. Bicester's Garden Town status and its designation as a Healthy New Town emphasises the importance of protecting, expanding, and enhancing its green infrastructure networks.

5.28. Our last Local Plan sought to secure an urban edge park around the town. Other key open spaces include Bure Park, Pingle Fields and Bicester Fields. Garth Park is the main town park providing a mix of recreation provision. Local Wildlife Sites at Gavray Drive, Graven Hill and Bicester Wetland Reserve also form part of the town's Green Infrastructure network, and the Ray Conservation Target Area incorporates the first of these sites in the south-east of the town. The new Burnehyll Community Woodland is being created to the south-west of the town.

5.29. We have published a Green Infrastructure Strategy alongside this plan that identifies a number of opportunities for Bicester to develop a successful green infrastructure network.

Open Space and Recreation Facilities

5.30. Our emerging Playing Pitch Strategy identifies shortfalls of provision to meet quantitative needs for football (both natural grass pitches and artificial grass pitches) and rugby union, and recommends qualitative improvements to grass pitches for all pitch sports and associated facilities.

5.31. Initial indications from the 2022 Built Facilities Study are that there is a requirement to continue to invest in indoor and built facilities in Cherwell and there is a need for new provision in the Bicester area in order to support expected population growth. This could take the form of an expansion of the existing leisure centre provision.

5.32. We will expect that all the strategic allocations at Bicester will provide for open space and recreation. There is potential for each of the strategic sites in Bicester to become specialist hubs for different types of sports facilities and recreation. The provision of open space and recreation facilities at strategic sites will be confirmed as the Local Plan progresses. Areas of existing open space in Bicester will continue to be protected.

Core Policy 73: Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Bicester Area

All development will be required to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Bicester area, as shown by maps in Appendix 6 and the Adopted Policies Map.

Contributions will be sought towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Bicester area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- **Establishing an urban edge park around the outskirts of the town, by protecting the existing network of green spaces and securing new open space and linear route provision linked with public footpaths/ cycleways, to create a circular route with connections to the town centre and the countryside beyond;**
- **Establishing a green corridor containing a community woodland between Vendee Drive and Chesterton;**
- **The restoration and use of Stratton Audley Quarry for informal outdoor recreation, provided that the proposals are compatible with the site's designation as a Local Wildlife Site and partial SSSI;**
- **Extending and enhancing connections from residential areas to the town centre and outward from Bicester to and within; Ardley cutting and Quarry SSSI, Langford Meadows and Gavray wildlife meadows, Bignell Park and past the reservoir between Bicester and Chesterton, local nature sites surrounding Bicester Airfield, and to the south of Bicester;**
- **The greening of Sheep Street, Causeway and Church Street, Market Square, Garth Park, Bicester North Station, Bicester village station, and Bicester village;**
- **Re-naturalise and enhance Bicester's river corridors and floodplains as multi-functional areas: including Langford Brook at Langford Meadows, through South Bicester and beyond the A41 and the River Bure and the floodplain around Bure Park; and**
- **The establishment of new burial grounds in Bicester.**

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

QUESTION 38: Is there other green and blue infrastructure you think should be delivered at Bicester?

Bicester Town Centre and Areas of Change

5.33. Bicester has a small, historic town centre with a market and retail centre. In recent years there has been significant investment in Bicester including the opening of Pioneer Square with a new seven screen cinema, large supermarket, multi-storey car park, smaller retail outlets, and civic buildings including a library and a new hotel. However, in common with many high streets, the closure of some shops has resulted in vacancies and empty units. This has made some areas of the centre feel less vibrant and less attractive to visitors. We recognise that a successful and vibrant town centre is important to the local economy, and engenders local pride in the town.

5.34. Bicester Village is a premium designer shopping and tourist destination of regional, national, and international significance comprising over 170 units. It is a key economic driver within Cherwell and employs around 3,500 people directly and many others indirectly.

5.35. Our 2022 Retail Study identified a number of challenges and opportunities for Bicester town centre. It recommended further investment into its public realm and the quality of the environment, to create a more attractive and distinctive space.

5.36. It flagged the opportunity for increased leisure and eating-out venues, which could go some way to repurposing vacant shopping units and also noted that although Bicester Market is popular it does not perform to its full potential.

5.37. The Retail Study also noted the lack of connections between the town centre and Bicester Village which should be improved. There are also opportunities for the town centre to capitalise on the visitors brought to Bicester Village by offering an alternative and complementary experience.

5.38. The Retail Study concluded that there was an over provision of comparison retail floorspace in both Banbury and Bicester, and that overall there was no additional need for comparison or convenience floorspace across the district up to 2040. The study also concluded that any further out of centre expansion to Banbury or Bicester's comparison fashion offer would be seriously detrimental to the vitality and viability of both town centres.

5.39. To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of Bicester town centre, we will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services, and other main town centre uses. New retail development will continue to be focused in Bicester town centre and all new development will be required to be built to high design standards. We will resist further major out of centre retail development, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of Bicester town centre.

Core Policy 74: Bicester Areas of Change

5.40. We have identified a number of opportunity areas have been identified within and close to Bicester Town Centre.

Site 1 – Claremont Car Park/ Deans Court: This site lends itself to residential use given its proximity to the Town Centre and existing housing areas.

Site 2 – Bure Place/ Wesley Lane/Sheep Street: This site provides an opportunity for sensitive remodelling to provide public realm and design improvements and could include new restaurants or space for leisure operators fronting Bure Place. Residential units on upper floors would help improve the attractiveness of this area and improve footfall, vibrancy and greater commercial returns for the leisure, food and beverage sector.

Site 3 – Market Place (Square): This area offers the opportunity to become a focal point of the Town Centre and a venue for periodic events that could drive interest and footfall in Bicester. Removal of car parking would facilitate improvements to the public realm, including widening of pavements, enable outside seating for the nearby food and beverage traders and create an attractive ‘café culture’ environment where visitors will want to spend more time.

Site 4 – London Road Area: The upgrades to East West Rail will necessitate the existing level crossing being closed for up to 50 minutes every hour and so there is an opportunity to provide positive change to the area which could include new parking and cycling and pedestrian links across the railway line.

Site 5 – Bicester Council Depot: The Council owns this site which is currently used for Council functions. The site is surrounded by residential development and there is a need for Council operations to locate to another site in Bicester. A site at Graven Hill has been identified. The existing site could be suitable for redevelopment for residential development.

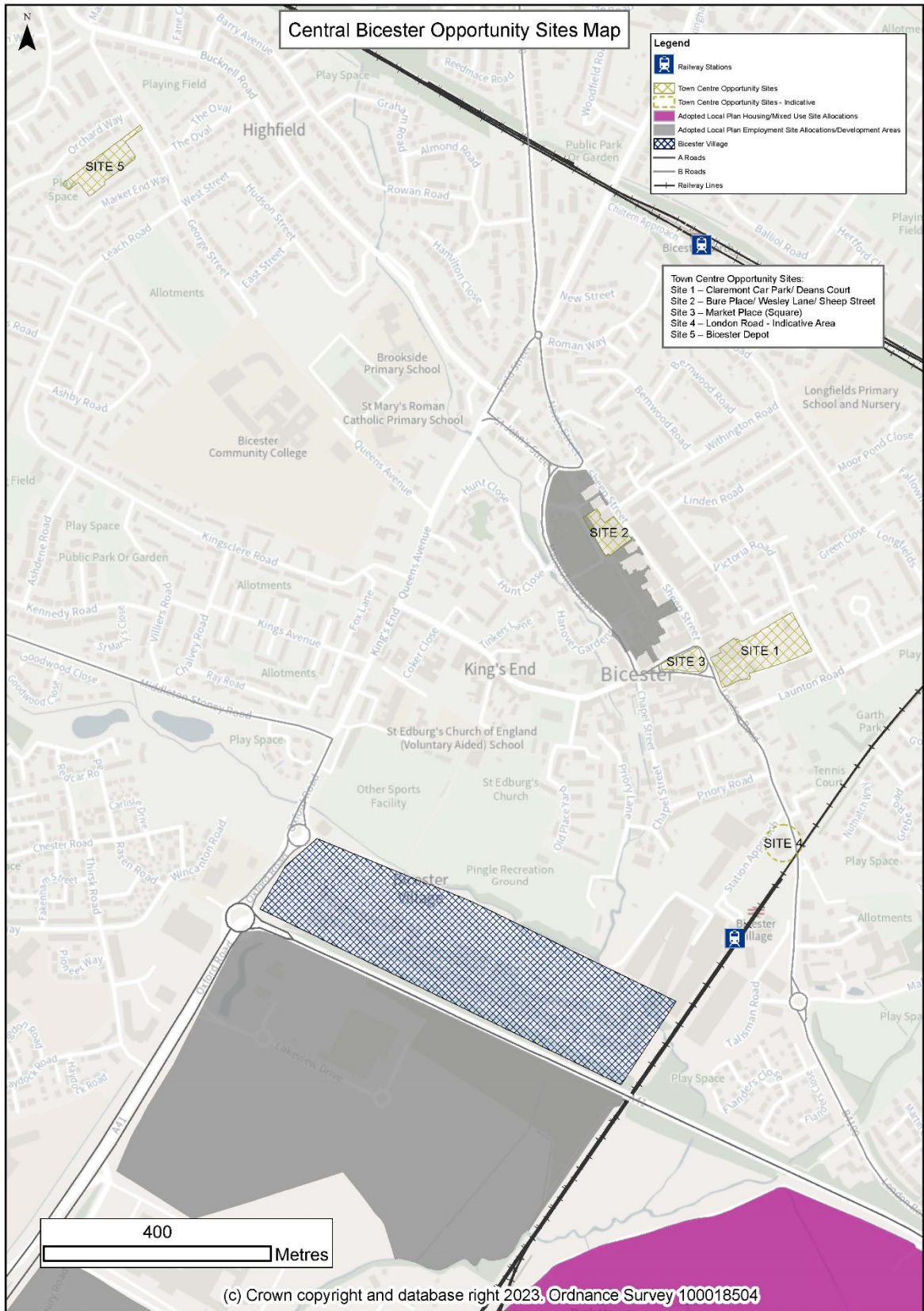


Figure 13: Bicester Town Centre Areas of Change

Core Policy 74: Bicester Areas of Change

Five areas of change have been identified within or close to the centre of Bicester as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and Figure 13, which are identified for specific change:

Site 1 – Claremont Car Park/ Deans Court

Site 2 – Bure Place/ Wesley Lane/Sheep Street

Site 3 – Market Place (Square)

Site 4 – London Road Area

Site 5 – Bicester Depot

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. Be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Bicester and provide opportunities for the ‘greening’ of Bicester town centre;
- ii. Proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment;
- iii. Be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the historic core and wider town centre;
- iv. Make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Bicester, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities;
- v. Be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels;
- vi. Improve the public realm, particularly in areas of historic value, such as Sheep Street and Market square, including by

- removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials;
- vii. Residential development will be supported within proposals for the identified sites, particularly on above ground floors.

Masterplanning of Bicester town centre will be supported.

QUESTION 39: Are there any other areas of change that you think we should identify in Bicester and how should these be redeveloped?

QUESTION 40: Are there any other measures should we be taking to improve Bicester town centre?

Bicester's Built Heritage

5.41. Bicester's interesting and varied history is perhaps not as widely known or appreciated as other places in the district. The Roman settlement of Alchester scheduled monument lies to the southwest of the town. The remains of an Augustinian priory founded between 1182 and 1185 survive within the town centre which is largely Medieval in origin focused on Sheep Street, King's End and the Causeway. Wretchwick deserted medieval settlement is in the south-east of the town. The historically important former RAF Bicester is now the home of Bicester Motion.

5.42. We have a duty to protect these important heritage assets. A key challenge for us is therefore to manage growth in a way that will not unacceptably harm the town's important heritage assets and local distinctiveness.

Core Policy 75: Former RAF Bicester

5.43. The Former RAF Bicester is an inter-war airfield situated immediately to the north-east of Bicester. Historically it comprised a 'Domestic Site' and 'Technical Site' together with the large open space of

the flying field. The whole of the site is a Conservation Area and most of the buildings and structures are protected by listing and scheduling. In addition, a Local Wildlife Site and proposed extension to the Local Wildlife Site covers a large part of the site.

5.44. We worked with the MOD and English Heritage and prepared a planning brief for the site in 2009. This brief recognised the complex issues, and the unique opportunities, raised by the site and the need to maintain and re-use its historic buildings and the flying field. The brief proposed a 'conservation-led' approach to the site, recognising that finding a use that can best preserve the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings may require a flexible approach in terms of the use to which the buildings are put.

5.45. Since then significant development has taken place at Bicester airfield providing new jobs and as a key destination for motorsport, new technologies, and events for historic car ownership, reflecting the sites history. A number of companies now occupy converted and new buildings in the south-eastern part of the site. We are keen to support the continued development, particularly as a tourist and leisure destination.

5.46. We wish to secure appropriate uses for a long-lasting 'conservation-led' approach to the technical site and flying field. Our aim is to establish uses that will be complementary to, and help enhance, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the nationally important heritage value of the site. We will encourage a mix of uses that will best preserve the sensitive historic fabric and layout of the buildings and the openness of the grass airfield.

Core Policy 75: Former RAF Bicester

Conservation-led proposals for the former RAF Bicester site will be encouraged that help to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the technical site and flying field.

Proposals for heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses will be particularly encouraged.

The development of hotel and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses.

All proposals will be required to accord with the latest Conservation Area Appraisal for the site and the 2009 Planning Brief.

Any proposals for the former RAF Bicester site should demonstrate how they will maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield. The biodiversity of the site should be protected and enhanced and habitats and species surveys (including a Great Crested Newt survey) should be undertaken.

The continuation of flying use will be supported at the site and opportunities for improving access to the countryside will also be encouraged.

QUESTION 41: Do you agree with our proposed approach to development proposals at Former RAF Bicester?

6. Kidlington Area Strategy

Kidlington Vision 2040

6.1. In 2040 the Kidlington area will continue to be an attractive place to live, visit and invest:

- We will have delivered the 4,400 homes already planned to help Oxford's unmet housing needs;
- Kidlington will be a local hub for employment and investment opportunities with attractive services and community facilities;
- Our residents and visitors will enjoy a high quality of life with improved access to natural green spaces and affordable housing;
- The area will be one of the best connected in Oxfordshire where people can and want to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Kidlington Policies

Core Policy 76: Kidlington Strategy

6.2. To achieve this vision, our **strategy** for the Kidlington area is to:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Overall Spatial Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen Kidlington's role as a Local Service Centre;• Continue to support investment in key economic assets including the Village Centre, London-Oxford Airport, Begbroke Science Park and at Langford Lane;• Improve the built and 'green' environment of Kidlington Village Centre;• Ensure the successful implementation of the committed 4,400 homes to help Oxford's housing needs so that the planned benefits for the communities of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton are delivered. |
|---------------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Kidlington Area Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a strong local economy with a focus on high value employment uses at Langford Lane and Begbroke centred on the Oxford Technology Park, London Oxford Airport and Begbroke Science Park; • Deliver new planned neighbourhoods at Yarnton, Begbroke and Gosford and Water Eaton with community facilities and infrastructure supporting greener sustainable living; • Support proposals that enhance the attractiveness and visibility of Kidlington’s centre; • Promote an enhanced role for Kidlington as a local service centre with new business and homes in/near the village’s centre and an improved cultural and leisure/night economy offer; • Improve access for all residents to high quality community facilities, sports and recreation spaces, and support improved health care facilities with the expansion of existing GP surgeries or a new facility; • Securing high-quality well-designed and accessible buildings and public spaces; • Provide enough market and affordable homes to address local needs; • Protect and enhance the townscape and landscape that form the setting of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp, Begbroke and Yarnton and maintain their local distinctiveness; • Protect and enhance areas of high natural capital value in the Cherwell Valley and the wider region including Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the proposed Otmoor, Bernwood and Ray Nature Park; • Support increased access to nature, open spaces and the Green Belt with specific opportunities to ‘green’ Kidlington’s centre and secure improvements to the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors; |
|--|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the area’s excellent links to Oxford, Bicester and London by public transport and work with County and Parish councils to deliver safe and inclusive routes that facilitate car free movements as the first choice for residents and visitors; • Support the delivery of Kidlington’s Local Cycling and Walking Plan with new and enhanced walking and cycling routes linking Kidlington to the surrounding villages of Hampton Poyle, Islip, Yarnton, Begbroke, Thrupp, Shipton-on- Cherwell; • Work with the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council to mitigate surface water run off through appropriate sustainable drainage infrastructure and look for opportunities for betterment where flood risk is already present. |
|--|--|

QUESTION 42: What are your views on our aspirations for the Kidlington area?

Housing

6.3. Over the next ten years some parts of the Kidlington area will see significant change, following the allocation of 4,400 new homes in the 2020 Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan. This is planned in six housing allocations located in the north of Oxford (PR6a and PR6b), Kidlington and southeast of Kidlington (PR7a and PR7b) and east and west of the A44 at Yarnton and Begbroke (PR8 and PR9).

6.4. We have prepared development briefs to help the delivery of these new neighbourhoods, guide their integration with the existing local communities and secure new schools and community facilities in the area.

6.5. In this Plan we need to consider the number and types of homes to support Kidlington’s need for market and affordable housing. Although we have a very significant level of housing already committed in the adopted

Local Plans, no land has been identified for allocation to address local needs of the Kidlington area.

6.6. The 2015 Local Plan stated that housing requirements and the development strategy for Kidlington could be achieved “without the need for a strategic review of the Green Belt in the District”, and that “small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specifically identified local housing need may be met through the release of rural exception sites as part of the development control process, in accordance with Policy Villages 3”.

6.7. In the past twenty-three years, there have been fewer than 500 new homes built in Kidlington and we know this is one of the most expensive places to buy a home in Cherwell.

6.8. The area’s prosperity, good transport connections and proximity to Oxford are likely to explain higher property prices in this area. The recent increase on the subdivision of larger dwellings may be partly in response to this demand.

6.9. We consider Kidlington’s future important social and economic role is unlikely to be achieved by relying on a rural strategy and being dependent on rural exception sites coming forward.

6.10. Within the current affordability context and the limited number of homes made available in the past for local needs, we think there is scope to explore the allocation of housing on the edge of Kidlington to support affordable homes and balance the needs of the growing local economy.

6.11. The availability of land outside Kidlington’s urban area is constrained by the Oxford Green Belt. However, Kidlington is one of our most sustainable areas and we will need to weigh the importance of protecting the Green Belt with wider sustainability factors.

6.12. We have identified two sites for consideration: South-East of Woodstock and North of the Moors, the latter lying within the Oxford Green Belt.

- i. South-East of Woodstock is well connected by sustainable transport modes to a wide range of employment, services and facilities in the area.
- ii. North of the Moors is a sustainable site, well-connected to a wide range of existing local services and facilities, including public transport, but also makes limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

6.13. Both sites could contribute positively to supporting market and affordable housing in one of our most sustainable areas. Given their relatively large size, the sites could also help support much needed facilities and community infrastructure for existing and new residents.

6.14. We have prepared an illustrative map showing the extent of potential Green Belt if North of the Moors was taken forward for allocation (Appendix 4).

QUESTION 43: Do you think these sites in the Kidlington area should be explored further for potential allocation for housing?

QUESTION 44: Are there any alternative housing sites for the Kidlington area you wish to suggest?

6.15. We are required to make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield and underutilised land before looking at countryside or Green Belt land. Before we can conclude that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to the Green Belt boundaries, we need to fully examine all other reasonable options.

6.16. Although we have not taken any formal views yet, we have followed up the 2017 Green Belt Site Study with an additional report. This is to understand the current context following the release of Green Belt land in the 2020 Local Plan Partial Review. Further work is being prepared.

6.17. We have identified opportunity areas within and near Kidlington's centre for mixed-use development including housing, but to make sure we make best use of urban capacity we will explore further the availability and suitability of small-scale housing sites within Kidlington's urban area before formally proposing land for allocation.

The Economy

6.18. Kidlington plays an important role in the wider economy of Cherwell. Its diverse economic base ranges from research and development to light industrial and commercial businesses and it has strong links with Oxford.

6.19. London Oxford Airport (Thames Valley area's primary regional and business aviation airport), the University of Oxford's Begbroke Science Park and the wider Langford Lane commercial area sit strategically in the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' halfway between Oxford and Bicester. Begbroke Science Park is an area identified in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy for further growth opportunities in advanced engineering and medical technology.

6.20. The 2011 Census travel to work data indicates there were c. 9,700 people living in Kidlington in employment and around 77% of those (8,100 people) were commuting to work. The majority of those commuting to work (44%) travelled to Oxford.

6.21. As 'small area data' is released from the 2021 Census we will gain a better understanding of how employment and travel to work patterns have changed in the area in the past decade. Nonetheless, we think there is an opportunity to improve the alignment of housing and employment in this area with its good connectivity to Oxford, Bicester and Oxford Parkway. This is likely to support further changes in commuting patterns aligned to sustainable transportation, especially to parts of Oxford and the District's main towns of Bicester and Banbury.

6.22. Our last Local Plan (2015) identified the need for a small-scale Green Belt Review around the employment clusters formed by the London

Oxford Airport and Langford Lane industrial area, and Begbroke Science Park to support high value employment needs.

6.23. A review undertaken in 2016 concluded Green Belt exceptional circumstances exist and land for area A was removed from the Green Belt in the 2020 Local Plan Partial Review following the Plan's examination. At the time, it was noted that a new Technology Park had been granted permission in the Langford Lane area (area B) but that it would be for this emerging Plan to address the employment needs.

6.24. Since then, some 8 hectares of land were granted planning permission for a technology park at Langford Lane (currently under construction) and the 2020 Partial Review of the Local Plan reserved 14.7 hectares of land for the potential expansion of Begbroke Science Park. This Plan proposes the allocation of 14.7 ha of additional employment land to support the expansion of Begbroke Science Park.

6.25. Begbroke Science Park hosts the Oxford University departments of Engineering Science and Materials, the Oxford Materials Characterisation Service and a large number of successful spin-outs and start-ups leading on research and technology. The proposed expansion will support Oxford University in transforming the science park into an Innovation District and deliver the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy's aspirations for the development of a major innovation quarter for UK and international collaboration and commercial research and development.

6.26. Retained Policy PR8 together with the allocation for the extension of Begbroke Science Park in this Plan will establish a highly sustainable and innovative urban neighbourhood with strong links to Kidlington Village Centre, to Oxford, and nearby communities of Yarnton and Begbroke.

6.27. A Development Brief for retained policy PR8 will guide the design principles for the delivery of the Science Park expansion and associated infrastructure and community facilities.

QUESTION 45: Do you agree with the employment sites we have selected at Kidlington to accommodate new employment development?

QUESTION 46: Are there any alternative sites to accommodate housing and employment needs that you think are more suitable?

6.28. Commercial development is already being delivered in the Technology Park at Langford Lane in recognition of the identified need in the 2015 Local Plan. A planning application for further commercial development at London Oxford Airport is currently ending determination.

6.29. We commissioned additional Green Belt evidence to help inform decisions on a small-scale review of the Green Belt in the Langford Lane area.

6.30. We consider there is a case to adjust the current Green Belt boundary on the southern side of Langford Lane to reflect the relationship between recently developed and open land following the development of the Oxford Technology Park.

6.31. We are also considering the appropriateness of adjustments to the Green Belt north of Langford Lane in and around the London Oxford Airport (LOA) area. However, this is far more complex. The distinction between the Business Park and functional airfield related development may preserve some contribution to safeguarding the countryside.

6.32. LOA benefits from permitted development rights for airport related development on the airport's operational land. Core Policy 22 supports the continued use of LOA for commercial aviation and ancillary uses and guides proposals affecting the airport's operations.

6.33. The airport is a regional centre for commercial aviation and training. There may be opportunities for research and technology business to be established at or near the airport, but we would like to ensure the airport

has sufficient land for operational purposes now and in the future without placing undue pressure on the larger site area where the potential harm to Green Belt purposes may be greater.

6.34. We have prepared an illustrative map showing the extent of potential Green Belt adjustments (Appendix 4).

QUESTION 47: Should this Plan adjust Green Belt boundaries in the Langford Lane area in response to recently developed land?

QUESTION 48: Should land for employment use be identified at London Oxford Airport?

Kidlington Area Heritage

6.35. The heritage and history of Kidlington and surrounding villages is closely related to the setting of the River Cherwell, their proximity to Oxford and the 19th century developments of the Oxford Canal and railway.

6.36. The villages are predominantly inset within the Oxford Green Belt, which amongst other purposes, intends restraining development pressure which could affect the character of Oxford City and its heritage setting.

6.37. The Oxford Canal is a designated Conservation Area along its whole length, including through Kidlington. Many of the Canal bridges and locks are listed.

6.38. The 13th Century Grade I Listed Church of St Mary the Virgin is the focal point of the Church Street character area, prominent in views from across the flood meadows of the River Cherwell and forms an important view to the wider setting of Hampton Poyle Conservation Area north of the River Cherwell.

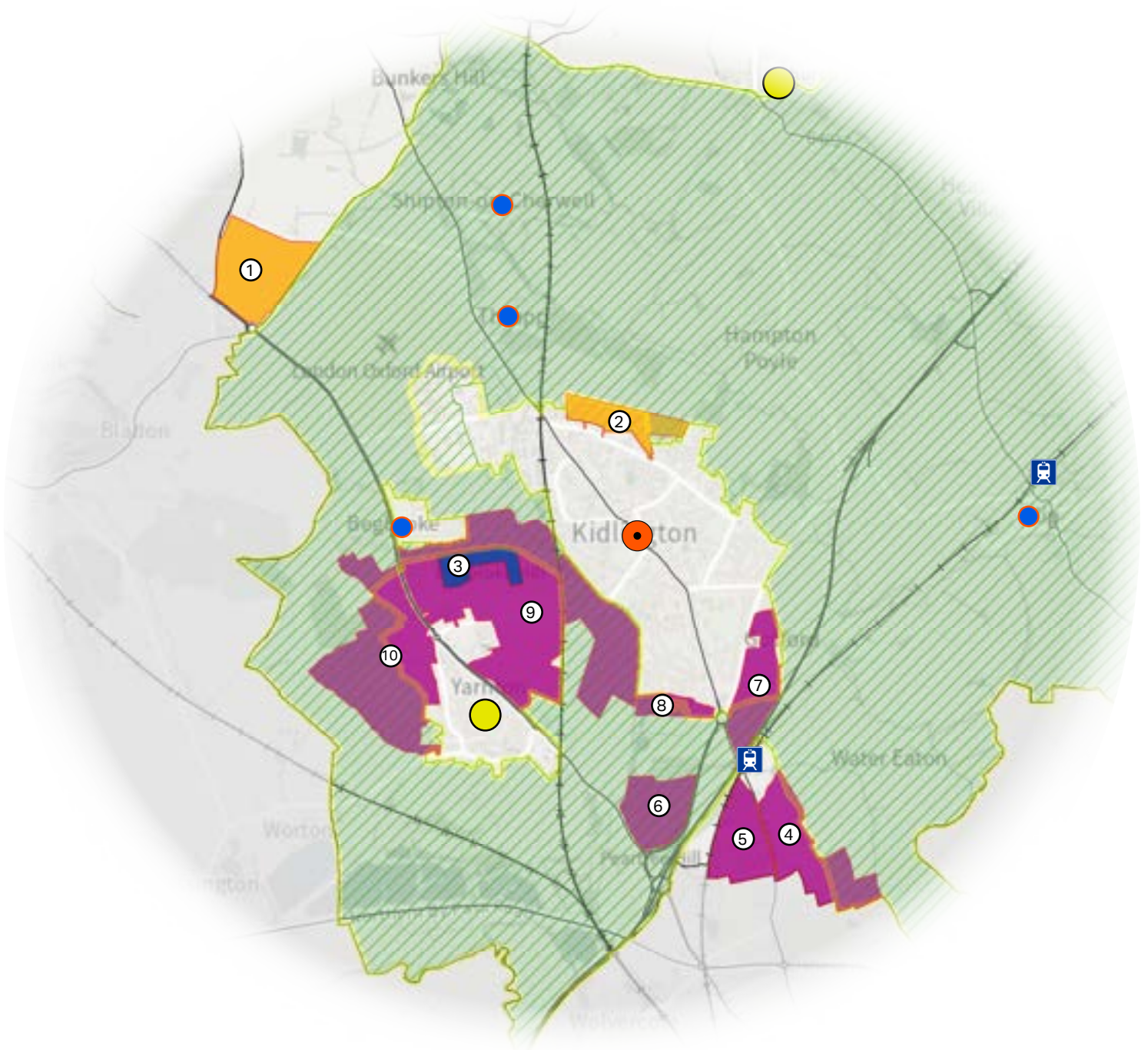
6.39. Begbroke's Conservation Area, west of the A44 includes nine buildings and their grounds. The special character of the Conservation Area is the use of local materials in traditional styles within large maturely vegetated plots, bordered by dry stone walls. Care should be taken to ensure that the open parts of the Conservation Area and the land which make up its setting and impact positively on its appearance remain open.

6.40. In the wider setting, the World Heritage Site (WHS) of Blenheim Palace, registered park and associated setting on the southeast edge of Woodstock are of high significance. The setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the ancient route of the 'Ridgeway' along the West Oxfordshire/Cherwell Boarder and the proximity of Bladon Conservation Area are also important heritage considerations.

6.41. The grounds of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS) are situated to the east of the A44 in close proximity to London Oxford Airport that sits in the Oxford Green Belt. To the north of the airport and adjoining Woodstock's boundary there are the buried remains of a Roman villa and associated fields, the designated Blenheim Villa Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

6.42. North of Campsfield Road, existing woodland belts contain views of the approach to Woodstock and other wooded areas such as Campsfield Wood, in contrast with the openness of the landscape to the south.

Figure 14: Kidlington Area Strategy Map



LEGEND

Local Plan Review 2040: preferred residential site allocation

- ① South East of Woodstock/Upper Campfield Road (LPR2)
- ② North of the Moors (LPR8a)

Local Plan Review 2040: preferred employment site allocation

- ③ Begbroke Science Park (LPR63)

Saved Allocations: Local Plan Partial Review

- ④ Land East of Oxford Road
- ⑤ Land West of Oxford Road
- ⑥ Land at Frieze Farm

- ⑦ Land SE Kidlington
- ⑧ Land at Stratfield Farm
- ⑨ Land East of the A44
- ⑩ Land West of Yarnton

Local Plan Review 2040: Settlement Hierarchy

- Main Towns
- Local Service Centre
- Large Village
- Small Village

Train Station

Green Belt

Proposed Green Belt Boundary

Core Policy 76: Kidlington Area Strategy

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development.

Development in the Kidlington Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 34.

Housing Delivery

900 homes will be delivered at Kidlington between 2020 and 2040 including the following strategic site allocations:

| <u>Site</u> | <u>2020-2040</u> | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>South-East of Woodstock</u> | <u>450</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |
| <u>North of the Moors</u> | <u>300</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |

Table 16: Kidlington Area Strategy Allocations

The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced:

Policy PR6a – Land East of Oxford Road

Policy PR6b – Land West of Oxford Road

Policy PR6c – Land at Frieze Farm

Policy PR7a – Land South East of Kidlington

Policy PR7b – Land at Stratfield Farm 1

Policy PR8 – Land East of the A44

Policy PR9 – Land West of Yarnton

A further allowance will be made for ‘windfalls’ of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area of Kidlington.

Employment

14.7 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on new strategic employment allocations as follows:

| <u>Site</u> | <u>Hectares</u> |
|---|------------------------|
| <u>Begbroke Science Park – Expansion</u> | <u>14.7</u> |

Table 17: Kidlington Area Strategic Employment Sites

Core Policy 77: London-Oxford Airport

6.43. The London Oxford Airport (LOA) operates as a private airport and is the area's primary regional and business aviation centre. LOA is the only commercial airport between Birmingham and London Heathrow and makes a significant contribution to the local and regional economy as a major infrastructure facility, local employer and supports the growing knowledge base and innovation sector in the area.

6.44. Current airport activities include general and business aviation uses, pilot training base (CAE Oxford Aviation Academy) and aircraft maintenance. Airbus Helicopters UK's headquarters are based at the airport. Complementary activities include aerospace/aviation related industries and research and development.

6.45. Construction of a new c. 7,000sqm hangar with two bays including rear offices, stores and workshops commenced in 2021.

6.46. LOA intends to set a programme for the replacement of existing older hangars with new facilities. It will be important that the airport's future and modernisation plans embrace all opportunities for carbon reduction, from the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (lifecycle carbon reduction of up to 80% compared to the traditional jet fuel) to more efficient aircraft design, and the development of future technologies like electrification.

6.47. LOA benefits from permitted development rights which in consultation with the Council could allow airport related development on the airport's operational land. A section 106 agreement restricts the airport's maximum annual operating capacity to 160,000 movements per year.

6.48. Support will be given to appropriate aviation related development proposals and the airport's contribution to the local and regional economy. The Council will seek clear mitigation measures effectively addressing any aviation related environmental or health concerns.

6.49. Airport safeguarded areas refer to a designated zone of exclusion, in which the Aerodrome Operator can, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority, consult on development proposals to protect the environment surrounding the airport from development. Reasons for preventing development would include activities that have the potential to impact the aerodrome's safe operation, or sensitive development that would likely be negatively and inappropriately impacted by the aerospace itself. Safeguarding ensures:

- i. Buildings and structures in the area do not pose a danger to aircraft;
- ii. The integrity of radar and other electronic aids to navigation are not affected;
- iii. Inappropriate lighting is not present, to avoid confusion with aeronautical lighting;
- iv. No increase in wildlife risk (e.g. bird strikes);
- v. Operations that could create interference through construction processes are prevented; and
- vi. Aircraft are not impacted by potential 'glint & glare' from development (e.g. solar panels).

6.50. LOA's safeguarded airspace measures two nautical miles (3.704 km) in radius, centred around the Airfield Reference Point, the mid-point of the main instrument runway.

6.51. Airport related development within the safeguard area, and elsewhere, must be held to the same standards as other development, as set out within the supporting policies.

Aircraft noise

6.52. Aircraft noise is generally exempt from the general noise nuisance controls. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the control of aircraft noise. However, the Civil Aviation Authority indicates the overall policy is that noise issues are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise.

6.53. In order to determine whether or not any specific development is likely to increase 'noise nuisance' from aircraft, the Council will seek to assess the impact of that development in terms of:

- i. The number, location, duration and frequency of aircraft activities or movements;
- ii. The noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with individual aircraft activities or movements;
- iii. The noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with overall aircraft activities or movements;
- iv. Seasonality of aircraft activities or movements; and
- v. The time of day at which aircraft activities or movements take place

Core Policy 77: London Oxford Airport

The Council will support the continued use of London Oxford Airport for commercial aviation and ancillary uses.

It will consult with the airport operator on proposals in the airport's safeguarded areas, as shown by the Policies Map and Appendix 11. Development that may be a hazard to aircraft safety will not be permitted.

In consultation with the Airport Operator, the Council will ensure that:

- i. Areas included in airport safeguarding areas are protected from development; and**
- ii. Sensitive uses such as housing, education and hospitals are not located in areas significantly affected by aircraft noise without acceptable mitigation measures.**

Development proposals at the airport should include mitigation measures to address any environmental and health impacts, particularly in respect of noise, air quality, health, and climate change in compliance with other Development Plan policies.

Any proposals for development on the wider airport, that fall within the Oxford Green Belt, will need to comply with related Development Plan policies, including for development in the Green Belt.

Core Policy 78: Delivery of strategic transport within the Kidlington Area

6.54. The Kidlington area is one of the best connected in Oxfordshire. The Oxford Road/Banbury Road (A4260) and Woodstock Road (A44) link Kidlington and surrounding villages with Oxford City centre, Woodstock and the north of Cherwell. The A34, A40 and Oxford Parkway railway station provides easy access to Bicester, Oxford, London and the wider region.

6.55. Langford Lane and Upper Campsfield Road (A4095) to the north and Frieze Farm to the south are important east-west connecting routes between the A44 and A4260 corridors.

6.56. The A34 is a major strategic route carrying freight from Southampton to the Midlands. It crosses the western edge of Kidlington and Gosford as it runs from Bicester Junction 9 of the M40 to Peartree interchange north of Oxford.

6.57. The local road network suffers from congestion on its main routes, particular on the accesses to Oxford. The concentration of major road and rail intersections exacerbate congestion in this area.

6.58. Traffic congestion and the ability to travel between villages and main centres without the use of a car is a challenge. However, work with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners has secured well-served bus routes providing easy access to Oxford and Bicester and main employment areas, the construction of the Oxford Parkway railway station has improved rail connections to Bicester and London and further public transport improvements are under construction on the A44.

6.59. We know there is already a high level of cycling commuting in Kidlington and the walking and cycling proposals in the Kidlington LCWIP will extend safe active travel opportunities to rural areas by linking Kidlington to the villages of Hampton Poyle, Islip, Yarnton, Begbroke, Thrupp and Shipton-on-Cherwell.

6.60. Our 2020 Local Plan and the recently adopted Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (November 2022) set out a clear strategy and infrastructure program for investing on public transport and active travel in the Kidlington area. Our focus on this Local Plan is to secure their delivery. We will make the most of the locational advantage and good public transport links in the area to support an ambitious shift to car-free travel.

6.61. It is important we bring together within this Plan transport and green infrastructure and deliver east-west active travel improvements across the Oxford Canal and the greening of Kidlington's centre as covered by Core Policy 80.

6.62. The Water Eaton Park and Peartree Park and Ride sites on the boundary with Oxford provide approximately 1,800 car parking spaces between them. Their main function is the removal of private vehicles from the main corridors into Oxford to help reduce congestion.

6.63. In the 2020 Local Plan we indicated the location of a potential Park & Ride on the A44 within London Oxford Airport land to help reduce congestion on the A44 and the A4260 into Oxford and Kidlington.

6.64. Oxfordshire County Council are further exploring the future of Park & Rides and their potential to function as transport hubs and electric vehicle charging facilities. We will continue to discuss with the County Council any opportunities to reduce congestion in these corridors and propose to safeguard in principle land for this facility in Core Policy 78.

6.65. Transport infrastructure is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, the type of facility and its design would need to preserve openness and not be in conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt

Core Policy 78: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Kidlington Area

In order to deliver the growth in the Kidlington Area, transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Kidlington and the Kidlington Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Transport infrastructure in the Kidlington area will be required as follows:

- i. Improved bus services and facilities along:**
 - a. The A44/A4144 corridor linking Woodstock and Oxford;**
 - b. The A4260/A4165 (Oxford Road) linking Kidlington, Gosford, Water Eaton and Oxford;**
 - c. Langford Lane;**
 - d. A44 P&R/ Transport Hub.**
- ii. The enhancement of the off-carriageway Cycle Track/ Shared Use Path along the western side of the A44 and the provision**

- of at least one pedestrian and cycle and wheelchair crossing over the A44;
- iii. The prioritisation of the A44 over the A4260 as the primary north-south through route for private motor vehicles into and out of Oxford;
 - iv. Improved rapid transit/bus services and associated Super Cycleway along the A4260 into Oxford;
 - v. Improvements to the public realm through the centre of Kidlington associated with (d) above;
 - vi. The provision of new and enhanced pedestrian, cycling and wheelchair routes into and out of Oxford;
 - vii. The provision of the proposed cycle route network in Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP).

All development within the Kidlington area will be required to contribute in accordance with Core Policy 51: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services. This will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

QUESTION 49: Do you have any comments on the transport schemes proposed for the Kidlington area?

Core Policy 79: Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the Kidlington Area

6.66. Our transport evidence to date lists the strategic transport improvements currently identified in the Local Transport Plan area strategies, and Oxfordshire's Infrastructure Strategy for the Kidlington area. We will need to test the impact of our Local Plan proposals on the transport network and take a view in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council on whether the schemes should be delivered during the lifetime of this Plan. At this stage we are just highlighting their potential for safeguarding.

Core Policy 79: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Kidlington Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes:

- **improved bus services and facilities along the A44/A4260;**
- **A44 P&R / Transport Hub;**
- **proposed cycle and walking route network in Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP).**

Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified schemes (Appendix 5)

QUESTION 50: Are there any other areas of land that you think should be safeguarded for transport schemes in the Kidlington area?

Core Policy 80: Kidlington Green and Blue Infrastructure

6.67. The Kidlington area has a good range of community facilities. Recreational spaces and sports grounds at Orchard and Park Hill recreation grounds, Ron Groves, Exeter Close and Stratfield Break provide green space, sports and play facilities serving the wider area alongside smaller green spaces and play parks.

6.68. Six primary schools at Kidlington, Gosford and Yarnton, a secondary school at Gosford Hill and further planned primary and secondary schools at Begbroke and Water Eaton will serve current and future education needs.

6.69. The Integrated Care Board, local GP practices and parish and district councils have explored opportunities for new health care facilities to extend the patient capacity of the two GP practices. Exeter Hall has been the preferred location for a health hub for some time but with the local GP practices already at capacity, other opportunities including

increasing capacity at Yarnton may need to be secured if feasibility work undertaken by the Parish Council shows Exeter Hall cannot accommodate a health centre expansion.

6.70. Evidence supporting the 2015 Local Plan and the 2016 Kidlington Master Plan indicated a shortage of parks and gardens, allotments and playing pitches in the area.

6.71. Our 2020 Local Plan addressed this shortage with new natural and seminatural open spaces, recreational areas and formal sports provision including c. 4 hectares of land for strategic sports provision south-east of Kidlington complementing key sports facilities at neighbouring Streatfield Break.

6.72. We will deliver this commitment and set up new policies in the emerging Plan seeking the protection of existing and planned facilities and setting standards for new provision through new development.

6.73. The leisure centre at Gosford and health & fitness offer at Langford Lane provide for indoor sports facilities but further facilities will be required to 2040. The planned secondary school at Begbroke is expected to offer shared use of a new four-court sports hall and the swimming facilities at Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre will require expansion.

6.74. The 2020 Local Plan Partial Review addressed some of the green Infrastructure and recreational open space opportunities along the canal identified in the 2016 Master Plan and provides for additional facilities in the area including the need for new and improved community and strategic infrastructure including education, health, sports and community facilities is being considered through the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that accompanies this Plan to ensure facilities are secured from new development.

6.75. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal are important green infrastructure corridors for biodiversity and active travel connecting Kidlington towards Oxford and gives access to the wider countryside beyond. Open spaces and areas of high natural and landscape value

stretch along the river and canal lengths and frame the setting of Kidlington, surrounding villages and that of Oxford. The area includes open spaces such as the woodland and wetland habitats at Stratfield Brake, Begbroke Wood Local Wildlife Site and Rushy Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as the open spaces in the Lower Cherwell Conservation Target Area. All of which contribute to Oxfordshire's nature recovery network

6.76. The Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2022 has been prepared to ensure we, our partners and local community, have a framework which supports increased access to nature, open space and the Green Belt, help us conserve our heritage, landscape and natural environment, makes us more resilient to climate change and support active travel.

6.77. In the Kidlington Area, the strategy addresses the network of green spaces and routes, landscape and water features shaped by the canal and River Cherwell as well as the greening of Kidlington's urban area. The strategy identifies area specific opportunities and sets projects for the protection of green spaces and increased wider benefits to people and biodiversity. Importantly, it sets the area in a wider natural context with links to important spaces within the Oxford Meadows and Farmoor conservation target area and the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation further south.

6.78. Priorities to 2040 include:

1. Protecting the function of the river Cherwell floodplain;
2. Protecting areas of green space of high natural capital and nature recovery value surrounding Kidlington and surrounding villages set within the two conservation target areas: Lower Cherwell Valley CTA and Oxford Meadows and Farmoor CTA;
3. Improving blue corridor connectivity along the canal and river corridors;
4. Supporting active travel through integrated green infrastructure to help reduce daily commutes to Oxford; and
5. Supporting improvements to the River Cherwell's water quality

Core Policy 80: Kidlington Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Kidlington area as shown by maps in Appendix 6 and the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Kidlington area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- i. Expanding and enhancing Kidlington's network of footpaths and trails;**
- ii. Enhancing the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell blue corridors;**
- iii. New and enhanced access to the canal and river, and**
- iv. Greening Kidlington village centre and supporting walking and cycling.**

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

QUESTION 51: Do you have any comments on the green and blue infrastructure proposed for the Kidlington area?

Core Policy 81: Kidlington Areas of Change

6.79. In the past ten years, recent retail/town centre developments, with office and residential uses above and public realm improvements, have helped consolidate the village centre. Today, the centre has a strong service offer and very low vacancy rates.

6.80. Looking to 2040, investing in village centre spaces and improving their accessibility and visibility will be key to support Kidlington's role as a local service centre.

6.81. The recent completion of a 100-room hotel at Langford Lane has helped increase the accommodation offer in the area. Enhancements to the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors and a focus on strengthening the village centre and public realm will increase opportunities for leisure activities and improve the attractiveness of the area as a destination.

6.82. Our Retail and Town Centre Study made specific recommendations for the village centre and its spaces including:

- i. Prioritise improvements to the public realm and arrival experience to the centre:
 - Improve the attractiveness of the Banbury Road/Oxford Road approach to the village centre to enhance arrival experience;
 - Provide of a gateway to the village centre;
 - Increase the visibility Kidlington Centre as a whole and Kidlington Centre arcade including further signage, and
 - Improvements to make the west of High Street / Watts Way area a focal point and increase its use.
- ii. Encourage clustering of evening economy/leisure uses for example around the pedestrianised square (west of High Street / Watts Way);
- iii. Improve the availability of private & affordable housing and senior living in the village centre;
- iv. The village centre boundary should broadly reflect the existing boundary except for a residential dwelling to the west of the Black Bull Public House which is recommended to be removed, and
- v. Drawing a compact Primary Shopping Area.

6.83. Our latest evidence indicates we should be directing retail development to the Primary Shopping Area only and leisure uses to the village centre as a whole. This is to avoid overprovision of retail floorspace and support stronger relationships and connections between retail uses.

6.84. We propose a minor amendment to the village centre boundary and a primary shopping area.

6.85. Saved Policies PR6a and PR8 will enable the provision of a small-scale neighbourhood centre at Gosford and Water Eaton in proximity to the Oxford Parkway and at Yarnton on the east side of the A44 to support existing and planned communities in the area.

QUESTION 52: Do you have any views on the proposed changes to the village centre?

Areas of change

6.86. The Town Centre and Retail Study identifies two sites with regeneration opportunities within and close to Kidlington village centre:

Site 1 - Skoda Garage, Oxford Road/Lyne Road

Site 2 - Watts Way Piazza.

6.87. Further technical and feasibility work will need to be carried out to understand the potential of these opportunity areas, but the sites are considered important to improve the visibility and attractiveness of the village centre and secure public realm enhancements. Any future proposals should not preclude the delivery of these village centre improvement opportunities.

6.88. The 2016 Kidlington Framework Master Plan identified a number of other sites with regeneration potential, the Co-op car park has now been completed but Exeter Close has property constraints which affect the consideration of development proposals.

6.89. Exeter Close is an important civic space in the vicinity of the village centre with uses including a community hall, medical practice, recreational open space and sports provision.

6.90. We are proposing a criteria-based policy to guide the development of sites 1 and 2 and have also included Exeter Close. We are committed to continue working with partners to deliver this site if an appropriate development proposal comes forward.

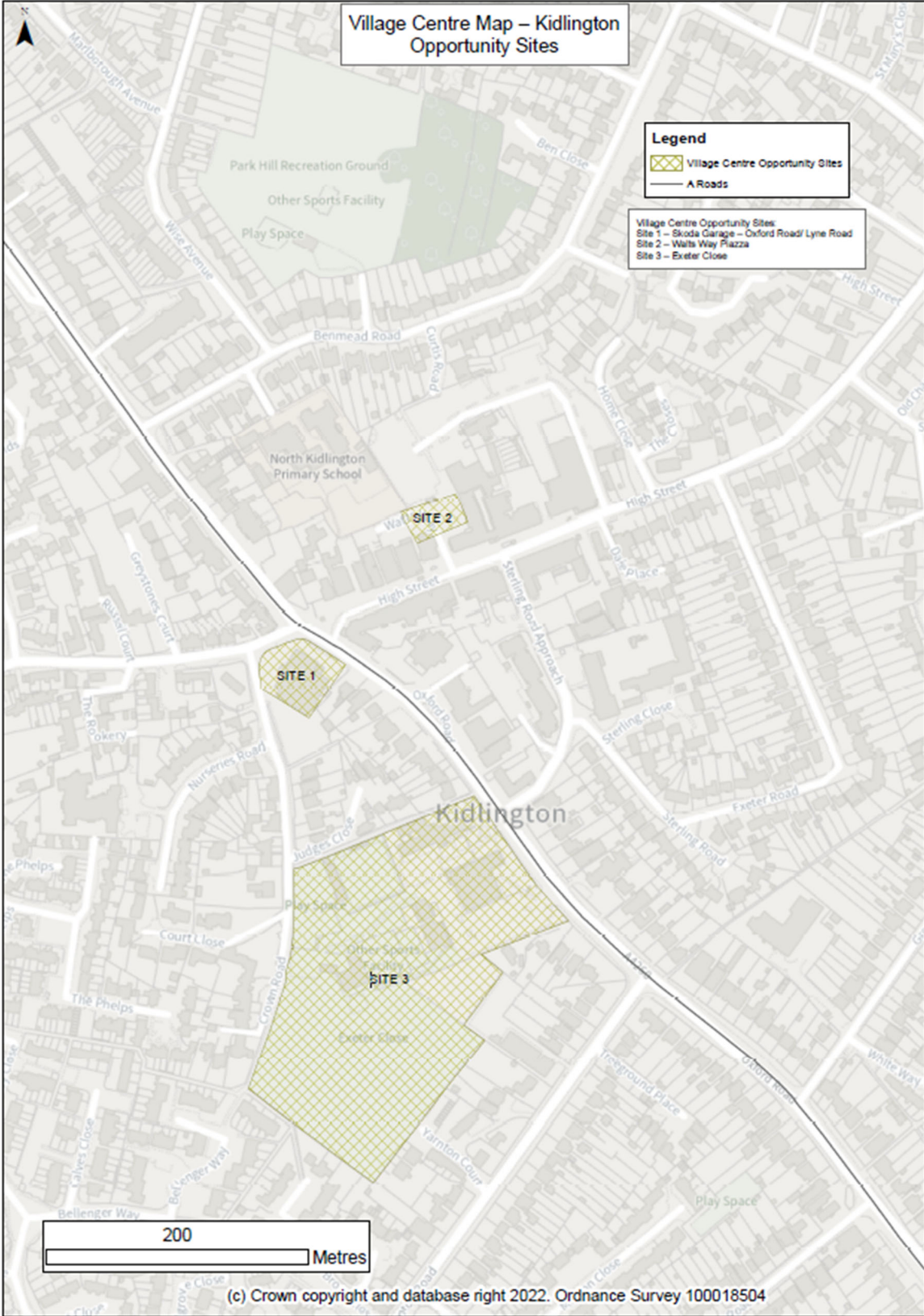


Figure 15: Kidlington Town Centre Areas of Change

Core Policy 81: Kidlington Areas of Change

Three principal areas of change have been identified within or close to the centre of Kidlington as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and Figure 15:

Site 1: Skoda Garage – Oxford Road/ Lyne Road

Site 2: Watts Way Piazza

Site 3: Exeter Close

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. Be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Kidlington;**
- ii. Proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment;**
- iii. Be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the village centre;**
- iv. Make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Kidlington, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities;**
- v. Be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels, and**
- vi. Improve the public realm and by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials.**

Residential development will be supported within proposals for the identified sites, particularly above ground floors.

QUESTION 53: Do you have any views on the areas of change identified?

QUESTION 54: Are there any other opportunity areas or sites that we should be including?

7. Heyford Park Area Strategy

Heyford Park Vision 2040

7.1. Heyford Park will continue to make a significant contribution to delivering homes and jobs in Cherwell.

7.2. By 2040, Heyford Park will be a distinct place with its own facilities and employment opportunities but well related to Bicester and the wider rural area in Mid Cherwell.

7.3. The new community will grow and prosper, taking proper account of the area's sensitive environment and the importance of its heritage legacy.

7.4. New development will be supported, if able to boost infrastructure and deliver sustainable transport links. Our vision for Heyford Park is:

- The approved (2022) masterplan for Heyford Plan will be delivered;
- Additional development on land to the south will be well integrated with the 2022 masterplan vision and help secure further infrastructure and improved transport links;
- Heyford Park will be a local service centre for the wider community in Mid Cherwell well connected to Bicester;
- New services, community facilities, and cultural and recreation opportunities will be delivered;
- The area will be an attractive location for business and a focus for creative industries in Oxfordshire;
- Public transport will have improved;
- New and improved walking and cycling routes will be created within Heyford Park and to the wider countryside;
- Preservation of the historic environment and environmental improvement of the former airbase will be secured, and
- Environmental and recreational improvements to the wider area beyond Heyford Park will be delivered, including to the Canal and River corridors with improved public access and an enhanced natural environment.

Heyford Park Policies

Core Policy 82: Heyford Park Strategy

7.5. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Heyford Park is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Overall Spatial Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the implementation of the committed growth at Heyford Park to fully establish the new settlement already planned;• Provide for the future expansion of Heyford Park to meet future housing and infrastructure needs should highway capacity limitations be resolved. |
| Heyford Park Area Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful implementation of the approved masterplan (2022);• Delivery of further transport investment to avoid unacceptable impacts on the highway network and support sustainable modes of travel;• Helping to improve the range of employment, community facilities and infrastructure and further enhance the sustainable transport and connectivity credentials of the area;• Recognise the potential for additional development to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the new community at Heyford Park;• Providing the future potential for additional development later in the plan period on land south of Heyford Park to provide approximately 1,235 new dwellings. |

QUESTION 55: do you have any views on our aspirations for Heyford Park?

Housing

7.6. A masterplan was approved in 2022 to guide the delivery of the 2015 Local Plan allocation and ensure the planned new settlement responds sensitively to the environmental and heritage context of the site.

7.7. This Plan provides an opportunity to further improve the sustainability, connectivity and infrastructure associated with the development in the longer-term. However, it is recognised that further development will be dependent on the successful delivery of the development already approved and further investment in sustainable transportation.

7.8. We will also need to consider the relationship of the new community at Heyford Park with other places in Cherwell.

7.9. Further work will be needed before we can take a formal view on the proposal, but it is unlikely we would be looking at delivering this further development before 2031.

7.10. We will explore further any opportunities to maximise development in the adopted Heyford Park site before formally proposing land for allocation. Notwithstanding, we do not consider that intensification should be considered at the expense of protecting the environmental and heritage value of Heyford Park.

7.11. However, we think it is reasonable to explore a new role for Heyford Park as a local service centre well related to Bicester and supporting services and facilities for its own needs and those of the nearby rural communities.

QUESTION 56: do you agree with the local service role for Heyford Park proposed in Core Policy 3?

The Economy

7.12. Heyford Park has proved to be an attractive business location and the 2020 Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan earmarks its potential to become a hub for creative industries.

7.13. Our 2015 Local Plan proposed some 120,000 sqm of floor space for commercial uses supporting the residential allocation in Policy Villages 5.

7.14. We do not have enough information at this time to take a view on whether further employment land is needed at Heyford Park and make no recommendations for further employment allocation but may need to revisit this approach once more detailed employment evidence is available.

QUESTION 57: do you think we should be considering employment uses alongside the potential allocation for more homes in the longer term at Heyford Park?

Delivery of green and other strategic infrastructure in the Heyford Area

7.15. Existing community facilities at Heyford Park include a secondary school, nursery and a village centre. The approved 2022 masterplan application for the site has helped secure further leisure and education provision and food and non-food retail opportunities.

7.16. The existing local centre is expected to provide for the majority of the needs of the new community with higher order services located in the nearby settlements of Bicester and Oxford.

7.17. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022) has identified areas near to Heyford Park for green infrastructure improvements linked to the river Cherwell corridor and Oxford Canal which provide an opportunity to serve the residents of Heyford Park as well as providing for ecological, ecosystem services and public access enhancement.

7.18. The study describes a larger cluster of protected habitat lies further to the east at Upper Heyford - including the Ardley Trackways SSSI, the linear Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI, as well as multiple local wildlife sites at the former RAF Airfield and at Stoke Wood.

7.19. The following opportunities have been identified for the Heyford Area:

- Preventative upstream flood mitigation, including nature-based solutions, which would minimise impacts downstream;
- The creation of a nature-rich “green lung” through the central part of Cherwell, enhancing access to the landscape along the green-blue spine of the River Cherwell and allowing for landscape-scale nature recovery;
- The creation of a landscape-scale River Cherwell Waterway Park;
- Restoration of the health of the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal - enhancing water quality through vegetation, floodplain restoration, and the removal of barriers;
- New spaces for habitat and recreation - connecting Steeple Aston and Lower Heyford, providing a Gateway to Upper Heyford, and nature-exploration park at Somerton near Bestmoor SSSI;
- Green corridor connections - connections provided to Ardley Trackways SSSI, between the Oxford Canal and Upper Heyford and Lower Heyford Station with enhanced canal access.

Heyford Park’s Historic Environment and Landscape

7.20. The former RAF Upper Heyford airbase in its entirety is designated as a conservation area, reflecting the role that the airbase played in the Cold War years. It contains a number of Scheduled Monuments identified as ‘Cold War Structures’ at the former Upper Heyford designation as well as five listed buildings.

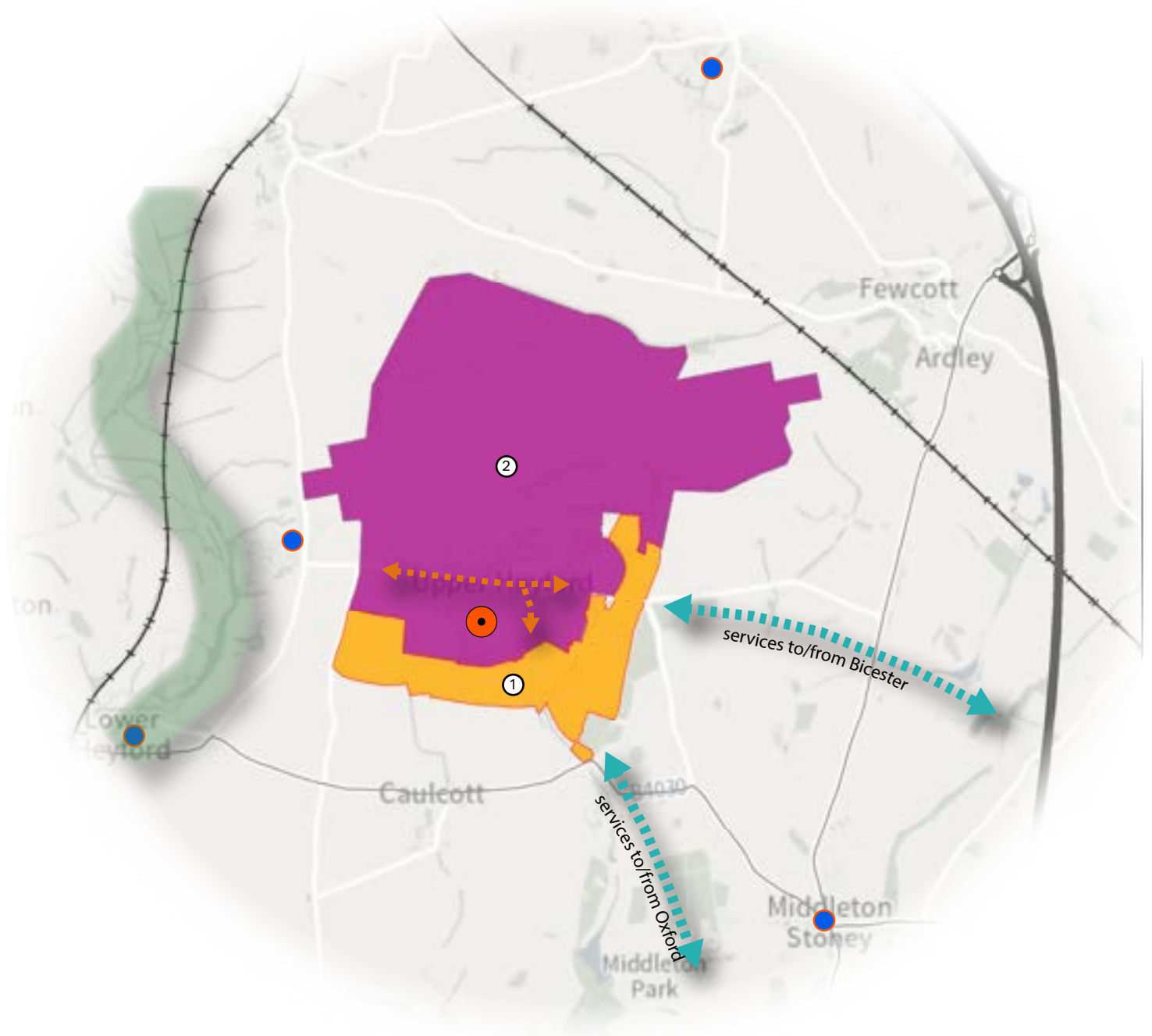
7.21. Heyford Park is surrounded by open countryside in an area containing historic rural villages, important landscapes, views and vistas. Rousham Conservation Area also lies partly within this area and includes the designated landscape to the north of Rousham House.

7.22. The 2007 RAF Upper Heyford Planning Brief is still relevant document today. It provides detailed heritage and landscape information and sets out key principles to maintain the central open character and functional appearance of the site's former flying field and the preservation of buildings of international and national importance on site.

7.23. The proposed extension to Heyford Park extends into a small part of the Rousham Conservation Area and lies adjacent to the Heyford Park Conservation Area.

7.24. New proposals within the Heyford Area will therefore need to take account of important views and vistas, seek to limit of the impact of development on the surrounding countryside and preserve and enhance the historic environment.

Figure 16: Heyford Area Strategy Map



LEGEND

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan Review 2040: preferred residential site allocation ① South of Heyford Park (LPR42a) Saved Allocations: Local Plan 2015 ② Former RAF Upper Heyford | <p>Local Plan Review 2040: Settlement Hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Towns Local Service Centre Large Village Small Village Train Station Green infrastructure improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport and active travel infrastructure improvements Wider public transport improvements |
|---|--|---|

Core Policy 82: Heyford Area Strategy

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development as part of a comprehensive approach.

Development in the Heyford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 35.

Housing Delivery

1,235 dwellings will be delivered through a new strategic site allocation.

Development will be supported on the newly allocated site after 2030 in the interests of:

- i. First ensuring the delivery of the approved (2022) masterplan under Saved Policy Villages 5;
- ii. Securing further sustainable transport infrastructure investment necessary to support the additional homes.

| <u>Site</u> | <u>2020-2040</u> | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>South of Heyford Park</u> | <u>1,235</u> | <u>New Site Allocation</u> |

Table 18: Heyford Park Area Strategy Allocations

The following existing strategic site policy is retained and will not be replaced:

Policy Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford

QUESTION 58: Do you have any comments on the potential allocation at Heyford Park?

QUESTION 59: do you have any views on the principle of phased development at Heyford Park subject to implementation of the approved masterplan and the delivery of transport infrastructure?

Core Policy 83: Delivery of strategic transport infrastructure within the Heyford Area

7.25. The development of a further 1,235 homes at Heyford Park could help improve the long-term sustainability of this new community but will need to be designed around a clear transport strategy and it is likely to require a significant package of transport and other infrastructure.

7.26. We need to undertake more work in consultation with the County Council and other infrastructure providers before we firm up Local Plan proposals, but we consider there is merit in exploring further growth at Heyford Park if public transport infrastructure can be delivered.

7.27. We propose additional growth at Heyford Park should be contingent on the delivery of the necessary infrastructure, coming forward later in the Plan period.

7.28. There are planned improvements to the bus services between Heyford Park and Bicester and the additional development provides opportunities to deliver improvements to this service and to other destinations, including Banbury.

7.29. New development should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport and minimising the need to travel by private car. Layouts should enable a high degree of integration and connectivity with the existing and planned communities at Heyford Park and which maximise the potential for walkable neighbourhoods with a legible hierarchy of routes.

Core Policy 83: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Heyford Area

Transport infrastructure for the development of the additional 1,235 homes at Heyford Park will include:

- i. **Extended walking / cycling provision including eastwards along Camp Road and westwards connecting to Lower Heyford station through public rights of way improvement utilising the canal towpath;**
- ii. **A new spine road within the new proposed allocation to accommodate buses and to provide for active travel;**
- iii. **Walking / cycling connections through the new development linking Lower Heyford Road to Camp Road via Tait Drive;**
- iv. **A commuter cycle route to Bicester linking to an improved bridleway to Bicester to the east of Heyford Park;**
- v. **Mobility hubs with cycling provision and electric car charging points;**
- vi. **Appropriate contributions necessary to capacity upgrades to M40 Junction 10 along with wider highway capacity improvements; and**
- vii. **Upgrading of the access road to the B430 to the east of Heyford Park.**

Core Policy 84: Safeguarding of land for strategic transport improvements within the Heyford Area

7.30. Our transport evidence to date lists the strategic transport improvements currently identified in the Local Transport Plan area strategies, and Oxfordshire's Infrastructure Strategy for the Heyford area. We will need to test the impact of our Local Plan proposals on the transport network and take a view in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council on whether the schemes should be delivered during the lifetime of this Plan. At this stage we are just highlighting their potential for safeguarding.

Core Policy 84: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Heyford Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes:

- **A new spine road within the new proposed allocation to accommodate buses and to provide for active travel;**
- **A commuter cycle route to Bicester linking to an improved bridleway to Bicester to the east of Heyford Park;**
- **Capacity upgrades to M40 Junction 10 along with wider highway capacity improvements; and**
- **Upgrading of the access road to the B430 to the east of Heyford Park.**

Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified schemes (Appendix 5).

QUESTION 60: Are there any other areas of land that you think should be safeguarded for transport schemes in the Heyford area?

Core Policy 85: Ardley Railway Station

7.31. The Heyford area is already served by a railway station at Lower Heyford on the line between Oxford and Banbury. However, there was originally a station at Ardley on the Chiltern main line that runs between Birmingham and London, which closed in 1963. To ensure that opportunities for sustainable public transport and connectivity in the area is maximised, especially in the longer-term, land is safeguarded for a railway station at Ardley on the railway line to the south of the settlement of Ardley.

7.32. Reinstating Ardley's railway station is a long-term aspiration promoted by the developers of Heyford Park. We do not know at this stage Network Rail's position on a business case for the station. Nevertheless, we consider this Plan should not preclude any opportunities for supporting strategic sustainable transport and where possible it should help their delivery. The potential location of the station is shown at Appendix 5.

Core Policy 85: Ardley Railway Station

The reopening of Ardley Railway station for passenger services will be supported. The Council will work with Network Rail and others to ensure opportunities to deliver a new passenger railway station are brought forward during the plan period.

Land at the original Ardley station is safeguarded to support the delivery of a new station and suitable access to it.

Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified scheme (Appendix 5).

8. Rural Areas Strategy

Rural Areas Vision 2040

8.1. There is a need for some limited housing and employment development at our larger and more sustainable villages to help sustain local services and enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Our vision is that by 2040:

- housing and employment growth will have been managed to protect the character, appearance, heritage and identity of our villages
- our most important landscapes will have been protected or enhanced
- we will have continued to meet local community and business needs and created sustainable housing and employment opportunity
- we will have directed most development in our rural areas to our larger and best served villages with most opportunity for sustainable travel choices, particularly those better connected by public transport to nearby urban areas
- farming and rural business will have had the opportunity to thrive within the context of a more restrictive policy context for the countryside

Core Policy 86: Rural Areas Strategy

8.2. To achieve this vision we will deliver the following strategy:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Overall Spatial Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas, and avoid unplanned development in the open countryside• Provide for limited development to meet local community and business needs and help support the vitality of these more rural settlements and the viability of existing businesses and farms• Direct the development of new housing to the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well connected to our urban areas than the smaller villages |
|---------------------------------|---|

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the designated Green Belt but consider a limited release at Kidlington to meet local housing needs if there are exceptional circumstances to do so • Protect the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) |
| <p>Rural Areas Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development opportunities to meet identified local needs • tight management of speculative development and the avoidance of comparatively less sustainable development outcomes • Greater emphasis on development being supported by sustainable transport and active travel opportunity • Greater emphasis on development being designed and supported by infrastructure to support health and well-being • Protection and enhancement of our environmental and heritage assets |

QUESTION 61: Do you have any views on our aspirations for our Rural Areas?

Housing

8.3. We have housing need to meet in our rural areas with newly forming households, those unable to access the housing market or affordable housing, and those whose housing needs have changed over time.

8.4. Developing in rural areas can, relative to urban areas, often be very economically attractive to developers.

8.5. We need to carefully manage development pressures to provide for local need to be met in a way that benefits local communities, does not lead to unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure, can be supported by sustainable and active travel options and which does not cause damage to the environment that makes our rural areas attractive and distinctive.

8.6. We are suggesting that the final Plan should identify sites at our most sustainable villages to accommodate 500 additional new dwellings.

8.7. We have already had a large number of suggested sites submitted to us. We have begun our assessments, although these have not yet been finalised. This document is therefore not proposing specific sites.

8.8. A number of parishes are preparing neighbourhood plans and we will support them to identify potential housing sites within their plans, if they wish to do so.

8.9. We have also asked earlier whether any other Parish Councils are seeking a specific housing requirement for Neighbourhood Plans.

8.10. In addition we expect small site 'windfalls' of less than 10 dwellings (known as windfalls) to emerge for consideration against Core Policy 35 (Settlement hierarchy).

Core Policy 86: Rural Areas Strategy

In accordance with the spatial strategy and Core Policy 34: District Wide Housing Distribution, the 500 dwelling non-strategic housing requirement for the rural area will only be met by site specific allocations in this Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan.

Development Policy 7: Rural Exception Sites

8.11. Most of our rural areas have high house prices and a limited supply of affordable homes. We will therefore continue to support rural exception sites that provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs. In some cases we will also need to consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would make a scheme more viable. In these circumstances we will ensure that the inclusion of any element of open market housing must benefit the provision of rural affordable housing and must not inflate the 'threshold land value' (the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land).

Development Policy 7: Rural Exception Sites

The Council will support development for small scale affordable housing schemes within or immediately adjacent to villages to meet specific, identified local housing needs that cannot be met through the development of sites allocated for housing development.

Arrangements will be secured to restrict the occupancy of the housing to ensure that it continues to meet local needs in perpetuity.

Market housing for private rent or sale will only be considered on rural exception sites when:

- i. **The number of market homes does not exceed 25% of the total number of homes proposed;**
- ii. **The market housing is shown to be required to secure the viability of the proposal. Development costs must be justified;**
- iii. **No alternative, suitable site is available to provide a rural exception site following a robust site search;**
- iv. **The market housing ensures that no additional subsidy for the scheme is required;**
- v. **The development has the support of the local community;**

- vi. **The total number of dwellings and the scale of the development is in keeping with the settlement categorisation, character and form of the village and its local landscape setting.**

Development Policy 8: New Dwellings in the Countryside

8.12. National guidance states that rural housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Development of isolated homes in the countryside should generally be avoided. There are some exceptions, for example, where there is an essential need for a rural worker, or where the design is of exceptional quality.

8.13. We also recognise that it may be beneficial to permit the replacement of a dwelling in the open countryside, for example where an existing dwelling is unfit or substandard. There may also be opportunities to improve the quality of local environments through the re-development of some brownfield sites.

8.14. Where planning permission is given for a rural worker in the open countryside we will impose an appropriate occupancy condition. Such conditions will only be removed if it can clearly be demonstrated that there is no need for a rural worker's dwelling in the locality.

8.15. Planning applications will need to provide sufficient details to enable an assessment of the size, nature and viability of the existing or proposed enterprise together with details of the number and tenure of existing dwellings related to the holding or estate. Where there is any doubt that a dwelling is required for the proper functioning of an enterprise, or where a new business is being proposed, it will be necessary to supply adequate financial information to demonstrate that the proposals are sound (covering a three-year period).

8.16. Our preference is that new dwellings should be through the conversion of existing rural buildings, to use land efficiently and reduce impacts on the countryside. Where a new build dwelling is proposed we will normally expect them to reflect the local vernacular and be closely related to existing buildings in the interest of protecting the appearance and open character of the countryside.

Development Policy 8: New Dwellings in the Countryside

The Council will permit the development of an agricultural worker's dwelling if there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Dwellings beyond the built up limits of settlements which are not essential for rural workers will not be permitted unless one or more of the following apply:

- i. **The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate small scale development that secures the future of associated heritage assets;**
- ii. **The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings;**
- iii. **The development would involve the one for one replacement of an existing dwelling;**
- iv. **The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; and**
- v. **The development is for an individual dwelling where the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:**
 - **Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and**
 - **Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.**

Development Policy 9: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling

8.17. The conversion of rural buildings to dwellings will help contribute towards meeting the district's housing needs and can allow farms to diversify and remain economically viable. However, it is also important

that employment opportunities continue to be provided in our rural areas and that farms continue to thrive.

8.18. Many conversions of farm buildings to dwellings do not need planning permission, but where they do we will prioritise employment re-use over residential conversion to promote the diversification of the rural economy.

8.19. Permitted development rights may be removed to ensure there is no further inappropriate alteration to the form, character and setting of the dwelling.

Development Policy 9: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling

The conversion of a rural building to a dwelling will be permitted provided that:

- i. **The applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable employment re-use;**
- ii. **The building's form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings;**
- iii. **The building is of permanent and substantial construction, evidenced through a structural engineers report appropriate to the building;**
- iv. **In the case of a building beyond the built-up limits of a village, conversion can be achieved without major rebuilding or major extension and without inappropriate alteration to its form and character;**
- v. **The proposal would not harm the special character and interest of a heritage asset or its setting;**
- vi. **The proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the countryside or the immediate setting of the building; and**
- vii. **There are no significant transport, highways and noise impacts.**

QUESTION 62: Do you support our preliminary proposals for housing in our rural areas?

QUESTION 63: Are there any potential rural housing sites you wish to suggest?

Economy

8.20. We recognise that our rural economy is diverse and provides benefits to our rural communities. We will continue to support the sustainable economic growth of our rural businesses, including farming. Proposals for employment development on unallocated sites will be considered against Core Policy 27.

8.21. In addition, we want to identify a number of smaller employment sites in our rural areas. Work is ongoing to identify suitable sites.

QUESTION 64: Do you know of any potential new rural employment sites?

9. Implementing the Plan

Core Policy 87: Delivery and Contingency

9.1. This Plan, when finalised, will set out how the district will develop over the Plan period to 2040, identifying where homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered, and the types of distinctive and characterful places that the Plan would like to create.

9.2. Monitoring allows us to understand whether policies are working as intended. It enables decisions to be taken that are well-informed and based on an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of policies based on evidence.

9.3. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan is critical in ensuring the successful delivery of the current Plan and to shape the development of any future development plan for the district.

9.4. Each year the Council must produce reports which assess the implementation of the Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 and the extent to which its strategic objectives and policies are being achieved.

9.5. The Sustainability Appraisal also plays an integral role in monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of Local Plan policies.

9.6. Following this consultation, we will prepare the proposed Plan – the ‘Regulation 19’ stage. A monitoring framework will then be prepared to monitor the effectiveness of the proposed Policies.

Core Policy 87: Delivery and Contingency

The Council will monitor progress towards the achievement of indicators and targets set out within the Monitoring Framework. The Annual Monitoring Report will be produced on at least an annual basis and will be used to establish whether the implementation of the Plan, either in part or as a whole, is being effectively actioned. Where there is evidence to suggest that policy-specific targets listed

in the Monitoring Framework have not been met, contingency measures and actions listed in the Monitoring Framework will apply.

Contingency measures may include one or more of the following:

- i. Seeking to accelerate delivery on other permitted or allocated sites;**
- ii. Seeking alternative sources of funding if a lack of infrastructure is delaying development or causing significant problems as a result of new development;**
- iii. Identifying alternative deliverable sites that are in general accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the Plan;**
- iv. Undertaking a full or partial review of the Local Plan, if investigation indicates that its strategy, either in whole or in part, is no longer appropriate.**

QUESTION 65: Do you have any comments on these measures?

Appendices