Appendix 1

An Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell District (2011 – 2016)

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1) Introduction

What is the Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell?

It is ‘vision’ supporting and developing themes outlined in the Community Strategy, setting out the direction we collectively need to take to ensure that the economy and society of the District is prosperous and resilient, for the benefit of all who live and work in north Oxfordshire. To be successful, it must integrate with partners and other key strategies, such as housing and transport, to maximise its impact. Ultimately, it should support Cherwell to prepare to resist future economic, environmental and social challenges, and to maximise opportunities. This is particularly timely as the nationally- significant Bicester Eco-Town project begins.

When will it happen?

The Strategy covers the 5 year (medium term) period from 2011 to 2016, as part of the Community Strategy’s vision for 2030. It will both inform annual delivery plans and look to a longer horizon to ensure cohesion and synergy with other strategic documents and policy frameworks.

Why is it necessary?

An Economic Development Strategy is necessary to reflect the changed economic conditions, and priorities of the Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership, as identified in broad terms within the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy 2010.

Economic growth has until recently been enjoyed since the early 1990s but the context has changed considerably through a series of crises hitting the world’s financial systems, deeply affecting global, national and local economies:

- The housing crisis (i.e. sub-prime mortgage defaults & slowing market);
- The banking crisis (i.e. collapse of banks, nationalisation & recapitalisation);
- The ‘credit crunch’ (i.e. constraints in borrowing for investment);
- Recession (i.e. reduced output and increased unemployment);
- Public borrowing (i.e. high public debt, reducing expenditure)
- Public spending cuts(i.e. further unemployment and increased reliance upon private and social sectors)

Whilst the causes of the crises were beyond the direct control of local partners, the Economic Development Strategy previously developed for Cherwell (2007-11) ensured that resources were adjusted to provide a timely, flexible and effective response to minimise the impact upon people and businesses. Support to residents facing redundancy, for example, was given through operating Job Clubs and an enterprise agency alongside core support for the 6,000 local businesses.

High aspirations for the local economy remain and we now also have a changed national political context, new local Community Strategy and new research to inform our understanding. Significantly, we have a unique opportunity to deliver economic growth through ‘Eco Bicester’ development, to be focussed upon the North West Bicester site and raising opportunities around ‘green technologies’ throughout the district and beyond.

Against a volatile background, local economic strategy and effective partnerships will have an important role to play, ensuring that resources are co-ordinated and that priorities can be agreed towards achieving the community's vision.

Where does it cover?

The Strategy deals with economic development as a theme that cuts across all that happens in Cherwell District, north Oxfordshire. Whilst administrative boundaries may be tightly drawn, partnerships and trade across boundaries are supported. A framework is provided for decision-making and local action; specific locations are rarely mentioned, apart from in annual operational plans.

North Oxfordshire is in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, it lies at the geographical heart of England, mid-way between the powerhouses of London and Birmingham, and in an excellent position for business. However, we also lie at the far north-western corner of the administrative South East region, at a junction point between the South East, East and West Midlands and South-West regions. This has in the past led to difficulties in being on the periphery of the large and economically highly active South-East region but, with a review of regions, there is renewed vigour to put Cherwell more effectively 'on the map'.

Who is it for?

It's for everybody with an interest in north Oxfordshire: businesses, investors, residents, visitors and communities. Whilst the Strategy is led by Cherwell District Council, the shared vision belongs to all members of the Local Strategic Partnership. The Council will co-ordinate annual operational plans but many goals will be delivered either whole or in part by other agencies, organisations and communities.

Upon what evidence is it based?

The Strategy draws upon the following research:

- Cherwell Community Strategy 2010
- Cherwell Economic Resilience Study 2010
- Cherwell Employers Skills Study 2010
- Cherwell Employment Land Review 2010
- Eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy 2010
- Oxfordshire Economic Assessment 2010

How will it be made to happen?

Building upon research and partnership discussions since 2009, the strategy will be predominantly delivered through a series of Annual Operational Plans which will focus on how the vision will be realised in the short-term within north Oxfordshire. It seeks to configure resources between partners across the social, private and public sectors in north Oxfordshire, exploiting the value to be added local by innovative and effective linkages, as illustrated below:

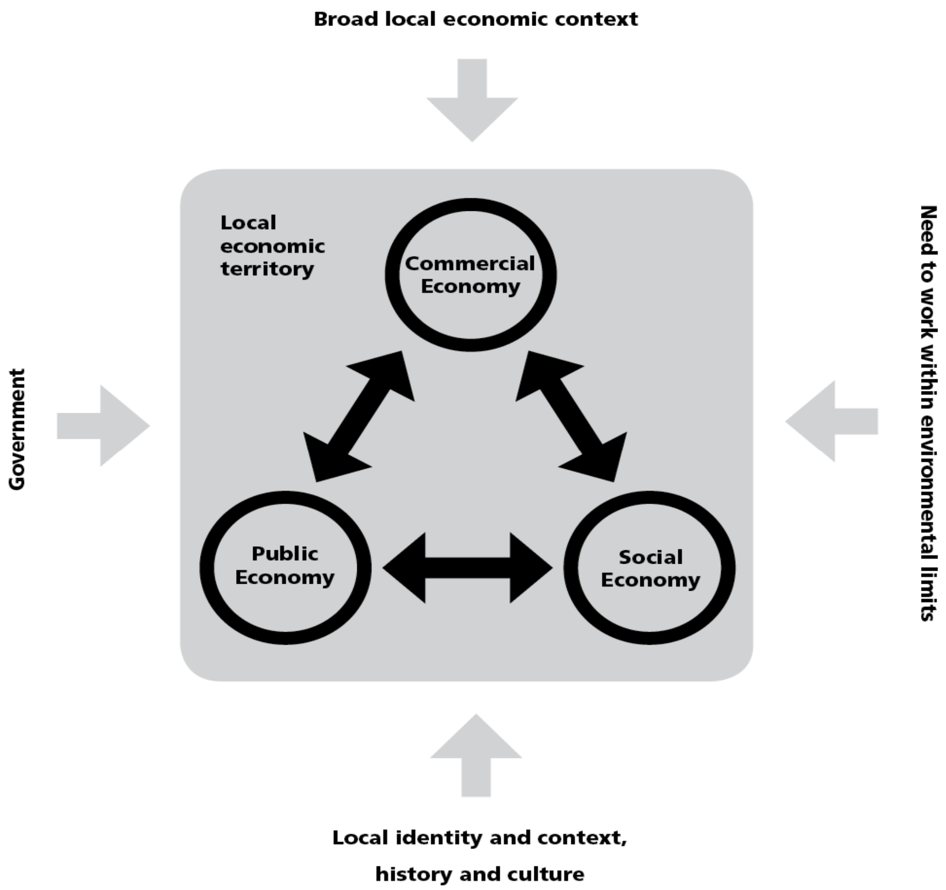


Figure 1: The CLES resilience model

The resilience model stands out because it acknowledges the relative strength of the reciprocal relationships between the public, private and social sectors that help generate resilience within an area. Stronger mutual relationships allow a locality to be more flexible, proactive and agile if faced with an economic/environmental shock or changing context.

Aiming to enhance the resilience of Cherwell's economy, this strategy follows a logical format:

- Firstly, we will outline the economic situation for the District; some of the recent and long-term trends, and key issues to address over the period of the strategy.
- Then we will outline the strategic context within which we are working, and the main aims of the Community Strategy that we are seeking to deliver.
- Finally, we will present a series of themes covering the economy in the District, giving a more focused view of how we will move forward over the next five years.

Map of district showing key business infrastructure to be inserted her.

2) Cherwell's Economy – the Key Issues

We face the following issues, in no particular order of priority:

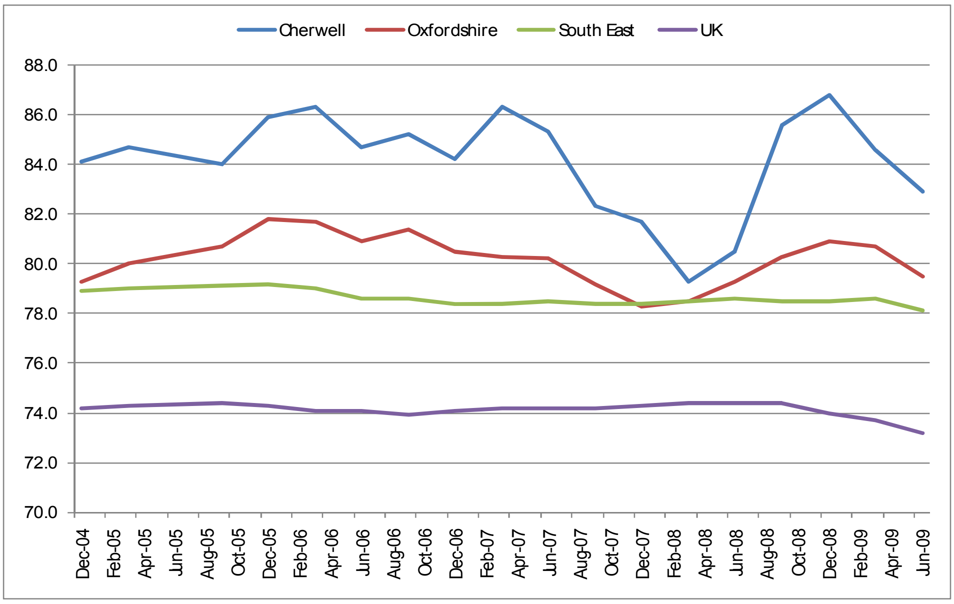
a) Levels of **employment** remain high but not everybody is benefiting;
b) We have increasingly relied upon **public sector** jobs which are set to reduce in number;
c) **Wages** paid within Cherwell still lag behind South East regional averages;
d) There are still residents without the right **skills**;
e) There remain pockets of **deprivation** within our overall prosperity;
f) Our **population** is expected to grow significantly;
g) Employment **land, premises & services** do not always meet modern business needs;
h) We have a **diverse** economy but often with 'lower value' activity similar to the south Midlands;
i) **Manufacturing** is a particular strength but is often lower skilled locally;
j) The **knowledge** economy is growing but not quickly enough;
k) Businesses are highly **satisfied** with their location in Cherwell yet this is not widely understood beyond the district;
l) This is an **enterprising** district with potential for innovation;
m) The **environment** provides both challenges and opportunities, especially through the 'Eco Bicester' project;
n) **Globalisation** has also become a significant issue for the economy: both a challenge and opportunity;
o) The **community** sector will have an increasing role to play.

a) Levels of employment remain high but not everybody is benefiting

- 70,200 residents (over 16 years old) of the district (April 2009 - March 2010) were in work (as employees or self employed).
- Individuals and communities have been affected by the national recession.
- Youth inactivity & unemployment has become a serious concern since 2009.
- Disability Allowance claimants and long term unemployed face challenges in finding work.

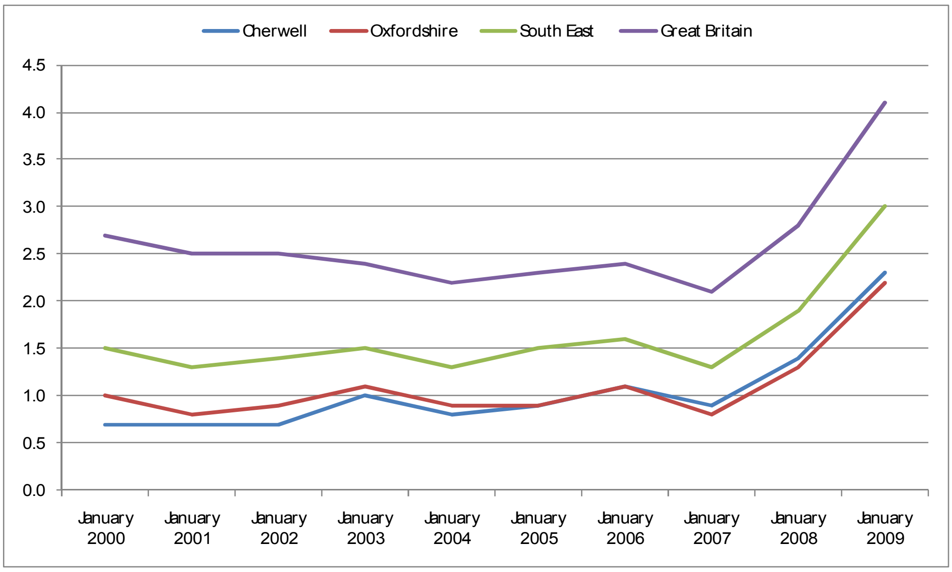
The employment rate demonstrates the percentage of people working within the private, public and social sectors within Cherwell. The employment rate across the three sectors is very high (82.9%), higher than the comparator areas of Oxfordshire, the wider South East and the UK. The rate has been consistently high since 2004, and despite a drop between 2007 and early 2008, has always been higher than the comparators. At its peak at the end of 2008, the rate was particularly high at around 87%. Despite the fall due to the recession, the impact upon the labour market has been limited. This limited impact of the recession upon the labour market is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, showing that although Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rates increased markedly through the recession, compared to other areas the rates are still low (1.8% in August 2010).

Figure 2: Employment rate as a percentage of the working age population, December 2004 to June 2009



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2009

Figure 3: Job Seekers Allowance rates as a percentage of the working age population, January 2000 to January 2009



Source: ONS, Claimant Count, 2009

b) We have increasingly relied upon public sector jobs which are set to reduce in number

The strong labour market performance has been helped by large growth in public sector employment, which is demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Private and public sector employment levels[1]

	Cherwell		Oxfordshire		South East		Great Britain	
	% of Employment	% change 1998-2008	% of Employment	% change 1998-2008	% of Employment	% change 1998-2008	% of Employment	% change 1998-2008
Private Sector	**74.2%**	**-2.4%**	69.2%	-3.4%	74.3%	6.2%	73.1%	4.6%
Public Sector	**25.9%**	**39.1%**	29.9%	34.7%	25.5%	21.5%	27.0%	25.4%

Although Cherwell has a strong level of private sector employment, this has actually decreased by 2.4% during 1998-2008 and the public sector has taken the slack in terms of local employment, increasing by 39.1% during 1998-2008, particularly in education. The proportional reliance on the public sector, however, remains lower than that of the county and nation as a whole. The major public spending cuts being implemented, however, present a significant challenge if the private and social sectors are to provide alternative employment.

c) Wages paid within Cherwell still lag behind South East regional averages

Wage earnings are a key indicator of the interaction between labour supply and demand in an economy, and the living standards of its employees. High earnings can be an indicator of strong labour demand as well as higher value activities in an economy, whilst low wages could imply either low demand for labour or lower value added activities. Within Cherwell, workplace earnings, whilst higher than the national average, are lower than the Oxfordshire and South East averages, although the relative change in earnings has increased markedly between 2002 and 2009, suggesting an increase of knowledge intensive activities. The resident based earnings are notably high compared to workplace based earnings, both in terms of 2009 averages and percentage change over time against the comparators, suggesting high levels of out commuting to increasingly higher paid, higher value jobs.

Table 2: Full time workplace gross median weekly earnings, 2002-2009

	Earnings 2002 (£)	Earnings 2009 (£)	Change 2002-2009 (£)	% change 2002-2009 (£)
Cherwell	400.0	490.1	90.1	22.5%
Oxfordshire	429.3	517.5	88.2	20.5%
South East	419.9	513.6	93.7	22.3%
UK	390.9	488.7	97.8	25.0%

Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2002 and 2009

Table 3: Full time residence based gross median weekly earnings, 2002-2009

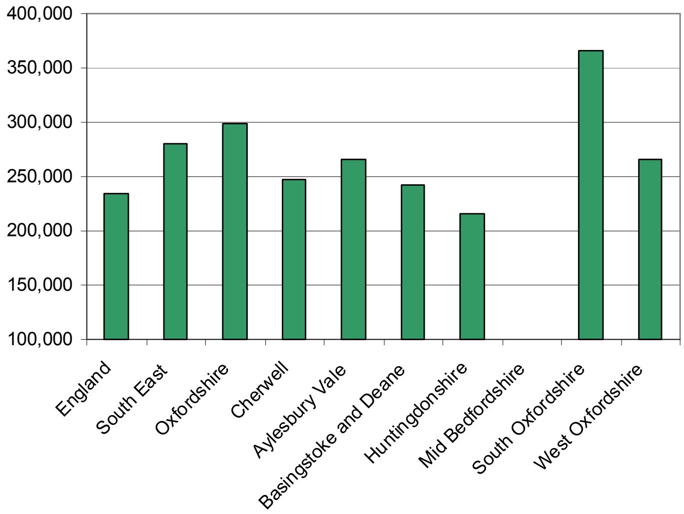
	Earnings 2002 (£)	Earnings 2009 (£)	Change 2002-2009 (£)	% change 2002-2009 (£)
Cherwell	**426.1**	**549.5**	123.4	29.0%
Oxfordshire	441.2	541.4	100.2	22.7%
South East	435.1	536.6	101.5	23.3%
UK	390.9	488.7	97.8	25.0%

Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2002 and 2009

[1] Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2008

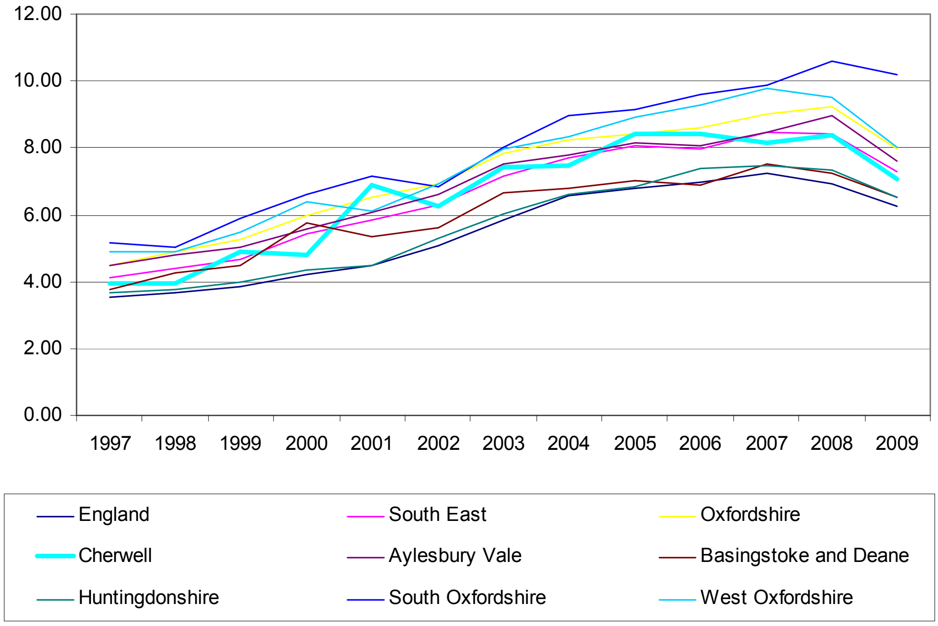
Whilst employers in north Oxfordshire may gain competitive advantage through lower wage rates (table 2) when compared with the south east and county, the ability to attract and retain employees in the district requires similarly competitively low costs of living. Housing affordability can be used as a proxy and the tables below indicate that, when compared nationally, regionally and within Oxfordshire, the cost of living in Cherwell is broadly in line with the respective earnings rates, and is competitive with other similar districts, especially others in the County.

1) Mean house prices (£) based on Land Registry data, 2010



Source: CLG Live Statistics

2) Housing Affordability Ratio: ratio of median house price to median earnings



Source: CLG Live Statistics 1997-2009

With lower house prices and lower wages locally, coupled with a central location connected to cities by an excellent transport infrastructure, it is unsurprising to see below a relatively high number of residents travelling over 20km to work, often to the relatively higher paid jobs indicated in table 3.

Commuting flows/patterns

Travel Distance to Work (percentage of residents in each location travelling the distance shown)

	Work from home	Less than 2km	2km-5km	5km-10km	10km-20km	20km-30km	More than 30km
England	9.2	20	20	18.2	15.2	5.3	7.2
South East	9.9	20.4	15.2	13.7	14.3	6.7	11.1
Cherwell	9.7	24.5	13.8	13.1	14.3	7.7	12.4

(Office of National Statistics – 2001 Census)

The challenge, therefore, is to attract higher value employers into north Oxfordshire to provide residents with opportunities to work locally in activities that create further wealth and employment, therefore reducing the need to commute outwards.

d) There are still residents without the right skills

Prosperity depends on employment and productivity, and skills are an essential part of achieving higher levels of both. Skills are of economic value to individuals as workers, to the organisations that employ them, and to the country as a whole through greater productivity and competitiveness. There are also considerable social benefits to individuals and society which aid the development of a more equitable and better functioning society which in turn supports economic growth and performance. The economic and social impact of skills can be maximised by investing in the right skills. These are the skills which achieve business success and create opportunities for individuals and effectively meet the changing needs of the labour market.

The pay-off from investments in training and skill development by the individual, firm and the country take time to materialise. They are rarely instant and cannot be achieved by 'one-off' investments. Moreover, skills degrade and their value depreciates if not maintained and updated. Improving the skills of Cherwell is therefore a long term and continual task but one which also requires immediate and urgent action if we are to realise the potential benefits of skills to north Oxfordshire in remaining competitive.

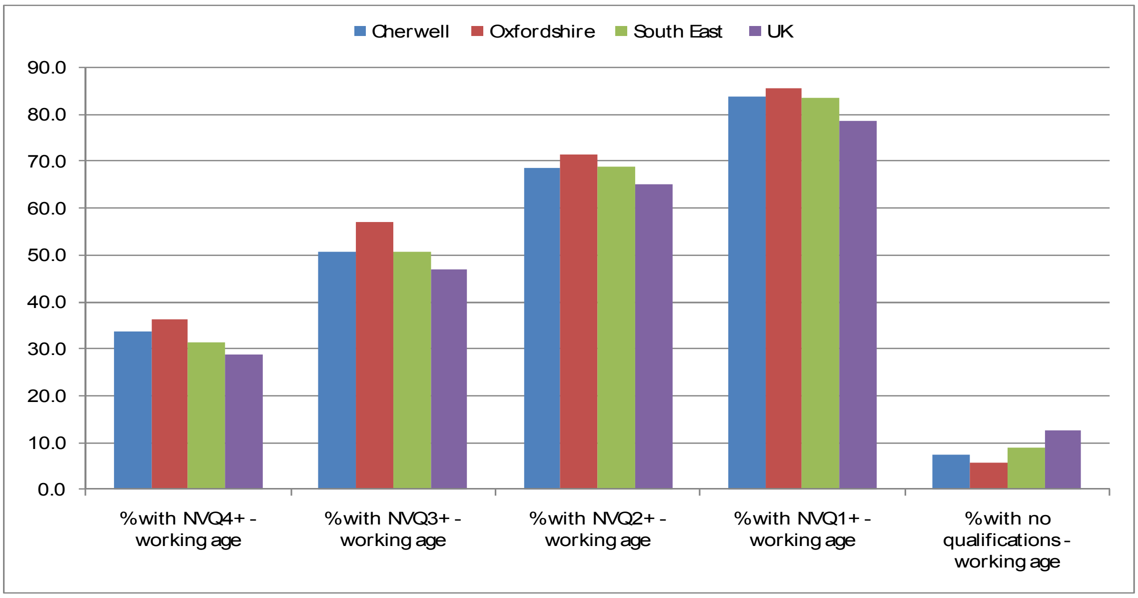
- Lack of 'basic' numeracy and literacy skills act as a barrier to other skills which are becoming essential in the workplace, especially with a decline in e.g. traditional manufacturing and construction jobs.
- A major impediment to finding work especially in the 'knowledge economy' age.
- Skills gaps can also reflect an employer's ability to recruit the right people with the right skills in the first place: initiatives like Job Club have helped locally to address this issue by developing job seekers' basic employability and job search skills.

In terms of labour market performance and skills, there is a significant positive correlation between high level graduate skills and the proportion of the workforce within knowledge industries. Figure 4 shows that skill levels are high for Cherwell residents (33.6% qualified to Level 4+[2] and half of all residents obtaining at least a Level 3+ qualification, highlighting intermediate skills to support those of key workers), but are in fact lower than the resident and workplace average for Oxfordshire, which

[2] An NVQ4+ level qualification is the equivalent of a first or foundation degree, diploma in higher education, HNC, HNDM or BTEC diploma, indicative of high employee skill levels. These are recognised as the skills required to drive innovation and leadership within an economy, and to enable businesses to compete globally. An NVQ2+ is the equivalent of five A*to C grades at GCSE or other vocational qualifications

suggests that people commute from Cherwell across Oxfordshire and elsewhere within the South East for higher paid jobs than what is generally available within Cherwell. Cherwell has lower workplace earnings and higher resident earnings.

Figure 4: Qualifications by NVQ Level for the working age population, 2008



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2009
Note; The difference between figures for 'no qualification' and 'NVQ1+' consists of 'other qualifications'.

The Cherwell Employers Skills Study 2010 also suggests a need to support *employees* to ensure they have the skills required to help their employer maximise their competitiveness in the current climate. As is the case across the County and in the neighbouring areas of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, the incidence of skills gaps reported by employers has increased since 2008 (20% compared with 14%), with particular issues highlighted around motivation of established staff members, their ability to keep up with change and to be *flexible* in terms of the skills they have and how they apply them. Skills gaps can also reflect an employer's ability to recruit the right people with the right skills in the first place: initiatives like Job Club may be helping to address this issue by developing job seekers' basic employability and job search skills.

Cherwell employers value training and are more likely to train than those elsewhere in the County, with around half (48%) feeling that they get a high return on investment from training staff, 55% funding or arranging training in the past year (51% across Oxfordshire) and 73% of those with skills gaps increasing training activity in response to this issue (compared with 57% across Oxfordshire). However, employers in Cherwell are, if anything, slightly less likely than the Oxfordshire average to have used external training provision (74% compared with 78%) and those businesses that have trained externally are less likely to have a "close relationship" with any provider (32% compared with 40%), which may mean that Cherwell employers are more likely to choose training providers on an *ad hoc* basis. Qualitative evidence from the study suggests that some Cherwell employers may need help choosing from the training available and judging the quality of what is on offer.

There also appears to be scope to strengthen relationships between employers and education providers around improving the work readiness of young people and informing them about different possible career paths. Around half of Cherwell businesses (47%) indicate that they would be interested in working with providers on this issue but some employers feel that providers need to take a more *pro-active* approach to developing engagement of this kind. Bicester eco-town could provide an opportunity for engaging employers in the environmental technologies sector.

e) There remain pockets of deprivation within our overall prosperity

- Cyclical nature of problems facing households.
- Concentration in Banbury with households also affected elsewhere
- Numbers of school leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) at all time high.

Cherwell is a relatively affluent area but there are significant differences in wealth distribution. Banbury in particular has pockets of severe deprivation, second only to Oxford in the County (two Lower Super Output Areas are within the top 20 most deprived in England). Cherwell as a whole is ranked 276 out of 354 local authorities in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, with 1 being the most deprived; 354 the least.

(The Indices of Multiple Deprivation combine information relating to income, employment, education, health, skills and training, barriers to housing and services and crime into an overall measure of deprivation. The measures are taken at a ward-sized level referred to by the Office of National Statistics as a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Other forms of deprivation derive from rural isolation. Over 62% of the population lives in the principal centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, with the remainder in more than 70 smaller settlements of between 50 and 3,500 people; therefore Cherwell's population faces both urban and rural challenges.

f) Our population is expected to grow significantly

- The number of residents of pensionable age in particular is set to grow, presenting challenges and opportunities for service provision and employment.

Future population projections

*Please Note – the following growth forecasts are based on South East Plan housing figures (Cherwell – 13,400 to 2026). The Secretary of State has now announced the revocation of the South East Plan.

There will still be a population increase (potentially based on 11,800 dwellings in Cherwell), however it is not possible, without a new housing figure and detailed analysis, to provide revised population growth forecasts at the moment.

Oxfordshire and Cherwell Population Growth

	2001	2006	2010	2016	2026	Change 2006 to 2026	
Oxfordshire	607,280	616,820	633,030	663,620	701,230	84,400	13.7 %
Cherwell	131,990	132,320	134,670	141,900	148,830	16,510	12.5 %

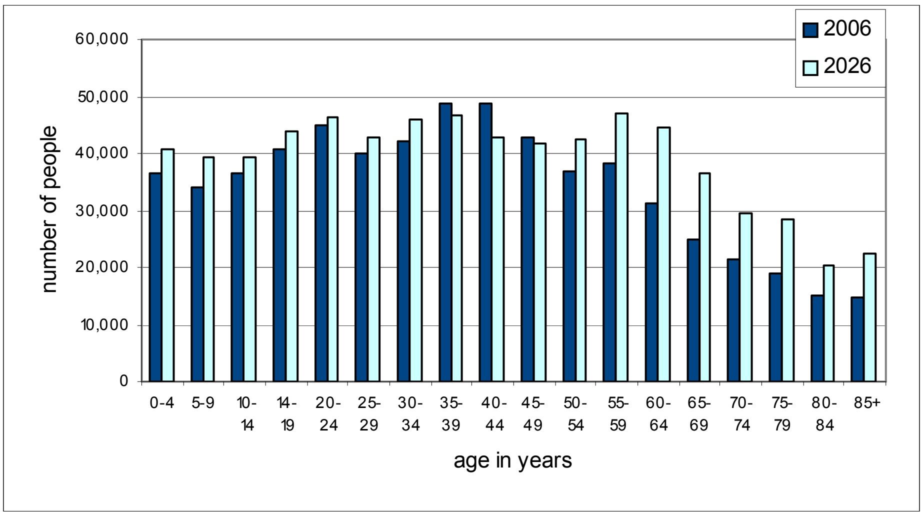
(Source: Oxfordshire County Council, Population and Household forecasts, 2010)

Town Population Growth - Figures only cover the town wards (Urban extensions will create most growth in adjacent rural wards around Banbury and Bicester)

	All persons			
	2006	**2011**	**2016**	**% change 2001-2016**
Cherwell				
Banbury	43,590	44,940	45,640	4.7%
Bicester	30,080	29,830	31,670	5.3%
Kidlington	13,410	13,410	13,160	-1.9%

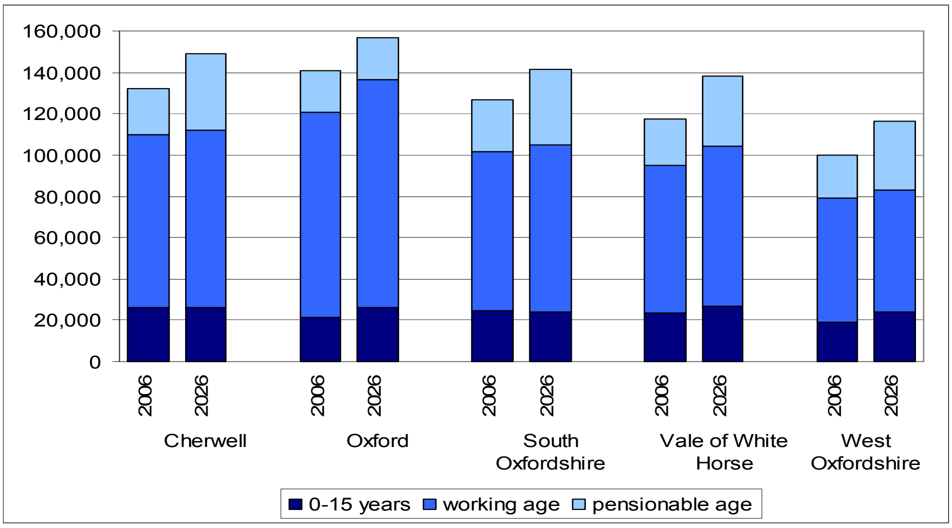
Cherwell's population has increased by almost 12% between 1991 and 2001, and by a further 4.5% since then. Growth predictions of a further 8% by 2016 and a cumulative 15.6% by 2026 are significantly higher than regional and national rates. Most of the recent growth has been in Banbury and Bicester and this will continue, with Bicester's population projected to grow by 13.8% between 2001 and 2016; however the rapid growth across the District will put pressure on the local infrastructure. Kidlington's population is expected to reduce due to declining size of households and green belt restraints on growth.

Population and Age in Oxfordshire



(OCC, Population and Household forecasts, 2010)

Population and Age in Cherwell



(OCC, Population and Household forecasts, 2010)

Cherwell now has the highest proportion of 0-15 year olds in Oxfordshire. By 2031 the population is forecast to age dramatically, with numbers in each of the over 65s, over 75s and over 85s bands increasing by at least 23 percentage points more than national rates, and by more than 47 percentage points in the case of the over 85s[3].

g) Employment land, premises & services do not always meet modern business needs

- Demand for office and manufacturing sites and premises is low with few new developments beginning.
- Pressure remains to use industrial and office land for other uses, and to demolish vacant buildings; further reducing supply.
- The LDF seeks to identify appropriate locations and amounts of new land.
- Utilities such as power, water/sewage and broadband are key issues that could restrict economic growth.

Cherwell's natural environment is a key feature of the District and plays an important role in the setting of Cherwell's settlements and contributes significantly to the wider Oxfordshire countryside. On this basis, it is important to balance the protection of Cherwell's natural environment with the need for improved economic prosperity and ensure that development is provided in a sustainable manner that minimises any impact on the environment.

The arrival of the M40 and the employment land planned within our towns has provided the District with the opportunity to accommodate economic growth; however, it is realised that the potential for existing employment land to accommodate future growth is limited. In this context, it is important that we balance the land requirements associated with economic growth with the protection of Cherwell's natural environment.

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[3] Oxfordshire Partnership
http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OxfordshirePartnership/Oxfordshire+2030/2030+strategy+in+full/OP+-+O+2030+12

The solution to economic growth is not necessarily to increase the supply of employment land but to examine the manner in which employment land is currently used and to explore new ways of improving the efficiency of land use. It is also important to ensure that sites identified for development are able to come forward within a reasonable timeframe to ensure balance with housing development. There are also further alternative options for the provision of employment; for example encouraging home-based working where appropriate.

Current land supply situation: Employment land

Total employment land availability in Cherwell is currently - **125 hectares**. This figure includes land identified in the Council's Employment Land Review (ELR) (* July 2006) and planning permissions (on sites not identified in the ELR) in 2008/09. The ELR included allocated but underdeveloped employment sites, and vacant or underutilised (but unallocated) sites in existing industrial areas identified through separate survey work. (Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report, 2009).
(*Further work is currently being undertaken to update information on Employment Land for the LDF)

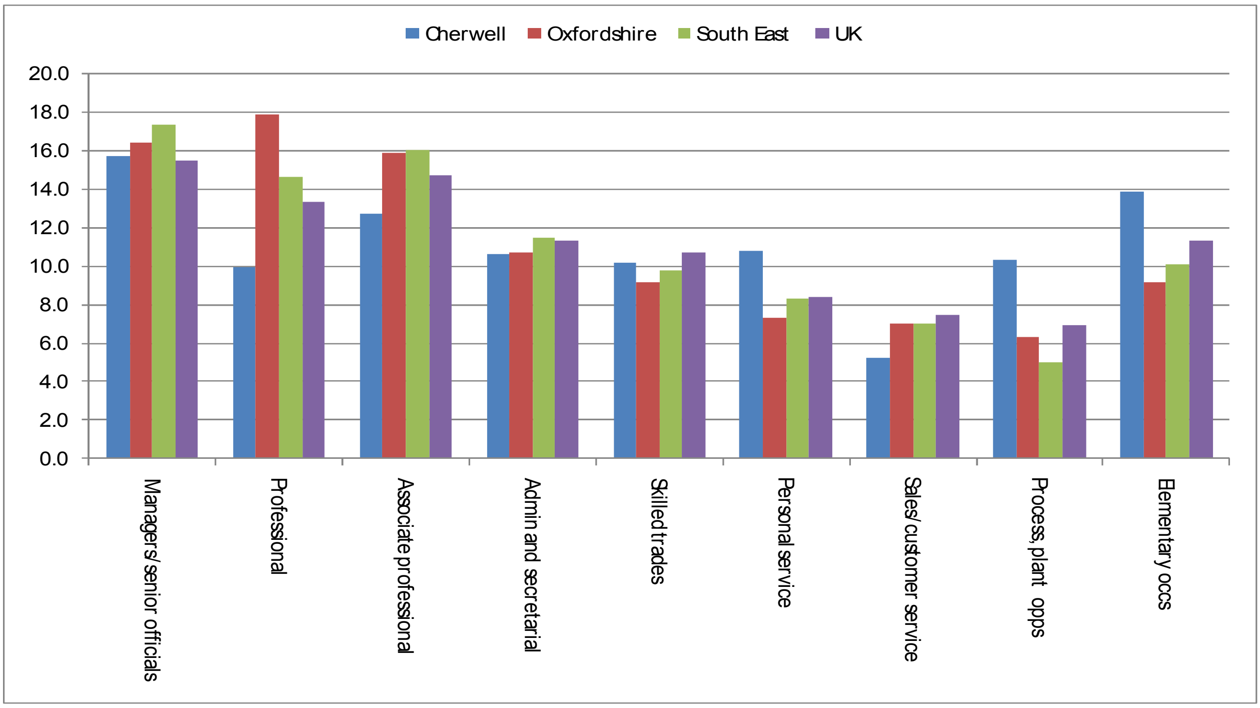
h) We have a diverse economy but often with 'lower value' activity similar to the south Midlands

- Evidence of differences with Oxfordshire and between the north and south of Cherwell district
- The business base within Cherwell generally consists of lower value activity, as highlighted in the reliance upon wholesale/retail and increasing growth of public sector employment.

The socio-economic and occupational characteristics of the labour market are central to Cherwell's competitiveness; they shape the economic opportunities that residents are able to access and are a key indicator to the strength of the existing knowledge economy. Over the last decade, there has been a widespread structural change from non-skilled occupations to management and professional, resulting in a declining demand for skilled craft workers and lower skilled manual workers, which is set to continue for the foreseeable future as the economy shifts further towards knowledge intensive activities.

Figure 5: Occupations by residents in employment, 2009[4]

[4] Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2009

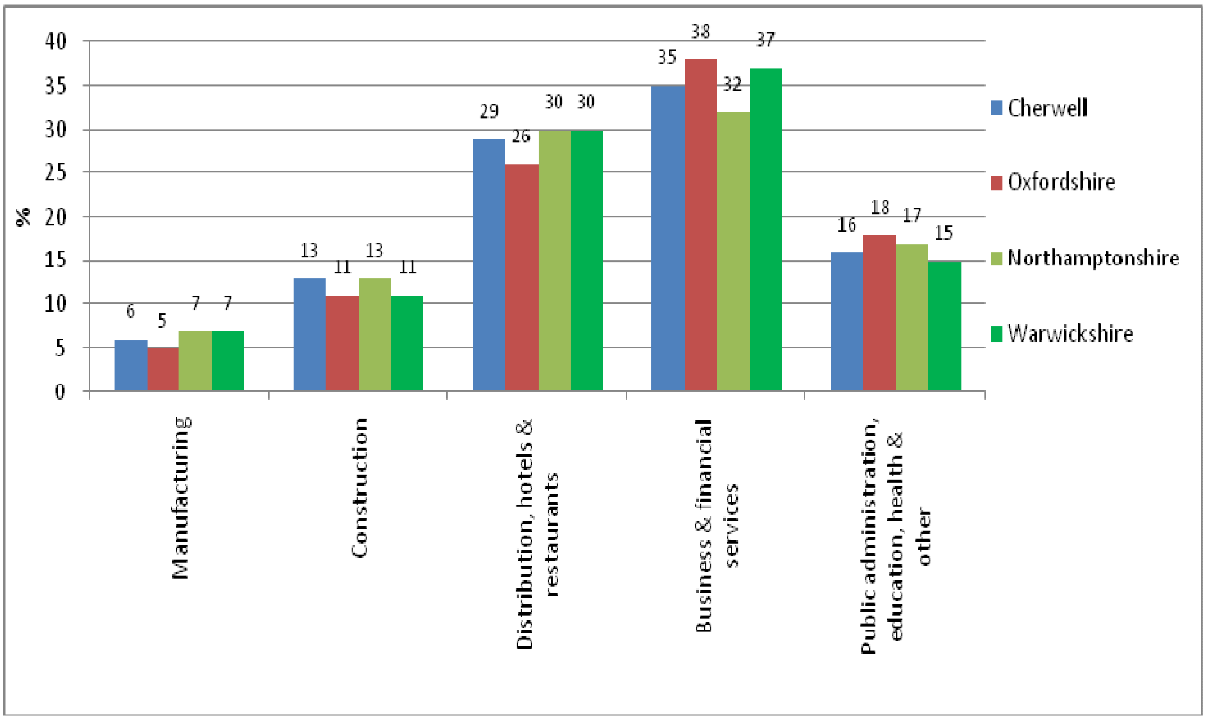


The occupational profile is revealing for Cherwell, in that fewer people are employed within higher level jobs (e.g. managers/senior officials accounting for 15.7%, professionals 9.9%, and associate professionals 12.7%). In each case, this is significantly lower than the Oxfordshire and regional averages, reinforcing the case that Cherwell is an area of relative lower value activity when compared to the wider region and economically disengaged from the Oxfordshire core.

As shown in Figure 2.1, compared with the county as a whole, Cherwell businesses are more likely to be in the distribution, hotels & restaurants sector and less likely to be in business & financial services. The Figure suggests that Cherwell's sector profile may have as much in common with neighbouring areas in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire as with Oxfordshire as a whole. These comparisons are even more striking if the distribution of *employment* is considered (Figure 2.1b).

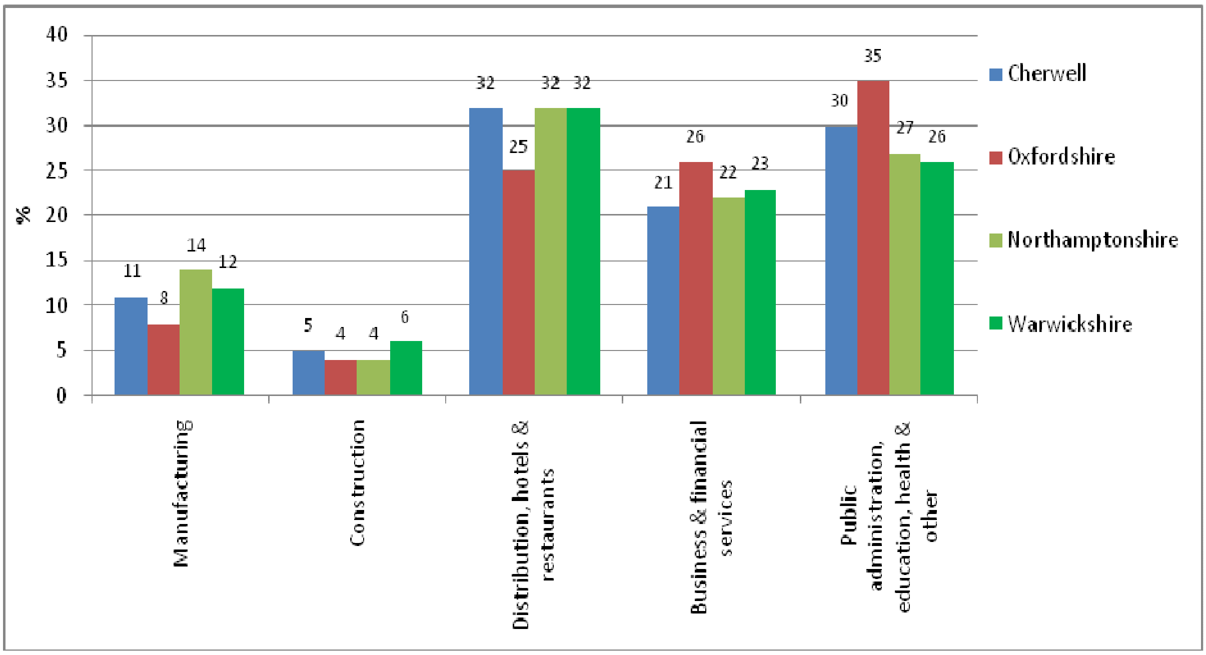
Figure 2.1: Broad sector profile - Cherwell, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire

Fig 2.1a: Businesses



Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2008. Does not include the self-employed.

Fig 2.1b: Employment



There are however differences between the North and South of the District. (* Identified by the Oxfordshire Employer Skills Study – Cherwell – 2010). North Cherwell has a greater proportion of employment in manufacturing (12% compared with 6% in South Cherwell) and distribution, hotels & restaurants (30% compared with 24%) and a smaller proportion in the "public administration, education, health & other" sector (39% compared with 54%).

Creative and Cultural Industries

Much business activity crosses over standard classifications, such as creative and cultural industries. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defines the Creative Industries as: “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”.

Expanding this definition further, a Creative Economy is defined as “the people, enterprises and communities that transform cultural (both traditional and contemporary) skills, knowledge and ideas into economically productive goods, services and places” (Mt Auburn Associates, 2005). It can therefore be seen as having potential to develop the ‘resilience’ connections within Cherwell, as identified earlier.

DCMS have identified that the Creative Industries include: Advertising, Architecture, Arts and Antiques Markets, Computer and Video Games, Crafts, Design, Designer Fashion, Film and Video, Music, Performing Arts, Photography, Publishing, Software, Television and Radio. For the purposes of the Oxfordshire study (2010), Cultural Tourism and Heritage, Visual Arts, Festivals, Museums and Galleries, Community Arts Organisations, Individual Artists and Crafts people must be included as well.

- Cultural and creative businesses are slightly underrepresented in Cherwell when compared to the UK, and to the rest of Oxfordshire, but have increased by 220 jobs between 2003 and 2007.
- Publishing is particularly well represented in terms of the number of jobs in Cherwell, mainly provided by larger businesses.
- The table below provides detail for further analysis:

Cherwell District

Table A.1 Summary Table of CCI Businesses by Sub-sector: Cherwell District

							Business size by employment band (%)			Legal status (%)			LQ (UK = 1.00)		Growth rate per annum *	
Cultural Sub-sector	**Number of Cultural Businesses**	**Gross employ-ment**	**% of all emp across district**	**Gross turnover (£ m)**	**Average turnover per worker (£)**	**% of gross Cultural turnover**	**1 to 10**	**11 to 49**	**50+**	**Com-pany**	**Sole Prop-rietor**	**Partner-ship**	**Number**	**Employ-ment**	**Number**	**Employ-ment**
Advertising	30	440	0.4%	56.2	128,000	19.5%	6%	0%	94%	83%	0%	17%	0.88	1.18	-0.8%	6.9%
Architecture	31	130	0.1%	9.5	71,000	3.3%	37%	36%	27%	74%	18%	8%	1.07	0.64	4.6%	-1.3%
Art and Antiques	16	80	0.2%	5.7	67,000	2.0%	29%	27%	44%	52%	33%	15%	0.86	1.01	0.5%	-2.3%
Comp Games, Softw & Elc Pub.	200	800	0.9%	70.7	89,000	24.5%	57%	35%	8%	93%	5%	3%	1.01	0.70	3.4%	-0.3%
Fashion	22	60	0.1%	6.3	105,000	2.2%	45%	36%	19%	76%	14%	8%	1.02	0.95	11.3%	3.8%
Museums and Other Cult Fac	10	300	0.2%	1.9	6,000	0.7%	8%	92%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0.96	0.55	15.8%	27.0%
Music and Visual Performing Arts	79	220	0.2%	12.5	57,000	4.3%	67%	30%	3%	25%	60%	6%	0.95	0.49	2.0%	-6.2%
Publishing	78	960	2.0%	120.9	125,000	41.9%	26%	60%	14%	68%	23%	10%	1.07	1.85	-6.5%	1.5%
Radio and Television	20	30	0.0%	1.8	67,000	0.6%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	1.02	0.11	15.5%	20.5%
Video, Film and Photography	25	80	0.1%	3.3	44,000	1.1%	30%	0%	70%	59%	33%	7%	0.99	0.68	15.3%	11.4%
Total	510	3,100	4.3%	288.7	-	100.0%	33%	37%	30%	71%	21%	6%	1.00	0.97	2.5%	2.0%

Source: IDBR and ABI ONS data (as of March 2008), VAT and/or PAYE based Enterprises/ Organisations.

Note: All figures are estimates and rounded to avoid disclosure. Figures may not add due to rounding.

** Based on period 2003 to 07. In 2005 ABI changed their survey reference date, hence growth rates are indicative estimates only.*

i) Manufacturing is a particular strength but is often lower skilled locally

- Manufacturing is a key wealth creating activity, especially when exporting.
- 'Value added' manufacturers investing in skills, technology and local networks perform well but are under-represented in Cherwell compared with other parts of Oxfordshire.
- Traditional manufacturers can become uncompetitive in the global economy.

It seems likely that, without some fairly dramatic action, manufacturing activity in our region will continue to decline. This suggests that either the strategy needs to address this head on or alternatives need to be sought to ensure the diverse economy which forms the corner - stone of the Vision

Table 4 highlights a number of niches within Cherwell. Immediately apparent are the number of niches within manufacturing, reflecting the high levels of employment within this sector. Some of these are high value (e.g. manufacture of medical equipment) and potentially lower value (e.g. industrial process equipment).

Table 4: 3 digit SIC code where location quotient is above 1.5 (Great Britain=1.0)[5]

3 digit SIC classification with a location quotient over 1.5	Number	Location quotient
Manufacture of industrial process control equipment	441	19.44
Manufacture of other transport equipment not elsewhere classified	47	17.69
Manufacture of lighting equipment and electric lamps	211	5.58
Manufacture of medical and surgical equipment and orthopaedic appliances	425	5.01
Reproduction of recorded media	49	4.68
Wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals	213	3.96
Provision of services to the community as a whole	5,146	3.87
Manufacture of insulated wire and cable	82	3.85
Data processing	232	3.75
Forestry, logging and related service activities	85	3.63
Manufacture of articles of paper and paperboard	409	3.48
Farming of animals	7	2.86
Non-scheduled air transport	120	2.79
Manufacture of electrical equipment not elsewhere classified	172	2.62
Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco	1,301	2.54
Manufacture of other food products	981	2.42
Manufacture of gas/distribution of gaseous fuels through mains	108	2.34
Quarrying of sand and clay	54	2.33
Publishing	809	2.29
Other financial intermediation	628	2.19
Wholesale on a fee or contract basis	355	2.12
Printing and service activities related to printing	639	1.97
Sale of motor vehicle parts and accessories	489	1.97
Renting of automobiles	151	1.82
Renting of personal and household goods not elsewhere classified	105	1.78
Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles	858	1.76
Wholesale of machinery, equipment and supplies	1,021	1.74
Other service activities	1,459	1.72
Manufacture of railway and tramway locomotives and rolling stock	56	1.62

[5] Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2008

Finishing of textiles	26	1.61
Manufacture of machine tools	52	1.60
Research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering	422	1.56
Telecommunications	768	1.54

The statistics available suggest that the lower value activity is present when looking at the low proportion that works in knowledge intensive activity, which includes advanced manufacturing activities. This is not to say that higher value activities do not exist, as can be seen from the niche in medical equipment manufacture. Although these companies may not be locally owned they still provide the local population with labour opportunities; however there are a number of key potential opportunities within advanced engineering/manufacturing which cross over with low carbon growth, as well as motor racing manufacture which is a key niche within Cherwell.

Other key niches within Cherwell include community services, with employment of 5,000 evenly split between judicial/law activities and defence. The wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco; and of machinery, equipment and supplies are other key niches with considerable employment, reflecting the overall high levels of employment within the wholesale and retail sector.

A more diverse industry mix means the greater the ability to withstand external shocks.

j) The knowledge economy is growing but not quickly enough.

- Compared with other parts of Oxfordshire, employment in "high skilled industries" is less common in Cherwell and high skilled clusters are less strong. The proportion of employment in such industries is similar to that in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire
- Higher Level Skills are important, suggesting a different challenge around supporting Higher Level Skills in the District as these skill needs are likely to be more *dispersed*, among smaller high technology or knowledge intensive employers or in *niche* activities within firms where lower level skills are more common.
- Recruitment: while Cherwell employers are less likely than those across Oxfordshire to face recruitment difficulties (34% of those trying to recruit compared with 39%) and this problem has decreased in importance since 2008 (43%), recruitment challenges remain, especially for specialist roles. Recruitment difficulties are similarly less of an issue in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. Competition for staff, including competition from other areas and attracting potential employees to Cherwell as a place to work, appears to represent a key issue for some businesses. (Source: Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010: Cherwell)

The knowledge economy is vital for the future of Cherwell and the wider Oxfordshire area because of the presence of high value added activities in the area, which are also of importance to the regional and national economy. If Cherwell wants to remain competitive within the global economy, it needs to secure focused investment and business growth within the key sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, biosciences, software and research and development. To better understand its current performance, a good guide is the percentage of employment in Knowledge Based Industries (KBIs).

Employment within KBIs has increased, as shown in Table 5, but is considerably lower within Cherwell when compared to Oxfordshire, the South East and Great Britain; however in the South of the District businesses generally engage within higher value activity, with strong linkages to the Oxford core. The growth in knowledge intensive jobs in recent years has been relatively strong, an encouraging sign for the future of Cherwell's knowledge economy.

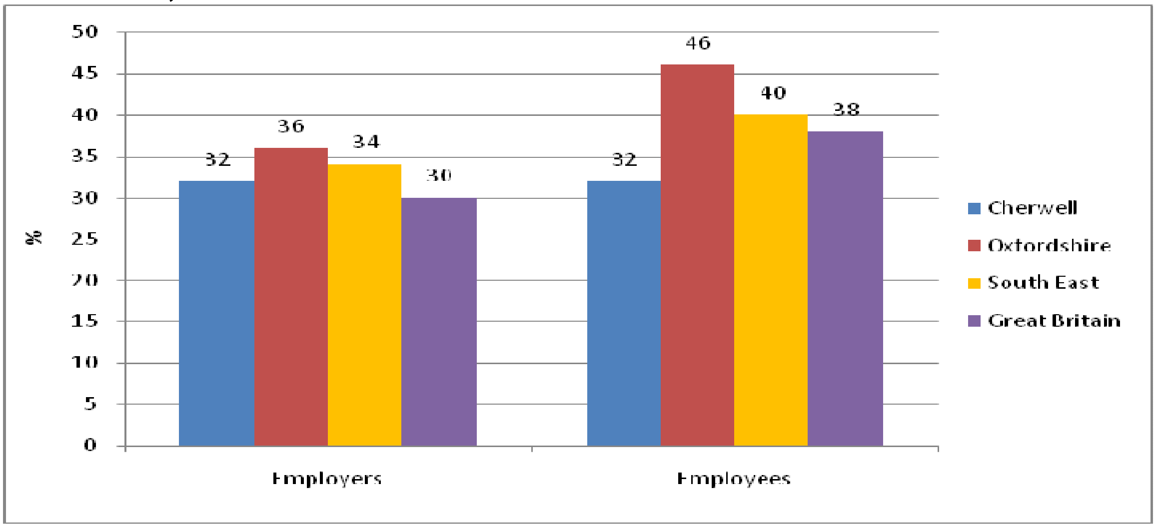
Not all places will be knowledge centres however; the lack of high value jobs raises questions about the future and possible increase in divergences with the rest of Oxfordshire and the wider South East. In order to increase inward investment, we will need to up the skills levels of employees and provide local employment opportunities to retain its higher skilled resident workforce.

Table 5: Total employees in knowledge based industries, percentage of total employees and percentage change, 2003 to 2008[6]

	KBI employees (2008)	KBI employees as % of total	% change 2003-2008
Cherwell	11,100	16.6%	6.8%
Oxfordshire	88,700	27.6%	3.1%
South East	902,000	24.0%	3.6%
Great Britain	5,828,900	21.8%	4.5%

Figure 2.2 shows that the proportion of employers in "high skilled industries" (where more than 40% of the workforce nationally has qualifications at Level 4 or above[7]) in Cherwell is a little below the average for Oxfordshire as a whole but broadly in line with the regional and national average[8]. In contrast, the proportion of *employment* accounted for by these activities is much further below the Oxfordshire average (32% compared with 46%) and below the figures for the South East and Great Britain as a whole. Employees in Cherwell are around half as likely to work in "high skilled industries" as is the case in Oxford (62%).

Figure 2.2: Proportion of employers and employees in "high skilled" industries - Cherwell, Oxfordshire, South East and Great Britain



Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2008. Does not include the self-employed.

[6] Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2008
[7] Level 4+ = Degree level qualification or higher, Level 3 = A levels or equivalent, Level 2 = 5+ GSCEs or equivalent, Level 1 = 1-5 GCSEs or equivalent.
[8] This definition of "high skilled" industries is based on the industry classification developed by Local Futures as part of their Regional Economic Architecture model (*'A Regional Perspective on the Knowledge Economy in Great Britain'*). This designates industries where graduates account for at least 40% of the workforce as "K1" industries, the most knowledge intensive group within the economy.

The District has a strong concentration of employers engaged in 'research & development' as their main business activity[9], illustrated by a Location Quotient (LQ)[10] of 1.77 but this is below the average for Oxfordshire (LQ of 2.67) and much lower than the figures for Oxford and Vale of White Horse for example (LQs of 4.91 and 4.37 respectively). Analysis also suggests that the proportion of *employment* accounted for by research & development activities is actually below the South East average (LQ of 0.76 compared with an Oxfordshire average figure of 2.27).

This reflects the presence of R&D employers in the District that are *smaller* than the regional average. In Cherwell, 93% of all employers engaged in this activity are small or micro-businesses (49 employees or less), compared with 88% across the South East, 87% across Oxfordshire and 74% in Vale of White Horse.

k) Businesses are highly satisfied with their location in Cherwell yet this is not widely understood beyond the district

- Investors tend initially to consider more congested and expensive parts of the county
- Ensure that Cherwell becomes even more attractive to both live and work in.

More than nine out of ten Cherwell businesses (93%) are satisfied or very satisfied with their business location, in line with the County average (92%). While there has been no increase in satisfaction in Cherwell as is the case across Oxfordshire (up from 88% satisfied in 2008), this is likely to reflect the fact that the proportion of Cherwell businesses satisfied with their location in 2008 was *already* high (92%). Source: Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010 – Cherwell.

Specific advantages are:

- central geographical position (39%)
- good transport links (22%)
- proximity to customers, suppliers or other businesses (20%).

The importance of a "central geographical position" as an advantage for Cherwell is likely to reflect the easy access from the District to other areas such as Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire and this advantage was more likely to be cited in Cherwell than across the county as a whole (29%). This was felt to be beneficial from the point of view of both easy access to *markets* and access to a wide pool of potential *employees*, an important consideration as the unemployment rate locally was still seen as fairly low compared with the national average.

However, accessibility also means that employers outside Cherwell can also compete to employ our residents so it is important to ensure attractive opportunities to both live and work in Cherwell are provided.

Location-related *disadvantages,* in contrast, were only mentioned by around four out of ten employers (41%). Of those criticisms of the area, most appear to be less of a concern than in other parts of Oxfordshire. These include poor transport infrastructure (5% compared with 8%), traffic congestion (4% compared with 7%) and the high cost of living (6% compared with 8%). Only 9% of Cherwell businesses report transport disadvantages of any kind compared with 14% across the County.

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[9] i.e. this does not include employers in other industries who undertake R&D but for whom this does not represent the main focus of their business.

[10] An LQ of more than 1 indicates a higher than average concentration of activity benchmarked against the South East. The greater the LQ, the greater the relative strength of the activity.

I) This is an enterprising district with potential for innovation

There were 5,800 VAT registered businesses in Cherwell at the end of 2007.

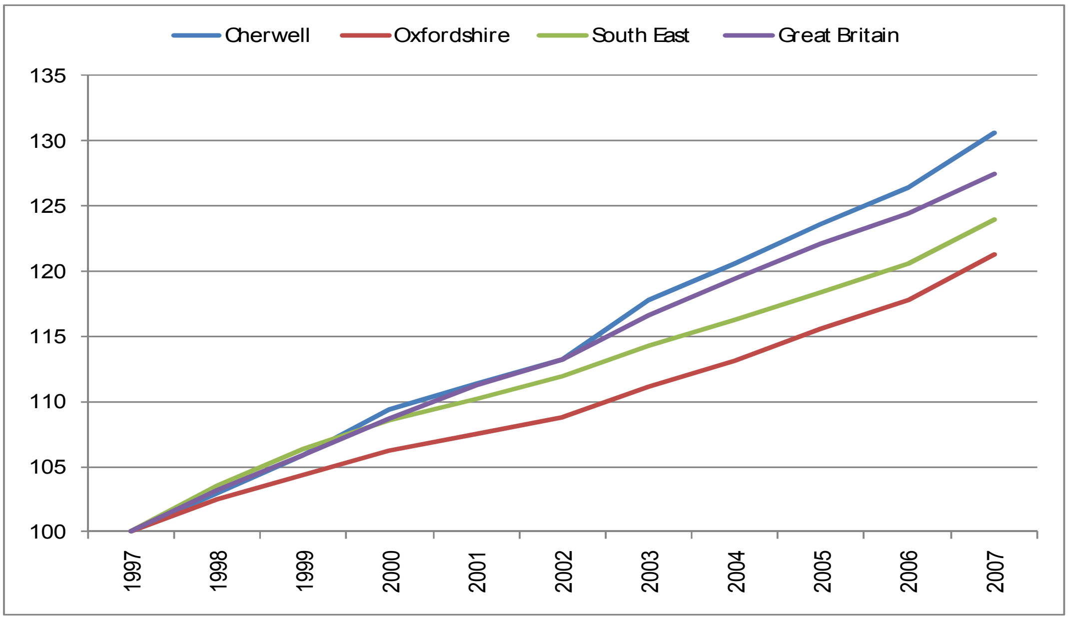
Business start-up levels are a good indicator of future economic growth. Studies show that 23% of new businesses create 71% of new employment, with businesses in high-tech sectors often having the greatest capacity for job creation. In addition to the direct employment they bring, new businesses also help foster innovation and can have a beneficial effect through enhancing competition, helping improve efficiency.

The number of VAT registrations in relation to the adult population is one way of measuring business start ups, although it is important to note that not all businesses are VAT registered and the smallest businesses might be missed.

Table 6: VAT registrations and de-registrations per 10,000 working age population[11]

	VAT registrations per 10,000 working age pop	VAT de-registrations per 10,000 working age pop
Cherwell	63.0	41.6
Oxfordshire	59.1	43.1
South East	62.4	45.2
UK	54.5	39.0

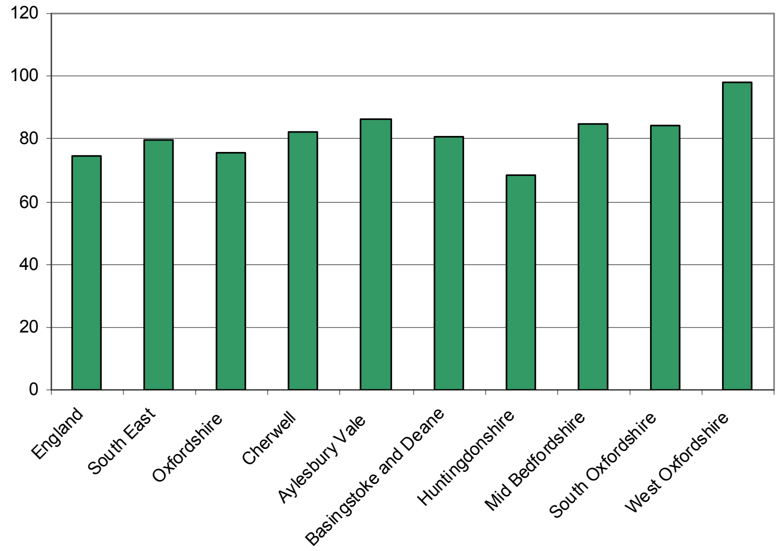
Figure 6: Stock of VAT registered businesses: Index 1997=100, 1997 to 2007



The data from Table 6 and Figure 6 shows that Cherwell is an enterprising area, with VAT registrations per 10,000 working age population higher than the comparators, and business stock, over time, also being higher than the county, regional and national levels.

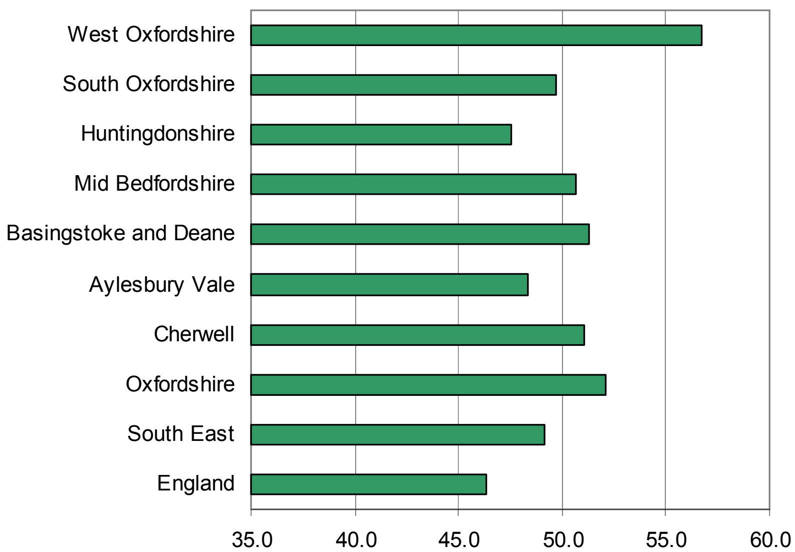
[11] Source: ONS, VAT registrations and stock, 2007

New Enterprises per 10,000 working age population (2008)



Source: Business Demography 2008 and Mid Year Population Estimates 2008

5-year business survival rates (2003-2008) - check



Source: Business Demography 2008

However, it is notable that VAT de-registrations are lower than the Oxfordshire and wider South East levels; this could allude to both strengths and weaknesses within the economy. The low de-registration rates could point to Cherwell's businesses being better managed and/or supported by the public sector; however it could also point to the creation of businesses that lack competitive activity, suggesting the sectors where start ups are prevalent have less risk involved and are generally less knowledge intensive than in other parts of the county and region. It is clear, however, that the skills of entrepreneurs are critical to the creation and growth of enterprises and that support will continue be needed.

m) The environment provides both challenges and opportunities, especially through the 'Eco Bicester' project;

Cherwell is the location of the nationally-significant North West Bicester (Eco-town) site. The detailed issues and vision are contained within the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision and emerging economic strategy for NW Bicester.

- The opportunity is to develop 'green technologies' and build 'green knowledge' around existing and new employers, sectors and clusters in Bicester and throughout the district to create a cluster of expertise and potential competitive advantage for new and existing employers.
- The challenge is to enable investment to provide at least 1 job for each of the 5,000 dwellings, ensuring that those jobs contribute to the wider themes of this vision for the district's economy. The detail for achieving this is contained within the North West Bicester Economic Development Strategy.

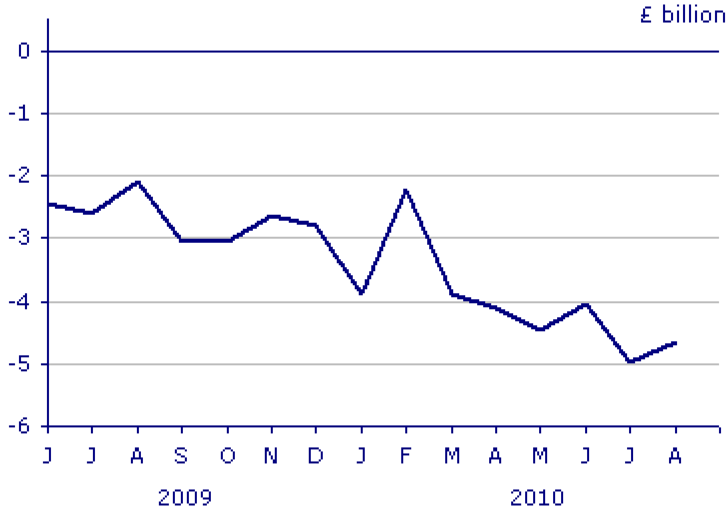
Transportation and telecommunication systems have a significant impact on economic development, and are set to be of increasing importance as costs of energy increase and waste is minimised.

Insert eco-Bicester challenges & opportunities from emerging work.

n) Globalisation has also become a significant issue for the economy: both a challenge and opportunity;

Our successful businesses look both within and beyond north Oxfordshire to sell their products and services, as do their competitors. Competition is increasingly global for many businesses and set to grow further with increasing movement of products, services, capital, people and knowledge.

Whilst figures are not available locally, the worsening of the UK's balance of trade deficit during and since the period of the recession meant that the deficit on trade in goods and services is significant: £4.6 billion in August 2010 (as illustrated below).



Balance of Trade, Office for National Statistics, August 2010

Whilst the surplus on trade in services was a fruitful £3.6 billion in August, the deficit on trade in goods was a worrying £8.2 billion.

In recent decades, we have seen the growth of four major developing economies; China, India, Brazil and Russia. Increasingly, manufacturing has been moving to lower-costs overseas locations but with rising costs of transportation and some concerns over responsiveness and quality, some have returned to ever more efficient bases here in the UK, including north Oxfordshire. Services have also been considered 'mobile' - call centres being a notable example – yet quality standards have not always been met resulting in new opportunities arising, yet again always demanding gains in efficiency and effectiveness.

If we are to prosper and achieve sustainable economic recovery with reduced national debt, this imbalance needs to be addressed at national and local levels, including at the level of the individual person.

o) The community sector will have an increasing role to play

- The community/social sector is already important in north Oxfordshire
- Government direction for a 'Big Society' will place more responsibility on community groups and individuals.

The resilience pilot project identified the lack of quantitative data available to understand the size and structure of the social economy; however the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations[12], conducted by the Cabinet Office of the Third Sector in relation to National Indicator 7[13], provides a useful summary of the social economy in upper and unitary authorities. Using population as a proxy, it is possible to provide approximate figures for the social economy in Cherwell from the Oxfordshire results[14]. Cherwell makes up 21.6% of Oxfordshire's population therefore it is possible to apply this proxy to the survey results. This shows a particularly strong representation of the social sector in Oxfordshire, with whom to work closely with.

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[12] National Survey of Third Sector Organisations http://www.nstso.com/about/
[13] NI7 – Environment for a thriving third sector
[14] Oxfordshire Survey http://www.nstso.com/reports/

Table 7: Social economy figures[15]

	Cherwell	Oxfordshire	Nationally
Registered third sector organisations			
Total number of registered third sector organisations	694	3,213	170,552
Per capita number of registered third sector organisations (per 1,000 people)	5.02	5.13	3.38
Employees working for third sector organisations			
Total number of employees working for third sector organisations (full-time equivalents)	3,180	14,724	640,198
Per capita number of employees working for third sector organisations (per 1,000 people)	23.01	23.49	12.69
Trustees/directors of third sector organisations			
Total number of trustees/directors of third sector organisations	3,397	15,729	772,173
Per capita number of trustees/directors of third sector organisations (per 1,000 people)	24.6	25.09	15.31

Summary of Issues facing businesses in Cherwell:

Figure 2.6: Key location advantages and disadvantages - Cherwell and Oxfordshire (% of businesses mentioning)

Fig 2.6a: Advantages

	Cherwell	Oxfordshire
Central geographical location	39	29
Good transport links	22	20
Proximity to customers, suppliers or other businesses	20	21
Thriving/ prosperous area	12	13
Pleasant/ scenic environment	7	8
Potential customers/ tourists attracted to the area	5	8
Easy location to travel/ commute to	5	5
Availability/ choice of business accommodation	3	2
Good local education (schools, colleges, universities)	2	5
Skill levels of the local population	2	3
Easy to find potential employees	1	2

Fig 2.6b: Disadvantages

	Cherwell	Oxfordshire
High cost of living	6	8
Cost of business accommodation	5	5
Poor transport infrastructure	5	8
Competition from similar businesses locally	5	4
Traffic congestion	4	7
Lack of potential employees locally with relevant skills/ experience	4	2
Rural area/ remote from other locations	3	2
High pay expectations	1	2

Source: Oxfordshire Employer Skills Survey May-June 2010. Bases: Cherwell =303 businesses, Oxfordshire = 1,277 businesses. Unprompted responses. Multiple responses possible.

Nine out of ten Cherwell businesses (90%) report that they face constraints on their business of some kind, a higher proportion than found in 2008 (83%)[16]. As shown in Figure 2.7, the most commonly cited constraint is the economic climate (73%), followed by access to finance or

[15] http://www.nstso.com/ModuleStorage/GetFile.aspx/cdd494c121fd47a0aad3b05ca9021881.pdf
[16] This reflects the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole (89% of businesses report constraints in 2010 compared with 81% in 2008).

cash flow and lack of market opportunities (both 28%).

While constraints relating to the economic downturn have grown in importance since 2008, other issues appear to be less of a concern, for example salary costs, which may reflect an *easing* of this issue linked to changes in the economy. The incidence of concerns relating to poor transport infrastructure and traffic congestion also appears to have reduced. The reasons for this are unclear but it may be that this concern has become a lower priority for employers focused on more pressing issues related to the economic downturn. Trends in constraints between 2008 and 2010 are reflected across Oxfordshire.

Figure 2.7: Most common constraints on businesses - 2008 and 2010 (% of businesses reporting)

	Cherwell		Oxfordshire	
	2008	2010	2008	2010
Threat of potential recession (2008) / The economic climate (2010)	54	73	50	73
Access to finance/ cash flow	-	28	-	30
Lack of market opportunities	21	28	20	25
Poor transport infrastructure/ traffic congestion	24	19	27	19
High salary costs	20	16	24	18
Existing staff skill levels	13	13	12	15
Recruitment problems	17	15	20	14
Lack of suitable premises	15	12	14	13

Sources: Oxfordshire Employer Skills Survey July-Sept 2008, Base = 305 Cherwell businesses; Oxfordshire Employer Skills Survey May-June 2010, Base = 303 Cherwell businesses. Key: = more of a concern in 2010, = less of a concern in 2010.

The economic climate appears less of a constraint in South Cherwell than North Cherwell, reported by 67% of respondents compared with 79%. However, existing staff skill levels (17% compared with 10%) appears more of a concern.

3) Vision for the Future

The vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cherwell in 2030 is:

> "A diverse economy with opportunities for all, vibrant communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose".

But what will the economy of Cherwell look like in 2016 – or 2030 or 2060 for that matter? The honest answer is that we do not know for certain, and while we can make reasoned arguments for expecting certain changes, the further into the future we look, the thicker the mists of time become. However, this is no reason not to try and envisage how we would like that economy to be, drawing on what we know is happening now and what we believe is likely to happen in the future.

Across the UK economy, we are aware of several factors that are almost certainly going to grow in importance in the coming years;

- Increasing global trade, including the movement of products, services, people and knowledge;
- The effective minimum level of qualifications for employment is steadily increasing;

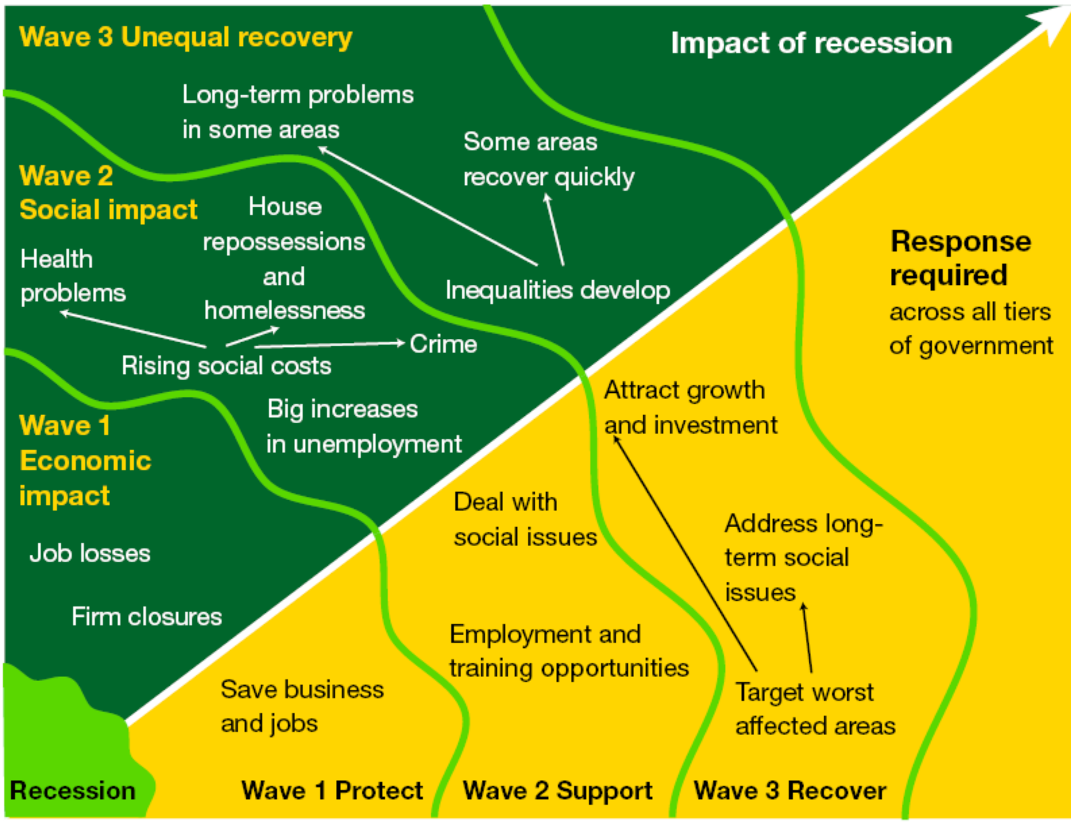
- Jobs in services to individuals, from hairdressing to personal shopping, are expected to increase as time becomes an increasingly rare commodity for many people;
- The draw of the south east for people relocating, both from other parts of the UK and further afield, will remain as long as the area retains its general prosperity.

Recent experience, however, reminds us that economic development does not occur at a steady rate and is subject to many global influences; foreseeable and unforeseeable, controllable and uncontrollable. Our experience during the recession proved that Cherwell was a 'resilient' place, particularly in:

- Economic partnership across the private, public and social sectors
- Business culture, and
- Its ability to cope with recession

By previous actions and by rapidly adjusting its economic development strategy, Cherwell took swift action to develop effective partnerships and services to meet head-on the waves of recessionary impact, as explained below:

Figure 1: **Responses to the three waves of a recession**
Economic effects generate social problems, and some areas are left behind in a recovery



Source: Audit Commission

Nevertheless, the recession has had an impact on Cherwell businesses and the economic climate remains a constraint for 73% of employers. However, expectations around turnover and staff growth in the next year are quite positive (70% expect turnover to increase, 24% expect increased staff numbers) and there are signs that employers in Cherwell are taking pro-active steps to try to grow their business or recover from the downturn, for example by looking to new markets or undertaking innovative activities.

The incidence of businesses with the aim to "grow by increasing sales" has increased strongly in Cherwell (82% in 2010 compared with 73% in 2008). This proportion is greater than that found across Oxfordshire as a whole (78%) and has increased at a faster rate. The importance of this aim in the District suggests that businesses may have an interest in training or support to help them achieve their goal.

The study also suggests a need to support *employees* to ensure they have the skills required to help their employer maximise their competitiveness in the current climate. As is the case across the County and in the neighbouring areas of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, the incidence of skills gaps reported by employers has increased since 2008 (20% compared with 14%), with particular issues highlighted around motivation of established staff members, their ability to keep up with change and to be *flexible* in terms of the skills they have and how they apply them. (Employers Skills Survey 2010 – Cherwell)

The response has therefore been achieved by effective mobilisation and co-ordination of social, public and private resources.   The challenge for Cherwell must now, therefore, be to maximise competitiveness and to ensure that effective action can be taken to repel the impact of further waves of recession through sustainable economic growth, defined as:

> “Growth that can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances environmental and social welfare and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles”. (Communities & Local Government, 2009b, p3).

Prosperity within a resilient Cherwell will be built through:

1) Innovation
2) Creativity, and
3) Entrepreneurship

Against a background of these factors, we have unique local circumstances; our geographical location in the country, our history, culture and heritage, the presence of transport links and other infrastructure. In this section we explore a possible future for the District, its three main urban centres, and its rural population.

Cherwell

Following the completion of the M40 in 1990, Cherwell has grown in population, and seen its economy turned around, with low unemployment and high economic activity and resilience through the recession. However, we are still a relatively low-wage economy. Simply increasing wages isn’t going to help – companies need to be successful and productive to be able to afford to pay, and this situation must be sustainable in the face of competition.

The future economy of Cherwell needs to retain what is good now and address its weaknesses. Population growth has been, and is likely to continue to be, driven by migration into the area. The presence of a strong economy is a cause, an effect, and a necessary requirement of such population growth. A key issue in the future will remain a careful balancing of population growth, economy and infrastructure. Cherwell is a good place to live and work, and our top priority must be to maintain that.

Cherwells' economy will by necessity be even more outward-looking than it is now. We will seek to add to our strong indigenous industry with selected inward investments, focussing on those companies which either bring diversity to our economy, or add to established strengths. We will also see an increase in companies trading on an international, global basis, in both goods and services.

We will need to provide new sites for development to ensure a paced economic growth; this will also be necessary if we are to redevelop existing sites in the district, something that will be necessary to ensure that sites remain relevant to modern business needs and to address the changing nature of our built and natural environment.

We see Cherwell further strengthening its technical capacity, using high-profile areas such as motor-sports as a ‘shop front’, but fulfilling a leading role in a variety of high-technology, specialised engineering sectors. We also expect Bio-technology to become an increasingly significant wealth generator, especially in the southern part of the District.

Banbury

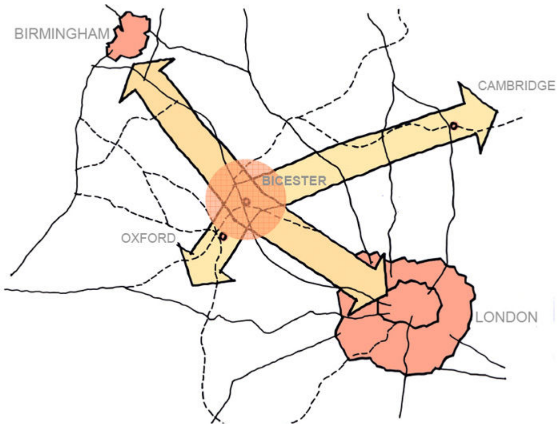
Banbury has undergone considerable growth over the past 20 years, and there is every reason to expect that to continue. The closure in 2008 of the aluminium works after 80 years was a major shock and Banbury’s manufacturing sector will continue to face competition from lower cost competitors overseas. However, with a large proportion of manufacturing in higher-value and specialised areas which are more dependent on skilled input, we can have some confidence that the sector will remain a significant employer locally.

Banbury has a strong industrial heritage, and we see this evolving into a robust, 21st century engineering economy, well located in relation to customers and suppliers . Driven by flagship sectors such as motor-sports and advanced materials, this will give Banbury a firm footing from which it can compete in a global marketplace. A cluster of other employment activity, such as food production, will ensure that a diverse range of jobs and employers maintain a ‘resilient’ private economy.

The town itself will also continue to be a sub-regional shopping centre, attracting shoppers from a broad catchment of towns and villages. A continuing programme of environmental improvements and regeneration will enable its town centre 'product' to remain competitive and attractive in a dynamic retail / tourism market.

Bicester

The development of an ‘eco town’ at north west Bicester, expected to create 5,000 homes and at least 5,000 jobs, provides an enormous and unique opportunity for the town to create itself as an internationally renowned location. The master planning of the site will take account of the land required to deliver the employment whilst work with partners will seek to successfully promote the site to established and new businesses. There is great scope for the north west Bicester development to act as a catalyst for inward investment and repositioning of the local economy, through the development of skills and expertise leading to innovative ‘eco-regeneration’ elsewhere in the town and beyond.



Bicester's history has been dominated by the presence of the Defence activities, and its location at a nexus of major transport routes. As the MOD has gradually reduced its presence, other private industry has had to provide alternative employment. Bicester's industrial estates have nurtured manufacturing employment since the 1960s but are not entirely suited to modern employment requirements.

The ease of access from Bicester to Oxford, Aylesbury and London has made it a popular residential area, but created significant issues of transport pressures and a 'brain drain'. Bicester must become a more attractive work location for many of its more-qualified and higher-earning residents.

We expect Bicester to become a significant location in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and so see an increase in science and technology based businesses, exploiting innovations and spin-outs from academic research.

Bicester will be able to take advantage of both materials engineering and bio-technology in its economic future, thanks to its location and the strength of those sectors already nearby. In addition, as these become more established the breadth of the towns' knowledge economy will increase to encompass other areas of innovation and creativity.

An example is in the motorsport engineering strengths of Oxford & Cherwell Valley College in Bicester and connections to local industry and Oxford Brookes University in leading green technology research.

The presence of the Bicester Village retail development has placed the town on the international map and given the town a stronger retail offering than would be expected in a centre of this size; our primary concern will continue to be to ensure that the town centre is vital and viable, and able to co-exist with Bicester Village in a mutually productive way. Drawing visitors from a very wide area, we expect that Bicester will show an increase in specialist high-value retailers appealing to discerning but affluent customers alongside its good range of local services in a revitalised town centre with enhanced rail services.

Kidlington

The economy in Kidlington is dominated by the proximity of Oxford, and inevitably its future is intimately linked with the future of the city. It is a popular location to live for people working in Oxford, and has also developed a considerable office property stock. We see Kidlington being a quality centre for office and laboratory based businesses, especially in the locally significant bio-technology sector and other activities 'spun out' from the universities and those relating to the nearby airport. Access, traffic and landscape will give the village a competitive offer to businesses. Above all, Kidlington will develop a stronger awareness of itself, integrate its facilities and use this to drive and maintain its distinctive character.

Kidlington will need to work hard to retain those aspects of village life that it most treasures; providing an attractive centre around which a sustainable community can thrive. The village will also benefit from developing stronger links between its resident, shopper, and daytime employee populations. Its relationship with the surrounding environment, particularly the Green Belt, will shape its future development.

Rural

The countryside has undergone massive changes in recent years and this is likely to continue. Increasingly, the countryside is being perceived less as an area of production, particularly agricultural production, and more as a managed environment. Quality of life factors have made rural villages attractive, and consequently expensive, places to live with knock on effects for young people seeking to set up home in their native territory.

We expect that villages will remain popular places to live, but that their small size may mean that local services become shared. The changing rural economy will continue to benefit from the growing public interest in the food and drink we consume, enabling rural enterprises to offer higher-value products such as organic produce. 'Light touch' industries, especially in the creative sphere, will continue to be attracted to rural locations, taking advantage of excellent communications connections to remain fully engaged in the economy while enjoying social and environmental advantages.

Some rural communities do, however, suffer a technological disadvantage when it comes to broadband connectivity. Given increasing reliance upon Information Communication Technology within the ‘knowledge economy’, it is of fundamental importance to address this issue.

4) Strategic Context

The purpose of any strategy is to provide a focussed approach to achieving its' key goals. Therefore, our strategy must first and foremost concentrate on delivering for Cherwell. However, it is important to remember that many initiatives and actions that enable us to deliver on our aims are dependent on our partners, and many issues that affect us reach more broadly than our District border.

Community Strategy

The new Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 'Our District; Our Future' identifies the central importance of a 'resilient' economy and provides a strategic context for the revision of the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy for 2010 – 2016.

The SCS identifies seven challenges:

- Managing growth;
- Managing resources and creating prosperity;
- Adapting to an ageing population;
- Empowering the next generation;
- Reducing inequality and addressing deprivation;
- Safe, strong and vibrant communities;
- Adapting to climate change.

Local Strategic Context

There is also a need for the Economic Development Strategy to integrate with the other medium-term strategies, and for all of those strategies to contain elements of local economic development at their core;

- Rural Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Environmental Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Public Health Strategy

Economic Strategy

Following the election of a coalition government in 2010, the strategic context for economic development has – along with other strategy – changed significantly. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) are emerging to take over the responsibilities of former regional economic strategy and, once LEPs are defined, then new sub-regional strategies will be drawn.

Add more when Local Enterprise Partnership's are confirmed

We are likely to see links and parallels continue between higher-tier strategies, aiming to, for instance:

- improve the productivity and competitiveness of businesses

- raise skill levels to drive this improvement, and to spread the benefits of a vibrant economy amongst the populace to ensure community sustainability.
- temper the need and desire for economic growth with consideration of the environmental impacts traditionally attendant to such growth.

The weakness of higher tier strategy can be an inability to engage or take action at a human level; whereas our 'resilient' approach will ensure that Cherwell is also led and actively supported locally towards its longer term vision.

Eco-town Economic Development Strategy

A detailed strategy is being developed for the Eco town at Bicester, meeting the requirement of Planning Policy Statement 1 policy ET10 - Employment**:**

> "It is important to ensure that eco-towns are genuine mixed-use communities and that unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum. An economic strategy should be produced to accompany planning applications for eco-towns that demonstrate how access to work will be achieved. The strategy should also set out facilities to support job creation in the town and as a minimum there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport". (The Department for Communities & Local Government, 2009a, p8).

It aims to generate innovative employment around four key areas:

1) Construction jobs
   - Jobs related to construction of the Eco-development
2) Endogenous jobs
   - 'service' jobs related to the increase in population
   - Population thresholds: a tipping point?
3) Exogenous jobs
   - Bicester as a hub for 'eco'-activity
   - Other high value-added employment
   - Using the re-branding of Bicester as a key attraction
4) Changing patterns of living and working

It has three key components:

- **Formulation** – covering the initial stages of the eco-town's development
- **Evolution** – demonstrating how the economy will evolve, particularly in response to new a changing context, and in particular how it may lead to more efficient resource use and low-carbon production
- **Implementation** – guidance on how relevant key actions will be taken forward

Procurement Strategy

Cherwell District Council is identifying how it can use its resources most effectively: it spends around £18 million a year on a diverse range of goods, works and services with external suppliers. It aims to commit to ensuring the goods and services it purchases are manufactured, delivered, used and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and deliver long term value for money for the Council and the public sector as a whole. There remains a challenge to engage local suppliers to play a greater role, and for partners organisations to follow suit to maximise their positive impact upon the local economy

Spatial Strategy

Delivery of economic development frequently has a crucial spatial dimension contained within national Planning Policy Statements and the Local Development Framework.

1) Planning for Economic Development

In planning for sustainable economic growth, Planning Policy Statement 4 states that Cherwell District Council, as local planning authority, should:

a. Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
b. Support existing business sectors, and identifies new and emerging sectors whilst retaining flexibility to respond to changing circumstances;
c. Positively plans for clusters of knowledge-driven or high technology industries, co-ordinated with the regional level;
d. Make the most efficient and effective use of land;
e. Identify, protect and promote key distribution networks, and locates or co-locate developments which generate substantial transport movements;
f. Plan for the delivery of sustainable transport and phasing of development;
g. Disaggregate minimum job targets from regional to local level;
h. Safeguard land from other uses, identify a range of sites, facilitate a broad range of economic development and not carry forward sites that are unlikely to be developed during the plan period;
i. Encourage new uses for vacant or derelict buildings;
j. Consider how sites for different business types can be delivered;
k. Facilitate new working practices such as live-work.

2) Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the Council's vehicle for shaping its overall spatial strategy and setting out its planning policies for Cherwell District. The LDF is not a single document but a suite of documents which are prepared at different times as required. The Economic Development Strategy therefore has strong links with the LDF, and some of the studies which have informed this Economic Development Strategy (such as the Employment Land Review) will also inform the work on the LDF.

The first document within the LDF is the Core Strategy. This will set out the overall development strategy for the district and the core policies (and allocations) that the Council will need to follow. In February 2010, the Council produced its Draft Core Strategy and consulted with local people on this. This Draft Core Strategy set out some broad policies for protecting employment land and identified several major areas where employment uses would be promoted.

The Draft Core Strategy was written in the context of the (then) regional spatial strategy for the south east of England; the South East Plan. This required the district to provide 13,400 new homes over the period 2006 - 2026. In July 2010 the new Secretary of State revoked all regional spatial strategies, and instead permitted local authorities to consider what level of growth would be appropriate within their areas and, if they can justify these, plan for them accordingly.

Cherwell District Council has indicated its intention to review its housing figures with a view to proposing some new targets which, it considers, may result in less development pressure on certain areas. In doing this, it has reaffirmed its commitment to growth at Bicester in line with its eco-town status.

At the time of writing this draft Economic Development Strategy, the Council is currently undertaking the work to inform what these new housing targets may be, and what impact this may have upon overall levels of growth, and its spatial distribution, across the district. The review of the Economic Development Strategy has come at a good time to allow the Core Strategy to consider the economic implications of growth (or lack of it) and make sure that it responds to the economic needs and priorities of the district as set out in the Economic Development Strategy.

5) Delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy

The Community Strategy is the main source of aspirations and goals for the Economic Development Strategy, and has four ambitions:

- Opportunities for all;
- A diverse and resilient economy;
- Connected infrastructure and protected environment;
- Resourceful and receptive community leadership.

Development of the local economy will in fact involve all four ambitions; in light of the strong linkages – between the community, private and public sectors - that will need to underpin the development of a ‘resilient’ economy. Primary focus will, however, be upon ‘creating a diverse and resilient economy’, summarised below:

We aim:

“To develop a diverse and resilient industrial base and an appropriately skilled workforce that can adapt to the challenges of climate change, supported by a well planned and effective infrastructure of housing, transport, leisure and services. We need appropriate growth in housing development to meet the needs of the population. We need to link this to supporting the population to gain the skills and flexibility to access local jobs, develop existing businesses and actively attract new businesses into the area which, in turn, encourages our younger population to stay or return here. A resurgence in localism, support for local products and businesses, and appropriate evolution of villages will strengthen our farming and rural areas”.

“Our economic ambition takes into account the jobs we have now and the jobs we would like to have in the future, the skills of our workforce and the wealth of enterprise and innovation on our doorstep. A vibrant and diverse economic infrastructure is the bedrock on which we can build a sustainable future”.

6) Themes for Delivery

We have established that the local economy is a complex series of interactions between private, public and social interests, and that the inter-relationships form the basis of value to be added to Cherwell's economy. This may not always be easy - or even necessary - to measure, but continuous practical experience over the past two decades nevertheless provides us with a solid basis upon which to build our shared economic vision for 2016.

Through seeking a 'diverse and resilient economy', we wish to be active in ensuring the comprehensive sustainability of our community through the following cross-cutting and broad themes:

A) Cross-cutting themes:

Throughout all activity in Cherwell, we will further develop our economy by working together to:

1) **Ensure a diverse and resilient economy remains at the heart of Cherwell's Vision**
2) **Acknowledge capacity and build strong relationships**
3) **Maximise the 'green economy' benefits arising from Eco-Bicester**

a. Ensure a diverse and resilient economy remains at the heart of Cherwell's Vision

Cherwell has been a prosperous district with very low unemployment. Much of the stability we have experienced has come from small and medium sized businesses and these businesses need continued support so that they are maintained. We also need to look to new and innovative business to attract this into the area and retain the population through a range of work opportunities. Lastly we need to ensure that our population is skilled enough to take up these opportunities and to balance this with homes they can live in and transport they can get to work with.

b. Acknowledge capacity and build strong relationships

There is an established culture of co-operation in north Oxfordshire with a strong track-record of taking both proactive and timely reactive steps to address economic 'shocks'. It is upon this positive culture that the annual delivery plans will be based, enabling a flexible and responsive approach to be taken, through effective community leadership in uncertain times.

c. Maximise the 'green economy' benefits arising from Eco-Bicester

In maintaining the global competitiveness of Cherwell's economy, we must sustain an environment in which people choose to live, work and visit. As energy costs rise and regulations tighten, the 'green economy' will be synonymous with the whole economy. Individuals, businesses and locations will have to be 'green' to survive and to compete. We have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of sustainable community development through Eco-Bicester, and to spread the benefits across the whole district.

B) Broad themes: people, business and place

Whilst valuing the inter-relationships, we will also take actions to develop the diversity and resilience of our local economy, as identified by the Community Strategy:

1. Raise expectations and ambitions and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining. We will foster and develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training;

2. Promote and support business diversification and a sustainable economy in both urban and rural environments. Protect and grow local services and businesses, while supporting town centres to be attractive economic hubs for the district.

3. Manage our infrastructure development, matching housing growth with local jobs, transport to work, facilities and services. We will plan effectively for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and actively attracting the right businesses into the area.

There are complex inter-linkages within and between these objectives but can be simplified into three broad headings:

1) Developing people
2) Developing business
3) Developing place

A) Developing people

Our people are indeed the greatest asset within our community and, to engage all, *we will:*

1. Create employment

Our economy generally consists of high levels of employment and economic activity but as identified in Issue b, this has increasingly been reliant upon a growing public sector whilst the private sector has contracted slightly. The implications of the coalition government's austerity plans, with likely reductions in public sector employment and expenditure will be experienced over the years of this strategy and will need interpretation and review locally.

Underpinning all other themes in the delivery of our economic strategy, continued high levels of engagement with the economy will support skills development, business growth, community vibrancy and social inclusion.

We will:

- **Create sufficient additional jobs** by the end of 2016 to cope with the predicted increase in population.
- **Maintain the low unemployment rate** in the district.

2. Provide access to Employment

Creating jobs is insufficient to ensure a prosperous economy. If we cannot find the right people with the right skills and aptitudes to fill those jobs, in the right location, then neither the local populace nor the employer will benefit. It is therefore vital that we continue to ensure that local people are able to take advantage of the opportunities that are created. This means more than simply ensuring they have access to training; it involves helping people into work for the first time, return to work with new skills and to progress as individuals.

The Job Clubs provide examples of best practice in how the private, public and social sectors can forge successful working partnerships to tackle an economic shock within a locality. The momentum created should ensure effective labour market support to individuals in good times as well as bad.

We will:

- **Continue to develop the Job Clubs** to improve access to skills, training, enterprise and employment opportunities.
- **Develop alternative ways of accessing employment** such as self-employment, apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training.
- **Help economically inactive people** into work and training, in co-operation with employers.
- **Consider spatial aspects**, such as commuting and other means of accessing employment, when planning for land use in both employment and housing, including home-based working.

3. Enhance Skills

Cherwell is served by Oxford and Cherwell Valley (Further Education) College (OCVC), and we are within an hour's travel of five universities, incorporating three business schools. Despite this, skill levels in the District are still a cause for concern. It is vital for our future prosperity that we equip the existing and future working population with the skills required for a 21st Century economy. These skills range across the board, including both technical skills and generic 'soft' skills such as customer service, team-working and so forth, and must be based on the needs of employers.

To maintain our diverse and resilient economy, skills development is about improving productivity, efficiency, and adding value. Through the recession, however, the challenge has also arisen to help provide individuals with the basic skills, knowledge and support to enter and return to work.

We will:

- **Develop relationships with local employers** as partners in addressing education and skills issues.
- **Enable employers to identify and to meet their future skills needs**, working with the Skills Funding Agency, schools, colleges and universities to jointly gain a greater understanding of needs and provision, and supporting key local sectors.
- **Provide the 'eco' skills** needed to develop Bicester eco-town, to attract businesses and to develop a competitive 'green economy'.
- **Raise expectations and ambitions** and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining.
- **Promote** apprenticeships, Future Jobs Fund Projects, eco town construction & technology skills, as well as volunteering and informal learning to equip people for work.

4. Engage the Community in Economic Development

Although our economy is generally prosperous, there are small areas where numbers of people suffer the linked disadvantages of poor housing, low skills, and low employment and economic activity. Where these problems are concentrated, we must have a flexible approach dealing with all the issues. The danger of communities forming within our large towns on the shared basis of exclusion from the broader prosperity is alienation, social exclusion and eventually problems of crime and disorder.

We will:

- **Tackle the causes of under achievement** which include engagement in education and training, poor housing, lack of access to transport, poor social and economic cultures and dependence on benefits - e.g. Banbury deprivation project.
- **Take advantage of the strong local identity** – the strong place identity among Cherwell residents means there is an opportunity for the public sector to work with the social sector primarily to generate additional benefits for the local economy.

B) Developing business

Businesses will work with each other, and public and social partners, to become even stronger and more diverse, and

We will:

5. Promote business start-up and entrepreneurship

The creation of new businesses, especially those in creative and knowledge-based sectors, is vital for the future of our economy. It will create more diversity and resilience amongst the businesses in our economy. Businesses started in a locality often have a strong loyalty to their ‘place of birth’, and generate all the benefits of wealth generation associated with a head-office function.

For some people, starting a business is self-employment in its truest sense; the aim is sustainable income rather than growth, and the focus is on the activity at hand rather than managing a business. This has an important role to play for individuals for whom mainstream employment may be inaccessible – their domestic demands may require them to manage time in a different way to 9-5 employment, or they may have recently become redundant with no clear opportunity to use their skills in a role with a new employer.

For others, the business is the focus, and these are the true entrepreneurs; their aim would be growth and competitiveness whatever their product. These businesses provide the powerhouses of the future for our economy, growing and employing people in skilled roles. Both self-employment and entrepreneurship are vital to our economy.

We will:

- **Increase the numbers of new businesses forming**, fostering enterprise through Oxfordshire Business Enterprises, enabling all residents considering starting a

business to gain help and support, smoothing the start-up process and ensuring early survival.
- **Enable high skill** and high tech entrepreneurship through the Innovation and Growth Team, Oxford Innovation and other local support networks,
- **Support the early survival and growth of enterprises**, though developing the network of agencies, banks and other professional advisers, training and education providers and local authorities.
- **Embed an entrepreneurial culture in our young people**, through programmes such as Young Enterprise, increasing the number of young people involved in these programmes.

6. Develop local procurement and supply chains

In an increasingly global economy, individual purchasing and investment decisions are often taken outside Cherwell yet the effects of those decisions can then be felt locally through business closures and job losses. Whilst in a global market place, it is increasingly difficult to compete on price alone, so quality and service are becoming more important, as is an understanding of the local 'multiplier' effects.

The public, private and increasingly social elements of a resilient economy should ensure that the exchange of products and services can involve all potential provides to contribute, allowing 'value for money' to be identified, especially where it contributes to circulation of wealth locally. Initiatives, such as breaking down larger contracts to match small to medium sized enterprise (SME) and social enterprise capacity, and encouraging collaboration between local SMEs and social enterprises to compete for larger contracts, will have a real positive impact on the local supply chain.

We will:

- **Maximise opportunities for the private and social sectors** to supply to public sector.
- **Ensure Cherwell District Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy is implemented** to deliver community and financial benefits through clever procurement.
- **Work with public sector to develop a single procurement portal** building upon the strong relationships that exist within the public sector in Cherwell.
- **Assist businesses to identify local supply chains**.

7. Promote business & cluster development

All businesses now compete in a national, international or for many a global marketplace. It is recognised that businesses geographically related and operating in a broadly similar field have much to gain by working in partnership, pooling their resources and knowledge to operate collaboratively against competition elsewhere.

Cherwell is already home, fully or partially to some established clusters (for instance, we are at the mid-point in the famed 'motor-sport valley'). There is considerable prestige to be gained by acting as the 'spiritual home' to an established and high-profile cluster, and to this end we should seek to be supportive of such groups.

Support for businesses is often delivered on a themed basis. Effective support provides a high return on the time invested by the company in becoming engaged; it is therefore a sign of a strong business support framework that it manages its contacts with the private sector closely and streamlines processes – this is all the more important when there are multiple agencies involved.

We will:

- **Continue to support the growth of established clusters** locally involved with the bio-medical, motor-sport and high-technology sectors and identify key areas for co-operative development, and identify further clusters.
- **Develop and integrate a new 'green technology cluster'** in and around Bicester as part of the eco-town.
- **Engage with our businesses** to understand what support we can give them to stay and grow here into medium sized, high performing businesses.
- **Operate a protocol for business support**, clarifying the roles of various agencies and the transferring of clients between them.

8. Attract new investment

A key part of the success of the Cherwell economy in recent years has been the concerted drive to attract inward investment, building upon the strong communication links of the M40, and the railways. A key to the success here has been the Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership, bringing together public and private sector partners to deliver comprehensive support for inward investors and expanding local companies. A number of highly successful firms have set-up or grown, making strong commitments to the area as a result, bringing many quality jobs and contributing diversity and resilience.

We will:

- **Continue enabling investment** in north Oxfordshire through our Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership, maximising the use of the private and public sector's resources.
- **Develop a North Oxfordshire focused inward investment strategy** to ensure effective working with other partners, such as UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and any new services provided at Oxfordshire level to attract investment, especially on a European and global basis.
- **Continue to focus on attracting high-quality jobs** to meet local need and opportunities, such as in 'green technologies', where the associated developments are of benefit to the area both economically and environmentally.
- **Plan effectively** for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and actively attracting the right businesses into the area.

9. Develop a 'World Class' Business Community

No business, however small, can continue untouched by the increasing impact of globalisation. As a part of one of the most economically active and dynamic regions in the world, we are 'in the top drawer' as a local economy. Developing our new businesses and encouraging appropriate inward investment will increase our competitiveness, and many of these new firms will join existing ones in trading on a European, and even a global basis.

We must be prepared to support and facilitate the internationalisation of our businesses, by giving them access to specialist knowledge and support, opportunities and markets. We must maintain our links with other parts of the world as a geographical and governmental entity, and look for opportunities to develop more. Since the demise of NOVEC (North Oxfordshire Virtual Exporters Club) there has been a vacuum for networking and support for export at the local level, which we are keen to address. Such a group will enable the sharing of experience and pooled resources, reducing the often daunting barriers to international markets.

We will:

- **Create an international trade network** locally, bringing experienced importers, exporters and traders together with novices and professional services to share experiences, develop knowledge and exploit opportunity.
- **Promote exporting opportunities** to local businesses arising from the UK Trade International and other such bodies to make opportunities for overseas market development and research readily available to local businesses.
- **Identify overseas links**, formed through civic activity or other networks, can be used to develop economic development opportunities.

10. Develop the Visitor Economy

The visitor economy is a unique sector comprising not only of attractions and overnight accommodation but also transport, retail and other services. The visitor economy can be an important part of an locality, providing expenditure, facilities, services and opportunities that might not otherwise exist. Cherwell's tourism product faces the challenge of nearby tourism ‘hot-spots’ such as Oxford City, the Cotswolds, Silverstone, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and the Chilterns. However, our strong transport infrastructure and central location for all these areas does give us a unique offering.

The promotion of Oxford and Oxfordshire allows the potential for venues in the district to engage with the lucrative business tourism market. Both Banbury and Bicester have in recent years seen limited investment in hotels and further investment is needed to meet existing and projected demand.

Business tourism fits well with our aim to be a centre of business growth and innovation in the sub-region. Our improved accessibility in comparison with Oxford City centre, and our generally good transport links, means we are in a strong position to develop the premier business tourism product for Oxfordshire.

We will:

- **Work in partnership with businesses and tourism bodies to enhance and develop our tourism product, maximising the value whilst minimising any negative affects.**

C) Developing place

Our district will be an even better place in which to live, work, learn and spend leisure time, and

We will:

11. Promote employment sites & premises

The successful Cherwell-M40 partnership brought together public and private sector partners, enabling the paced development and occupation commercial property to meet demands from employers. All businesses require premises; be they on an industrial estate, in a town or village, or even at home. It is important to maintain the capacity to create new space to meet needs when required, but it is also important to make the best use of existing business sites. We will seek to protect existing allocations of land for new employment generating development, and ensure sufficient new land is available through the Local Development Framework to accommodate economic growth.

Continued marketing, improvement and redevelopment where necessary of existing employment sites and premises will form a central pillar in the support we provide to the business community. Our main aim must be balance the need for new land against the opportunity to re-use previously developed land. We hope to improve the efficiency of land use, increasing the amount of employment and economic activity without unnecessarily increasing the amount of land used.

We will:

- **Provide a good supply of employment land** to accommodate the expansion needs of existing and future employers, across a diverse range of activity, making best use of land without compromising the environment.
- **Complete a review of employment land provision** within the district to feed into the Local Development Framework and inform local planning for business growth until 2026.
- **Work to increase the overall density of employment** on main business sites, and encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of sites and premises.
- **Continue to work closely with partners** in the commercial property and investment fields to encourage the bringing forward of new commercial property to meet demand, working to re-develop and improve existing commercial properties to maintain high environmental standards, meet changing demand patterns and improve the built environment for local people.
- **Enhance business environments** to encourage a virtuous cycle of upgrading of premises to encourage further investment, reducing the number of vacant units and enhancing economic activity.

12. Manage our infrastructure development

The quality of communications links has been highlighted as one of the key economic drivers in our district. Transport and telecommunications provide the key link to markets that businesses require and in a rural, centrally located area, maintaining and improving those connections is a vital task for economic development to take place.

We need to ensure that people have convenient access to homes and jobs, being able to get themselves to their place of work in a reasonable time and a sustainable manner. Cherwell residents travel further to work than people in the rest of the South East and nationally. Car ownership overall is high and residents in the rural areas are particularly dependent on their cars. Over 60% of people drive to work. This dependency on cars to get Cherwell’s residents to work could prove to be a problem as fuel prices continue to rise and, therefore, alternatives are required.

We will:

- **Continue to lobby for key transport developments** identified as necessary for moving the Cherwell economy forwards.
- **Develop broadband accessibility** across the district, lobbying for and exploiting new faster technologies as and when they become available and enabling more effective homeworking for a growing number of employees.
- **Enable a good supply of housing** and a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to ensure that housing provision is able to support the development of the local economy and people's ambitions and needs.
- **Ensure that utilities to all businesses meet present and future demand**, particularly in the older industrial areas where power and water/sewage supplies can become inadequate.
- **Develop Eco-Bicester** as an exemplar of innovative transport and communications.

13. Support rural areas

Cherwell's Rural Strategy acknowledges the importance of a strong local economy. Rural business locations are proving to be ever more popular, due to a combination of lower cost and pleasant surroundings, making them particularly appealing to start-up and micro-businesses where the owner lives locally. This is especially true of those working in the valuable creative or knowledge driven sectors. A key enabler of such rural business growth is good communications, and the increasing availability of high-speed internet connections means we are in a position to capitalise on this factor providing that access to broadband is improved in some rural locations.

We will:

- **Enable sustainable rural communities** through the development of appropriate sites and premises for local employment, especially in relation to new high-skill small firms that would benefit from a high-quality working environment.
- **Encourage diversification of farms and other rural businesses** to enable the creation of local employment and reduce commuting.
- **Support rural shops and businesses** in serving their rural communities and in creating jobs, ensuring that NNDR (business rate) relief is provided to all eligible businesses and encouraging patronage and community involvement.
- **Explore opportunities to pool resources** and community facilities to provide new community and commercial opportunities, including networks and hubs for home workers and shared travel to work schemes
- **As noted in 'infrastructure', ensure that broadband technology is available** throughout the district.

14. Support urban centres

Our three Urban Centres, in Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury, have an important role to play at a county and sub-regional level. Much has been achieved in creating thriving attractive places where people want to live, work and relax, but these places exist in a dynamic environment, and therefore if they do not keep moving forwards, in relative terms, they can be moving backwards.

The urban centres play a pivotal role in the economic life of the District. They form hubs around which our economy revolves, as meeting points for communications, and providing a critical mass of property, businesses and local customers. Quality urban centres represent the District to the outside world, being one of the main impressions gained by visitors here on either business or pleasure and therefore high quality, tidy, thriving centres establish the District firmly as a modern, dynamic and pleasant place to live, work and visit.

To enhance the resilience of Cherwell and to maximise resources, there is scope to stimulate more business interaction between our urban areas providing businesses with a perfect opportunity to develop cross sector working relationships, activity and trade.

We will:

- **Work with local chambers and business networks** to form closer working relationships between each other, and with public and community partners.
- **Support town centres** to maintain their economic vitality through their shops, markets and events.
- **Undertake regeneration** schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centres.

a. **Banbury**

- **Implement the 'Banbury Brighter Futures' project**, engaging businesses, and improving the proportion of residents in identified wards with skills and qualifications.
- **Implement the 'Banbury Cultural Quarter' development** to build the creative and cultural sector.
- **Redevelop Canalside, including Tramway Industrial Estate**, ensuring that existing businesses are supported in relocating locally if necessary.
- **Redevelop Orchard Way** - the existing 8 retail and 13 residential units at the junction with Orchard Way and Fairway. The scheme will provide for 4 retail units with better specifications and increased floorspace and 33 new residential units.
- **Redevelop Bolton Road** - a comprehensive redevelopment of the north western edge of Banbury town centre, which also includes the meteor car park.

b. **Bicester**

- **Maximise the potential of the eco-town development** – build upon the accessibility of Bicester, its skilled workforce, further education opportunities, and location to attract new businesses and cease this major opportunity, as detailed separately in the eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy.
- **Improve the quality of business premises and access to utilities,** as noted in 'infrastucture', by working with partners.
- **Work with Bicester Village** to raise the international profile of the town, maximising the links with other areas of this strategy.
- **Complete the Town Centre Redevelopment Project** - a comprehensive redevelopment of the Crown, Crown Walk and Franklins yard car parks to provide a supermarket, cinema, replacement car parks and bus facilities and further retail and restaurant units.
- **Remodel Market Square –** led by Oxfordshire County Council, a highway and townscape improvement scheme.

c. **Kidlington**

- **Enable stronger links** between industrial areas, local residents and the village centre.
- **Maximise its unique advantages:** the benefits of the airport, University of Oxford Begbroke Science Park and its proximity to Oxford.
- **Consider Kidlington pedestrianisation** – a project from the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board involving a review of the current ineffective Traffic Regulation Order for the High Street and formal public consultation on changes to be made, not only to the Order but signage too.

7) Taking the Strategy Forward

Having identified the themes to address the issues, it is necessary to prepare for action and to plan how this can best be done to achieve an even more diverse and resilient Cherwell.

Key Delivery Partners
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Partnership
South East England Regional Development Agency (SEEDA)
Local Chambers of Commerce and Business Networks
Local Businesses
Oxfordshire and Cherwell Valley College
Cherwell District Council
Cherwell Community and Voluntary Services
Oxfordshire County Council Banbury Town Centre Partnership
Bicester Vision
Kidlington Village Centre Management Board
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
Jobcentre Plus
Cherwell Skills Action Group
West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Partnership

Capacity and Partnership

Many economic development strategies will explain in great detail proposals for attracting investment, creating jobs and so forth. But frequently omitted from these documents is any detail on the ability to deliver the aims, and the potential human resources required.

Much of the work in economic development is now delivered in partnership – both with professional bodies such as Job Centre Plus and Business Link, and with voluntary groups such as community associations. A key part of the success in economic development in Cherwell over the last 20 years has been the Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP), which has been instrumental in attracting and retaining quality employers in the district. As with many fields, economic development has its own jargon and specialist knowledge; to achieve our aims we must communicate as clearly as possible with our partners, and where appropriate work with our partners to increase their capacity to work with us.

We will:

- **Identify the importance of economic development within Cherwell** – throughout all strategies of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- **Be realistic** – with the new Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board in place, there is a need for partners to utilise this structure to determine the key three or four strategic priorities for Cherwell in the future and concentrate on these rather than spreading themselves too thinly.
- **Develop our existing partnerships by enhancing co-operation** between the social/community, private and public sectors to be utilised for more effective action.
- **Develop stronger links between LSP partners** – as the pressure to reduce costs within the public sector mounts, there will be a need for public, private and social bodies to form even stronger links. Differences need to be understood and accounted for when the partners are developing strategy, policy or delivering programmes.
- **Create strong links** between the private, public and voluntary sectors with clear roles and contributions to the economic, aspiration and skills agenda.
- **Communicate and build understanding** – encourage individuals, organisations and businesses to recognise how their actions contribute to this vision.
- **Ensure relationships between partners are meaningful** – it is important that the Council continues to keep up the good work in engaging the private and social sectors separately; however it is important that Cherwell does not rest on its laurels and continues to ensure the relationships that exist are fit for purpose and generate meaningful results for the economy.

Our work is knowledge-based, and so depends greatly on quality information, which in turn rests upon quality data. A good base of robust data from a variety of sources is an essential resource, and one we will work to maintain. We also need to keep up our analytical capacity to turn that data into information, and we need to maintain strong working partnerships to create the context within which that information becomes knowledge. Ultimately, we must become a learning organisation to effectively deliver our strategic aims.

We will:

- **Undertake an annual review of our skills base** to ensure we are constantly upgrading the skills we have to deliver economic development in Cherwell.
- **Maximise the opportunities for voluntary and community sector** representatives to be involved in training and development opportunities alongside professional staff to increase their capacity to engage.
- **Maintain an economic database** covering land, property and businesses as the underpinning of a knowledge-driven service, and access to other data sources as appropriate.
- **Use our working partnerships** to analyse and learn from data and information.

A) Developing people

Objective: **Our people are indeed the greatest asset within our community and, to engage all, *we will:***				
Aim	**Action**	**Output/outcome**	**Timescale**	**Lead partner (s)**
1) Create employment	**Create sufficient additional jobs** by the end of 2016 to cope with the predicted increase in population.			
	Maintain the low unemployment rate in the district.			
2) Provide access to Employment	**Continue to develop the Job Clubs** to improve access to skills, training, enterprise and employment opportunities.			
	Develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as self-employment, apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training			
	Help economically inactive people into work and training, in co-operation with employers			
	Consider spatial aspects, such as commuting and other means of accessing employment, when planning for land use in both employment and housing, including home-based working.			
3) Enhance Skills	**Develop relationships with local employers** as partners in addressing education and skills issues.			
	Enable employers to identify and to meet their future skills needs, working with the Skills Funding Agency, schools, colleges and universities to jointly gain a greater understanding of needs and provision, and supporting key local sectors.			
	Provide the 'eco' skills needed to develop Bicester eco-town, to attract businesses and to develop a competitive 'green economy'			
	Raise expectations and ambitions and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining.			
	Promote apprenticeships, Future Jobs Fund Projects, eco town construction & technology skills, as well as volunteering and informal learning to equip people for work.			
4) Engage	**Tackle the causes of under achievement**			Skidz

the Community in Economic Development	which include engagement in education and training, poor housing, lack of access to transport, poor social and economic cultures and dependence on benefits - e.g. Banbury deprivation project.			
	Take advantage of the strong local identity – the strong place identity among Cherwell residents means there is an opportunity for the public sector to work with the social sector primarily to generate additional benefits for the local economy.			

B) Developing business

Objective: **Businesses will work with each other, and public and social partners, to become even stronger and more diverse, and** ***We will:***				
Aim	**Action**	**Output/outcome**	**Time scale**	**Lead partner(s)**
5) Promote business start-up and entrepreneurship	**Increase the numbers of new businesses forming**, fostering enterprise through Oxfordshire Business Enterprises, enabling all residents considering starting a business to gain help and support, smoothing the start-up process and ensuring early survival.			
	Enable high skill and high tech entrepreneurship through the Innovation and Growth Team, Oxford Innovation and other local support networks,			
	Support the early survival and growth of enterprises, though developing the network of agencies, banks and other professional advisers, training and education providers and local authorities.			
	Embed an entrepreneurial culture in our young people, through programmes such as Young Enterprise, increasing the number of young people involved in these programmes.			
6) Develop local procurement and supply chains	**Maximise opportunities for the private and social sectors** to supply to public sector.			

	Ensure Cherwell District Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy is implemented to deliver community and financial benefits through clever procurement.			
	Work with public sector to develop a single procurement portal building upon the strong relationships that exist within the public sector in Cherwell.			
	Assist businesses to identify local supply chains.			
7) Promote business & cluster development	**Continue to support the growth of established clusters** locally involved with the bio-medical, motor-sport and high-technology sectors and identify key areas for co-operative development, and identify further clusters.		CHIP/ LEPs	
	Develop and integrate a new 'green technology cluster' in and around Bicester as part of the eco-town.			
	Engage with our businesses to understand what support we can give them to stay and grow here into medium sized, high performing businesses.			
	Operate a protocol for business support, clarifying the roles of various agencies and the transferring of clients between them			
8) Attract new investment	**Continue enabling investment** in north Oxfordshire through our Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership, maximising the use of the private and public sector's resources.		CHIP	
	Develop a North Oxfordshire focused inward investment strategy to ensure effective working with other partners, such as UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and any new services provided at Oxfordshire level to attract investment, especially on a European and global basis.			
	Continue to focus on attracting			

	high-quality jobs to meet local need and opportunities, such as in 'green technologies', where the associated developments are of benefit to the area both economically and environmentally.			
	Plan effectively for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and actively attracting the right businesses into the area.			
9) Develop a 'World Class' Business Community	**Create an international trade network** locally, bringing experienced importers, exporters and traders together with novices and professional services to share experiences, develop knowledge and exploit opportunity.			
	Promote exporting opportunities to local businesses arising from the UK Trade International and other such bodies to make opportunities for overseas market development and research readily available to local businesses.			
	Identify overseas links, formed through civic activity or other networks, can be used to develop economic development opportunities			
10) Develop the Visitor Economy	**Work in partnership with businesses and tourism bodies to enhance and develop our tourism product, maximising the value whilst minimising any negative affects.**			

C) Developing place

Objective: **Our district will be an even better place in which to live, work, learn and spend leisure time, and** ***We will:***				
Aim	**Action**	**Output/outcome**	**Time scale**	**Lead partner(s)**
11) Promote employment sites & premises	**Provide a good supply of employment land** to accommodate the expansion needs of existing and future employers, across a diverse range of activity, making best use of land without compromising the environment.			
	Complete a review of employment land provision within the district to feed into the Local Development Framework and inform local planning for business growth until 2026.			
	Work to increase the overall density of employment on main business sites, and encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of sites and premises.			
	Continue to work closely with partners in the commercial property and investment fields to encourage the bringing forward of new commercial property to meet demand, working to re-develop and improve existing commercial properties to maintain high environmental standards, meet changing demand patterns and improve the built environment for local people.			
	Enhance business environments to encourage a virtuous cycle of upgrading of premises to encourage further investment, reducing the number of vacant units and enhancing economic activity.			
12) Manage our infrastructure development	**Continue to lobby for key transport developments** identified as necessary for moving the Cherwell economy forwards.			
	Develop broadband accessibility across the district, lobbying for and exploiting new faster technologies as			

	and when they become available and enabling more effective homeworking for a growing number of employees.			
	Enable a good supply of housing and a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to ensure that housing provision is able to support the development of the local economy and people's ambitions and needs.			
	Ensure that utilities to all businesses meet present and future demand, particularly in the older industrial areas where power and water/sewage supplies can become inadequate.			
	Develop Eco-Bicester as an exemplar of innovative transport and communications.			
13) Support rural areas	**Enable sustainable rural communities** through the development of appropriate sites and premises for local employment, especially in relation to new high-skill small firms that would benefit from a high-quality working environment.			
	Encourage diversification of farms and other rural businesses to enable the creation of local employment and reduce commuting.			
	Support rural shops and businesses in serving their rural communities and in creating jobs, ensuring that NNDR (business rate) relief is provided to all eligible businesses and encouraging patronage and community involvement.			
	Explore opportunities to pool resources and community facilities to provide new community and commercial opportunities, including networks and hubs for home workers and shared travel to work schemes			
	As noted in 'infrastructure', ensure that broadband technology is available throughout the district.			
14) Support urban centres	**Work with local chambers and business networks** to form closer working relationships between each other, and with public and community partners.			
	Support town centres to maintain			

	their economic vitality through their shops, markets and events.			
	Undertake regeneration schemes and actions to enhance the attractiveness and success of the centres.			
- Banbury	**Implement the 'Banbury Brighter Futures' project**, engaging businesses, and improving the proportion of residents in identified wards with skills and qualifications.			
	Implement the 'Banbury Cultural Quarter' development to build the creative and cultural sector.			
	Redevelop Canalside, including Tramway Industrial Estate, ensuring that existing businesses are supported in relocating locally if necessary.			
	Redevelop Orchard Way - the existing 8 retail and 13 residential units at the junction with Orchard Way and Fairway. The scheme will provide for 4 retail units with better specifications and increased floorspace and 33 new residential units.			
	Redevelop Bolton Road - a comprehensive redevelopment of the north western edge of Banbury town centre, which also includes the meteor car park.			
- Bicester	**Maximise the potential of the eco-town development** – build upon the accessibility of Bicester, its skilled workforce, further education opportunities, and location to attract new businesses and cease this major opportunity, as detailed separately in the eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy.			
	Improve the quality of business premises and access to utilities, as noted in 'infrastucture', by working with partners.			
	Work with Bicester Village to raise the international profile of the town, maximising the links with other areas of this strategy.			
	Complete the Town Centre Redevelopment Project - a			

	comprehensive redevelopment of the Crown, Crown Walk and Franklins yard car parks to provide a supermarket, cinema, replacement car parks and bus facilities and further retail and restaurant units.			
	Remodel Market Square – led by Oxfordshire County Council, a highway and townscape improvement scheme.			
- Kidlington	**Enable stronger links** between industrial areas, local residents and the village centre.			
	Maximise its unique advantages: the benefits of the airport, University of Oxford Begbroke Science Park and its proximity to Oxford.			
	Consider Kidlington pedestrianisation – a project from the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board involving a review of the current ineffective Traffic Regulation Order for the High Street and formal public consultation on changes to be made, not only to the Order but signage too.			

Appendix 1: Information Sources and Background Documents

To be updated

Information Sources

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2010) – Understanding the Resilience of Cherwell.

Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership (2010) – Our District, Our Future; a Sustainable Community Strategy.

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (2006) – Oxfordshire Economic Strategy

Step Ahead Research (2008) – Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study - Cherwell

Step Ahead Research (2010) – Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study - Cherwell

Tourism South **East (2010)** - The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire - Estimates for 2009.

UK Commission for Employment and Skills (July 2010) - The Value of Skills: An Evidence Review.

Background Documents

Department for Communities & Local Government (2008a) - Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities.

Department for Communities & Local Government (2008b) – Tackling Worklessness – A Review of the Contribution and Role of Partnerships – An Interim Report. Councillor Stephen Houghton, Claire Dove & Iqbal Wahhab. November 2008.

Department for Communities & Local Government (2009a) - Eco-towns - A supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1.

Department for Communities & Local Government (2009b) – Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.

Department for Communities & Local Government (2009c) - Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill - Local Economic Assessments - Policy Statement.

HM Government (2009) - Partnerships for Growth: A National Framework for Regional and Local Economic Development. December 2009.

SEEDA - South East England Development Agency (2006) - Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016.

Appendix 2: Consultation

- **14 January & 8 February 2010 - Banbury Corporate Finance Initiative** (Jeremy Lincoln - Chairman).
- **21 January 2010 – Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership.**
- **February 2010 – involvement of LSP partners in Resilience research.**
- **12 March 2010 – LSP Management Group discussion.**
- **19 March 2010 - Resilience Study consultation at 'Banbury in Business' Summit.**
- **7 July 2010 – Resilience Study findings and consultation at LSP Board**
- **August 2010 – Employers Skills Study consultation to LSP**
- **11 August 2010 – Cherwell Investment Partnership - Employment Land Review**
- **30 September 2010 – LSP Board**
- **18 October 2010 – Eco-Bicester Economic Development Strategy Group (businesses, councillors, officers).**
- **Development of ideas (exporting, digital, etc)**

Appendix 3: Significant Partnerships

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Cherwell Investment Partnership (CHIP) – a loose public-private partnership with property agents, chambers of commerce and representatives of local stakeholders who guide the service's efforts aimed at encouraging inward investment and the growth of indigenous businesses. Key objectives for 2010/11 are to continue / expand the partnership, develop the newly launched website to attract new investment, take action with partners on specific schemes to improve the district and work at Oxfordshire level to ensure that Cherwell draws benefit & investment leads from regional & national resources.

Bicester Vision – a partnership of local businesses and Authorities, with the objective of promoting Bicester. A significant partnership for the Council, for whom the Council provide a hosting service for the employment of the Bicester Vision Partnership Manager. It is an autonomous organisation which the Council supports financially, but their activities are not included in this plan. Key objectives for 2010/11 include the working with partners on the North West Bicester Scheme and developing the Bicester Vision continuation proposals.

Kidlington Village Centre Management Board – a groups of local authorities and public agencies seeking to guide the management and development of the village centre, and acting as a liaison group which brings together representatives from all three tiers of local government, the Police, and from business.

Banbury Town Centre Partnership - Guides activities on a range of town centre issues including the management and development of the town centre, and acting as a liaison group which brings together representatives from all three tiers of local government, the Police, and from business.

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (OEP) – A public-private partnership funded significantly by government through SEEDA and also employing staff transferred from Oxfordshire County Council This organisation is in receipt of significant LAA1 reward grant funding and Cherwell is seeking assurance on funding allocation as described above. OEP receives financial support from the Council (currently £5,000pa).
Key objectives for 2010/11 are subject in significant part to the allocation or otherwise of LAA1 reward funding which as described above.

Job Club Partnership–There are many partners involved in delivering the Job Clubs, which are managed and co-ordinated by Cherwell District Council. Key objectives for 2010/11 will be:

- to secure the continued commitment and participation of partners to Cherwell's Job Clubs during 2010/11 (assuming the need continues)
- Review and expand the current Worklessness Outreach Project, currently being piloted by partners with Charter Community Housing at the Sunshine Centre in Banbury
- extend access to job club services – particularly maintain and develop the Job Club website as a place of choice for local job vacancies, advice and guidance.
- work in partnership with the **Banbury Deprivation Project,** such as targeting NEETs in the defined Wards in most need and other community projects such as the Rainbow Venue.
- Work with businesses and the colleges to expand Apprenticeship opportunities in Cherwell.