

Executive

Local Development Framework (LDF) – Next Steps

23 May 2011

Report of Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree to undertake an informal consultation on locally generated population and household growth projections, a responding development strategy and other revisions to the Draft LDF Core Strategy.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To agree a revised development strategy as set out in Para 1.18 below and to include the PPS Eco-Town Standards as a new policy element of the Core Strategy.
- (2) To agree to progress an informal public consultation on a Revised Draft Core Strategy which incorporates locally generated population and household growth projections and a revised development strategy set out in this report and:
- (3) To delegate the preparation of the detailed wording of the Revised Draft Core Strategy and any consultation material to the Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Executive considered a report on 07 March 2011 which outlined updated population and household projections for the district and implications for a revised development strategy. It was agreed by the Executive that officers would progress further work on population and household projections for the sub-areas of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and the Rural Areas on the basis of the Council's preferred district wide scenario and also prepare a revised development strategy and other revisions to the Draft Core Strategy. The Council's preferred scenario was decided as being the Net Nil Migration scenario, which indicated household growth of 12,751 households over the

plan period 2006 – 2026.

Population and household projections for sub areas of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and the Rural Areas.

- 1.2 Most of the development that is already planned for or permitted for housing development as of September 2010 is taken into account in the projections as it is assumed that it will be built by 2016.
- 1.3 Based on a district wide level of growth of 12,751 households during the plan period, information for the sub areas is presented in Table 1 (Appendix 1). The household projections during the plan period are:

Banbury 5,553

Bicester 3,815

Kidlington 504

Rural Areas 2,874

District 12,751
- 1.4 When adjusted for the 7,169 homes (approx) which are already planned for and which are expected to be built after 2016, or which have already been completed or approved between 2006 – 2010, the remaining number of homes which would still need to be planned for within the Core Strategy or permitted is:

Banbury 2,932

Bicester 1,496

Kidlington 308

Rural Areas 841

District 5,582
- 1.5 For comparison, the Draft Core Strategy seeks to allocate strategic sites to deliver 6,130 homes.
- 1.6 For Banbury and Bicester, the projections indicate a combined remaining figure of 4,428 homes which would need to be planned for or permitted within the plan period. The Draft Core Strategy, for comparison, proposes 5,000 new homes in Banbury and Bicester combined within the plan period. The level of development currently proposed in the combined areas of Banbury and Bicester is higher than the projected growth and balanced toward Bicester rather than Banbury.
- 1.7 The projected household growth for Kidlington is notably higher than the level of development that is proposed within the Draft Core Strategy. The Green Belt policy restrictions which surround Kidlington are not factored into these projections. The population of Kidlington is also projected to decline up to 2016. Despite a projected increase in population after 2016, and again not factoring for policy constraints, the projections still indicate a net

population decline by 2026.

- 1.8 These projections may suggest that a slightly higher level of development in Kidlington could be considered in order to offset the projected population decline. However, if the Green Belt is considered to be an overriding constraint then higher growth from Kidlington could be focused toward either Banbury or Bicester. This is similar to the strategy currently proposed in the Draft Core Strategy, where a proportion of growth from the rural areas is proposed to be delivered in Bicester.
- 1.9 Within the Rural Areas (excl. Kidlington), population loss in some areas is offset by higher levels of projected growth in other areas. Within those areas that have been experiencing declining population, the level of growth projected under this scenario is not enough to completely offset that decline, although it does reduce the rate of population decline in those areas over the plan period. If some of the projected household growth in the Rural Areas is re-directed towards Banbury and Bicester, this may further compound this projected population decline within the Rural Areas.
- 1.10 Overall, the population in the Rural Areas (excl. Kidlington) under the Net Nil Migration scenario is projected to increase by 2,486 between 2006 – 2026, leading to a projected growth of 2,874 households. Within the plan period, the projections indicate that homes to accommodate approx. 841 of these households would still need to be planned for or permitted within the plan period.

Implications for Development Strategy based on Draft Core Strategy

- 1.11 On 07 March 2011 the Executive considered a range of illustrative growth scenarios for the period 2006 - 2026. The highest level of growth was based on the South East Plan employment figures and indicated a growth of 18,720 households. The projections indicate that this would be likely to significantly increase both the resident labour force and the population and household growth in the district. These would be likely to have significant impacts on the landscape and infrastructure of the district and this level of growth is therefore considered at this stage to be unrealistic.
- 1.12 The lowest level of growth was based on a Natural Change scenario and indicated a growth level of 11,089 households. Significantly, the projections indicate that this scenario would not meet the housing demand generated from within the district and de-population and/or increased homelessness would be likely to result, as well as a decreasing resident labour force. This level of growth is also therefore considered to be unrealistic.
- 1.13 The remaining scenarios illustrate levels of growth varying between 12,751 and 14,705 households between 2006 – 2026. The highest of these is based on a projected trend of expected development over a 5 year period (2012 – 2016). The volume of development that is expected to be delivered during these years is unusually high due to a concurrent supply of new homes at several large development sites in the District including land at Bankside (Banbury), at South West Bicester and Gavray Drive (Bicester) and at the Former RAF Upper Heyford Airbase.
- 1.14 Of the remaining scenarios, the level of growth based on a 10 year trend is similar to that illustrated in Net Nil Migration and indicates a similar level of

labour force growth.

- 1.15 Based on the demographic evidence, the lowest level of growth that might reasonably be appropriate for the district's internally generated housing demand would be 12,751 homes.
- 1.16 Based on the proposals in the Draft Core Strategy, there are various spatial options for amending the development strategy to reflect this level of growth, some of which are outlined below.
- 1.17 All are based upon delivering a level of growth of 12,751 homes (Net Nil Migration demographic scenario) and therefore a requirement that would still need to be planned for or permitted within the plan period of 5,582 homes, unless otherwise stated. Furthermore, all take as their starting point the indicative spatial distribution options in the Draft Core Strategy.

Projected household demand (Net Nil Migration demographic scenario)	Approx. requirement that would still need to be planned for or permitted within the plan period (Local Adjustment)	Indicative spatial distribution options based on Draft Core Strategy
District projection 12,751	5,582	<p>Maintaining proposed strategic sites</p> <p>Canalside 1,200dw</p> <p>Bankside Phase 2 400dw</p> <p>W. of Bretch Hill 400 dw</p> <p>NW Bicester 3,000 dw</p> <p>Rural Areas / other sites 582 dw</p>
<p>District projection 12,751</p> <p>(Banbury and Bicester combined projection 2016-2026 4,590)</p> <p>(Rural Areas projection 2016-2026 1,352)</p>	5,582	<p>Decreasing growth in towns (A)</p> <p>Delete W. of Bretch Hill allocation. Remaining allocations are:-</p> <p>Canalside 1,200dw</p> <p>Bankside Phase 2 400dw</p> <p>NW Bicester 3,000 dw</p> <p>Rural Areas / other sites 982 dw</p>
District projection 12,751		<p>Decreasing growth in towns (B)</p> <p>Retain Bretch Hill and</p>

		reduce capacity of Canalside site and/or delete Bankside phase 2
District projection 12,751		<p>Decreasing growth in towns (C)</p> <p>Retain all Banbury sites and consider reducing capacity or rate of delivery at North West Bicester.</p>
District projection 12,751		<p>Rebalance growth between towns</p> <p>Note existing commitment to growth at Bicester but is there opportunity to refine level of growth at Bicester and bring forward a reserve site?</p>
District projection 12,751		<p>Increase growth at Kidlington</p> <p>This could be balanced by:-</p> <p>Reducing/deleting an allocation in Banbury or Bicester or</p> <p>Reducing the allocation to the Rural Areas or</p> <p>Increasing the figure for the district as a whole</p>
District projection 12,751 Plus (say) 500 in Rural Areas		<p>Rebalance for growth in Rural Areas</p> <p>Increase the allocation to Rural Areas by (say) 500 dwellings to provide better match between household projections and strategy.</p> <p>The Rural Areas total would increase to 1,082 and the District total to 13,251.</p>

- 1.18 The Executive is asked, without prejudice to further work to be undertaken, to agree to progress the revisions to the Draft Core Strategy and public consultation on the basis of the first option outlined above including further work be undertaken regarding revisions to Policy RA2 (Distribution of Housing in the Rural Areas) in the Draft Core Strategy. This option incorporates all of the proposed strategic sites in the Draft Core Strategy:

Eco-Town NW Bicester 3000 dwellings - during plan period

Canalside Banbury 1200 dwellings

Bankside Phase 2 Banbury 400 dwellings

Bretch Hill Banbury 400 dwellings

This gives a total development programme on identified sites of 5000 dwellings to set against projections which show a potential need of approximately 5600. The balance (c600) would be met within the rural areas and Kidlington.

Neighbourhood planning initiatives will be encouraged in rural locations. This, combined with the expectation of acceptable planning application proposals, will deliver sufficient new village housing and ensure that there is some scope for continued rural development.

No further strategic employment land allocations are proposed other than land included in the Eco-Town proposal.

PPS Eco-Town Standards

- 1.19 Since the publication of the Draft Core Strategy the position with the Eco Town plans for N W Bicester has progressed. The Council's decision to support this development is reflected in the inclusion of NW Bicester as a location with the potential to be an Eco-Town in the PPS1 Eco Towns supplement to PPS1. The new Government has however advised that under its "localism" policy its intent is to move away from top down national planning policy. It is suggesting that all councils will need to do more to develop, justify and adopt their own policies locally. It is proposed that the Eco-Town Standards be incorporated into the LDF Core Strategy. The groundwork for this has already been laid through approval of the informal policy document that includes the Standards - "Eco Bicester – One Shared Vision" - by the Council and Oxfordshire County Council and Bicester Town Council.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.20 The Government is proposing to introduce a new type of Plan to be included in the statutory Development Plans system. This is the Neighbourhood Plan. It will take some while for these new plans to be introduced formally, but the Council has agreed to pilot the concept on a site in Banbury and Wroxton (under a Government scheme known as Neighbourhood Plan Front runners). The purpose of the new type of Plan is to allow Town and Parish Councils or community groups to promote development proposals for their area from the bottom up.
- 1.21 More details of the Neighbourhood Planning system proposals are available

on the Communities and Local Government web site (see reference in Background Documents below).

Public Consultation on the Draft Core Strategy

- 1.22 In February 2010 the Council undertook a major public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy. The results of that consultation have been assessed and taken into account in the approach set out in this report. However in many respects the consultation was overtaken by the Localism proposals from the new Government, particularly in that new options were opened up in respect of regional housing targets and development strategy. This means that the detailed comments received are best considered following the new consultation proposed in this report.
- 1.23 A summary Report on Consultation has been prepared and a draft is attached for reference and a copy has been placed in the Member's Room for reference. At this stage the 'Officer's Response' sections have not been completed but it is proposed that these be completed as work on the Revised Draft Core Strategy progresses and that that the finalised document be made available alongside the consultation on the Revised Draft Core Strategy.

Proposed Informal Public Consultation on Draft Core Strategy Revisions

- 1.24 If it accepts the principles of the revisions to the Draft Core Strategy outlined above, the Executive is asked to agree to an informal public consultation on a revised Draft Core Strategy which will include the changes set out above. A delegation to officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder will be required to complete the detailed documents needed. This will take some time, but it is intended to commence the consultation before the main summer holiday period. The consultation will be an economical postal and web based consultation building on the previous wider public consultation. This is because most of the issues subject to consultation have not changed and previous public views remain relevant. Where changes have been made they go some way to meeting expressed general public concerns about the original Draft Strategy. The main interested parties for this consultation are landowning and development interests. They must be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the changes proposed as they are directly affected.
- 1.25 This informal consultation is essential before a Draft Core Strategy can progress to the next stage of the statutory process (Submission draft that will be subject to independent public examination) because of the significant changes proposed in response to the Council's responses to Government "localism" initiatives and the proposed abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies. Particularly important in this respect is the need to undertake consultation on the revised strategy with our locally generated figure of population and household growth and projection evidence available for scrutiny.

Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.26 This document was approved by Executive at its January meeting. A linked report on this agenda explains the relationship of this document to, and its importance for LDF progress. It will be advantageous to undertake consultation on this document alongside the LDF Core Strategy revision.

Proposals

- 1.27 As described above, the next step on preparation of the LDF Core Strategy is to undertake informal public consultation on the emerging local level of growth for the district, the Development strategy outlined in response, and a number of other changes to the previous Draft Core Strategy.
- 1.28 This consultation would be combined with consultation on the previously approved Draft Planning Obligations SPD.

Conclusion

- 1.29 The preparation of the Local Development Framework is a statutory requirement. However, the Government has proposed that changes to the statutory procedures for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks will be introduced in April 2012. These changes are expected to include greater responsibility for local planning authorities in assessing their local housing needs.
- 1.30 The population and household projections set out in this report, together with the proposal to undertake public consultation on the revised development strategy as set out in a Revised Draft Core Strategy, will provide a basis for the Council to progress the Draft Core Strategy to a Proposed Submission document taking into account any changes to the plan preparation procedures.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 To agree to progress an informal public consultation on the emerging local level of growth for the district and to delegate the preparation of a Revised Draft Core Strategy and consultation material to the Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Housing..

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

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| Option One | To agree the recommendations as set out in the report. |
| Option Two | To amend the recommendations |
| Option Three | Not to agree the recommendations. |

Consultations

- | | |
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| Councillor Michael | Continuous informal briefing / steer and work via LDF |
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Gibbard

Panel

LDF Advisory Panel

Briefings in November and December 2010 and May 2011.

Implications

Financial:

Budget provision has already been made to undertake public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy. There is wider ongoing budgetary provision for the work on the LDF within the Council's wider budget planning

Comments checked by Joanne Kaye, Service Accountant, 01295 221545

Legal:

The preparation of this Revised Draft Core Strategy and subsequent public consultation is part of the ongoing public participation (regulation 25) stage of preparing the Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document under current statutory procedures. There are no direct legal implications arising from this. It should be recognised that the development strategy proposed in this report is based upon a level of housing growth that may not be in general conformity with the present Regional Spatial Strategy.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning and Litigation, 01295 221687

Risk Management:

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

Comments checked by Philip Clarke, Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, 01295 221840

Equalities

The Core Strategy will assist in delivering a number of matters in relation to equalities. The Equality Impact Assessment of the planning service highlighted the need for Development Plan Documents to consider issues of race and in particular the needs of gypsies and travellers. The Core Strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment prior to submission. The details of the Localism Bill are currently emerging and there remains some uncertainty regarding details of any final legislative changes.

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

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

A District of Opportunity
A Cleaner Greener Cherwell
A Safe and healthy Cherwell
An Accessible Value for Money Council

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Table 1 Sub-Area Projections based on Net Nil Migration scenario
Appendix 2	Draft 'Draft Core Strategy Report on Consultation' 2010
Background Papers	
Report to Executive 07 March 2011 'Population and Household Projections for Cherwell and Key Implications for the Local Development Framework'.	
http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/neighbourhoodplanningvanguards/	
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