

**Committee:** Executive

**Date:** Monday 24 May 2010

**Time:** 6.30 pm

**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

**Membership:** To be confirmed at Annual Council, 19 May 2010

**Distribution:** All Councillors

## AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

4. **Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2010.

## **Strategy and Policy**

### **6. Proposed Mollington Conservation Area (Pages 11 - 34) 6.35 pm**

\*\* The conservation area appraisal, amended following consultation, will be circulated separately with the agenda \*\*

Report of Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development

#### **Summary**

To designate a conservation area in Mollington

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To consider the representations received following consultation and the changes made to the draft conservation area appraisal and to the proposed conservation area boundary as a result
- (2) To approve the conservation area appraisal for Mollington accordingly
- (3) To designate Mollington conservation area.

## **Service Delivery and Innovation**

### **7. Bicester Market Square Highway and Environmental Improvement Scheme (Pages 35 - 42) 6.40 pm**

Report of Head of Regeneration and Estates

#### **Summary**

To confirm the Council's approval of the final design for the environmental improvement scheme of Bicester Market Square.

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve the presented final design for the Environmental Improvement Scheme of Bicester Market Square, for it to proceed to the County Council for approval.

### **8. Bicester Car Parking (Pages 43 - 52) 6.55 pm**

Report of Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services

#### **Summary**

To identify likely impact on car parks income and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) arising from the Bicester town centre and Market Square developments.

To secure approval for changes to car parking arrangements in Bicester as a consequence of these developments to ensure a balanced and viable parking strategy for the town.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note the potential effects on car parks income and the MTFs arising from the Bicester town centre and Market Square developments.
- (2) To approve the changes to car parking arrangements for Bicester as set out in the proposals section of this report.
- (3) To authorise the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural to finalise these arrangements.
- (4) To consult, subject to the agreement of the above, on these proposals with Bicester Town Council, Bicester Vision and Bicester Chamber of Commerce.

**9. Request for Approval of Funding for various Affordable Housing Schemes from CDC Capital Reserves (Pages 53 - 58) 7.05 pm**

Report of Head of Housing Services

### **Summary**

To seek approval for grant funding from the Capital Reserves for Affordable Housing for an Extra Care Housing Scheme, Cassington Road, Yarnton and to explore options for funding affordable housing at Dashwood Road Primary School site, Banbury

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve funding for the Extra Care Housing Scheme at Cassington Road, Yarnton of £200,000 from the Capital Reserves for Affordable Housing in return for nomination rights.
- (2) To agree that the request for approval of funding for the Dashwood Road Primary School site is not approved at this time and that officers be instructed to explore ways in which the level of District Council social housing grant support required might be reduced and report back as appropriate.

### **Value for Money and Performance**

**10. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update (Pages 59 - 72) 7.15 pm**

Report of Head of Finance

## **Summary**

The Medium Term Strategy (MTFS) is the Council's key financial planning document. It is driven by our Corporate Plan and the four strategic priorities which lie at the heart of it. The 2010/11 local government finance settlement represented the final year of the "fixed" three year funding regime announced in 2008/09. Due to the current economic climate and national deficit it is clear that local authorities will continue to need to plan on the basis of a very restricted financial envelope from 2011/12 onwards. This report considers 3 scenarios for funding and calculates the potential shortfalls which will need to be addressed to deliver a balanced budget.

## **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note contents of report and MTFS scenarios detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) To note the process and approximate timings of the Formula Grant Settlement and Concessionary Fares Transfer Impact
- (3) To agree that we should lobby Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with our counterparties in Oxfordshire and approach Northamptonshire for a joint approach on the financial implications of the concessionary fares transfer.
- (4) To agree that each MTFS scenario modelled will have a specific action plan developed to address the projected shortfall.
- (5) To advise of any other scenarios they would like modelled and / or matters they would like taken into consideration in developing the action plans.
- (6) To agree Timetable and process for the development of the next MTFS forecast and action plans.

## **Urgent Business**

### **11. Urgent Business**

Any other items which the Chairman has decided is urgent.

### **12. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following item contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

3– Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members are reminded that whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider each of them in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

13. **Exempt Annex for Agenda item 9** (Pages 73 - 76)

7.45 pm

**(Meeting scheduled to close at 7.50 pm)**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or (01295) 221587 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in Part 5 Section A of the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

**Personal Interest:** Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

**Prejudicial Interest:** Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact James Doble, Legal and Democratic Services [james.doble@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:james.doble@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) (01295) 221587

**Mary Harpley**  
**Chief Executive**

Published on Friday 14 May 2010

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# Agenda Item 5

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 12 April 2010 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)  
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack  
Councillor Michael Gibbard  
Councillor James Macnamara  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Nigel Morris  
Councillor D M Pickford  
Councillor Nicholas Turner

Also Present: Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Norman Bolster

Officers: Mary Harpley, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service  
Ian Davies, Strategic Director - Environment and Community  
John Hoad, Strategic Director - Planning, Housing and Economy  
Liz Howlett, Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer  
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance  
Pat Simpson, Head of Customer Service & Information Systems  
Craig Forsyth, Communications Officer  
Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

#### 124 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interest with regard to the following agenda item:

##### **9. LGPS Pension Scheme Update.**

Councillor D M Pickford, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Nigel Morris, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

125 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions. The Chairman confirmed that he had agreed a request to address the meeting from Councillor Lawrie Stratford in respect of agenda item 11, Constitution Update.

126 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

127 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

128 **Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan**

The Head of Finance submitted a report which sought approval for the procurement strategy for the council. The primary objective of the procurement strategy was to procure services that are affordable, fit for purpose, met the needs of local people and service users and provided value for money.

The Executive thanked officers for their hard work on developing the Council's Procurement Strategy in recent years and noted that the Audit Commission had also praised the Council's procurement management.

**Resolved**

(1) That the draft procurement strategy for the council be approved.

**Reasons** - The procurement strategy has been written as part of the recommendations of the National Procurement Strategy.

129 **Customer Access by Phone**

The Head of Customer Service and Information Systems submitted a report which sought approval for a new approach to using our contact centre and switchboard telephone systems to improve their resilience, make it quicker for customers to get the information they need, and improve the quality of information available to the Council about how calls are handled.



## Resolved

- (1) That the use of a short menu of options on some of the main customer contact numbers be approved.
- (2) That the use of recorded information on those lines where customer research has shown it to be helpful to the customer be approved.
- (3) That the improvement to telephony response and business continuity for customer contact brought about by these changes be noted.
- (4) That the development of a publicity campaign to help customers get the best number for their service requirements be approved.
- (5) That the use of mystery shopping to measure the completeness of service delivered at first contact by phone be approved.

**Reasons** - The centrality of the telephone to the delivery of all the Council's services means it is of paramount importance that people who use the phone get the best possible service from the contact centre advisers, and the need to be responsive in terms of getting information to customers in the case of unexpected events and emergencies.

## Options

**Option One** Divert 252535 into the contact centre as the **main** number for all council services, but also retain the "direct" lines for services. These numbers are already in wide circulation through publications and advertising, so customers who know what they need simply call the appropriate number and skip a step.

The disadvantage of this approach is that the menu options would have to be directly under 252535. This would put an immediate additional barrier between the customer and someone who can help them. It would also distort the calculation of wait and abandoned rates.

**Option Two** Another alternative is to publish 252535 as the **only** number for all council services (along with direct dial numbers to council officers) and have it answered directly by the customer service advisers. There are many disadvantages to this option. While all fully-trained customer service advisers are capable of dealing with all enquiries and transactions for those parts of the services currently transferred into their remit (except new recruits still in training) the customer benefits of the contact centre system would be lost – as would the contact management benefits – without grouping of services. For instance:

- Advisers would have no idea what subject was about to be presented and so be much slower in delivering the information or service
- We would not be able to report on call volumes for each group of services,
- We would not be able to present recorded information to

the customer with a high probability of answering their question, releasing capacity to deliver more services without needing more people

- Being able to give trainees only those calls they can deal with
- Overflow calls in times of high demand to specialists elsewhere in the council.

Advantages of this option are that we publish just one number for everything. However, given the range of numbers currently published this can also be a disadvantage.

**Option Three**

Continue as we are, reducing as speedily as possible the services that people have to use 252535 to reach, and advertising very prominently the contact centre numbers. While migrating customers away from 252535 appoint a dedicated telephone operator (it would take two to cover the whole day) to handle calls to 252535 thus leaving customer service advisers to talk solely with customers. Aim to converge 252535 with 227001 after two years.

130

**Overview and Scrutiny: Report of Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board: Partnership Scrutiny - Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board report on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

Councillor Morris presented the report.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board scrutiny review into the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council be noted.
- (2) That the following Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board recommendations regarding the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council as detailed below be agreed:

**Recommendation 1:**

That it be noted that the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is an important partnership which should continue and be regarded as critical to the delivery of the rural agenda.

**Recommendation 2:**

That a Service Level Agreement for the rural community development and community transport elements of the partnership be adopted.

**Recommendation 3:**

That an annual programme of aims/objectives (aligned to the Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Council's corporate priorities) be agreed with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and regularly reviewed and

monitored by officers, the elected Member representative from a rural ward and reported to the Portfolio Holder.

**Recommendation 4:**

That the role and involvement of elected Members (the representative from a rural ward and the Portfolio Holder) in the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council be clarified and strengthened.

**Recommendation 5:**

That the elected Member representative from a rural ward should work closely with rural community development officers and community transport officers to provide overall steer and direction for the partnership.

**Recommendation 6:**

That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2010.

131 **LGPS Pension Scheme Update**

The Head of Finance and Head of People and Improvement submitted a report which set out an overview of the current position on the funding of the pension scheme, the potential implications arising from the triennial review of the pension fund and a review of local discretions on the scheme.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be asked to provide an analysis of the financing options available to the Council once the 2010 valuation is finalised including the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (3) That the changes to local pension discretions be approved.

**Reasons** - The pension fund triennial valuation is due to be conducted in March 2010. The likelihood is that this will require an increased employer's contribution rate, which the Council will need to fund. The pension regulations require the Council to formulate, publish and keep under review its policies in respect of certain areas of the pension scheme where it may exercise its local discretion.

132 **Performance Management Framework Corporate Scorecard, Performance and Risk Reporting in 2010/11**

The Chief Executive and Corporate Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager submitted a report which introduced the Corporate Scorecard and performance reporting arrangements for 2010/11. It included the proposed format and content of the Corporate Scorecard and performance reports

through which the Council will monitor and report its priority targets around strategic priorities, service delivery and organisational performance.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the proposed scorecard, performance reports and performance monitoring arrangements for 2010/11 be agreed.
- (2) That the updated risk strategy for 2010/11 and the Risk Register comprising strategic, corporate and partnership risks for 2010/11 be adopted.

**Reasons** - The corporate scorecard and performance management arrangements for 2010/11 are robust and focus on the delivery of the corporate plan, the public pledges, the corporate improvement plan, the quality of service delivery and key strategic projects, partnership plans including the Local Area Agreement and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Options**

#### **Option One**

1. To agree the proposed scorecard, performance reports and performance monitoring arrangements for 2010/11.
2. To adopt the updated risk strategy for 2010/11 and agree the Risk Register comprising strategic, corporate and partnership risks for 2010/11.

#### **Option Two**

To identify any additional performance targets or risks to include in the corporate scorecard.

133

### **Constitution Update**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report seeking approval for amendments and updates to the Council's constitution.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford addressed the meeting.

### **Resolved**

That Council be recommended to approve the following:

- (1) That the changes to the scheme of delegation detailed in the report be approved and to delegate to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services the detailed reallocation of powers reflecting the recent review of the Extended Management Team and the retirement of the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development.
- (2) That the revised Proper Officer provisions be approved.
- (3) That the Contract Procedure Rules detailed in the report be approved.

- (4) That the revised and updated Finance Procedure Rules be approved subject to the addition of the following text at 7.1: "The Executive is responsible for agreeing procedures for carrying forward under and overspending on budget headings."

**Reasons** - The constitution needs to be kept updated so that it reflects the current structure. Powers must be exercised properly in order to minimise challenge.

**Options**

**Option One**                      To approve the recommendations as drafted

**Option Two**                      To amend the recommendations

At the conclusion of the item the Leader noted that this was the last meeting of the Executive in 2009/10 and expressed his best wishes to all Councillors in the forthcoming election.

The Leader advised Executive that this was Councillor Mallon's last meeting as a member of Executive and thanked him for his hard work and valuable contribution.

134      **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved**

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

135      **Value for Money Review of Finance**

The Chief Executive and Head of Finance submitted an exempt joint report which considered the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review of Finance and the recommendations arising from the report.

**Resolved**

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

136      **Legal Action to Recover Icelandic Deposits**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance submitted an exempt joint report which sought authority to institute and pursue legal proceedings in order to recover the financial deposits currently held in Glitnir bank and to agree to fund such legal action.

**Resolved**

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chairman:

Date:

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## Executive

### Proposed Mollington Conservation Area

24 May 2010

### Report of Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To designate a conservation area in Mollington.

This report is public

THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL, AMENDED FOLLOWING CONSULTATION, IS CIRCULATED SEPERATELY WITH THE AGENDA

#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To consider the representations received following consultation and the changes made to the draft conservation area appraisal and to the proposed conservation area boundary as a result
- (2) To approve the conservation area appraisal for Mollington accordingly
- (3) To designate Mollington conservation area.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Background

- 1.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [The Act] places a duty on local planning authorities [LPAs] to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest and to designate those areas as conservation areas. Thereafter the LPA is required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, submit these to a public meeting and have regard to views expressed.
- 1.2 There are currently 58 conservation areas designated in Cherwell District and there is an ongoing programme of review and new designations, with 26 (45%) having been designated or reviewed within the last 5 years.
- 1.3 Conservation Area designation can sometimes cause local controversy and so this Council operates a policy of not proposing designation unless this is requested by the Parish Council as representative of the wishes of local

people.

- 1.4 Mollington Parish Council requested that a conservation area be designated in the village in 2005 and work on the appraisal began in 2009, involving local people and the Parish Council in the process.
- 1.5 The draft appraisal identifies the special architectural and historic interest of Mollington, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as required by The Act. The appraisal follows a format recommended by English Heritage and assesses the geology, topography, historical development and architectural history, identifies buildings of local interest as well as those statutorily listed and other heritage assets. It includes a character analysis of the land use, street pattern, scale and massing, building age, type and style, materials, windows and doors, carriageways, vegetation, open spaces, key views, threats, features of special interest, identifies individual character areas and includes a visual analysis. It also identifies areas for preservation and enhancement. It is used in the determination of planning applications and by inspectors at appeals.
- 1.6 Mollington clings to the south west facing valley side of a tributary of the River Cherwell where the topography influences the character and settlement pattern and the geology gives rise to a high number of springs, sinks, wells, cisterns and water courses. Historically an agricultural village, originally with seven farms, it was a closed village owned by the Holbech family until 1950, when the estate was broken up. It is noticeable, and most unusual, that very little development took place in the village between the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century for this reason. Despite a relatively substantial amount of infill housing and new residential development, the original form of the village can still be discerned. The overwhelming use of local ironstone in vernacular cottages and in the few grander farm houses is now accompanied by the brick of later development. The informal village streets have soft verges and banks and others are contained by striking stone walls and vegetation. Other un-surfaced grass lanes link the different levels of the village across the contours.

### **Public consultation**

- 2.1 A keen local historian, Mr Bob Thacker, made his library of documents and photographs available for research purposes, which was very useful, and officers have met with him on a number of occasions and his assistance is gratefully acknowledged.
- 2.2 The **emerging draft document** was sent to all members of the Parish Council for comment and several comments were received and incorporated into the draft. One anonymous additional response was also received from a resident opposed designation on the grounds that there is too much poor quality modern development, there are numerous springs that cause problems, conservation had been ineffective so far (as evidenced, it was alleged, by a listed building being roofed in pantiles – re-roofed prior to listing - and an un-named listed barn being demolished to allow the construction of a house) and querying the inclusion of the allotments.
- 2.3 **Public consultation** commenced on 16 February for a period of 6 weeks.
- 2.4 The **Draft document** was made available on the Council's web site, in

Banbury Library, the Green Man PH, the Village Hall, the Parish Church and copies were given to Parish Council members to distribute to anyone who was interested. Many copies were distributed at the public exhibition and public meeting and others were sent by post on request.

**2.5 Publicity** included

- an article in the Parish newsletter, which is distributed to every household
- leaflets advising of the proposal, the draft boundary, the implications, the exhibition and meeting were distributed by the Parish Council to every household
- posters were put up by the Parish Council advertising the public exhibition and public meeting
- a media release was sent out.

**2.6 Questionnaires** were delivered to every household asking for comments on the boundary, the appraisal and any other relevant information.

**2.7 A public exhibition** was held in the Village hall in the early evening of 23 February, which was attended by over 20 people.

**2.8** This was followed by a **public meeting**, which was chaired by the chairman of the Parish Council, and attended by the local Member, the Port Folio Holder, the clerk of the Parish Council, several officers and over 60 residents. Officers made a presentation, setting out the justification for designation, the implications of designation and the consultation process, and this was followed by a questions and answer session. Questions were wide-ranging in their subject matter. Topics covered included:

- *Why the need for a conservation area, when the village was well cared for?*
- *Why the need for a conservation area when much of the village was of recent construction?*
- *The alleged lack of mandate to consider designation and the speed with this was being rushed through without consultation*
- *Designation of only part of the village would be divisive*
- *The process for carrying out works to trees and other vegetation including on the allotments*
- *Whether traffic restrictions and speed controls would result*
- *Whether the Highway Authority would undertake more sensitive works to the highway as result*
- *Whether grants would be available*
- *Whether designation would prevent development*
- *The justification for including certain areas, including Church Lane*
- *Objections to including certain areas, such as the allotments*
- *Objection to reference to the design of Chestnut Road junction, which was taken as being inflammatory.*

The debate was dominated by a handful of speakers. A couple of residents spoke in favour and one expressed concern that those in favour might feel too intimidated to speak. A vote by show of hands on the principle of designation was requested but rejected as non representative of the whole village by some speakers and the chairman. The Parish Council was then asked to hold a ballot by way of a further questionnaire specifically seeking views on the principle of designation and this was agreed to.

**2.9 A second questionnaire** was accordingly distributed to every household.

The results of this are analysed at paragraphs 3 and 4.

**2.10** The **Parish Council** held a further meeting on 23 March at which three people from nearby villages where conservation areas had been designated were invited to speak and answer questions. This meeting was attended by 34 Mollington parishioners. Following debate, the Parish Council voted unanimously to support designation. It also made specific suggestions for areas to be added or excluded and these are outlined at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2.

**2.11** The **Parish Council** held a meeting of all Mollington Councillors on 16 April, at which all confirmed support for designation. Subsequently the amendments that Officers were recommending to the proposed boundary, taking account of all the representations received, were sent to the Parish Council which advised that all Councillors confirmed agreement. One late representation objecting to the inclusion of one property as part of this recommended change was also later reported to the Parish Council, to which the response was ambivalent.

**2.12** A **petition** was received containing 148 signatures supporting the following statement:

*“We the undersigned believe that Mollington is not an area of special architectural or historic interest. We have made it a pleasant environment for both residents and visitors without help or hindrance from outside bodies and wish to continue to do so. To enable this we request that Cherwell District Council abandon their plans to create a conservation area within the village.”*

There are 395 adults on the electoral register in the parish of Mollington. The list of signatures includes several from people who have also stated they support designation and several from people who do not live in the village itself. This Council has received three complaints and the Parish Council has received five complaints about the manner in which signatures were collected. This suggests that there could be a question mark over the veracity of the process followed and the outcome. It is considered that the petition should be afforded little weight, particularly in the light of the fact that each property received a questionnaire, which enabled parishioners to respond anonymously, and comments are reported at paragraphs 3 and 4. The petition is available for inspection in the members’ room.

**2.12** Following consideration of the requests for addition or deletion, officers have undertaken further site visits and discussed issues on site with all residents who would be affected by proposed additions to the draft boundary previously circulated. The additions that are proposed to the draft boundary have, as result, been agreed with property owners who would be directly affected (with the exception of one, where a response has been invited) and also by the Chairman of the Parish Council. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting if required.

### **Consultation responses**

**3.1** **Sixty one** consultation responses were received (31 in favour of designation, 27 against and 3 a qualified maybe) from a potential 205 properties. These are reported verbatim in the table at Appendix 1 and the originals are available for inspection in the Members’ room.

- 3.2** Of the thirty one **in favour** of designation, some made suggestions as to additions or deletions from the draft boundary and these are referred to in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.
- 3.3** Of the three who were **undecided**, two considered the decision should be made by residents of the whole village or only those within the proposed boundary respectively and one would support if it helped traffic calming.
- 3.4** Of the twenty seven **against** designation, there were positive references to the potential to use designation to
- *“Reduce traffic speeding.”*
  - *“Reduce the number of HGVs travelling through the village.”*
  - *“Prevent wind farms and gipsy sites near the village”.*

Other respondents against designation expressed concern about

- *“The need, either on account of the village not being of special interest or on account of the village looking after itself”*

The Appraisal identifies those parts of the village that are of architectural and historic interest, which is the requirement of The Act and the purpose of an appraisal. Mollington is a very well cared for village, but its character and appearance is still capable of preservation and enhancement, which is the role of designation.

- *“Hindering growth and development”.*  
Members will be aware that conservation area designation does not prevent development or hinder growth, but enables the Council to seek a higher standard of design and materials.
- *“Making houses more difficult to sell”.*  
The evidence nationwide regarding house sales is that a conservation area location is seen as an asset.
- *“Listed buildings being capable of protection without designation”.*  
Whilst it is true that the legislation protecting listed buildings is stronger than that through conservation area designation, only 10 buildings within the proposed conservation area are listed. The others, even those identified as of Local Interest, are currently afforded no protection from demolition or unsympathetic works that could cause harm.
- *“Including only part of the village in the conservation area being divisive”.*  
Only those parts of the village identified as being of “special architectural or historic interest” should be considered for designation and to include the whole village would undermine the designation.
- *“Involving more bureaucracy”.*  
Whilst designation does require consent to be sought for some development for which no permission is required outside a conservation area, there is no fee for submitting these applications and the aim is to preserve or enhance the identified special character.
- *“Increasing Council tax”.*  
Members will be aware that there is no increase in Council tax levied on properties within conservation areas.

### **Suggested amendments to the boundary**

The letters in brackets refer to the map at Appendix 2 where the location of each of these areas is identified.

## 4.1 Suggested additions

- 4.1.1 Four respondents considered that the **whole village** should be included, one asked for modern development to be included to prevent alterations and one asked for the surrounding countryside to be included to prevent development:  
Whilst conservation areas are about whole areas, not individual properties, and including some areas of modern infill within the historic part of the village would be acceptable, including the entire settlement when much of it is composed of modern housing estates would devalue designation. The countryside around a conservation area is afforded by some protection by virtue of being within its setting.
- 4.1.2 One respondent asked for all **The Paddocks** (A) and two for properties on the **south of Whiteways** (B) to be included:  
Both of these would be inappropriate for the reason given above.
- 4.1.3 Three respondents asked that **1 and 2 Main Street and 1 Chestnut Road** (C) be included as frontage to Main Street:  
Whilst these properties are not of any special architectural or historic interest and inclusion of much modern development that can be excluded could devalue the designation, there is some logic in including Main Street frontage in its entirety. However, on balance, it is concluded that the existing draft boundary should be retained.
- 4.1.4 The owners of **La Mamaille** (D) and **Amare** (E) specifically sought inclusion on the grounds of historic interest and the Parish Council has also asked for the inclusion of this group and five other respondents supported the Parish Council's suggestions:  
Having visited the properties and examined old maps further, it is evident that La Mamaille and its neighbour Woodbine Cottage (F) are part of a cluster of 17<sup>th</sup> century properties, much altered and extended, but still representative of the early settlement pattern. Although Amare was constructed in 1964 and is not of interest as a building, its plot was the field in which the horses associated with the adjacent Old Bakery were kept and its garage is the former stable. This plot also forms part of the historic cluster, retaining its historic property boundaries, and is worthy of inclusion for this reason. The Old School House (G) has recently been extended and the rear curtilage also extended into what was agricultural land. It is therefore proposed that the draft boundary be extended to include La Mamaille, Amare, the extended rear garden of Old School House and Woodbine Cottage. Officers have spoken with the owners of La Mamaille, Amare and Old School House they are in agreement with the proposed revision and have written to the owners of Woodbine Cottage to canvas their opinion.
- 4.1.5 The owners of **Mansion House Farm** (H) requested that more of the curtilage to the east be included and two others supported this:  
Including the whole paddock provides a boundary more readily identifiable on the ground than the draft boundary. It is proposed that the boundary be amended accordingly.
- 4.1.6 The Parish Council asked that the premises of the **former village cooper** (I), not proposed to be included within the conservation area, be listed. Officers are collating information on this building to support a request from the Parish Council to English Heritage.

## 4.2 Suggested deletions

- 4.2.1 Two respondents sought a generally smaller boundary and two that **no modern development** be included. Others sought the removal of School Hill (J) and March House (K). The Parish Council suggests that it would be inappropriate to include post 1950 development except where it is a natural part of a more narrowly defined area.

Officers have given careful consideration to these requests. It is the conservation of areas, not individual properties that is sought, and where there is small scale infill development, such as School Hill, and individual properties within an otherwise generally historic frontage, it is difficult to exclude them from the boundary without peppering the designated area with holes, which is not good practice. March House, on the other hand, is a recently redeveloped plot right on the edge of the draft boundary and could be excluded without detriment, particularly as the features of particular value, the mature trees within the curtilage, are already protected by Tree Preservation Orders. It is recommended that March House and the intervening property 1 The Paddocks therefore be excluded.

- 4.2.2 The Parish Council suggests that **Church Lane** (L) be excluded and five other respondents supported the Parish Council's suggestion; one other respondent specifically sought the exclusion of the former Banbury RDC Council Houses (M) on Church Lane.

Whilst most of the properties on Church Lane do not exhibit any special architectural or historic interest, what sets Church Lane apart is that it is, in itself, an historic route and has sufficient interest with its boundary walls, soft verges and vegetation to retain a rural character, unlike some of the other recently constructed estate roads. The former Banbury RDC Council Houses, whilst not unique to Mollington, add to the social history. It is also difficult to exclude Church Lane without creating a hole within the designated area. On balance, officers' advice is that Church Lane should remain within the boundary and the Chairman of the Parish Council accepts this is a valid response.

- 4.2.3 The Parish Council and two respondents sought the exclusion of **the allotments** (N). This was also raised at the public meeting, possibly by the same people. Allotment holders are worried that there will be confusion as to whether they need to give advance notice of any works to vegetation within the allotment area

It is accepted that the allotments do not make a major contribution to the character or appearance of the rest of the village, being screened by dense vegetation and mature trees. Neither are they the original allotments so do not contribute to the social history as originally thought. For these reasons it is proposed to remove the allotments from the proposed conservation area.

- 4.2.4 The owner of the farm **buildings immediately north of the Parish Church** (O) requested that the farm buildings be excluded.

The original farm buildings west of the church have been converted to residential use and the farm now operates from buildings to the east, adjacent to the replacement farm house, The Yews, a dwelling of recent construction. It is accepted that there is no historic interest in the existing farm buildings, which area also of recent construction. The

visual impact of these buildings on the setting of the church could be controlled, if required, through their location within the setting of the grade 2 \* listed building and setting of the conservation area, without needing to be included within its boundary.

#### **4.3 Revised proposed boundary**

This is indicated on the plan at Appendix 3.

In summary, it is recommended that the proposed conservation area at Mollington be designated with the following additions and deletions:

**Additions:** Woodbine Cottage, La Mamaille and Amare Cottage, the extended garden of the Old School House, the rest of the paddock to the east of Mansion House Farm

**Deletions:** The allotments gardens, March House, 1 The Paddocks, the farm buildings to the north of the church.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

To designate a conservation area in Mollington

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

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Option One</b>   | Designate a conservation area in Mollington as identified in the recommendation |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | To decline to designate a conservation area in Mollington                       |
| <b>Option Three</b> | To designate a conservation area with a different boundary, as Members see fit. |

### **Consultations**

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Mollington Parish Council | Comments reported at paragraphs 3 and 4 and at Appendix 1. |
| Residents of Mollington   | Comments reported at paragraphs 3 and 4 and at Appendix 1. |

### **Implications**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Financial:</b> | There are no financial implications arising from this report as the costs of preparation and designation have been absorbed within the normal revenue budget and the Council does not operate any grant aid that would be triggered by designation.<br><br>Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant, ext 1552 |
| <b>Legal:</b>     | The Council would be failing in its duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)   |



Act 1990 if it declined to designate a conservation area where it had determined the area to have special architectural or historic interest.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Solicitor, ext 1687

**Risk Management:**

In failing to designate a conservation area, the Council would not be using all the powers at its disposal to preserve or enhance the identified special interest and could be putting this at risk

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer , ext 1566

**Wards Affected**

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Cropredy

**Corporate Plan Themes**

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Corporate Theme 6: Protect and enhance the local environment  
Corporate theme 8: Rural Focus

**Executive Portfolio**

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Councillor Michael Gibbard  
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

**Document Information**

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Consultation responses received
Appendix 2	Additions and deletions to proposed conservation area boundary suggested in public consultation
Appendix 3	Recommended changes to proposed conservation area boundary
<b>Background Papers</b>	
none	
<b>Report Author</b>	Linda Rand, Design and Conservation Team Leader
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221845 linda.rand@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

**Appendix 1  
Consultation responses received**

Please give us your comments on the proposed Conservation Area boundary	Please give us your comments on the content of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal	Please give us any information that you think would be interesting
<b>SUPPORT DESIGNATION</b>		
<p>The parish councillors' views may be summarised by saying that whilst they felt that an overstretched Cherwell Planning Department could do more and be more consistent in protecting conservation areas, a CA was a good thing in better preserving old property and the essential core even though that would mean additional cost to property owners. Grants to assist were only in theory available and Oxfordshire CC showed no respect whatsoever for a CA, meaning designation would do nothing to encourage road repair, reduced speeds and weight limits.</p> <p>A resident confirmed that a petition opposing designation of a CA would be submitted to Cherwell DC by 31st March. This has been completed but we have received four [and subsequently received another] complaints about the manner in which it was conducted.</p> <p>Mollington Parish Council's position is that we welcome the draft appraisal but recommend that the actual boundary of the CA be defined more tightly to cover the essential historical core of the village. We suggest that it would be inappropriate to include post 1950 development except where it is a natural part of that more narrowly defined area. Our proposed area would not include the allotments which are covered by the PCC, nor Church Lane for the above reasons given. Although we recognise that the former council houses are of special interest, they are not special only to Mollington. We recommend that the former workshop of the village cooper (part of Mr Wilday's property)</p>	<p>Thank you very much for the considerable time and energy that has been put into a thorough draft appraisal.</p>	

<p>should be a listed building. We would add into the CA the whole of La Marmaille including its land to the rear because of that property's age and its many trees. As a consequence Amaré Cottage would also be included as it becomes contiguous with the remaining narrower boundary. Your team will of course have its own views.</p> <p>Subject to that, whilst regretting having upset some residents by encouraging such a designation, Mollington Parish Council still supports a Conservation Area for Mollington for the many well rehearsed reasons including strengthening our arm in protecting the cultural history of the village and assisting Cherwell and this parish council in maintaining Mollington's character.</p>		
I have no problems with Conservation Area boundary.	I think the appraisal is good and I am surprised that so many people objected.	There is a disused well opposite the old school. This was cleaned out as a Millennium project. Sadly it is now overgrown. Perhaps this could be restored and made a feature of the village.
Absolutely fine	Well done on a compelling, informative and well designed draft. Congratulations to all the CDC team. Very well researched and updated.	
This looks to be well thought out and I have no problems with it at all.		
I think it's a good idea	About right	
Seems to contain most of the character of the village.	Suggests a good set of criteria for conservation in the village.	
Contains the most characterful part of the village.	Suggests reasonable grounds for including the village in a Conservation Area.	
It's acceptable	Adequate	
	Very good	
OK by me	OK	

Seems good	Good	
I feel unable to comment in any depth about the proposed boundary. I do feel however that a Conservation Area would enhance the village.		
We are in favour and support our house and land being included. We feel it would have a positive impact on the village and the area we live in .	We realise that this proposal is not very popular with some residents, especially if their property is not adjacent to or seen from a listed building. Could these properties be excluded?	
1 Chestnut Road, Hill House and adj property south of Main Street either side of the entrance to Chestnut Road should be included for completeness and control. Woodbine Cottage, La Marmaille and Amare Cottage should be excluded, do not add worth to Conservation Area. The grazing land east of Mansion House Farm should be included. Important to designate this land, adds to village setting.	Very thorough and interesting appraisal. A certain practicality has to be balanced against what is actually achievable with the Local Planning Authority and County Highways Dept. some of the comments were a little unrealistic.	
Agree with revised boundary	Excellent document, very thorough	Good to document springs and listed buildings in village
Agree with revised boundary as shown at public meeting. Conservation Area is a very good idea as it will protect the fabric of the village	Very good	Overlay on maps of springs
The boundary as displayed including the blue coloured area looked best	Contents of draft Conservation Area appraisal very good.	Boundary where it comes down to meet Whiteway from School Hill includes too many modern houses. Trees on the Green should be protected.
No specific comment		
Ok as drafted	Very detailed and balanced. Draws out various issues well. Could have been a little more direct about some of the unfortunate alterations to the village and houses within it over the last 10 – 15 years. Could also have been more specific about siting and design of solar panels.	Traffic speed something of an issue. HGVs are still common. Some attention to preservation of verges due to HGVs.

I support the idea provided that the Parish Council is given a strong democratic say in procedures.	Extensive comments provided, particularly of an historical nature.	Extensive information provided, principally about the need to be aware of the existence and importance of springs, underground cisterns and wells and to protect these.
Boundary – ok except it perhaps should include surrounding countryside in order to prevent any future building projects.	I believe that the recent modern buildings (30 years) should perhaps be included to prevent their future development, alteration, modernisation or garden landscape changes in usage.	
Support the Parish Council's suggestions regarding the Area boundary.		
Concur with Parish Council on specific areas. However as boundary has been changed a new diagram would be appropriate, on the Parish Notice Board.	Very good. Has given us a as fairly new residents better insight to the village, history, make-up etc.	
Should cover more of the village such as all of The Paddocks and March House and grounds.	The village ends at the 30 limit signs not at the village green.	
Also to include any properties with any boundary to Main Street – not just top of Orchard but also houses just to west of The Green, fronting Whiteways but backing into Main Street	It's a good draft. However insufficient consultation and small amount of time before closure for comments and further research	Some realistic examples of the effect on Conservation implementation to future planning permission requests, e.g. what effect on asking for new windows or different sized windows etc.
The proposed boundary is generally good, possible additions should be Main Street top of Chestnut Road (The Old Shop) include first 3 houses on the left past The Green (Whiteways) and the field adj. Mansion Farm	There is no information in the proposals as to how the Conservation Area is 'policed'. How the area can be used to help maintain/improve/involve the whole village so that it is not divisive	What is going on/how a Conservation Area in other similar villages has helped to improve/protect their environments.
Seems right, although I am surprised that the two houses at the end of Plough Close are included since they are the same age as the rest of that estate.	Interesting and informative: brilliant	1 and 3 North Green: no 1 cottage is 1 and 2 combined. I think this probably dates from the 1960s when the front room of no 2 was made into a garage.
In principle I have no objection to the proposal. However, if the move towards a conservation area resulted in an increase in Council tax then I would be opposed.	Adequate but lacking in information regarding possible cost implications	

<p>Boundary should not include any post 1950's buildings. Architecturally they are ugly and of little/no importance</p>	<p>The work and research is of first rate quality. Very thorough and sympathetic to the local and surrounding area. It reflects local building methods and also incorporates new techniques that could be used to alter existing properties within the Conservation Area</p>	<p>Underground springs and wells could be made more of a feature within Mollington. Overhead telephone and electrical wiring would be best disguised/hidden to further enhance Mollington. Electrical meter cupboards especially on the front of properties should be disguised.</p>
<p>We both believe that a smaller, more focused boundary would be preferable. This would exclude areas that are generally of more recent construction and concentrate on the core historical area of the village. The exclusion of more modern properties is not in any way to denigrate them, but simply a reflection of the fact that they have been built in a different style and era which is not necessarily consistent with the original ironstone properties of the village.</p> <p>We support the inclusion of our own property, in spite of the fact that the main house was only built in 1964. The land on which it sits was the field in which the Old Bakery horses were kept (for delivering bread) and our garage is their original stables. We would like to think this would be protected over time. You are welcome to view this should you ever wish to do so.</p> <p>We support the proposal as we want to protect the fabric of the village. We understand that you will be taking a balanced view of all evidence available and trust that you will not be swayed by a petition that is seriously flawed in construction and execution.</p> <p>It was clear at the meeting there was considerable misunderstanding of its purpose. We would like to make the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Although there was a lot of noise at the meeting it was by a relatively small minority who have their own agenda(s). The quality of an argument is not enhanced by the raising of voices.</li> <li>b. Unfortunately the vociferous minority appeared to overwhelm the silent majority; we can assure you, from</li> </ol>	<p>We were impressed with the quality of the Appraisal document.</p>	<p><b>Village Survey / Questionnaire</b></p> <p>Since the Public Meeting we are aware that there have been efforts to generate a "credible" opposition to the proposal through a survey / questionnaire. You should be aware of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are suggestions that those conducting the survey have not properly introduced themselves on doorsteps and allowed villagers to think that they were conducting an official survey on behalf of CDC. This point was raised at the PC meeting last night.</li> <li>2. There appears to be selection going on as to who they have asked to sign the survey i.e. not all the village have been approached. It is easy to gain what appears to be overwhelming support by only selecting those who you know to be opposed.</li> <li>3. Their manner of approach to villagers has been intimidatory, rather than an unbiased question which does not lead the respondent to any specific answer.</li> <li>4. Where villagers are unsure these people have communicate their version of the "facts" about Conservation Areas, which are, of course, both biased and incorrect.</li> </ol>

<p>conversations we had with others present, that there were some people who felt intimidated and therefore did not openly support the proposal. Please bear this in mind.</p> <p>c. The vocal minority refused to acknowledge the facts that were put before them, specifically that the village will not pay more Council Tax and that we will not be regimented and told what to do by faceless bureaucrats. We know that neither of these are true, but they are part of the campaign to discredit the proposal.</p>		
<p><b>AGAINST DESIGNATION</b></p>		
<p>Rubbish</p>	<p>This is an unbelievable waste of rate payers money. We have more than enough bureaucrats telling us what we can and cannot do with our property. You should be looking for a means to reduce our rates instead of employing another layer of officials for the rate payer to bear. Speaking as a pensioner, we will find it difficult to find the money to pay our rates as it stands without this extra burden.</p>	<p>If it would prevent wind farms and gypsy camps being built around this village it would have some purpose</p>
	<p>The justification for a Conservation Area is very limited. Pre 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings now comprise a very small proportion of the village. Within Section 8 there are no less than 17 critical observations. Not encouraging.</p>	<p>In the current economic climate, CDC should be seeking obvious economies, not the setting up of layers of bureaucracy to further control how we live. This is an exercise purely to justify the existence of members of the local planning authority and in doing so another money spinner. A district authority cash cow. I sincerely hope that a majority of Mollington residents respond to this questionnaire. The council must accept that in this instance a negative vote for justification is accepted.</p>
<p>I don't agree that there should be a Conservation Area. However if one is to be imposed on us it should be much smaller than the planned area.</p>	<p>Too extensive, too glossy and too expensive. An unnecessary PR exercise. There must be more productive ways of spending our Council tax</p>	<p>At the present time my home lies outside the proposed area so I have no axe to grind. However, we should be seeking less</p>

		bureaucratic control, especially at this time of economic crisis. I have no idea of the cost involved in producing this appraisal. Would have been better spent on renovating the roads.
Absolute nonsense. Fair enough some buildings need protecting for future, but to include all manner of modern buildings in boundary is unnecessary.	Living within the proposed Conservation Area I resent inclusion of own 1976 built property as example of site which would need to be screened off by fence or hedge as not of perceived correct character for proposed Conservation Area. How dare a photograph of my property appear on a public website	As long as any building of significant historical interest is listed that is protection enough
No Conservation Area required. Current planning regulations are appropriate.	A nice quiet village that should be left alone. Would like to stop heavy commercial vehicles not servicing the village, but who will police it? Do not want a reduced speed limit or any more silly gates. The nimby attitude in this proposal is offensive to long term residents.	Far too much legislative interventions already – natural evolution under regular planning laws should be quite sufficient.
The boundary discriminates against examples of 1960's properties against 1920's Council houses. The Council supports snobbery to enable a raising of Council taxes	This biased and ill informed document highlights examples of 1980's cobble stones as some architectural and historic importance. Village is a mixture of development for every decade in the last 100 years or so. Document only portrays in favour of the Council's wish and does not put both sides equally. The Council should not promote its point of view to increase bureaucracy and control the enjoyment of my property.	Individual properties can be listed on an individual basis not by busybodies wanting a blanket listing in order to control other people's lives and freedom.
Why should owners of properties be subject to this restriction?		This is another example of the Parish Council acting against the wishes of the village. They are backward looking.
I don't agree with the allotments being in the Conservation Area	Must have cost a considerable amount of money to prepare. We were not consulted about it, and don't agree with the Conservation Area.	



<p>I feel that these areas have a negative impact on a community as it creates divisions of a them and us.</p>	<p>If it happens, the areas that have historical value have been missed, The Holt New build areas included because they've a look of the right types.</p>	<p>I think that too much has been said about benefits. Also misinformation that car speed will be reduced. Some houses would gain a chance of listed status. Costs to have been a slight change to a person's property through gaining a planning agreement.</p>
<p>Cut and dried already</p>	<p>What benefit to me? None</p>	<p>Where were all the project managers, team leaders etc. when the gypsies moved in?</p>
<p>I see satellite dishes, velux, cars, wheelie bins etc and ugly down pipes, rendering and unattractive 70's windows. Nothing left from the days of damp, thatched with little or no sanitation. What is there to preserve here? Your scheme to impose a subjective discipline is far too little and far too late. How do you decide which periods of architectural aesthetic you wish to retain?</p>	<p>Apparently it is only the frontage of buildings that are of interest to you, while style atrocities performed away from the public gaze are of no concern. Who exactly is this proposal attempting to gratify? Those who feel the designation offers them some sort of elitist cache or the random passerby with refined sensibilities? I am reliably advised that the majority of residents who attended the meeting were against it.</p>	<p>The implementation of this inappropriate and divisive scheme is obviously a foregone conclusion and therefore in my opinion an infringement of personal liberties.</p>
<p>Boundary encompasses listed properties but in doing so involves areas where there are houses/bungalows which have no historical value. This may not mean much to the 'expert' but is of considerable concern when general planning enquiries are sought. No reason to include the allotments, March House, Church Farm, the Council houses and houses opposite. Just another layer of beurocracy.</p> <p>Separate letter received as follows: I disagree with the proposal in its entirety. However, should the proposal go ahead I believe I have the opportunity to put forward any objections to inclusions that directly affect my property and business. I would like 2 areas removed from the conservation area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my buildings which lie north of Mollington Church and are general purpose agricultural buildings in use for farming activities and are not of any historical interest</li> </ul>	<p>I feel this has already been decided and is just a paper exercise. The appraisal which no doubt has cost the taxpayer an awful lot of money has only just come to light and majority of villagers would be unaware that this was instigated in 2005. The report is drawn up by 'experts' full of ill thought and observations without the local knowledge as to why areas have developed in certain ways, i.e. Pg 43 garage fronts over exposed suggested enclosure – designed this way for different tenants car access. Pg 43 advise hedge to be planted north of Church to screen farm buildings. Pg 40 loss of frontage to highway. This occurred to allow safe visibility out of Lower Farm House. These examples are just a few of the ill informed comments that are made from outsiders who 'think' they know best.</p>	<p>I feel a village should breathe and encapsulating parts of it will only deliver more bureaucracy. I strongly project to this conservation area and the manner I which it has been served.</p>

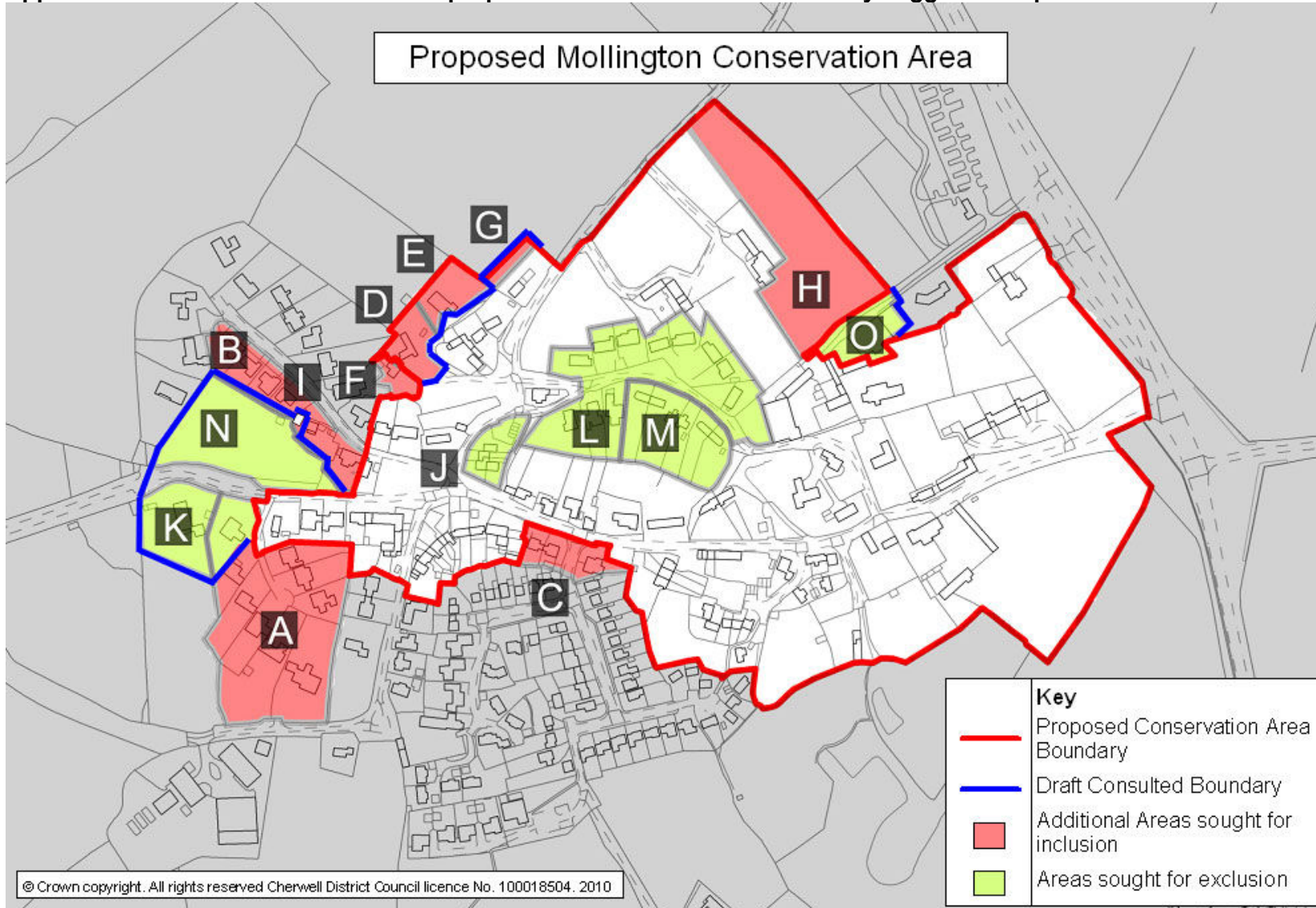
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my driveway, which is totally unnecessary and should be along the Old Vicarage garden boundary. I believe the conservation proposals will infringe on future decisions for repair and rebuild.</li> <li>• Regarding areas in the village, an easy line has been drawn around historical properties, already listed and protected, which include modern houses; this is ludicrous as it condemns these householders to unnecessary restraining conditions they are naively unaware of.</li> </ul>		
<p>No advantage to the village not covered in planning already. It puts more obstacles in the way of change with no advantage except to protect the buildings 'of interest'.</p>	<p>Interesting document good overview of village throughout and well produced.</p>	<p>All there</p>
<p>No specific comments provided</p>		
<p>Boundary being selection negates the whole exercise, whole village should have been included.</p>	<p>Content and detail was well done and well constructed. However, in this current economic climate money spent could be better employed elsewhere.</p> <p>Central Government agenda has prompted our Parish Council Chairman via Cherwell to investigate and initiate this appraisal, an unwelcome level of beurocracy.</p>	<p>A Conservation Area to anyone unfamiliar to what a CA means has a fear of restrictive practices, controls and Council interventions, resulting in possible house buyers failing to pursue a prospective purchase. This unfamiliarity cannot be avoided therefore is detrimental to property negotiations.</p>
<p>Why does the boundary exclude most of the Whiteway houses and yet does include the houses in Orchard Piece? Likewise why are some of the bungalows in The Paddocks excluded and the houses in Lower Farm lane? How was the boundary decided and by whom. My house is within the boundary, but I was not approached by anyone, asking if I wanted to be included or excluded? It was just taken for granted.</p>	<p>The content of the Conservation Area draft Appraisal was very good. Photographs were excellent and the brief history of the village was interesting. I shall keep the brochure as a "keepsake" of Mollington village. An excellent presentation.</p>	<p>I am opposed to Mollington becoming a conservation area for the following reasons:</p> <p>I think home owners keep their gardens very well tended. The parish council are conscientious and keep a very close eye on all matters relating to the general upkeep of the village. Cherwell District Council have very strict planning restrictions. Is there a snob value to a village being within a conservation area? Why is the whole of the village not designated a</p>

		<p>conservation area?</p> <p>There was some talk at the meeting of the new estate. This estate provided affordable housing and many of the children on the estate attended the village school which was excellent. In my opinion the estate did not spoil Mollington village.</p>
I attended the meeting. I am opposed to the introduction of a Conservation Area.	Good	
		I believe that it is vital for buildings of historic interest to be retained as much as is reasonably possible, just as it is to retain the green belt around the village. After much discussion with people who live in conservation areas I have come to the conclusion that the buildings can be protected if they are listed. The conservation area therefore would appear to be an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy and cost.
	The author of this document seems to have a different way of looking at architecture than most normal people. They have set out to produce a picture of the village that is far from reality.	Mollington is not a village that needs any further protection and is not what would normally be considered to be of special architectural interest. The proposal has generated great anger amongst the residents, many of whom are prepared to go to great lengths to fight it. It is unneeded and unwelcome. Please leave us alone.
No specific comment		
I do not agree that parts of Mollington should become a conservation area: The Parish Council did not take any views from the residents before asking Cherwell for an appraisal. Having parts of the village in a conservation area and the majority of the residents out of the area will make Mollington	The appraisal was very thorough and professionally done.	Since the 1960's there has been considerable inappropriate construction with regard to design and the materials used. All approved by Cherwell District Council, who at the time did not take into account the local design of buildings and the ironstone which is

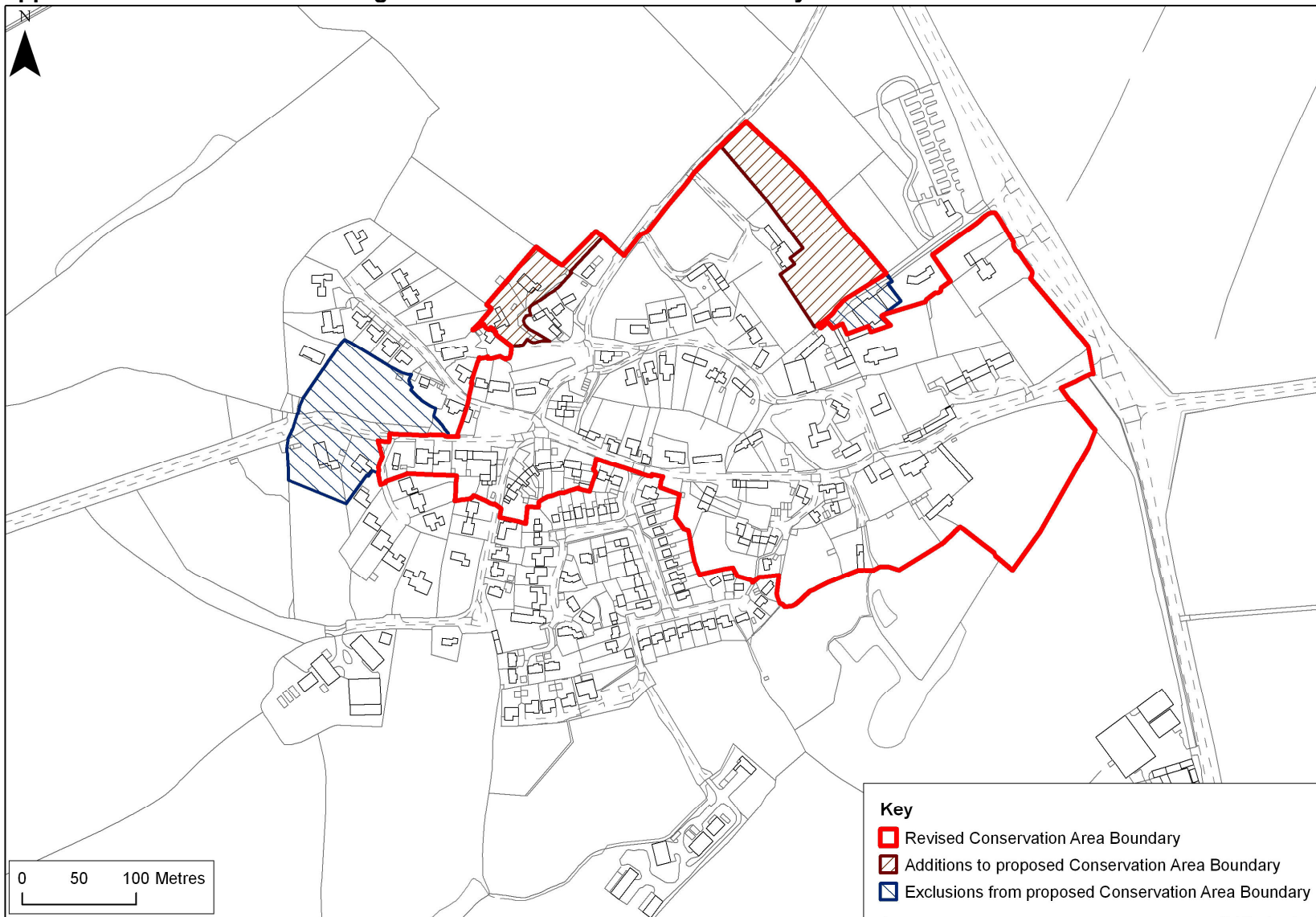
<p>a divisive village. If Cherwell are minded to proceed with this then the whole village should be included.</p>		<p>commonplace. We now have a village that is of mixed design/construction and has lost its original concept of cottage style, ironstone, linear style buildings.</p> <p>I believe that we already have in place enough control, by way of Cherwell Planning and English Heritage, to enable them to keep Mollington as it is.</p>
<p>Far too extensive and divisive for a small community</p>	<p>Very selective in the areas it comments on. Exposed garages are nothing compared to the huge house recently built and totally dominates the area. As a resident of Chestnut Road I find the language used offensive. These are people's homes.</p>	<p>In 4 years living here in 2 different properties there has always been an acceptance of different lifestyles. This proposal has generated ill-feeling which seems a pity as this is a very small village and certainly will not benefit from any divisions</p>
<p>If approved the boundary should include the whole village</p>	<p>The appraisal is comprehensive and well set out but I feel existing planning regulations are adequate for the village</p>	
<p>Listed buildings are already protected. Enough planning hoops to jump through.</p>	<p>Good document. Interesting facts. Captured feel of the village and pulled together lots of information.</p>	
<p>I now understand that there is a revised proposal from the Parish Council. I oppose both. If there were to be a conservation area the whole village should be included.</p>	<p>Having been given the mandate by both the parish Council and the Cherwell Councils the team have produced a fair and balanced document. Obviously there are some mistakes which I am sure others have covered.</p>	<p>The Parish Council have acted without the mandate of the village in requesting a CA. However, I accept they are our elected representatives and as such are empowered and must take responsibility for their decisions. I have 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A village is a community that needs to grow organically to survive and provide the services that we as villagers require. Any legislation that potentially hinders that is unacceptable. Legislation = barriers to overcome = cost = exclusivity.</li> </ul> <p>Should the decision be made to designate, this should be the whole village. This village is not</p>

		just one or two groups of houses that should be preserved. We heard at the open meeting that it is also roads, road edges, walls etc, this means the whole village.
Not necessary. The whole village is maintained to a high standard and has been so for many years.	This is very thorough but an unnecessary expense.	
<p>I do not agree because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having only parts of it in the CA will make Mollington a divisive village, despite what was said at the meeting. If Cherwell are minded to proceed then the whole village should be included.</li> <li>- Since the 1960s there has been considerable inappropriate construction with regard to design and materials used. All approved by Cherwell, who at the time did not take into account the local design and ironstone which is commonplace. We now have a village that is of mixed design / construction and has lost its original concept of cottage style, ironstone, linear style buildings.</li> <li>- I believe we already have in place enough control by way of Cherwell Planning and English heritage to enable them to keep Mollington as it is.</li> </ul> <p>It was a shock to me that the appraisal had got so far down the line without any input from the residents.</p>	The appraisal was very thorough and professionally done.	
<b>UNDECIDED</b>		
Acceptable only if overwhelming proportion of those living within the proposed Conservation Areas are in agreement	Very good and informative	
Only if it helps traffic calming		
It is unacceptable to show amended area boundary to a proposed area for Conservation so late in the appraisal time frame.	Comprehensive	Each villager will have a chance to vote for or against the proposal. This is a democratic way for decision making.

Appendix 2: Additions and deletions to proposed conservation area boundary suggested in public consultation



### Appendix 3: Recommended changes to the conservation area boundary



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## Executive

### Bicester Market Square Highway and Environmental Improvement Scheme

24 May 2010

#### Report of Head of Regeneration and Estates

##### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To confirm the Council's approval of the final design for the environmental Improvement Scheme of Bicester Market Square.

This report is public
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##### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve the presented final design for the Environmental Improvement Scheme of Bicester Market Square, for it to proceed to the County Council for approval.

##### Executive Summary

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###### Introduction

- 1.1 The environmental improvements of Bicester Market Square has been a project that this Council has been involved with for some time. The scheme is now a joint financial collaboration between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council. The Executive resolution of September 2009 approved three design options to go to public consultation in November 2009. This report now seeks the approval of the Council to the final design. This is a scheme created as a result of the consultation event in November and the public feedback on the original three options.

###### Proposals

- 1.2 That the final scheme be approved by the Council, and that it to proceed to the County Council for their approval.

##### Background Information

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- 1.3 The County Council are project managing the scheme but with Cherwell District Council providing specialist advice on urban design issues. The project board for the scheme is made up of; Town, District and County Council members, County Council officers, Cherwell District Council officers, representatives from Bicester Vision, and until April 2010 Jacobs, the OCC consulting engineers.
- 1.4 Further background to the project was set out in the Executive report of 7 September 2009.

### **Public Consultation**

- 1.5 On 27-29 November 2009 the three options for the Square went out to public consultation as part of the feasibility stage. An exhibition was held in Bicester town centre where the plans could be viewed and comments given. Overall, just fewer than 1000 people attended the public exhibition. Of these, 355 completed questionnaires either at the exhibition or online by the 18 December 2009. Attached is a 9 page document summarising the responses.
- 1.6 The final question of the feedback form asked which of the three options presented would they like to see progressed. Of the 355 respondents:
- 10% (36) preferred Option A,
  - 24% (84) preferred Option B,
  - 51% (176) favoured Option C,
  - 2% (7) preferred a combination of Option A and Option B,
  - 5% (18) preferred a combination of Option B and Option C, and
  - 1% (4) preferred a combination of Option A and Option C.

Option C therefore was the clear preferred option to progress. This was given formal approval by the project board in January 2010, subject to some minor changes. The final scheme presented with this report has therefore been modified to take into account these requested changes, suggested as a result of feedback from the public consultation.

### **Taxi Survey**

- 1.7 As part of these revisions there were concerns expressed that the number of taxi spaces allocated as part of the scheme in Option C were too few. Option C showed 4 spaces compared to the 9 currently provided. In March 2010 a taxi survey was therefore undertaken to inform the Project Board how many taxi rank spaces should be provided as part of the Market Square Scheme. This was done on a Friday and Saturday on consecutive weekends 10am-3am. The surveys measured:-
- i) at snapshots in time, each separated by a period of 15 minutes, the number of taxis waiting for fares.
  - ii) During each 15 minute period the numbers of taxis departing with fares.
- 1.8 The findings showing the numbers of taxis waiting at the rank at any particular time is the most informative for the purpose of designing a new

rank. Although probably suppressed due to the constraints of the existing rank space these show a maximum of 14 waiting at the rank with an evening average of 7.1 on Saturday (the busiest day).

- 1.9 On the assumption that the general demand at Market Square will not materially change as a result of the changes to Bicester's retail environment (it has been assumed the new town centre development would put demand on the northern end of the town for taxis numbers) the survey resulted in a conclusion that 10 rank spaces should be provided. This will cater for about 50% above average demand. (A balance has inevitably to be struck in a public urban space where there are several competing demands. It is not feasible to accommodate peak demand without compromising other uses).
- 1.10 At the time of writing this report the project board have yet to formally approve the revisions to the scheme. However they have been kept informed of discussions taking place about the minor amendments that would be made. Therefore the final scheme should come to them as expected. A plan of the scheme is attached.

### **Final Scheme**

- 1.11 The final scheme will provide for two way traffic on the south side of the Market Square. In parallel with Option C it will also remove all parking from Market Square. Market Hill is now available for 11 taxis and 3 blue badge holder spaces only, there is no non-blue badge holder parking. This has been designed to reduce the traffic movement at, what could be a busy corner junction adjacent to the Kings Arms Public House. The final scheme now means only limited vehicles can access Market Hill and this would be clearly signed. No non-blue badge holders would need to drive into this area to try and find a space as there would not be any provided. There will however, be provision for 10, time limited, on street parking spaces adjacent to London Road, which are anticipated to be free of charge (although later consideration may be given to on street pay and display after any introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement) .

### **Parking and Financial Implications**

- 1.12 The six spaces on the north side of London Road are currently located within land owned by Cherwell District Council, which is not part of the public highway, and could be operated as pay and display spaces. However, it is likely to be confusing to the public if charges are levied for the use of these spaces, as the four spaces on the southern side of London Road will be on highway land and therefore free of charge. Consequently it is proposed that the spaces within the Cherwell District Council's ownership are also dedicated as highway land. This will make the parking standardised and easier for the public to use.
- 1.13 The principal issue for this Council to consider is the impact on its land comprising the Market Square car park, the loss of public car parking and associated income. 33 spaces will be lost with potential effects on income of £80,000-£90,000 per annum. Some of the lost income from the car park will be displaced to other Cherwell District Council operated car parks within Bicester town centre. However at this time a figure cannot be accurately accounted for, as it is difficult to estimate what this will be once the new town centre development is completed. However it is hoped the new development

will encourage greater activity levels within Bicester town centre which will in turn increase the use of the Council operated car parks. This displacement of car parking however also needs to be weighed against the environmental and wider economic benefits of the scheme. It is also necessary to bear in mind that this scheme will not be built until the new public car park which forms part of the town centre redevelopment has been brought into use.

- 1.14 In addition to the parking implications, there will be new paving, new crossing points and a more aesthetically pleasing environment to include new street furniture, public art and some landscape features. There will be a large public civic space available for on street seating, as well as events and exhibitions, linking well with Sheep Street and Crown Walk, both of which are pedestrianised. Provision would also be made for loading and unloading via a restricted access route within the pedestrianised area. The restricted access route will be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order and will be available for loading and unloading outside a core period time. This core period has yet to be confirmed but it is proposed to be the same as Sheep Street. However this limited access route will be available at any time for licensed postal operators and emergency vehicles. There would be provision for **24** parking spaces in total; 10 on street limited waiting, 3 disabled, plus 11 taxi spaces. This comprises a reduction of 33 public parking spaces and an increase of two taxi spaces
- 1.15 The final design for the Market Hill area of the scheme is however yet to be confirmed. There will be a minimum of 9 taxi spaces, but small changes may still be made to the number of blue badge holder spaces (minimum will be 3) and a choice will be made about whether to include a loading bay in Market Hill, at the expense of two taxi spaces.
- 1.16 Once this final scheme is agreed, detailed design will be carried out. When detailed proposals have been prepared, there will be further public consultation. This will concern only detailing and not the principle of the scheme. The amendments to traffic and parking orders outlined above will be covered by this second round of consultation.
- 1.17 The date for works to physically commence on site is scheduled to follow on from the completion of the town centre redevelopment works, which will be approximately January 2012. The Market Square development will work subsequently to these works to avoid any highway infrastructure works relating to the town centre scheme.
- 1.18 This final scheme removes Cherwell District Council public off street car parking in both Market Square and Market Hill entirely. This will result in a reduction in car parking income for the Council. There is some on street parking adjacent to London Road but this is anticipated to be free, time limited, parking. A separate report on the wider implications and proposals for the future of pay and display parking is included elsewhere on this agenda.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 2.1 The three proposed options presented to the Committee in September 2009 have now gone through a public consultation process and this final scheme is as a direct result of this feedback.

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

**Option One** Approve the final scheme for it to proceed to the County Council for approval.

**Option Two** Reject the scheme. However this may result in a delay to the scheme moving forward, if a new option is drafted or changes made to the other options in light of any comments.

## Implications

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**Financial:** The matters set out in this report do not affect the capital budget of £250,000 set aside for this project. The loss of off-street car parking spaces administered by the Council will result in lost income. To some extent this may be reduced if the parking is displaced to other Council operated car parks. When this scheme is built, and in the light of other changes to the distribution and management of parking resulting from the town centre redevelopment, it will be appropriate to review the structure of car park charges generally. This may mitigate any reduction in the Council's income. However, disregarding these effects, the estimated reduction in car park income arising as a result of this scheme is £88,154 per annum. (based on 2009/10 car park income figures). Any loss of car park income will need to be considered as part of the 2012/13 Revenue Estimates

Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant 01295 221552

**Legal:** As this scheme is being undertaken by OCC, it will not be necessary for there to be any agency powers granted to this Council. It will be necessary to seek an indemnity from OCC relating to the works which they are to carry out on the Council's land, and an agreement relating to the future on-street parking income.

Comments checked by Malcolm Saunders, Senior Legal Assistant 01295 221692

**Risk Management:** If the Council does not agree to the proposed final scheme, there is a significant risk that this will delay the project as new options or amendments to options are sought.

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

**Urban and Rural Services** The revised scheme design takes account of the consultation concerns around provision and extension of taxi rank space.

More detail will be required in connection with

landscaping, floral displays and street furniture and there will be revenue implications for this considerably enlarged public space.

Consideration also needs to be given to CCTV and whether further units are required.

The most significant change is with the total removal of paid for parking and the financial effects of this.

Comments checked by Chris Rothwell, Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services 01295 221712

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**Wards Affected**

All wards in Bicester

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**Corporate Plan Themes**

A District of Opportunity

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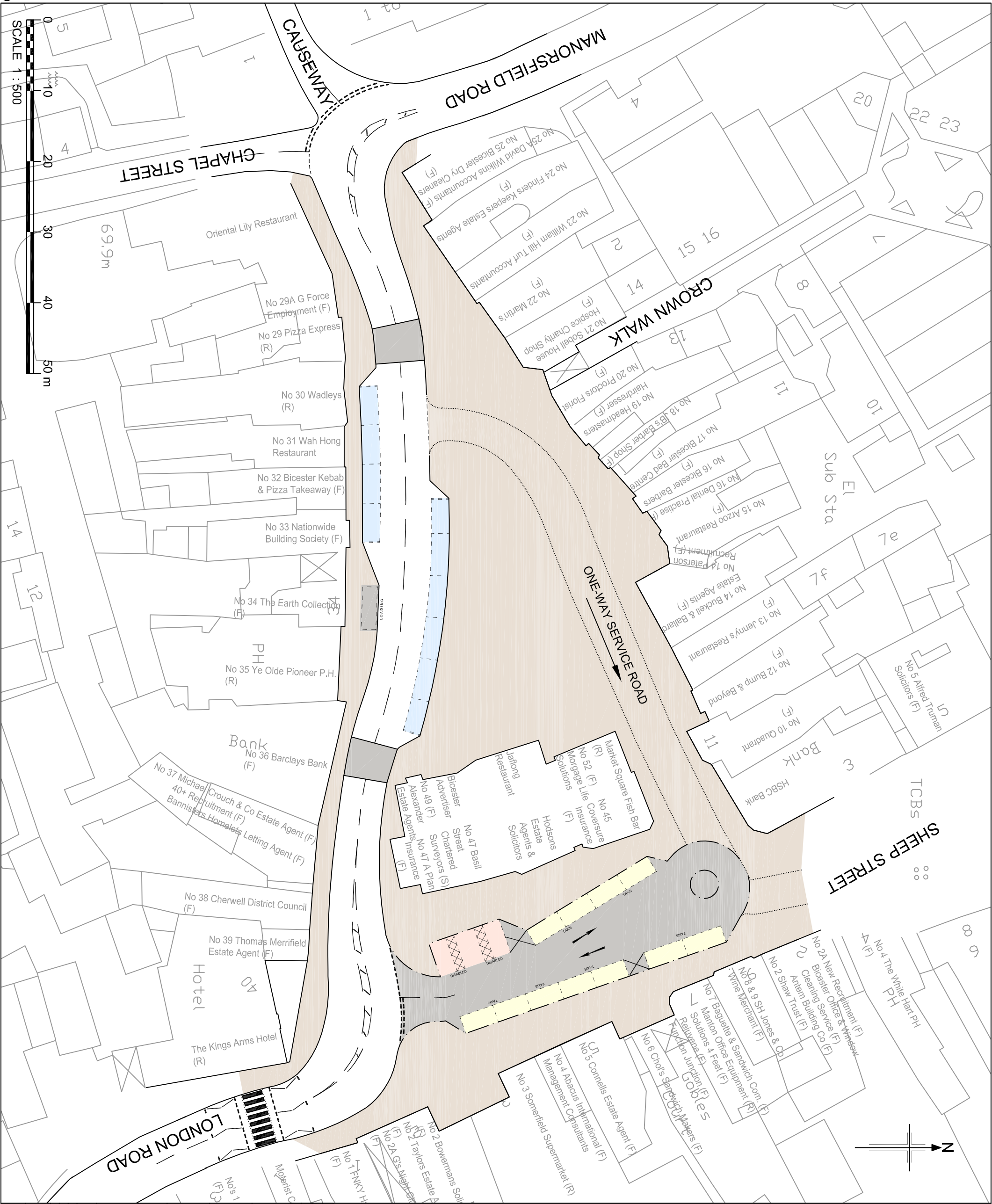
**Executive Portfolio**

**Councillor Norman Bolster**  
Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Estates

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**Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Lisa Chaney, Urban Centres Development Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221843 lisa.chaney@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk



**KEY:**

- Flush Pedestrian Crossing Points / Shared surface carriageway / Loading Spaces
- Footway / Public Open Space
- Public Parking Space (Disabled)
- On-carriageway Parking
- Taxi Rank
- Indicative outline of proposed one-way service road integrated within new public open space
- Indicative outline of proposed shared surface carriageway

**NOTES:**

- Design based on topographical survey undertaken in Jan 2001

**PARKING SPACES**

**Proposed:**

- Taxi rank = 11
- Limited stay (30min) = 10
- Disabled = 3
- Pay & Display = 0

**Existing:**

- Taxi rank = 9
- Limited stay (30min) = 13
- Disabled = 2
- Pay & Display = 33
- Single yellow line = 14

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Rev	Rev. Date	Rev. Description	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1	19 Apr 10	Final Scheme Layout	EA	PJE	EA
2	20 Apr 10	Final Scheme Layout	EA	PJE	EA
3	26 Feb 10	Final Scheme Layout	SAC	PJE	EA

Client: **JACOBS** Oxfordshire Highways Improving Your Roads

Project: Bicester Market Square Environmental & Pedestrian Improvements

Drawing title: **Final Scheme Layout**

Scale: 1:500 @ A3 DO NOT SCALE

Client No: B1175100

Drawing number: B1175100/EA/000/018

Rev: 2

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## Executive

### Bicester Car Parking

24 May 2010

### Report of Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To identify likely impact on car parks income and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) arising from the Bicester town centre and Market Square developments.

To secure approval for changes to car parking arrangements in Bicester as a consequence of these developments to ensure a balanced and viable parking strategy for the town.

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note the potential effects on car parks income and the MTFS arising from the Bicester town centre and Market Square developments.
- (2) To approve the changes to car parking arrangements for Bicester as set out in the proposals section of this report.
- (3) To authorise the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural to finalise these arrangements.
- (4) To consult, subject to the agreement of the above, on these proposals with Bicester Town Council, Bicester Vision and Bicester Chamber of Commerce.

#### Executive Summary

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- 1.1 There are significant developments planned for Bicester that will have major impact on current car parking arrangements and parking capacity with a total estimated reduction in Council operated pay and display parking spaces of 230 (31%) by 2012. These changes to Bicester town centre require a review of the arrangements currently in place across the Council operated car

parks.

- 1.2 Based on a number of assumptions and sensitivities set out in this report, the effects on the MTFS in 2012/13 could be a reduction in the income from car parks ranging from £5,478 to £307,278. However, there is compensatory rental income from the new shops and commercial premise projected to generate £100,000 in 2012/13 and a further £250,000 per annum in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The annual income is expected to be £600,000 once the scheme is fully let.
- 1.3 This report proposes changes to the parking arrangements in order to provide publicly accessible parking for residents, visitors and town centre workers; minimise the adverse effects on the MTFS; and maximise parking provision and revenue generated whilst remaining competitively priced. It seeks to introduce changes to car park arrangements on completion of the Cattle Market car park extension in order to start impacting on current car park user patterns ahead of the main developments and prior to the opening of the new privately operated parking.
- 1.4 The proposals include promoting the extended Cattle Market car park as the only long stay car park for Bicester and introducing revised short stay tariffs at other car parks. One consequence of this would be that season ticket holders would only be able to park in the Cattle Market whereas currently they can use any long stay car park.

## Background Information

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- 1.5 **Bicester Developments:** The developments that will affect car parking are:
- Bicester Market Square- proposed removal of all current paid for parking
  - Bicester town centre redevelopment-loss of 263 Council operated short stay pay and display spaces at Crown/Crown Walk; and loss of 85 long stay Council operated pay and display spaces at Franklins Yard.
  - The new Sainsbury's development will be operating a 560 space short stay car park from April 2012 (on current plan).
  - The Cattle Market long stay car park is due to be extended prior to the main works starting and will increase capacity from 117 plus 8 disabled, to 270 plus 8 disabled spaces providing an additional capacity for 153 parking places. This car park is currently very under used.
  - Chapel Street is due to close as part of a land exchange with Sanctuary Housing as part of the Bryan House development. An extension to Chapel Brook is part of the deal with a net loss of 2 parking spaces.
- 1.6 **Financial Effects:** As a consequence of the above, by the start of the 2012/13 financial year there will be an estimated reduction in Council operated pay and display spaces of 230 (31%) and 20 disabled parking spaces. It is expected that there will be displacement to remaining Council car parks but also significant loss of short stay usage to the new privately operated Sainsbury's car park. Long stay parking will not be permitted in this car park. The commercial terms with Sainsbury's require that they price parking as short stay in line with the Council's charges (but not necessarily the same).
- 1.7 These changes could result in significant reduction in revenue generated from both pay and display parking and in Excess Charge Notice (ECN) income. On current development plans this is projected to have an impact from 2012/13.
- 1.8 Based on a number of assumptions/projections as set out in this report, income from car park receipts in 2012/13 could reduce by up to £271,047 and income from ECN's could reduce by up to £36,231.
- 1.9 **Other Considerations:** In planning revised parking arrangements and in determining the affects on the MTFS of these developments, the following should also be considered:
- Increases in demand for long stay provision arising from additional shop/office staff after completion of the Town Centre development.
  - Loss of c 50 private car parking spaces around Bure Place (likely to be being used as long stay) arising from the Sainsbury's development with displacement into other 'public' car parks.
  - Potential displacement of commuter parking into residential roads
  - Civil Parking Enforcement (it has not been possible to factor CPE in to the assumptions used in this report).

- 1.10 **Financial Assumptions:** In determining the affects on the MTFS it has been assumed that fees and charges are at the 2010/11 levels.
- 1.11 It has also been assumed that the budgeted levels of income set in the MTFS from 2010/11 to 2012/13 are achievable. In 2009/10 income from car parks underachieved against budget by £300,000 due to adverse economic climate and poor weather resulting in car park closures. However, ECN's levels achieved £157,868 in excess of the budget.
- 1.12 While developments will affect car parks earlier then 2012, there will only be Council car parks operating in Bicester until the opening of the new Sainsbury's car park, assumed to be in April 2012 and therefore the assumption has been used in 2010/11 and 2011/12 that existing users will be displaced into Council car parks and there will be little if any effect on the MTFS.
- 1.13 If developments are carried out as currently programmed the first impact on the MTFS is projected to see a reduction in car parks income of £10,000 in the fourth quarter of 2011/12 (when the Market Square works commence). This car park is ultra short stay and attracts a higher premium of £1.10/hour. Users will be displaced into other short stay car parks paying the £0.60/hour pay and display fee.
- 1.14 From 2012/13, the financial effects are less clear and a range of scenarios have been modelled to try and forecast the likely effects on the MTFS. These are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. In summary these scenarios are based on the following additional assumptions:
- Scenario 1: That current occupancy level of Council car parks is maintained but with a reduction of available parking spaces this represents a 31% reduction in income and is assumed to be the worst case resulting in a total loss of income and ECN revenue of £307,278.
  - Scenario 2: That there will be a 10% increase in occupancy of Council car parks arising out of displacement from the development works of c 50 privately available long stay places. This projects a lower reduction in income of £240,211.
  - Scenario 3: That in addition to 2 above there will also be a 25% increase in occupancy arising from displacement of current users into remaining Council car park spaces. This projects a lower reduction in income of £72,544.
  - Scenario 4: That in addition to 3 above there will also be a 10% increase in occupancy arising out of new users of Council car parks which could be visitors to Bicester or new employees. This projects a lower reduction in income of £5,478.
- 1.15 **Long stay user survey:** A review has been undertaken of current arrangements in Council operated car parks and a survey of long stay usage undertaken across all Bicester pay and display car parks to provide some information to guide future requirements.
- 1.16 The long stay survey, carried out over the duration of one week in March 2010, identified that long stay users (season tickets and all day pay and display tickets) ranged from 59 to 83 per day. An average figure was 75 per day. This does not take account of the likely effect of the Town centre development increasing the number of long stay required from new shop workers, nor does it take account of the loss of c

50 private parking spaces.

- 1.17 Should the Council decide to implement Civil Parking Enforcement, this is also likely to result in increased demand for parking as commuters used to parking in residential streets may well be displaced into car parks should limited waiting restrictions and/or on-street charging be introduced.
- 1.18 **Review Principles:** As a consequence of these changes and from the assessments and possible future developments, this review has adopted the following principles:
- Seek to displace long stay parking to the extended Cattle Market (which will provide 270 spaces) as soon as practicable after the extension is completed.
  - Chapel Street retained as long stay until the Bryan House development but operated on a cashless basis for season tickets and/or ring-go only to reduce operating costs.
  - Season ticket holders to continue only to be able to park in long stay car parks, and consequently a much more limited choice of season ticket parking than currently available in order to promote the remaining car parks closer to the town centre shops as short stay.
  - Revise short stay tariff from the current maximum stay of 2 hours to a maximum stay of 3 hours.
  - Provide short stay parking closest to the town centre to provide customer choice and competition to the new Sainsbury's car parking.
- 1.19 These changes will require consultation through advertising Car Park Orders, a legal process that will incur costs. There will also be need to amend highways direction signage, notice boards and ticket machines. Ideally fees and charges should be considered at the same time as introducing these changes so that updating of car parking information can be undertaken at the same time. A report on these is planned later this year. It is estimated that these requirements could cost £10,000-£15,000.

## Proposals

Car Park	Current Tariff (hours)	Current capacity + disabled	Proposed capacity	Proposals
Market Square	1	33 +2	No pay and display parking, subject to Executive decision -24 May 2010	CLOSED
Crown Walk	2	65 +10	0	CLOSED
Crown	2	198 +10	0	CLOSED
Victoria Road	24	28	28	Change to Short Stay 3 hours
Claremont	24	164 +9	164 +9	Change to Short Stay 3 hours *1 *2

<b>Chapel Street</b>	24	14	12	No Change 24 hours.  Cashless parking only (i.e. Ring-go or Season Ticket)  Then closes on completion of Chapel Brook extension in conjunction with Sanctuary Housing.
<b>Chapel Brook</b>	24	28 +1	40	Change to Short Stay 3 hours
<b>Franklins Yard</b>	24	85	Temporary reconfiguration to 94. Then 75 Then 0	Initially Short Stay 3 hours  Then CLOSED
<b>Cattle Market</b>	24	117 + 8	c270 + 8	No Change 24 hours

\*1: Lease of part of the car park which runs out 31 March 2019 with option to renew for further 40 years at open market rental. We currently pay nominal rent.

\*2: Lease requires 7 Annual Season tickets (Mon-Fri) to be issued to West Norfolk Tomatoes (an investment company).

## Conclusion

Major developments in Bicester town centre and changes to car parking arrangements requires a review of the way the Council operates and delivers its parking services in order to maximise income, minimise the adverse affects on the MTFs, and to provide an effective parking strategy for the town.

## Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 The potential reduction in car parks income and the compensating commercial return from the Sainsbury's development.
- 3.2 The scenarios used in projecting the potential effects on the MTFs and projected changes to usage patterns
- 3.3 The concentration of long stay parking in the extended Cattle Market car park.
- 3.4 The increase in length of stay for short stay parking from 2 hours to 3 hours.
- 3.5 The need to review fees and charges at the earliest opportunity and introduce any changes as part of this strategy.

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

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Option One</b>   | Do nothing to amend the parking arrangements as a consequence of town centre works.   |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | Provide public pay and display parking on a different basis to that proposed in this report in all or some of the car parks |
| <b>Option Three</b> | Adopt the proposals set out in this report.   |

### **Consultations**

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- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>   | Oxfordshire County Council are lead on the Market Square project                     |
| <b>Bicester Town Council</b>        | The Town Council have been consulted on the town centre and Market Square proposals. |
| <b>Bicester Chamber of Commerce</b> | Final details will be considered with the Chamber of Commerce.                       |
| <b>Bicester Vision</b>              | Final details will be considered with Bicester Vision.                               |

### **Implications**

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- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b> | <p>Whilst income levels over 2010/11 and 2011/12 are anticipated to be broadly in line with current levels (based on existing charges), once the new Sainsbury's parking is open there could be significant reduction in revenue and this will need to be accounted for in the 2012/13 MTFS.</p> <p>Based on a number of assumptions and sensitivities set out in this report, the effects on the MTFS in 2012/13 could be a reduction in the income from car parks ranging from £5,478 to £307,278. Our worst case MTFS scenario includes a reduction of £307,278 in 2012/13, the best case scenario includes a reduction of £5,478 and the realistic scenario includes a reduction of £72,544.</p> <p>However, there is compensatory rental income from the new shops and commercial premise projected to generate £100,000 in 2012/13 and a further £250,000 per annum in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The annual income is expected to be £600,000 once the scheme is fully let.</p> <p>Comments checked by Joanne Kaye, Service Accountant 01295 221545</p> |
| <b>Legal:</b>     | <p>Changes to car parking arrangements will require formal notice and amendment of car park Orders.</p> <p>Comments checked by Malcolm Saunders, Senior Legal Assistant 01295 221692.</p>  |

**Risk Management:** There are risks of objections to proposed changes through the Car Park Order making process but these can be dealt with at the time. The significant long term risks are to parking revenue.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk and Insurance Manager 01295 221566

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**Wards Affected**

All Bicester Wards

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**Corporate Plan Themes**

An Accessible Value For Money Council

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**Executive Portfolio**

Councillor Nigel Morris,  
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural

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**Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	<i>Financial Assumptions</i>
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Rothwell, Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221712 chris.rothwell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk



## Appendix 1 – Income Effect of Bicester Town Centre Redevelopment on MTFS in 2012/13

Income effect 2012/13	Scenario 1			Scenario 2			Scenario 3			Scenario 4		
	Pay & Display	ECN	Total	Pay & Display	ECN	Total	Pay & Display	ECN	Total	Pay & Display	ECN	Total
2012/13 Budget as per MTFS	£862,635	£115,309	£977,945	£862,635	£115,309	£977,945	£862,635	£115,309	£977,945	£862,635	£115,309	£977,945
31% reduction from 732 to 502 spaces	-£271,047	-£36,231	-£307,278	-£271,047	-£36,231	-£307,278	-£271,047	-£36,231	-£307,278	-£271,047	-£36,231	-£307,278
<b>Adjusted 2012/13 Budget</b>	<b>£591,589</b>	<b>£79,078</b>	<b>£670,667</b>	<b>£591,589</b>	<b>£79,078</b>	<b>£670,667</b>	<b>£591,589</b>	<b>£79,078</b>	<b>£670,667</b>	<b>£591,589</b>	<b>£79,078</b>	<b>£670,667</b>
10% increase from displacement of private spaces	-	-	£0	£59,159	£7,908	£67,067	£59,159	£7,908	£67,067	£59,159	£7,908	£67,067
25% increase from displacement of other spaces	-	-	£0	-	-	£0	£147,897	£19,770	£167,667	£147,897	£19,770	£167,667
10% increase from new visitors to Bicester	-	-	£0	-	-	£0	-	-	£0	£59,159	£7,908	£67,067
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£591,589</b>	<b>£79,078</b>	<b>£670,667</b>	<b>£650,748</b>	<b>£86,986</b>	<b>£737,734</b>	<b>£798,645</b>	<b>£106,756</b>	<b>£905,400</b>	<b>£857,804</b>	<b>£114,663</b>	<b>£972,467</b>
<b>Movement from 2012/13 in MTFS</b>	<b>-£271,047</b>	<b>-£36,231</b>	<b>-£307,278</b>	<b>-£211,888</b>	<b>-£28,323</b>	<b>-£240,211</b>	<b>-£63,991</b>	<b>-£8,554</b>	<b>-£72,544</b>	<b>-£4,832</b>	<b>-£646</b>	<b>-£5,478</b>

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## Executive

### Request for Approval of Funding for various Affordable Housing Schemes from CDC Capital Reserves

24 May 2010

### Report of Head of Housing Services

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for grant funding from the Capital Reserves for Affordable Housing for an Extra Care Housing Scheme, Cassington Road, Yarnton and to explore options for funding affordable housing at Dashwood Road Primary School site, Banbury

This report is public

Appendix 1 of this report is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972

#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To approve funding for the Extra Care Housing Scheme at Cassington Road, Yarnton of £200,000 from the Capital Reserves for Affordable Housing in return for nomination rights.
- (2) To agree that the request for approval of funding for the Dashwood Road Primary School site is not approved at this time and that officers be instructed to explore ways in which the level of District Council social housing grant support required might be reduced and report back as appropriate.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The two schemes are being considered for funding by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) but need additional funding to make them viable. They will all make a much needed contribution to meeting local housing needs and affordable housing targets. The Council often uses its ear marked capital reserves for social housing schemes being undertaken by Registered Social Landlords and this grant buys social housing nomination rights for the Council.

- 1.2 This report considers two requests for support and examines the value for money to the Council of each of the above schemes
- 1.3 The Extra Care Housing Scheme, Cassington Road Yarnton is a proposal for a 45 bed affordable scheme including units for social rent and shared ownership. The scheme will be purchased and managed by Housing 21, a specialist extra care provider. It will have a range of facilities such as a restaurant and communal rooms, assisted bathing and health rooms and staff offices. It provides an opportunity for Extra Care provision in the south of the District where there are few opportunities. The site has outline planning permission for a nursing home but a new application would be needed for this particular scheme. An application for funding of £3,200,000 has been made to the HCA by Berkeley Homes and Oxfordshire County Council (the County Council') have agreed to contribute £200,000 if Cherwell also contributes £200,000. This funding may help to secure HCA funding and hence potentially levers in significant additional public subsidy. Council funding would only be paid if the scheme obtains full planning consent and HCA funding and would not be paid until the scheme starts on site.
- 1.4 The proposed Dashwood Road Primary School affordable housing scheme is a conversion of a County Council owned former school site for affordable housing. Paradigm Housing Association has made an offer to purchase this site for a development to provide nineteen units for social rent. They are ready to submit a planning application and intend to submit a bid for HCA grant at the same time. The scheme reuses a building of local architectural and historic importance following Development Guidelines approved by CDC in 2007. A scheme has been developed that fits well into the existing conservation area and is thus likely to obtain planning permission. The development could make a significant contribution to regeneration in a priority area of Banbury. Understandably as a conversion based development, the scheme is challenging and above the norm in terms of costs. Development costs affect land values and the overall viability of the scheme is also dependent on that land cost to the developer. Paradigm has approached the Council to provide a £400,000 grant in order to make the scheme financially viable. The value for money of providing this funding is examined in the options section of this report.

### **Proposals**

- 1.5 That if full planning permission and HCA grant are achieved for the Extra Care scheme at Cassington Road the Council makes a grant contribution of £200,000 in return for full nomination rights.
- 1.6 That the request for grant support on the Dashwood School Site should not be approved. That further consideration is given to viability issues on the scheme.

### **Conclusion**

- 1.7 Earmarking these schemes for funding from capital reserves will help the chances of delivery of these projects and hence help the Council to meet its targets for affordable housing delivery and secure nomination rights. However

it is important to ensure that use of increasingly scarce Council capital funding represents excellent value for money for the Council.

## **Background Information**

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- 2.1 Funding for affordable housing is changing through the HCA's new process of the Single Conversation whereby decisions about delivery of housing and associated infrastructure will be undertaken in closer consultation with local partners. The HCA is increasingly seeking a shared approach to funding and delivery including financial support by local authorities.
- 2.2 The Extra Care scheme at Cassington Road is brought forward in line with this approach and can be seen to offer excellent value for money in terms of the overall investment. Extra care is a District priority within the Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2010 to 2015 and older people's housing needs are also prioritised within the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy. This scheme will be an important part of our development of Extra Care schemes District wide.
- 2.3 For the Dashwood School development officers are not satisfied that the level of Council funding requested can be justified. Certainly this is the case on housing objectives alone. There are clearly wider cost and viability issues at play in this case. Other corporate objectives (regeneration in Banbury 'Brighter Futures' priority area) may better justify a higher level of financial support. However it may be that due to its complexities this site would be better developed for private market housing. It has to be acknowledged though that in current market conditions this might not be readily achievable. This in turn would mean continued uncertainty over the future of the site and building. The full details explaining the viability problems of the site are described in a letter from Paradigm attached at Appendix 1 of this report (within the confidential section of the Committee papers). This suggests that some of the viability problems arise from the decisions being made about the market value of the site for development. Before final decisions are made it seems important that all the viability issues are reconsidered by the developing housing association, the site owner (County Council) and the housing funding bodies (HCA and Cherwell). The site has already been prioritised by partners within the Local Investment Plan being agreed between the HCA and the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (including the County Council) and there may be opportunities for a resolution of the issues. This will of course cause delay and there is a risk that this may affect prospects for any development in the short term.
- 2.4 Other options available to the Housing Association to reduce the amount of funding required have been explored and rejected. In particular this includes providing more shared ownership on the scheme. This is not a solution due to the current low market valuations of the units against the relatively expensive scheme costs.

## **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 Affordable housing remains a corporate priority and is a priority within the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement. These units will help the Council meet its targets for the provision of new homes for those in need of better housing in difficult economic times.
- 3.2 However it is important to ensure that use of increasingly scarce Council capital funding represents excellent value for money to the Council. Part of this is to ensure we are working as effectively as possible with our partners to ensure the best use of available resources,

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

**Option One**                      That the Committee finally rejects the requests for approval to fund the schemes on one or both sites.

**Option Two**                      To try and secure the wider non housing objectives of delivery of development on the Dashwood school site the Committee agree to fund £400,000 towards the cost of the scheme at this stage.

**Option Three**                      That the committee approves the Cassington Road scheme but asks for further partnership investigation of the Dashwood School site viability issues. This is the recommended option.

## **Consultations**

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None

## **Implications**

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**Financial:**                      If approved Cassington Road will result in supplementary estimated capital expenditure of £200,000 from the Council's earmarked reserves for capital expenditure on affordable housing (which currently equates to approximately £7m) if the scheme succeeds. The current Medium Term Financial Strategy is reviewing earmarked capital reserves as this amount allocated to affordable housing may reduce in future. If members approve funding for Dashwood Road at this stage it will result in a further £400,000 being earmarked from these reserves.

Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant for Planning, Housing and Economy 01295

221552.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from the funding of these schemes although Legal and Democratic services will help secure the nomination rights to the properties if they get planning permission.

Comments checked by Pam Wilkinson, Principal Solicitor 01295 221688.

**Risk Management:** No payments will be made until the schemes have started on site and final payments will be withheld until completion. Full nomination rights for Cherwell District Council will be secured with the Planning Consent.

Not providing sufficient affordable housing leaves the Council at increased risk of an upturn in housing need and in particular homelessness which could increase the costs of this service.

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

**Equalities** The provision of good quality affordable underpins the Councils commitment to equality for all groups in our communities. The investment in the provision of affordable housing is therefore central to our strategic priority to ensure access to services by all members of our community. The Cassington Road scheme in particular provides housing for the elderly who have been identified as a key vulnerable group in the District through the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

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

#### **Wards Affected**

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**Banbury Grimsbury and Castle and Yarnton**

#### **Corporate Plan Themes**

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**Strategic Priority 1 – Cherwell A District of Opportunity includes the aim of securing more housing through an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing.**

#### **Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Michael Gibbard  
Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and the Economy**

#### **Document Information**

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1 (Exempt)	Letter from Paradigm Housing regarding a funding Request for Dashwood Road Primary School.
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Fiona Brown, Strategic Housing Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221659 Fiona.brown @Cherwell-dc.gov.uk



## Executive

### Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update

24 May 2010

### Report of the Head of Finance

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Medium Term Strategy (MTFS) is the Council's key financial planning document. It is driven by our Corporate Plan and the four strategic priorities which lie at the heart of it. The 2010/11 local government finance settlement represented the final year of the "fixed" three year funding regime announced in 2008/09. Due to the current economic climate and national deficit it is clear that local authorities will continue to need to plan on the basis of a very restricted financial envelope from 2011/12 onwards. This report considers 3 scenarios for funding and calculates the potential shortfalls which will need to be addressed to deliver a balanced budget.

This report is public
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#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note contents of report and MTFS scenarios detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) To note the process and approximate timings of the Formula Grant Settlement and Concessionary Fares Transfer Impact
- (3) To agree that we should lobby Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with our counterparties in Oxfordshire and approach Northamptonshire for a joint approach on the financial implications of the concessionary fares transfer.
- (4) To agree that each MTFS scenario modelled will have a specific action plan developed to address the projected shortfall.
- (5) To advise of any other scenarios they would like modelled and / or matters they would like taken into consideration in developing the action plans.
- (6) To agree Timetable and process for the development of the next MTFS forecast and action plans.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The MTFS is a key part of the Council's Policy, Service Planning and Performance Management framework which aims to ensure that all revenue and capital resources are directed towards the Council's strategic priorities.

The Strategy describes the financial direction of the Council for planning purposes and outlines the financial pressures over a 4 year period.

- 1.2 The MTFS establishes how available resources will be allocated to services in line with Council priorities following extensive consultation with Councillors, residents and other stakeholders.

### **Proposals**

- 1.3 We continually update our medium financial strategy and model scenarios to test our planning rigorously and the latest forecast can be seen along with assumptions in Annex 3 of the 2010/11 budget book. The draft forecast – best case at present (ref – column D Line 52) shows a forecasted shortfall of £1.2m from 2010/11 to 2011/12. This annex also shows an analysis of reserves, capital receipts, cashflow and the impact of the capital programme. Our capital receipts are forecast to reduce from £42m to £21m by March 2015 based on the current capital programme.
- 1.4 This report considers these assumptions in light of the current economic climate, change of government and expected reduction in government grant funding. This report consider 3 scenarios (best case, worst case and realistic case) in order to allow the Council to produce action plans to meet the shortfalls in each scenario. The timing of the government settlement is not due until November 2010 so a number of assumptions have been made to ensure we begin our deliberations and planning early.
- 1.5 The detailed assumptions that have been modelled are shown in Appendix 1 but at present our best case scenario assumes a freeze for the next 3 years and our worse case assumes a 6.5% cut in each of the 3 years – effective 19.5% with no inflationary increases.
- 1.6 The other consideration that we need to understand further is the impact of the transfer of concessionary travel to the County as this will be considered in the next formula grant settlement. It is imperative that we have an input into these calculations ahead of formal consultation as the revenue support grant reduction for concessionary fares should be no more than Cherwell District Council received to run the service in the first place.
- 1.7 In order to be prepared for the impact of the forthcoming funding decisions from the new Government and potential shortfalls that will arise the Council needs to develop an action plan for each scenario. This action plan needs to be robust and have a clear indication of how the Council will deliver a balanced budget and which services will be prioritised.

The action plan should consider:

- 1) Sources of funding
- 2) Review of service priorities
- 3) Statutory / Discretionary Service Review
- 4) VFM and Improvement Programme
- 5) Review of capital receipts and capital priorities
- 6) Collaboration and Partnership Opportunities

- 1.8 In order to produce these plans extensive consultation is required with Members, Residents of the District and our partners. This consultation will begin with a workshop with the Executive in July 2010.

## **Conclusion**

- 1.9 Whilst not underestimating the major challenges ahead facing the Council, it is better placed than many Councils to respond to the challenges posed by the wider economic situation, as during the previous period of economic growth not only did the Council continue to realise efficiency savings but also focused on delivering value for money services whilst reducing support costs.
- 1.10 Whatever the level of cuts determined by the Government, local decision makers will face extreme pressure to implement necessary changes and deliver required savings on challenging timetables. In this context it is critically important that we anticipate these developments and prepare for them.
- 1.11 The Council will make formal responses to the concessionary fares consultation and the Settlement Working Group consultation during the summer and produce an updated MTFS forecast and robust action plan to address the shortfall and present these to the Executive in October 2010 ahead of the 2011/12 budget process.

## **Background Information**

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### **Medium Term Financial Strategy – Background**

- 2.1 Our current Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved by the Executive in April 2009. This strategy committed the Council to eliminating its revenue dependency on investment income within the remaining 4-year lifetime of the strategy. This required some limited and reducing support from reserves during the period to ensure effective implementation while protecting service levels during any transition period. A number of potential actions were identified to secure the required reduction in net expenditure over the duration of the strategy – circa £2.6m.
- 2.2 The MTFS financial forecast is reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis and was last agreed by the Executive as part of setting the 2010/11 budget in February 2010. Cherwell District Council is committed to maximising the use of scarce resources and directing resources towards its priorities whilst keeping Council Tax at an affordable level. The main driver for the MTFS is the desire to provide high quality services that are in the line with Council priorities and resident needs at the least possible cost to council tax payers.
- 2.3 The MTFS flows from the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan and shows what the Council will do to ensure a stable and sustainable financial position that will allow the Council to achieve its vision and strategic objectives over the next three years, delivering on the key objectives of value for money and efficiency, continuing to deliver the Council's commitments to below inflation council tax increases and high quality services for the residents of our District. Maintaining the Council's financial strength will ensure the delivery of services is maintained during a period of economic uncertainty.
- 2.4 The MTFS assumptions are being reviewed to take into account the effects of the national economic situation. RPI and CPI measures of inflation have been volatile over the past 12 months and the Bank of England has kept the bank base rate at 0.5% for the last 13 months. Whilst CPI is expected to reach its target of 2% over the next 2 years it will do so as interest rates increase.

- 2.5 The level of Government debt is forecast to grow to nearly 80% of GDP. It is widely acknowledged that public expenditure will need to be reduced significantly, certainly for the period of this MTF5 and probably longer i.e. at least the next two CSR spending rounds. The Government announced in the Pre-Budget Report (PBR) that some services would be protected but local government has not been mentioned in this context and can expect to bear the full impact of any reductions.
- 2.6 This is likely to translate into a reduction in Formula Grant and an even greater reduction in specific grants related to specific initiatives and in capital funding, which will impact upon the resources available for the Council to deliver services. The PBR stated that capital spending was 3.3% of GDP in 2009/10 but will move to 1.25% of GDP by 2013/4 – a reduction of over 60%. Other major income streams are also under pressure whilst the demand from the public for a diverse range of good quality services will continue.

### **Formula Grant Settlement Process**

- 2.7 There have been a number of discussions raised at Executive during the 2010/11 budget process regarding how difficult central Government funding for local government might be going forward and how we might build this into our medium term financial strategy. In relation to future settlements, known as the Formula Grant Settlement, there are two critical elements - what the size of the settlement will be for local government and how it will be distributed. There are 4 stages to the process and these stages are outlined below:

#### **1) Comprehensive Spending Review.**

This activity will be one of the first tasks of the new coalition government and will be led by Eric Pickles MP who has been appointed secretary of state for communities and local government. The Coalition Government has announced that there will be an emergency budget is expected within 50 days. There are no details in relation to this yet but they have indicated that they will be reviewing the long term affordability of public sector pensions. Therefore the outcome of a spending review is expected in the autumn.

In the Spending Review, the Government decides how much it can afford to spend over the period 2011/12 to 2013/14 and reviews its expenditure priorities. It sets the framework for Government grant support to local government and specifies the total level of grant that will be paid for the following three years. This will only provide a high level overview of grant support and it is not possible to estimate at this stage what levels of Formula Grant the Council will receive over the next three years.

#### **2) Settlement Working Group (SWG)**

The next stage will be the outcome of the Settlement Working Group who are set up to discuss issues relating to formula grant distribution, in particular potential changes to the 2011-12 Local Government Finance Settlement onwards. They are also tasked with arranging the transfer of concessionary travel to the County and associated impact on support grant.

This is a Working Group of:

- Departmental officials,
- officials from other Government departments,
- officers from the LGA,

- officers from London Councils,
  - representatives of the Local Authority Association Special Interest groups, and
  - representatives of the Treasurers Societies
- 2.8 Their work to date can be seen in the minutes of their meetings available on the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) website. The outcome of this work will be the **Settlement Working Group Consultation Report**, which will probably come out in September 2010.
- 2.9 This technical report will set out a series of options for changes to the formulae, which are used to allocate out grant to local authorities. It will also show how each option will impact on councils. This is a key report because after the consultation exercise has been completed, the report is duly amended and then passed to Ministers to take final decisions on the options for change. We have the opportunity to provide a formal Council response to the consultation and this response will come to the Executive in September or October 2010.
- 2.10 Once we receive this report we will be able to model some further MTFS scenarios but these will be indicative at best for a number of reasons. Firstly, for each change under consideration there will be a number of options, which will have a varying impact on the Council's grant. Secondly, the Consultation Report will not set out how much grant will be allocated to each specific service such as social care and highways, which can have a significant effect on how much total grant is eventually allocated to the Council. Finally, it will not set out how the system of grant floors will operate, which will be key in determining our final grant entitlement. Unless there are radical adverse changes to the formula used to allocate out the grant, we will not be on a floor in 2011/14 but we will have to make a contribution to the floor scheme, which will in turn reduce the grant that we receive.

### **Provisional Finance Settlement**

- 2.11 The next stage in the process is the publication of the **Provisional Finance Settlement** in late November/early December 2010. It will be these figures that we use for the preparation of the 2011/12 budget. This will specify the Council's proposed grant for the following three years. After the publication, there is another period of consultation, when local authorities can put their views on the proposals to Government, and point out any errors that may have been made. Once all the points from local authorities have been considered and any amendments have been incorporated, the final Local Government Finance Settlement is approved by the House of Commons in late January or early February. In previous years there have been only very minor changes to the Provisional Finance Settlement grants as the consultation at this stage, focuses on data errors rather than on changes in the formula; and so we will be able to plan with some confidence, on the basis of the three-year grant entitlements released in November/December. We will then know with certainty when the Final Finance Settlement is published, what grant we will actually receive in 2011/12.

### **Final Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement**

- 2.12 The Final Local Government Finance Settlement published in January/early February 2011 will only contain final grant figures for 2011/12. It is not possible for the Government to announce final 2012/13 and 2013/14 formula grant allocations at this time without a change in the law. As a result, unless

there is a change in the legislation, the Government will announce the final 2012/13 and 2013/14 formula grant allocations in Jan/Feb 2012 and Jan/Feb 2013, respectively. However, using the example of the last two Settlements, the 2012/13 and 2013/14 grants announced in the Provisional Settlement in November/December 2010 will probably not change.

### **Concessionary Fares Funding Implications**

- 2.13 The DCLG website reveals that there are 6 options that have been considered so far by the Settlement Working Group (SWG) for transferring the service to Upper Tier Authorities and each has a financial implication of formula grant reductions for Cherwell District Council. The current options have an impact of between £1.3m and £0.8m; this is on top of any expected reductions in government grant due to the spending review.
- 2.14 The DCLG have always said and continue to say that the revenue support grant is complicated and it is not possible to say how much is for each individual service but using the information available on their website and using the approach Northamptonshire authorities have taken it is possible to make a comprehensive calculation showing the amount of funding Cherwell received in 2006/07 for concessionary fares. This calculation equates to £0.9m which at today's prices (inflated using the formulae grant annual uplifts) would equate to £1.1m of funding reductions and a further £0.2m of loss of special grant. Using these figures and offsetting against expenditure would result in a budget pressure of £0.3m.
- 2.15 The pre-budget report in December 2009 said further detailed calculations will continue with the SWG and consultation will commence in July 10. Cherwell District Council are currently exploring how we can work with the Local Government Association, Society of District Treasurer's and our contacts within concessionary fares to feed into this group. We hope to agree with all neighbouring districts and Northamptonshire that we should make a group representation to DCLG prior together with to any formal consultation.

### **MTFS Scenarios**

- 2.16 The funding pressures that the Council faces in the medium term are not unique; they are facing all Councils across the country, posing the challenge of delivering priority services within tightening resources available.
- 2.17 Eliminating our revenue dependency on investment income reduces the impact of low returns and enables the Council to utilise this income in a number of different ways, including:
- Growing the capital base to allow for future investment
  - Funding capital financing arrangements for major scheme
  - Funding short-term one-off revenue based activities in the future
- 2.18 Cherwell District Council faces a period of funding restraint and in the MTFS model the Council, like other Councils, is forecasting on this basis. The MTFS model provides the latest indication of financial pressures for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15.
- 2.19 Whilst we await the outcome of the spending review, impact of the change of government and an indication of level of government grant we can expect a variety of planning scenarios have been modeled and for the purposes of this report 3 indicative scenarios are set out:

## Scenario 1 - Best Case

2.20 Key assumptions are as follows:

- Formula grant is frozen at 2010-11 levels – no inflation so real term cut
- Concessionary Fare Transfer poses a budget strain of £320k
- Pension fund triennial valuation poses 3% increase phased over 3 years
- Grants such as Area Based Grant and Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) continue to be received and fund short term projects only.
- Assumption that Housing Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) is removed.
- Council Tax increases at 0.5% less than RPI
- Continue to reduce reliance on investment income

Scenario 1 - BEST	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Net Expenditure	19.4	19.1	18.8	18.7
Gov't Grant	-10.9	-10.9	-10.9	-10.9
Council Tax	-6.4	-6.6	-6.8	-7
Investment Income	-0.4	0	0	0
Collection fund	-0.1	0	0	0
Use of Reserves	-0.5	-0.3	0	0
<b>Savings requirement</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>
RPI	3.00%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%
Payroll Inflation	1.80%	1.90%	3.00%	3.00%
Interest Rate	1.00%	3.00%	4.50%	4.50%
Council Tax Increase	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%

Total shortfall to identify over 4 yr period is **£4.3m** assuming efficiencies are achieved at 4% annually this would leave a medium term revenue plan deficit of **£1.1m**. This equates to further base budget annual reduction requirement of approx **£300k**. This equates to **1.5%** of base budget.

## Scenario 2 - Worst Case

2.21 Key assumptions are as follows:

- Formula grant is cut in accordance with CIPFA / SOLACE model of 6.5% reduction for each of the 3 years (19.5% reduction)
- Concessionary Fare Transfer - budget strain of £1.3m – worst SWG option
- Additional grants are all reduced to zero
- Pension fund triennial valuation poses 5% increase phased over 3 years
- Interest income reliance, RPI, Payroll Inflation, Interest Rates and Council Tax assumptions as per scenario 1

Scenario 2 - WORST	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Net Expenditure	20.5	20.5	20.3	20.1
Gov't Grant	-10.2	-9.5	-8.9	-8.9
Council Tax	-6.4	-6.6	-6.8	-7
Investment Income	-0.4	0	0	0
Collection fund	-0.1	0	0	0

Use of Reserves	-0.5	-0.3	0	0
<b>Savings requirement</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>

Total shortfall to identify over 4 yr period is **£15.8m** assuming efficiencies are achieved at 4% annually this would leave a medium term revenue plan deficit of **£12.6m**. This equates to further base budget annual reduction requirement of approx **£3.1m**. This equates to **15%** of base budget.

### Scenario 3 - Realistic Case

2.22 Key assumptions are as follows:

- Formula grant is cut by 5% for each of the 3 years (15% reduction)
- Concessionary Fare Transfer poses a budget strain of £0.8m – mid range option per SWG
- All additional grants such as Planning Delivery Grant, Area Based Grant and The Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) grant are reduced to zero
- Pension fund triennial valuation poses 3.3% increase phased over 3 years
- Interest income reliance, RPI, Payroll Inflation, Interest Rates and Council Tax assumptions as per scenario 1

<b>Scenario 3 - REALISTIC</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>
Net Expenditure	19.9	19.6	19.4	19.3
Gov't Grant	-10.4	-9.8	-9.3	-9.3
Council Tax	-6.4	-6.6	-6.8	-7
Investment Income	-0.4	0	0	0
Collection fund	-0.1	0	0	0
Use of Reserves	-0.5	-0.3	0	0
<b>Savings requirement</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Total shortfall to identify over 4 yr period is **£11.3m** assuming efficiencies are achieved at 4% annually this would leave a medium term revenue plan deficit of **£8.3m**. This equates to further base budget annual reduction requirement of approx **£2.1m**. This equates to **10.5%** of base budget.

2.23 All of the scenarios above include an annual uplift on fees and charges only and do not include any additional income in relation to Bicester Town Centre development or additional income from Council properties. This will be included in the next development of the financial forecasts and outlined in the action plans.

### Sensitivity Analysis

2.23 A small change in key underlying assumptions can produce a significant change in the budget. The key sensitivities are outlined below:

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Annual impact</b>
Pay award	1%	£120K



Inflation	1%	£120K
Government grant	1%	£110K
Pension Rates	1%	£125K

2.24 The detailed scenarios financial forecasts have been produced using the MTFS model. This model also shows an analysis of reserves, capital receipts, cashflow and the impact of the capital programme. Our capital receipts are forecast to reduce from £42m to £21m by March 2015 based on the current capital programme and plans to replenish these are required.

### Action Plans

2.25 In order to be prepared for the impact of the forthcoming funding decisions from the new Government and potential shortfalls that will arise as a result of the scenarios modelled the Council needs to develop an action plan for each scenario. This action plan needs to be robust and have a clear indication of how the Council will deliver a balanced budget and which services will be prioritised.

2.26 The Council's public promises and high priority areas remain the focus for investment. Non customer-facing support services together with lower priority services and services delivering poor value for money will be the main focus of savings proposals. Working in partnership with others, strategic procurement and delivering services in different ways offer further opportunities to reduce costs.

2.27 Other actions aim to generate additional, sustainable income. Changes to our approach to asset management will be key to this, via plans to share overheads and co-locate with partners.

### Timetable

2.28 In order to produce these action plans extensive consultation is required with all stakeholders including members, residents of the District and our partners. This consultation will begin with a workshop with the Executive in July 2010.

Month	Task
Jun-10	Commence work on statutory / discretionary review of services
Jun-10	Commence lobbying with Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire on Concessionary Fares
Jul-10	Executive Workshop
Jul-10	Resident Budget Consultation
Aug-10	Formal Response to DCLG on Concessionary Fares and Settlement
Aug-10	Review work on statutory / discretionary review of services
Aug-10	Develop Action Plans for each MTFS Scenario
Sep-10	Executive Workshop
Sept-10	Budget Guidelines to Executive
Oct-10	MTFS Action Plans to Executive
Nov-10	Local Government Provisional Settlement
Dec-10	Executive receives Draft 1 budget proposals including savings and efficiencies
Jan-11	Local Government Final Settlement
Jan-11	Executive receives Draft 2 budget proposals and MTFS
Feb-11	Full Council approves MTFS, Budget and Council Tax

## Consultations

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Various consultations with Local Government Association (LGA), Communities and Local Government Office (CLG) and neighbouring authorities.

The scenarios modelled have been discussed and reviewed with the Corporate Management Team as part of the 2010/11 budget process and during meetings in April and May 2010.

## Implications

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### Financial:

Financial Effects: There are no direct financial effects on the Council from this report but the scenarios modelled indicate the potential funding shortfalls that might arise depending on the funding available. In order to ensure that the services can be delivered a robust action plan is required for each scenario.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate Accountant, 01295 221559.

### Legal:

The Council has a statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget and therefore any reductions in funding must be met with reductions in expenditure.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer 01295 221686

### Risk Management:

The significant risks and assumptions associated with the MTFS forecasts are included within this report. If due consideration is not given to matching scarce financial resources carefully against properly assessed service priorities, the Council may fail in achieving its strategic priorities and in its duty to demonstrate value for money.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate Accountant, 01295 221559.

## Wards Affected

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All

## Corporate Plan Themes

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An Accessible, Value for Money Council

## Executive Portfolio

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Councillor James Macnamara - Portfolio Holder for Resources

## Document Information

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	MTFS Scenario Analysis
<b>Background Papers</b>	
2010/11 – 2013/14 Medium Term Financial Strategy (April 2009)	
2010/11 Budget Book	
Cherwell's Sustainable Community Strategy, 'Our District, Our Future'	
Procurement Strategy 2010/11	

MTFS Financial Model	
<b>Report Author</b>	Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221551 <a href="mailto:Karen.Curtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Karen.Curtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>

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## APPENDIX 1

### MTFS Assumptions - Best Case - Scenario 1

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Pay Award	0.0%	1.8%	1.9%	3.0%	3.0%
General Inflation - not contractual	0.0%	3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Council Tax Increase - 0.5% less RPI	0.0%	2.5%	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%
Government Grant - freeze no inflation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pension Rates - valuation 3% over 3 years	21.6%	22.6%	23.6%	24.6%	24.6%
Employers NI	11.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%
Retail Price Index - Sector Forecast		3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Interest Rate - Bank Base Sector Forecast	0.5%	1.0%	3.0%	4.5%	4.5%
Interest Rate Forecast	1.6%	1.3%	3.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Concessionary Fares strain		£320,000			
Bicester Parking Income Strain		£10,928	£5,478		
<b>Other Funding - used as one off funding only</b>					
LABGI Funding (Local Authority Business Incentive Grant)	£160,000	£160,000	£160,000	£160,000	£160,000
HPDG Funding (Housing, Planning Delivery Grant)	£606,828	£0	£0	£0	£0
ABG Funding - Climate Change (Area Based Grant)	£16,835	£16,000	£16,000	£16,000	£16,000

### MTFS Assumptions - Worst Case - Scenario 2

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Pay Award	0.0%	1.8%	1.9%	3.0%	3.0%
General Inflation - not contractual	0.0%	3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Council Tax Increase - 0.5% less RPI	0.0%	2.5%	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%
Government Grant - 6.5% cut per yr/3 yrs	0.0%	-6.5%	-6.5%	-6.5%	0.0%
Pension Rates - valuation 5% over 3 years	21.6%	23.3%	24.9%	26.6%	26.6%
Employers NI	11.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%
Retail Price Index - Sector Forecast		3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Interest Rate - Bank Base Sector Forecast	0.5%	1.0%	3.0%	4.5%	4.5%
Interest Rate Forecast	1.6%	1.3%	3.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Concessionary Fares strain		£1,300,000			
Bicester Parking Income Strain		£10,928	£307,728		
<b>Other Funding - used as one off funding only</b>					
LABGI Funding (Local Authority Business Incentive Grant)	£160,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
HPDG Funding (Housing, Planning Delivery Grant)	£606,828	£0	£0	£0	£0
ABG Funding - Climate Change (Area Based Grant)	£16,835	£0	£0	£0	£0

### MTFS Assumptions - Mid Case - Scenario 3

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Pay Award	0.0%	1.8%	1.9%	3.0%	3.0%
General Inflation - not contractual	0.0%	3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Council Tax Increase - 0.5% less RPI	0.0%	2.5%	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%
Government Grant - 10% over first 2 yrs	0.0%	-5.0%	-5.0%	-5.0%	0.0%
Pension Rates - valuation 3.3% over 3 years	21.6%	22.7%	23.8%	24.9%	24.9%
Employers NI	11.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%
Retail Price Index - Sector Forecast		3.0%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%
Interest Rate - Bank Base Sector Forecast	0.5%	1.0%	3.0%	4.5%	4.5%
Interest Rate Forecast	1.6%	1.3%	3.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Concessionary Fares strain		£810,000			
Bicester Parking Income Strain		£10,928	£72,544		
<b>Other Funding - used as one off funding only</b>					
LABGI Funding (Local Authority Business Incentive Grant)	£160,000	£120,000	£60,000	£30,000	£30,000
HPDG Funding (Housing, Planning Delivery Grant)	£606,828	£0	£0	£0	£0
ABG Funding - Climate Change (Area Based Grant)	£16,835	£12,626	£6,313	£5,000	£5,000

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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