

## Executive Summary

This Local Plan is an important document for Cherwell District. Upon adoption it will set out broadly how the district will grow and change in the period up to 2031. The Local Plan must set out the long term spatial vision for the District and contain policies to help deliver that vision.

This Executive Summary seeks to give an overview of the main policies in the Local Plan. It is important that the Plan is considered as a whole. There are three themes which link together; the economy we look to secure, the communities we build, and ensuring that the development required is sustainable. It is also crucial that the Plan's policies are read in detail to understand the strategy that the Council is putting forward.

The Plan has been prepared following a detailed examination of the needs and challenges facing our towns, villages and rural areas. It provides a proactive, positive set of policies to help our places thrive, to deliver essential and longer term infrastructure and achieve development that will improve the quality of life in the district. It has a clear focus on addressing the difficulties of economic recession and building on Cherwell's strengths to achieve positive outcomes for both urban and rural areas.

We are seeking to achieve sustainable economic growth. We wish to draw in investment tailored to the current and future needs of the district and to Cherwell's social and economic position in Oxfordshire and the south-east Midlands. We are aiming to create jobs; to significantly boost housing supply in targeted, sustainable locations; to mitigate and adapt to climate change; to secure sustainable design; and to achieve net gains in biodiversity.

## Structure of the Local Plan

The Local Plan is structured so that it sets out our priorities and policies clearly and separately for the whole of Cherwell, for Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington, and for our rural areas. It has five sections:

- Section A – 'Strategy for Development in Cherwell' considers Cherwell District as a whole. It includes a vision for the district, a spatial strategy and a series of key objectives.
- Section B – 'Policies for Development in Cherwell' sets out planning policies grouped around three themes:
  - Theme One: Developing a Sustainable Local Economy
  - Theme Two: Building Sustainable Communities
  - Theme Three: Ensuring Sustainable Development.
- Section C – 'Policies for Cherwell's Places' looks at different places within the district: Bicester, Banbury, Kidlington and our villages and rural areas. For each area it outlines how the three themes will be delivered and proposed strategic development sites for housing, employment and open space.
- Section D – 'The Infrastructure Delivery Plan' shows what new infrastructure and key facilities the Local Plan will secure.
- Section E – 'Monitoring Delivery of the Local Plan' sets out how delivery of the three policy themes, the objectives and strategic development sites of the Local Plan will be monitored and reviewed.

## Vision, Strategy and Objectives

Underpinning the Local Plan is a vision and a spatial strategy for Cherwell District (Section Cherwell in 2031: Our Vision and Strategy). Our spatial strategy for how we manage the growth of the district can be summarised as:-

- Focusing the bulk of the proposed growth in and around Bicester and Banbury
- Limiting growth in our rural areas and directing it towards larger and more sustainable villages
- Aiming to strictly control development in open countryside.

There are then fifteen strategic objectives (see Section A ‘Strategy for Development in Cherwell’) and the policies which follow seek to meet these objectives.

## The Policies in the Local Plan

The Local Plan contains a large number of policies that will be important in shaping the future development of the district. A few of the key policies are set out below.

## Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

Securing the economic future of the District is the main priority of this Plan.

This is a Development Plan that has been developed in a recession. The plan recognises the challenges for achieving growth and employment generating development and the impact on local business. The Local Plan will be an important tool in assisting growth and in ensuring that the District is resilient and can weather the current storm.

The Local Plan seeks to ensure that there is a supply of employment land to meet the needs of the district for the plan period. Policy SLE 1: ‘Employment Development’ (Section B ‘Policies for Development in Cherwell’) seeks, as a general principle, to protect existing employment land and buildings. The Local Plan identifies eight strategic employment areas to meet employment needs over the plan period. These are:

Strategic Employment Sites			
Site	Employment Area (gross) (ha)	Policy no.	Section
<b>Bicester</b>			
North West Bicester Eco-Town	25.5 (1)	Bicester 1	C.2 ‘Bicester’
Graven Hill	26	Bicester 2	C.2 ‘Bicester’
Bicester Business Park	<a href="#">2917.5</a>	Bicester 4	C.2 ‘Bicester’
Bicester Gateway	15	Bicester 10	C.2 ‘Bicester’
North East Bicester Business Park	8	Bicester 11	C.2 ‘Bicester’

South East Bicester	18	Bicester 12	C.2 'Bicester'
<b>Banbury</b>			
Land West of M40	24.5	Banbury 6	C.3 'Banbury'
<b>Rural Areas</b>			
Former RAF Upper Heyford	approx 120,000 sq.metres	Villages 5	C.5 'Bicester'
(1) Estimate. The precise area for employment uses at North West Bicester will be determined through a masterplan for the area. North West Bicester is anticipated to deliver land for about 1,800 jobs by 2031 (5,000 for the eco-development as a whole).			

### Dynamic Town Centres

The Local Plan seeks to direct retail and other town centre appropriate development to the two town centres in the district ('Policy SLE 2: Securing Dynamic Town Centres'). [It also seeks to strengthen Kidlington Village Centre. The Plan and](#) sets the boundaries for the centres ~~;- Banbury ('Policies Bicester 5, y-Banbury 7) and ; Strengthening Banbury Town Centre')~~, Bicester ('Policy Bicester 5: Strengthening Bicester Town Centre') and Kidlington (Policy Kidlington 2: 'Strengthening Kidlington Village Centre') ~~It also~~ identifies the following strategic allocations [in Bicester and Banbury:-](#)

Proposed Strategic Town Centre Allocations				
Site	Proposed Use	Area (ha)	Policy no.	Section
<b>Bicester</b>				
Bure Place Town Centre Redevelopment Phase 2	Shopping, Leisure	4 (Phase 1 & 2)	Bicester 6	C.2 'Bicester'
<b>Banbury</b>				
Land at Bolton Road	Retail/residential/mix	2	Banbury 8	C.3 'Banbury'
Spiceball Development Area	Refurbished Arts Centre, new library, public space, car parking, retail/mix	4.5	Banbury 9	C.3 'Banbury'

The plan also has proposals for supporting tourism, improving transport connections and addressing the challenge of High Speed Rail.

### Building Sustainable Communities

The Plan seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing. Policy BSC 1 sets the overall distribution of development across the district.

The [former](#) South East Plan [previously](#) required the District to deliver 13,400 new homes across the district between 2006 and 2026 (670 per year). [In general accordance with 2008 and 2011 household projections,](#) ~~T~~he Local Plan retains this rate of delivery, adds a further 5 years to 2031, and provides for a total of 16,750 new

homes. At 31 March 2012, some 2,898 homes had already been built including 1,376 at Banbury, 224 at Bicester and 1,298 in rural areas. The [Local Plan's housing strategy](#) ~~Plan~~ seeks to [support the development of Bicester's economy and help provide an improved range of services and facilities](#). It responds ~~to~~ [particular problems of](#) under-delivery at Bicester and high levels of delivery in rural areas.

The Council identifies North West Bicester as a strategic allocation for Bicester ('Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town') together with a major housing development at Graven Hill, Bicester ('Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill') which will result in more housing distributed to Bicester than elsewhere in the District. As a consequence of this housing growth at Bicester, the Local Plan [limits/reduces](#) the overall level of growth directed to the rural areas of the district.

The Plan includes a housing trajectory (within Section E) showing when new strategic sites are expected to be delivered and the expectations for the approved sites at Bankside, Banbury; South West Bicester (Phase 1); and former RAF Upper Heyford. The table below summarises the overall distribution of housing compared to recent South East Plan requirements.

Overall Distribution of Housing in the Local Plan		
	<b>Previous South East Plan Requirement 2006 - 2026</b>	<b>Local Plan Requirement 2006 - 2031</b>
	-	
Bicester	4,900 (245 dpa)	6,894 (276 dpa)
Banbury	4,800 (240 dpa)	5,954 (238 dpa)
Rest of Cherwell	3,700 (185 dpa)	3,902 (156 dpa)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,400 (670 dpa)</b>	<b>16,750 (670 dpa)</b>

## Locations for Community Growth:

### Bicester and Banbury

Section [C](#) 'Policies for Cherwell's Places' of the Local Plan identifies the key strategic housing sites that will need to be developed to meet needs within Banbury and Bicester for the period up to 2031. Strategic sites are generally those that can accommodate over 400 homes. The Plan does not specifically identify all sites for new housing for the period up to 2031.

Through the evolution of the 'Eco-Town' project, Bicester is [working towards becoming a new 'Garden City' in the manner of Letchworth in Hertfordshire, a greener, more pleasant town in which to live, work and visit. A town which will expand](#) ~~ing~~ [to embrace both high environmental standards for new the housing which is built, and but which also secur](#) ~~ing~~ [investment in creating a cutting edge economy based on major new employment sites.](#)

Work on a Bicester Masterplan has been used to form a holistic town vision to help ensure the town develops in a coordinated, planned and integrated way. Other

studies have ensured that the plan as a whole is based on up to date evidence and that we are taking account of the latest analysis of economic trends as we plan for the economy of the future.

The following sites are allocated to meet strategic housing needs for Bicester and Banbury to 2031.

### Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations in Bicester and Banbury 2012-2031

Site	Allocation to 2031	Policy no.
<b>Bicester</b>		
North West Bicester (Eco-Town)	1,793 <sup>(1)</sup>	Bicester 1
Graven Hill	1,900	Bicester 2
South West Bicester Phase 2	650	Bicester 3
South East Bicester	400	Bicester 12
<b>Banbury</b>		
Canalside	950	Banbury 1
Hardwick Farm, Southam Road	600	Banbury 2
West of Bretch Hill	400	Banbury 3
Bankside Phase 2	400	Banbury 4
North of Hanwell Fields	500	Banbury 5

<sup>(1)</sup> The total capacity of the North West Bicester eco-development is 5,000 homes. It is estimated that approximately 3,207 will be built after 2031.

~~The total capacity of Graven Hill is 1,900 homes. It is estimated that 500 will be built after 2031.~~

### The Villages and Rural Areas

Within the rural areas a substantial amount of housing has already been completed or approved. The Local Plan does not identify the specific sites where further rural housing will go. However, it does provide an additional allowance of some 398 homes (for sites of 10 or over) and identifies those villages to which development should be directed. This will help inform decisions on planning applications and the allocation of sites in the 'Local Neighbourhoods Development Plan Document' (DPD) or Neighbourhood Plans where applicable.

'Policy for Villages 2: Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas' (Section C.5 'Our Villages and Rural Areas') identifies the 23 villages to which development will be directed. The policy does not propose a housing target for individual villages, but it does set a target that will need to be met by groupings of villages.

### Villages – Housing Allocation 2012-2031 (10 or more dwellings)

Villages	Total no.
Kidlington	50
Adderbury, Ambrosden, Chesterton, Deddington, Launton, Hook Norton	252
Arcott, Bletchington, Bloxham, Bodicote, Cropredy, Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Kirtlington, Middleton Stoney, Milcombe, Sibford Gower / <a href="#">Sibford</a>	96
Ferris, Steeple Aston Weston-on-the-Green, Wroxton, Yarnton	
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>

The Local Plan also includes a policy on village categorisation (~~‘Policy Villages 1)’: ‘Village Categorisation’ in Section C.5 Our Villages and Rural Areas~~). This sets out the approach that will be used to determine small, ‘windfall’ proposals for residential development (~~for less than 10 dwellings~~) that come forward within the built-up limits of villages. These will typically, but not exclusively, be proposals for less than 10 dwellings. The policy sets out the limitations to scale of development for each category of village. Smaller villages may only be suitable for infill housing, whilst larger villages may be able to accommodate minor development.

An exceptional scheme has already been approved to secure heritage conservation and environmental improvements at the Former RAF Upper Heyford airbase. This will result in the development of 761 new homes in addition to the 314 ex-military homes that already exist (see Policy ~~for Villages 5: ‘Former RAF Upper Heyford’~~).

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is housing for affordable / social rent or ‘intermediate’ housing such as shared ownership. ‘Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing’ (Section B ‘Policies for Development in Cherwell’) sets out the approach for meeting affordable housing requirements. It sets out a percentage requirement for different parts of the district and a minimum threshold at which affordable housing would be required.

Affordable Housing Policy as set out in Policy BSC3		
	Requirement	Qualifying Threshold
Banbury & Bicester	30%	10 homes
Kidlington	35%	10 homes
Rural Areas	35%	3 homes

In meeting the need for affordable housing in rural areas, the Local Plan supports the use of ‘rural exception sites’ in appropriate cases. These are sites specifically identified for affordable housing in rural communities and which would not normally be permitted for housing. The Council’s approach is set out in ~~‘Policy for Villages 3 in ‘Rural Exception Sites’~~ (Section Ce ‘Policies for Cherwell’s Places’).

### Ensuring Sustainable Development

The Local Plan contains a wide number of other strategic policies that will help build sustainable communities and ensure sustainable development. These include:-

Supporting Strategic Policies		
Subject	Policies	Section
Climate Change, Energy, Sustainable Construction and Flooding	ESD 1 - ESD 7	B. 3 ‘Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development’
Water Resources, Ecology and Biodiversity, Landscape	ESD 8 - ESD 13	B. 3 ‘Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development’
Green Belt and Green Boundaries to Growth	ESD 14 - ESD 15	B. 3 ‘Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development’
The Built Environment	ESD 16	B. 3 ‘Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development’

Green Infrastructure	ESD 18	B. 3 'Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development'
Effective and Efficient Use of Land	BSC 2	B. 2 'Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities'
The Mix of Housing	BSC 4	B. 2 'Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities'
Travelling Communities	BSC 6	B. 2 'Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities'
Meeting Educational Needs	BSC 7	B. 2 'Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities'
Providing Sport, Recreation and Community Facilities	BSC 10 - BSC 12	B. 2 'Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities'
Meeting the Needs for Cemeteries in Bicester	Bicester 9	C.2 'Bicester'

## Ensuring Delivery

The Local Plan needs to be viable and deliverable and create the context for development management decisions to be taken in a positive way, for high quality development to be achieved on the ground and for enabling applications for sustainable development to be approved where possible.

The completion of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will provide confidence that critical infrastructure can be provided, that the Plan's development strategy is deliverable, and that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure can be secured to support the planned development. The Local Plan includes provision for a range of key infrastructure such as schools, ~~new~~ strategic [highway improvements roads](#), and 'green' infrastructure. The completed IDP will identify costs attributable to the proposed levels of growth, requirements of each type of growth, and consider how and when infrastructure should be provided having regard to the phasing of development and possible funding opportunities.

Section D 'The Infrastructure Delivery Plan' of the Plan currently includes a temporary IDP – a summary of key infrastructure requirements which will be superseded by the full IDP when finalised.

The Plan also includes a monitoring framework (Section E 'Monitoring Delivery of the Local Plan') to ensure that Local Plan policies are being implemented and are achieving their aims.