

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031

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Extract from adopted Local Plan Part 1 - Policy ESD11



Part 1
Adopted 20 July 2015

July 2015

- **Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution**
- **Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably**
- **A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long term suitable management.**

Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas

B.240 Conservation Target Areas in Oxfordshire have been mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) in consultation with local authorities and nature conservation organisations in Oxfordshire. The Target Areas have been identified to focus work to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of UK BAP priority habitats, and this is their principle aim. They therefore have a major role to play in achieving Strategic Objective 15 (Section A: Strategy for Development in Cherwell). Addressing habitat fragmentation through the linking of sites to form strategic ecological networks can help species adapt to the impact of climate change, and therefore Conservation Target Areas can also contribute to the achievement of Strategic Objective 11. Conservation Target Areas represent the areas of greatest opportunity for strategic biodiversity improvement in the District and as such development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the aims of the target areas through avoiding habitat fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.

B.241 Ten Conservation Target Areas lie wholly or partly within Cherwell District. The boundaries of the Conservation Target Areas are indicated on the Policies Map (Appendix 5: Maps).

B.242 General targets for maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats have been set for each area, to be achieved through a combination of biodiversity project work undertaken by a range of organisations, agri-environment schemes and biodiversity enhancements secured in association with development. These targets are in the process of being made more specific in terms of the amount of each habitat type to be secured within each Conservation Target Area (see Wild Oxfordshire's website <http://wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversityconservation-target-areas>). Habitat improvement within each area will contribute towards achieving County targets, which in turn will contribute towards regional biodiversity targets identified by the South East England Biodiversity Forum. A lead partner has been appointed for several of the Conservation Target Areas to co-ordinate action.

B.243 Biodiversity enhancements sought in association with development could include the restoration or maintenance of habitats through appropriate management, new habitat creation to link fragmented habitats, or a financial contribution towards

biodiversity initiatives in the Conservation Target Area. Biodiversity enhancement within the Conservation Target Areas will be considered through the review of the current Planning Obligations Draft SPD and the funding of infrastructure through CIL or other tariff system. Biodiversity offsetting is

being explored at national level through a number of pilot projects, as a way of compensating for biodiversity loss in an effective way. If this initiative proves successful the approach could be used to secure strategic biodiversity improvement.

Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas

Where development is proposed within or adjacent to a Conservation Target Area biodiversity surveys and a report will be required to identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Development which would prevent the aims of a Conservation Target Area being achieved will not be permitted. Where there is potential for development, the design and layout of the development, planning conditions or obligations will be used to secure biodiversity enhancement to help achieve the aims of the Conservation Target Area.

Policy ESD 12: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

B.244 Cherwell contains one area of national landscape importance - the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). National designations including AONBs are to be prioritised for landscape protection as set out in national planning guidance, with the NPPF indicating that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in those areas.

B.245 Only a small part of Cherwell District, around the village of Epwell, is included in the Cotswolds AONB, as shown on the Policies Map (Appendix 5: Maps). The area of AONB straddles the boundary of Sibford and Wroxton wards.

B.246 Proposals for development in the AONB should be small-scale and sustainably located and designed. Proposals which support the economies and social well-being of the AONB and its communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

B.247 The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan was prepared by the Cotswold Conservation Board and was adopted by the Council for use as supplementary guidance. The Management Plan was updated and adopted by the Board in March 2013. The main principles are that development within the AONB will:

- be compatible with the distinctive character of the location as described by the relevant landscape character assessment, strategy and guidelines