



## URGENT BUSINESS AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

### Executive

19 January 2023

Agenda Item Number	Page	Title	Officer Responsible	Reason Not Included with Original Agenda
7.	(Pages 3 - 288)	Draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18) Consultation  Appendix 1 – Emerging Draft Local Plan 2040	Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Manager	Published as a supplement due to size of document

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**Cherwell Local Plan 2040  
Draft Plan (V3)  
Regulation 18 Consultation  
January 2023**

Draft for Executive

**Note:**

The final published version will be Desk Top Published.

## **About this Consultation**

This is a draft version of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040 that is published for consultation. A proposed version of the Plan will be produced following the consideration of consultation responses. This will also be published for comment before the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

We are also publishing a series of supporting documents and topic papers to accompany this consultation document. These documents will be available from the start of the consultation and can be accessed at local libraries, the Council offices, and online at [www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

## **Foreword**

This is the Local Plan for Cherwell district. It sets out a vision for how the district should be shaped and developed up to 2040. It includes objectives and policies on how the district will address the climate emergency, where homes and employment areas should be located and what infrastructure is required to support existing and new communities within the district.

It is an ambitious plan which focuses on delivering good growth and ensuring that the district's unique character is preserved. Cherwell district is a distinctive area. It includes a variety of heritage-rich and bustling market towns and productive employment areas, enveloped by serene rural landscapes.

This Local Plan will ensure that new homes are located in sustainable locations, with a focus on placing growth in the existing settlements of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and at Heyford Park. Development in these locations will be sensitively planned to ensure that a wide range of services and facilities are readily accessible and meet the needs of current and future generations.

At the heart of this Local Plan is an ambition to future proof growth and to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation are an integral consideration when planning for new development. This plan will also ensure that the district's most valued landscapes, natural environment and historic environment are protected and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

**Councillor Colin Clarke – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development**

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Cherwell Local Plan 2040 provides a strategic framework to guide the delivery of sustainable development across the district up to 2040. It sets out a vision for the future and identifies the number of homes, employment land, infrastructure and other essential services required to support the local community over the Plan period.

The Local Plan 2040 has been prepared in compliance with national policy and guidance, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup> (PPG).

The Plan has been informed by a range of technical evidence and supporting information, including:

- the NPPF and PPG
- a robust and up-to-date evidence base, including but not limited to the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA), Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and the Employment Land Review (ELR)
- sustainability appraisal (includes an assessment of ‘reasonable alternative’ sites)
- engagement with neighbouring authorities, consultation bodies, organisations and service providers, and
- previous consultations on the emerging Local Plan.

## Structure of the Plan

The Local Plan 2040 identifies three overarching themes which underpin the strategy and core policies of the Plan. These are:

- Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development
- Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy, and
- Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

The Local Plan 2040 comprises of 13 chapters, which are ordered as follows:

- Introduction
- Context of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040
- Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives
- Spatial Strategy
- Area Strategies for Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Heyford Park and the Rural Areas

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

- Thematic Policies 1: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development
- Thematic Policies 2: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy
- Thematic Policies 3: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities
- Implementing the Plan

## Spatial Strategy

The Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver the majority of homes at the main settlements of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Heyford Park, whilst also allowing a smaller number of homes to come forward in the district’s most sustainable larger villages. The Spatial Strategy centres upon the following six core policies:

- Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
- Core Policy 2: District-wide Housing Distribution
- Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy
- Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs
- Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
- Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt

Core Policy 2 (District-wide Housing Distribution) sets out a housing requirement of 26,267 homes across the district over the period 2020-2040, of which 5,605 homes will be delivered on strategic allocations. The above figure takes into account the agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford City, which equates to 6,087 homes. The table below sets out the Local Plan 2040’s strategic allocations alongside the respective quantum of dwellings to be delivered on each site.

Area	Site Name	Number of Dwellings to be Delivered
Banbury	South of Saltway/Wykhams Lane, LPR52	600
Banbury	West of Bretch Hill/south of BAN3, LPR49	220
Banbury	Canalside Banbury, LPR55	500
Bicester	Land South East of Bicester, LPR21 A	800
Bicester	North West Bicester, LPR33	1,000*
Bicester	Land South of Chesterton and North West of A41, LPR37A	500
Kidlington	Land North of The Moors, Kidlington, LPR8A	300
Kidlington	South East of Woodstock/Upper Campfield Road, LPR2	450
Heyford Park	South and East of Heyford Park, LPR42A	1,235
Total		

\*The North-West Bicester Site is an existing allocation for 6,000 dwellings that is being increased by around 1,000 dwellings in this plan, to deliver around 7,000 dwellings in total, although some of this will fall outside of the plan period beyond 2040.

## **Area Strategies**

The Local Plan 2040 includes five area strategies for the following areas:

- Banbury
- Bicester
- Kidlington
- Heyford Park, and
- Rural Areas (i.e., the rest of the district)

Each Area Strategy sets out a number of core policies for that respective area. This includes further area-specific details relating to the strategic housing and employment allocations, and also expand on the key strategic transport schemes, green and blue infrastructure and other key physical and social infrastructure facilities and services to be delivered in that area over the Plan period.

The Area Strategies also earmark the built-up town/village centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington for regeneration. Masterplan-led redevelopment will be supported in these locations.

## **Development Policies**

The Local Plan 2040 also includes a number of strategic development policies which will complement the core policies within the Spatial Strategy and Area Strategies. The majority of these policies will apply across the district will and inform and guide development to ensure it is well-designed and reflects the overarching themes and strategic objectives of this Plan.

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Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution

Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy

Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt

Core Policy 7: Banbury Area Strategy

Core Policy 8: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area

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## List of Development Policies

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Development Policy 2: Rural Exception Sites

Development Policy 3: New Dwellings in the Countryside

Development Policy 4: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling

Development Policy 5: Hot Food Takeaways

Development Policy 6: Outdoor Markets

Development Policy 7: Shopfronts and Signage

Development Policy 8: Residential Caravans

## 1. Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This Cherwell Local Plan 2040 is a new local plan that sets out the vision, objectives and strategy for development in Cherwell up to 2040. It reviews, and where necessary, updates or replaces existing policies and proposals from the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031, adopted in 2015, and the Partial Review of that Plan, adopted in 2020, which provided for unmet housing needs for Oxford to be addressed in Cherwell.
- 1.2. This Plan, the Local Plan 2040, provides a strategy and policy framework for Cherwell up to 2040. It ensures that we plan for an appropriate level of housing, support job creation and protect the economy of the district, help us to address the challenge of climate change and to support biodiversity gain and protection for our environment. The Plan also ensures that we continue to make an appropriate contribution to meeting the unmet needs of Oxford through our Duty-to-Cooperate commitments and legal obligations.

### What is the Role of the Local Plan?

- 1.3. This Local Plan sets out a framework for how development will be planned and delivered across Cherwell District up to 2040. It sets out our vision, and objectives (**Chapter 3**), grouped under three key themes, which respond to that vision. These three overarching themes run through this plan and are described below and shown in **Figure 1.1**

#### **Theme 1: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development**

- 1.4. Climate change is perhaps the greatest long-term challenge facing society today; a challenge we recognised when the Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.5. Climate change is already evident in the form of increased extreme weather events, rising sea levels, longer droughts and heatwaves, and retreating polar ice and glaciers.
- 1.6. The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a statutory target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and in 2019 the Government adopted a legally binding target for the nation to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Council is legally bound to ensure that its

Local Plan contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. Working with the County Council, our approach also recognises the circular economy to ensure that resources are kept in use for as long as possible, that maximum value is extracted from them whilst in use, and with products and materials recovered at the end of each service life.

- 1.7. Our Local Plan 2040 policies therefore provide for a step-change in the expectations from new development. We expect a greater contribution to responding to climate change in the design of new development, in how development occurs, and in how the infrastructure necessary to support it is provided.

## **Theme 2: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy**

- 1.8. Supporting our local economy is vital to maintain employment, improve standards of living, and to encourage investment that brings training and development opportunities. It is essential that we help our existing local businesses thrive whilst also encouraging new businesses to become established. This positive environment will help to attract new companies in sectors such as manufacturing, engineering, distribution, the low carbon economy, and high-tech knowledge-based industries, thereby supporting innovation and prosperity. To provide a range of well-paid jobs for local people, and to provide opportunity for all, it is important we continue to support a diverse and resilient economy.
- 1.9. We also recognise the strategic importance of the food and farming industry to the local economy. This sector can help us deliver thriving rural communities, providing jobs and growth both in food production but also in diversified industries such as renewable energy and tourism.
- 1.10. Our town, village and local centres also play a central role in the life of our communities and the future of our local economy. Their prosperity determines how well they serve our community's needs, shape people's perceptions of the district, and influences future investment in the wider area. Their vitality and vibrancy provide for better places in which people can live and work.
- 1.11. Improving Cherwell's economic future also requires consideration of how we manage and reduce the environmental impact of existing and proposed development. We must ensure development is of sufficient quality, sustainable, and respects the urban and rural character of the district.

**Theme 3: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities.**

1.12. Evidence suggests that only 10% of our health and well-being is determined by access to health care<sup>3</sup>. The remainder is influenced by housing, the quality of our work, income, education and skills, diet, access to green space and nature, sport and recreation, transport, family, friends and communities.

1.13. Significant benefits for our local communities can therefore be achieved through bringing together planning for housing, infrastructure and the economy with planning for residents’ health and well-being.

**Delivering on our Themes**

1.14. The table set out below shows the policy areas within the Plan that address each of the above themes.

Theme One: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development	Theme Two: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy	Theme Three: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity and Transport</li> <li>• Sustainable design and construction and Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Flood Risk</li> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Town Centres &amp; Retail</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Utilities and Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving Well Designed and Healthy Places</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Historic Environment</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.1 Overarching themes set out within the Cherwell Local Plan Review**

1.15. The Plan sets out an ambitious yet achievable Vision and identifies Strategic Objectives, that build on these themes to provide a clear framework for what the Plan should do. It also sets out policies for change and includes a strategy for the whole of Cherwell– **the spatial strategy** - for delivering required future growth (**Chapter 4**). It includes strategies and policies for our places – **the area strategies** (**Chapters 5 to 9**). It identifies appropriate areas and sites for development, such as

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.health.org.uk/blogs/health-care-only-accounts-for-10-of-a-population%E2%80%99s-health>

new homes, employment and community facilities. It sets out how valuable historic and natural environments are to be protected and enhanced. It also identifies circumstances where development is not appropriate.

1.16. The Plan also contains more detailed policies to guide development that sit under our three overarching themes described above: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy; Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development; and Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities. These are set out in **Chapters 10 to 12**.

1.17. Once it is adopted this Cherwell Local Plan 2040 will form part of the **Development Plan** for Cherwell along with retained policies from other Local Plans and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans produced by Parish or Town Councils. A flow diagram illustrating how planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan is shown by **Appendix 1**.

## How has the Local Plan been Produced?

1.18. Government planning policy and guidance is set out in the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** and **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development and is complemented by the PPG, which provides additional guidance for practitioners.

1.19. This Local Plan has been prepared in compliance with national policy. In particular, the NPPF states that for a local plan to be considered sound, it must comply with the legal and procedural requirements of plan making, such as the 'Duty-to-Cooperate' and demonstrate that it is:

- a. positively prepared
- b. justified
- c. effective, and
- d. consistent with national policy.

## How will new development be supported?

1.20. The Local Plan makes clear where and how new development would be supported. Much of the previously planned development that will help meet identified needs will be progressing to delivery through the consideration of planning applications in consultation with technical consultees and local communities. Infrastructure needs to support development identified in previous plans are considered in more detail as specific developments are progressed.

1.21. This Local Plan is supported by a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)<sup>4</sup> which sets out key infrastructure expected to deliver committed growth but also that required to accommodate new planned development. This may involve improvements to existing infrastructure or new works to ensure new homes and commercial development can be satisfactorily provided. However, we can only require developers to provide new infrastructure needed to support the development we identify. Wider needs must be met by infrastructure providers themselves.

1.22. Government funding can sometimes be accessed to support critical and strategic infrastructure but otherwise developer-led provision through legal agreements accompanying planning decisions and/ or the use of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (or equivalent) are the main means of funding. The Council is developing a proposed CIL for submission to Government alongside this Local Plan in its final form.

## How will we know if the Local Plan is successful?

1.23. We will carefully monitor the progress of the Plan and the performance of each policy. We will need to check whether Plan objectives are being met and whether plan development and infrastructure are delivered at the rate expected.

1.24. Although the Plan is intended for the next 20 years, there are some matters such as retail and employment where it is difficult to predict trends and needs beyond ten years. Policies are therefore, where appropriate, written to be flexible to respond to changing markets and unforeseen circumstances. The Plan, in accordance with national planning policy, must be reviewed every five years to ensure that it remains up to date and fit for purpose.

1.25. The methods by which we will monitor the Plan are set out in **Chapter 13**, the Monitoring Framework.

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<sup>4</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

## 2. Chapter 2: Context for the Cherwell Local Plan 2040

### Introduction

- 2.1. This Chapter provides the policy context that has informed preparation of the Plan, including identifying some of the key issues, needs and opportunities facing the district. These inform the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** set out in **Chapter 3** and in turn the remainder of the Plan.

### Policy Framework

#### National

- 2.2. In Chapter 1 we explained the policy requirements and relationship of this Plan with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). In preparing this Plan we have also considered other existing Government policy including, for example, the Environment Act 2021 and emerging policies which address climate change and energy efficiency. Whilst acknowledging that the Government is signalling changes to the planning system, the Plan has been prepared under the current legislative and policy frameworks.

#### Oxfordshire and Beyond

##### *Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire*

- 2.3 This report, published in 2021, was commissioned in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) and the district and city councils. It states:

*'This report addresses the question of how Oxfordshire can sustain the momentum of the last decade to achieve net-zero emissions. While substantial progress has been made to decouple economic growth from carbon emissions, driven by cleaner electricity supply and increased energy efficiency, there remains a significant way to go to decarbonise transport, reduce reliance on fossil fuels for heating, and protect and enhance carbon stored in the natural environment. Maintaining the same rate of emissions reduction in Oxfordshire will require relatively greater investment locally, in building retrofit, cleaner heating systems and electric vehicles; and cultural and behavioural changes such as active travel, dietary changes and reduced energy demand.'*

- 2.4 Whilst not a policy document it provided a number of cross-sector conclusions and recommendations on potential 'pathways' to achieving net-zero carbon emissions involving:

- *the expansion of solar generating capacity in Oxfordshire*
- *a major programme of retrofit for existing homes and non-domestic buildings*
- *prioritising climate goals when planning for new homes and developments*
- *substantial increases in electricity demand, driven by heat and transport, requiring grid reinforcement and flexibility provided by various means*
- *the phase out of gas boilers and fossil-fuelled modes of transport*
- *a need for innovation in food production to maintain or increase output while agricultural land makes way for development, and Oxfordshire grows its fair share of biofuels*
- *protection and restoration of ecosystems and natural capital, for enhanced sequestration and increased biodiversity.*

### **Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework**

2.5 The Government has described the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (the OxCam Arc) as a globally significant area that lies between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge. It comprises the five counties of Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire (**Figure 2.1**). It supports over two million jobs, adds over £110 billion to the national economy annually, and houses one of the fastest growing economies in England.

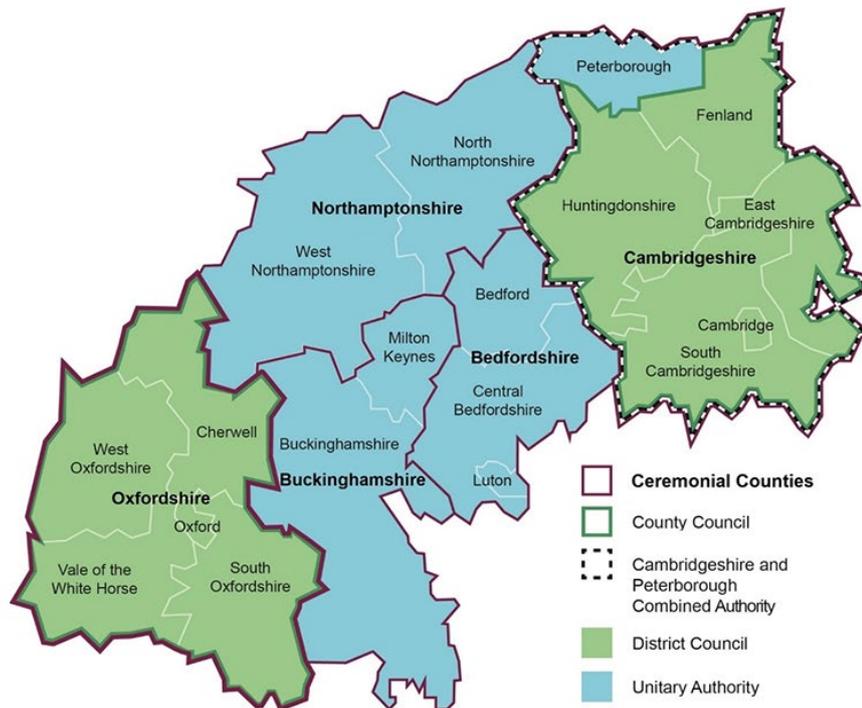
2.6 In July 2021, the Government announced that it was preparing a Spatial Framework for the Arc with an anticipated completion of the document in 2023. Once finalised, the Spatial Framework would be given the same status as the National Planning Policy Framework and would inform both plan preparation and decision making. In 2022, the status of the project is uncertain, but it is still important this Local Plan reflects the emerging vision for this key area. In particular, the Arc provides opportunities to:

- support long-term sustainable economic growth across the area
- help to make the area a brilliant place to live, work and travel in – for existing residents and future communities alike, and
- support lasting improvements to the environment, green infrastructure and biodiversity<sup>5</sup>.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962455/Spatial\\_framework\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962455/Spatial_framework_policy_paper.pdf)



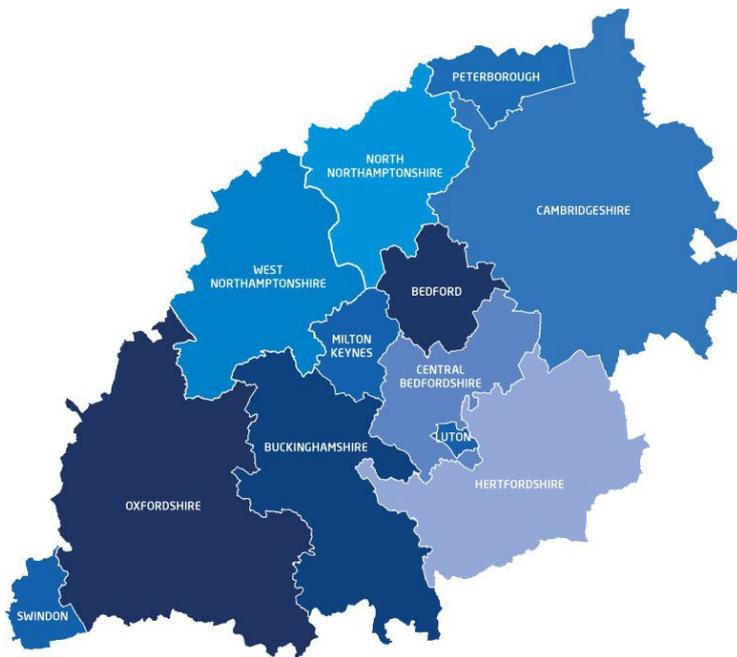
**Figure 2.1 Oxford-Cambridge Arc**

***England's Economic Heartland***

2.7 England's Economic Heartland is a partnership of councils and local enterprise partners that provide leadership and coordinate investment on strategic infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth. It covers the area from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire (**Figure 2.2**). The partnership has prepared a series of strategies that have helped to inform the Local Plan including:

- Regional Transport Strategy, 'Connecting People, Transforming Journeys' (February 2021)<sup>6</sup>
- Decarbonisation Roadmap Phase One Report (November 2021), and
- Three-Year Business Plan 2022 to 2025 (May 2022).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com/our-work/our-strategy/>



**Figure 2.2 England’s Economic Heartland**

***Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership***

2.8 The Economic growth strategy for Oxfordshire is led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). The current Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), prepared by OXLEP in 2016<sup>7</sup> encourages economic investment across a ‘Knowledge Spine’ which includes the ‘Science Vale’ in the south of the County, extending northwards to Oxford and Bicester (**Figure 2.3**). The SEP also highlights the importance of other projects in our market towns and rural areas including rural broadband and providing for sustainable jobs.

2.9 The LEP has also prepared the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy<sup>8</sup> (LIS) and the Local Investment Plan<sup>9</sup>. The LIS sets out an ambitious plan to build on Oxfordshire’s strong foundations and world-leading assets, to deliver transformative economic growth, which is clean and sustainable and delivers prosperity for all communities across the county. Its vision for Oxfordshire is for it to have ‘*A vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world-leading economy – driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence*’<sup>10</sup>. The Investment Plan converts some of these ambitions into firm commitments that are already starting to be brought forward.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20SEP.pdf>

<sup>8</sup>

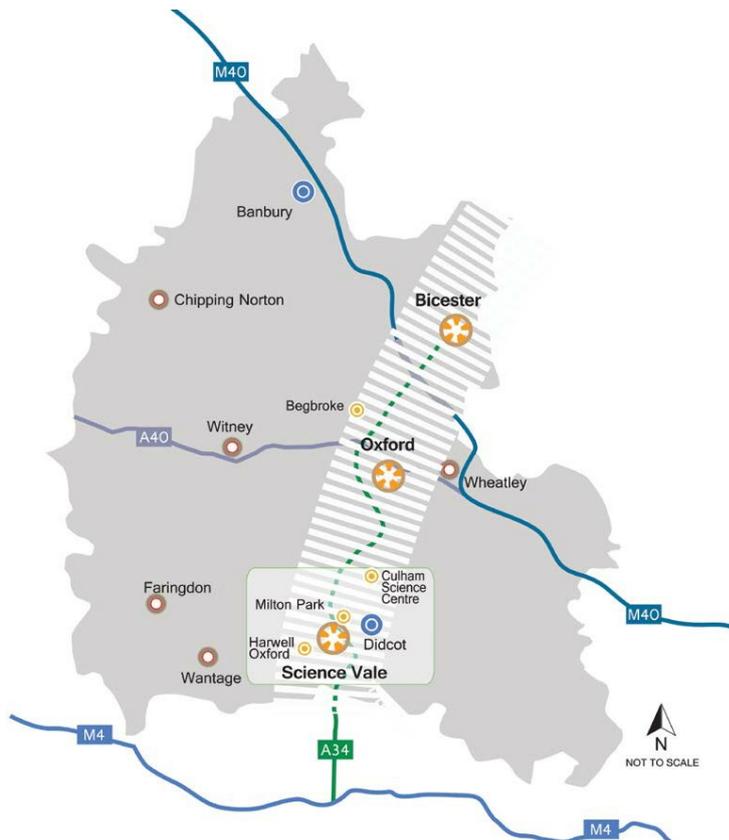
[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20Local%20Industrial%20Strategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20Local%20Industrial%20Strategy_0.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>

<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/The%20Oxfordshire%20Investment%20Plan%20-%20August%202020.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/about/our-strategies>

2.10 The LEP has also published an Oxfordshire Energy Strategy<sup>11</sup> that sets out an ambitious framework to enable the County to be at the forefront of energy innovation to foster clean growth. In 2021, and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the LEP also published an economic recovery plan ‘At the vanguard of UK Recovery: *Delivering Economic Growth for Oxfordshire and UK plc*’<sup>12</sup>, which explores how Oxfordshire can lead the nation’s economic recovery.



**Figure 2.3 Oxfordshire’s Knowledge Spine**

***Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Growth Deal***

2.11 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly known as the Oxfordshire Growth Board) is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners. Following an extensive public review in 2020, the Partnership adopted its new name and established a new purpose, which is to:

<sup>11</sup>[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Energy%20strategy%20placemat%20230x210%200321\\_0.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Energy%20strategy%20placemat%20230x210%200321_0.pdf)

<sup>12</sup>[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20ERP%20Action%20Plan%20-%20FINAL%20%2826th%20February%202021%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20ERP%20Action%20Plan%20-%20FINAL%20%2826th%20February%202021%29_0.pdf)

- coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits
- support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government’s stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world, and
- seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the joint committee’s constituent local authority members.

2.12 In April 2021, the then Growth Board approved a strategic vision for Oxfordshire to 2050<sup>13</sup>.

2.13 One of the Partnership’s functions was to oversee the projects set out in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal agreed with Government in 2018. The Deal involved Oxfordshire receiving up to £215 million of central government funding to help support infrastructure provision and, in particular, the delivery of 100,000 homes across the county by 2031 and the provision of additional affordable housing and enhanced economic productivity.

### ***Oxfordshire’s Local Nature Partnership***

2.14 Oxfordshire’s Local Nature Partnership (LNP) was formed in 2021. Its purpose is to radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it is given, helping to make Oxfordshire a county where people and nature thrive. It has three priorities: to support the creation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire, to enable investment in natural capital so as to protect and to enhance green infrastructure; and a People and Nature Strategy, with a view to promoting greater equity in access to nature. The LNP is looking to develop a strong-relationship with Cherwell District Council so that green infrastructure policies and nature recovery plans are aligned.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/oxfordshire-strategic-vision/>

## Cherwell Today

- 2.15 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted in 2015 provides a sustainable development strategy to meet the needs of Cherwell to 2031. A 'Partial Review' of that Plan, adopted in 2020, subsequently helps to ensure that the identified quantum of unmet housing needs for Oxford of 4,400 homes to be met within Cherwell was planned for. This Local Plan looks beyond 2031 and up to 2040, establishing a longer term vision for Cherwell.
- 2.16 Cherwell is one of the fastest growing areas in the south-east, although it remains a predominantly rural district. It has a population of approximately 150,000 people mainly concentrated in the three urban centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. Banbury is the largest settlement with 32% of the population, Bicester has 24% and Kidlington 13%. The rural areas, with its many small villages, accounts for the remaining 31% of Cherwell's population<sup>14</sup>.
- 2.17 Over the last twenty years the population of Cherwell has grown by over 16% and it is forecast to grow further to approximately 170,000 by 2043<sup>15</sup>. Much of this increase is as a result of significant housing and employment growth, particularly at Banbury, Bicester and in the Kidlington area, as proposed by the previous Local Plans. Cherwell's location, at the fulcrum of two strong and growing knowledge intensive economies: the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and the Oxfordshire Knowledge spine, influence the scale, form and nature of economic activity in our area (refer to **Figures 2.1 and 2.3**).
- 2.18 Cherwell has excellent transport links. The M40 motorway passes through Cherwell close to Banbury and Bicester, and there are direct rail links from Banbury and Bicester to London, Birmingham and Oxford. The rail link from Oxford to Bicester has recently been upgraded as part of the wider East West Rail (EWR) Project, which will link Oxford with Cambridge. A new station at Water Eaton (Oxford Parkway) linking Oxford and London Marylebone via Bicester also opened in 2015.
- 2.19 The district is characterised by distinctive and diverse towns and villages. Most of our villages and hamlets retain their traditional character. There are approximately 2,300 listed buildings, 60 Conservation Areas, 38 scheduled monuments and 11 nationally recognised registered parks and gardens, and a historic civil war battlefield in the district. In some areas the MOD's presence has influenced the built environment,

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<sup>14</sup> <https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OxIS-Stage-1-Technical-Report-v1.4-Chapter-2-160322.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.varbes.com/population/cherwell-population>

with Bicester Airfield and former RAF Upper Heyford being of national historic importance.

2.20 Cherwell's natural environment also provides contrasting characteristics making an important contribution to the area's strength. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal run north-south through the district. There are Ironstone Downs in the north-west, which include a very small area within the Cotswolds Natural Landscape.

2.21 Part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies in the south-west of the district, north of the boundary with Oxford City. There are also several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other designated areas of ecological or geological interest, including Otmoor. Much of the southern part of the district lies within the Oxford Green Belt.

2.22 Our previous planning strategy for meeting Cherwell's needs, as expressed in the 2015 Local Plan, aimed to manage the growth of Cherwell up to 2031 and can be summarised as:

- focusing most 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, and
- aiming to strictly control development in open countryside.

2.23 This previous strategy will result in over 20,000 additional people living in Bicester and over 14,000 at Banbury over the 2011 to 2031 period.

2.24 Planned housing growth in the 2015 Plan was higher than seen previously and reflected the economic potential of Cherwell, the aspirations for economic development, and the high level of housing need. In addition to the 2015 Plan, the Council's Partial Review Local Plan allocated a further 4,400 homes to meet our share of the unmet needs of Oxford to 2031. These allocations were focused north of Oxford, south of Kidlington, and along the A44 corridor at Yarnton and Begbroke, being the area of the district with the strongest economic and social relationships with Oxford and being fully integrated with the County Council's sustainable transport policies. The 2015 Plan has been successful in delivering this growth, broadly in accordance with the strategy.

2.25 Whilst this Plan will replace and supersede the majority of the existing policies that date back to either the 2015 plan, or even the 1996 plan, some policies from these plans will be 'saved'. Any saved policies are clearly shown by **Appendix 2**.

2.26 This Local Plan 2040 will ensure that Cherwell has a comprehensive suite of up to date policies to best meet the needs of Cherwell up to 2040.

## Cherwell's Issues, Needs and Opportunities

2.27 The work that we have undertaken in reviewing national, regional and local strategies and policies, local priorities and through consultation and engagement with the local community and stakeholders, has identified the following key issues to be addressed by this Local Plan.

### Climate Change

2.28 The Council's Climate Action Framework (2020) supports its Climate Climate Action declaration by seeking to enable a zero carbon Cherwell by 2030. It highlights the influence and leadership of the Council with regard to the development of planning policy and in taking planning decisions. It sets out the following aims for transport, connectivity and planning:

*'Through our Local Planning role and work with partners we will':*

- *Prioritise digital infrastructure and co-working facilities over road building: connectivity, enabled by full fibre broadband across Oxfordshire will replace the need for many journeys*
- *Increase the number of people walking and cycling in conjunction with the healthy place shaping principles: it will be accessible and normal*
- *Accelerate the rise of electric, shared and autonomous travel*
- *Increasingly deprioritise journeys by single occupancy private car*
- *Promote net zero carbon new developments, with high fabric standards, renewables maximised on site and low embodied carbon*
- *Continue to spearhead the development of the nationally important true zero carbon Eco-town development.'*

2.29 The need for climate action is therefore central to this Local Plan.

### Housing

2.30 The number, affordability and availability of suitable homes to meet the needs of our residents is a major issue. Average property prices in the district are consistently higher than in England. In September 2019, the average property price in Cherwell (£315,000) was 31% higher than across England (£240,000). The mean affordability ratios are now 9.3 times workplace-based earnings in Cherwell, compared with 10.7 in South-East England and 7.8 times in England<sup>16</sup>. Our population is also ageing and there is a significant number of local residents who have specialist housing needs.

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<sup>16</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandanddwales/2020>

We therefore need to plan for a mix of homes across the district that deliver a range and mix of property types and sizes that include supported living for the elderly, as well as accessible and adaptable homes for those with physical or learning difficulties.

2.31 We already require new affordable housing provision on all major developments and because of the higher level of residential development we have seen in recent years, its provision has increased accordingly. However, the affordability of both market and rented housing, particularly social rent tenure, remains a key issue for us. The important contribution that community led, self-build and custom housebuilding can make to meeting need is also recognised.

2.32 Many Cherwell residents look to Oxford for work and leisure activities. Banbury has its own hinterland, which extends into South Northamptonshire and to a lesser extent, West Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. In our rural areas, villages are now predominantly places to live in, and commute from, as the traditional rural economy has declined. London also has a significant commuting influence in the district. However, we recognise that post-pandemic, remote and hybrid working have become the norm for many.

## **Economy**

2.33 A strong and resilient local economy is crucial to Cherwell's prosperity and the creation of well paid, high-skilled jobs for our local residents. Cherwell provides 34% of the total of 6.5 million square metres commercial floorspace in Oxfordshire. Over the last 10 years the district has had an economic activity rate of 80%, which is above the regional and national averages. Unemployment has continued to fall in line with national trends<sup>17</sup>.

2.34 Cherwell has a slightly smaller scientific, technical and education sector when compared to Oxfordshire as a whole and wage levels remain lower than surrounding areas. However, Cherwell's work-based earnings are comparable to Oxfordshire and earnings have risen in the last 5 years.

2.35 As well as the traditional employment sectors of industrial, manufacturing and logistics, other sectors of the economy are important to local prosperity. For example, tourism is a vital component of the national and local economy and can help support local services and facilities, provide employment, promote regeneration and help preserve the natural and historic environment. It can include day visits by local people through to visits from overseas. Despite the adverse

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx>

effects of the pandemic, tourism spending in Cherwell is on an upwards trajectory, and there is the opportunity to expand this sector further by, for example, promoting the unique heritage and landscape of the district.

2.36 Agriculture and food production still form an important part of the local economy. The importance of resilience in the food supply chain has been highlighted by the pandemic. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that the provision of community gardens and allotments enable people and communities to produce their own food and contributes to improvements in their health and well-being.

2.37 In 2021, there were approximately 80,000 jobs (52,000 full time and 25,000 part time) in Cherwell. This is an increase of 11.1% (8,000 jobs) since 2015 that is more than the percentage increase in jobs experienced in the South-East (2.1%) and England (5.7%) over the same six-year period<sup>18</sup>.

2.38 The Council recognises the need to have strong policies to support the local economy, particularly as it continues to restart, recover and renew following the pandemic and the continuing shocks to the global economy from the international situation, particularly the rising cost of energy, food, and raw materials.

### **Town Centres and Retail**

2.39 Retail is one of the top employment sectors in Cherwell with retail premises making up 18% of Cherwell's total business floorspace (338,000 m<sup>2</sup> in 2019). From 2000 to 2019, Cherwell experienced a 36% growth on retail floor space (89,000 m<sup>2</sup>), performing strongly when compared to retail growth in Oxfordshire and England. Along with Oxford City, Cherwell provides 30% of the floorspace for the retail sector in Oxfordshire.

2.40 However, our town centres that were already under pressure before the pandemic from changing retail patterns, including online shopping and out of town developments, need support to safeguard their future viability and to maintain them as centres for our communities. This may mean encouraging uses other than retail in our town centres to increase footfall by, for example, providing more leisure, residential, community and business space.

2.41 The Council and our local residents also understand that good quality, safe, well maintained and accessible public spaces are important to the success and local pride in our urban centres.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157323/report.aspx>

## **Community Facilities, Outdoor Sport, Indoor Recreation and Open Space**

- 2.42 The pandemic reinforced our understanding that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for our health and well-being. It is also important that we have good quality and accessible community buildings where neighbours can meet, and where social networks and support can be fostered.
- 2.43 The Local Plan needs to ensure that new open space, sport and recreation and community provision in Cherwell meets identified deficiencies and that provision follows best practice and meets the specific needs of local residents and sports clubs. We also recognise that nationally and locally there is an increased emphasis on healthy place-shaping and the need to protect our existing, and secure new, green and blue infrastructure.
- 2.44 We also recognise that the loss of existing services and facilities, such as bus services, pubs and local shops, has been a particular issue for the whole of Cherwell in recent years, but it is our villages and rural areas that have been affected the most.

### **Transport**

- 2.45 The Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)<sup>19</sup> provides the strategic framework for transport across the County. The LTCP recognises connectivity as a key factor enabling sustainable growth with an emphasis on the role digital communications have in a dynamic local economy.
- 2.46 Of particular relevance to the Local Plan vision and objectives is Oxfordshire County Council's LTCP vision:
- “Our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision is for an inclusive and safe net zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive. It will tackle inequality, be better for health, wellbeing and social inclusivity and have zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries. It will also enhance our natural and historic environment and enable the county to be one of the world's leading innovation economies. Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.”
- 2.47 Our Local Plan policies need to complement those of the transport plan by seeking to reduce the need to travel, discourage individual private vehicle journeys as well

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp>

as promote walking, cycling, public and shared transport. The Plan will also support greener transport technology such as the increasing demand for electric vehicle charging points in line with the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy,<sup>20</sup>. It will also need to provide new green spaces for leisure and travel and encourage the provision of new infrastructure for cycling, walking and wheelchair users. We understand that supporting active travel also leads to health benefits and connected communities.

## Health

- 2.48 Statistics from the 2011 Census suggest that perceived health in Cherwell is generally good with 85% of the population reporting themselves to be in 'very good' or 'good' health. Some 11.2% state they are in 'fair' health, with only 3% and 0.8% in 'bad' or 'very bad' health respectively. The 2011 Census also found that 85.9% of the population in Cherwell state that their day-to-day activities are not limited by their health and 8% reported that their day-to-day activities are limited a little by their health.
- 2.49 However, whilst many residents enjoy good health and wellbeing the district also has areas where people experience significant health inequalities. This is reflected in differences in life expectancy that can differ as much as seven years between wealthier and more deprived communities. Public Health England estimate that life expectancy is 7.4 years lower for men and 6.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas in Cherwell than in the least deprived areas.
- 2.50 In Cherwell, poor health and wellbeing are associated with obesity: 63.2% of people aged 18 or over in Cherwell were classified as overweight or obese (2017/18 data); low levels of physical activity: 32.6% of adults do not achieve at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week; poor mental health, including isolation and loneliness, and smoking, drug and alcohol consumption. The prevalence of these risk factors together with an ageing population are driving an increase in long-term conditions and disability. Common conditions include high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and common mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. The proportion of patients recorded with diabetes in Cherwell is significantly higher than the Oxfordshire average. The mortality rate for females due to Dementia and Alzheimer's disease was also above the national average in 2015 and 2016. Although the prevalence of such conditions is generally worse in areas of deprivation, these issues affect the whole population.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/OxfordshireElectricVehicleInfrastructureStrategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/OxfordshireElectricVehicleInfrastructureStrategy_0.pdf)

## **Biodiversity and the Natural Environment**

- 2.51 Maintaining and enhancing a healthy and stable natural environment contributes to the district's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit and is also important to its economic prosperity. The natural environment provides crucial services of value including fertile soils, clean water, flood prevention and flood storage, and access to nature can contribute to people's health and well-being.
- 2.52 The most recent national State of Nature report (2019) highlights that there has been a 13% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since the 1970s despite the legislative and policy interventions that have occurred. It is important that the value of the natural environment and the need to improve biodiversity is fully recognised in planning for future development and Natural Capital Mapping recently produced for the district can assist in this.
- 2.53 Government policy now requires development to secure biodiversity net gain in a measured way. Under the Environment Act 2021 nearly all planning permissions will need to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from a date of implementation yet to be confirmed but presently expected in November 2023. Biodiversity Net Gain will be measured using a biodiversity metric tool with habitats having to be secured for at least 30 years.
- 2.54 There will also be a strengthened legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, new biodiversity reporting requirements for local authorities, and mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies or 'LNRS'. Preparation of the Local Plan will need to evolve in response to these new statutory requirements.
- 2.55 As required under the Environment Act 2021, a Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be developed to identify priorities for nature recovery. At a more local level there are various measures that can be incorporated into new development to ensure that it can be constructed in a more nature friendly way to produce environments where people and nature can thrive together.
- 2.56 Tranquil areas can be beneficial to our health by helping to reduce stress, and may also benefit the economy in attracting visitors to the area. The CPRE's tranquillity map (2007) indicates that our most tranquil areas are concentrated in the north-west of the district in the ironstone downs, including part of the Cotswolds Natural Landscape and in the south of the district in Otmoor.
- 2.57 Light pollution mapping shows high levels of light pollution above Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Yarnton, however there are still significant areas of the district with

relatively low levels of light pollution. Whilst artificial light can in some cases be necessary and beneficial it can also be the source of annoyance, have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside, the tranquillity of an area and enjoyment of the night sky, and be harmful to wildlife. Reducing light pollution can also assist in achieving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

## **Heritage**

2.58 Our heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of international significance. We also have Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site on our doorstep. We are all familiar with listed buildings and churches, but heritage assets also include historic parklands and gardens such as those at Rousham and Wroxton, and historic battlefields, such as at Cropredy. Many of our important heritage features are hidden underground and these are often designated as ancient monuments. The district also contains the former RAF bases at Bicester and Upper Heyford that are nationally significant heritage assets and it is important they are protected by policy. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and we need to conserve them in a way that is appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to our quality of life and that of future generations.

## 3 Chapter 3: Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

### Spatial Vision

- 3.1 The Plan needs to be clear in what we are aiming to achieve and the priorities we are seeking to address. We need a clear vision that is both specific to Cherwell and deliverable by 2040. Our Spatial Vision therefore describes the future that we are seeking to create for Cherwell. In other words, **what type of place do we want Cherwell to be in 2040 and beyond?** It is an ambitious, yet achievable vision to help us deliver good growth, support sustainable development, address the challenge of climate change and protect the environment, whilst also supporting local communities and businesses.
- 3.2 Our Spatial Vision for the Local Plan has been influenced by many factors including the issues and needs of our places, evidence we have gathered, and what our local communities and businesses have told us. We have also been mindful of vision statements adopted by other bodies, including those for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and England's Economic Heartland.

### **Our Vision for Cherwell – what type of place do we want Cherwell to be in 2040?**

The Cherwell Local Plan Review will ensure that by 2040:

- 1) We achieve our climate action targets. Our energy production will be sustainable and new developments are built to high energy efficient standards.
- 2) There is a choice of well-designed market and affordable homes to meet our needs and neighbourhoods are sustainable, healthy, vibrant and cohesive communities, that promote good health, wellbeing and equality. They respond positively to their local social and natural context and seek to address the challenges of our growing and ageing communities.
- 3) Working with our partners, investment in social and physical infrastructure related to development is timely. Residents of new development have convenient access to excellent health, education, open space, sport and recreational activities when and where they need it. The Plan has helped to reduce inequalities in health, along with poverty and social inclusion and supported well-being. Poverty and social exclusion have been reduced.
- 4) The Plan has supported a sustainable, flexible and resilient economy that is vibrant, inclusive with good transport links and sound infrastructure, supported by excellent educational facilities to foster the workforce skills required for the future. The economy has grown to provide more diverse employment for our increasing population and reduce the need for our residents to travel outside the district for work.
- 5) Our urban areas will build on their ongoing economic success, take full advantage of new technologies and the green economy and by sharing knowledge and common resources to take an important role in the regional and national economy.
- 6) Cherwell continues to be a caring place known for fostering and retaining young talent, attracting business and investment and reducing poverty and social isolation.
- 7) Our distinctive natural and built environment and our rich historic heritage is cherished, protected and enhanced. Cherwell maintains its rural character where its landscapes, its vast range of natural and built heritage and its market towns define its distinctiveness.
- 8) The district's biodiversity resource is enhanced. Our natural environment is more diverse. Social, economic and ecological resilience provides the capacity to adapt to change, including minimising flood risk. Our heritage assets, visitor economy and vibrant cultural offer is further enhanced with improved access.
- 9) Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington have re-shaped and adapted with improved quality public realm and a greater mix of uses to maintain their roles as attractive, vibrant, retail, cultural and social centres for our communities and visitors.
- 10) Heyford Park and other areas of planned growth benefit from enhanced community facilities, sustainable transport links and other infrastructure investment required to support their existing and new neighbourhoods.
- 11) Our rural communities are realising their potential by making the most of new technologies, supported by small business growth and transport services that are more responsive to their needs. New rural models of transport and service provision complement existing services for a more sustainable and well-connected (including digital) rural living. Our villages are places where communities thrive, as well as benefitting from being well connected to our towns, and major employment and service centres.

## Strategic Objectives

3.3 To achieve our **Spatial Vision**, we have established a series of **Strategic Objectives** grouped under our three overarching themes that run throughout the Plan. These central themes are consistent with the Government's social, economic and environmental objectives for the planning system to achieve sustainable development and are the following:

- Theme 1 – Meeting the challenge of climate change and ensuring sustainable development
- Theme 2 – Maintaining and developing a sustainable local economy, and
- Theme 3 – Building healthy and sustainable communities.

3.4 The Strategic Objectives are shown in **Figure 3.1**.



### **Theme 1: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development**

**SO 1:** Promote net-zero carbon new developments, with high sustainable construction standards, and low embodied carbon to ensure new developments deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy; and support a local zero-carbon energy system that reduces Cherwell’s reliance on global fossil fuels and prioritises community energy.

**SO 2:** Deliver developments that efficiently use local natural resources (particularly water), that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves.

**SO 3:** Improve air quality. Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of Cherwell’s natural capital assets, such as soils, woodlands, hedges and ponds in order to capture and store carbon.

**SO 4:** Maintain and improve the natural and built environment including biodiversity, landscape, green Infrastructure and waterways and by ensuring new development achieves high quality design standards and conserves and enhances the natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets of Cherwell.

**SO 5:** Prioritise active travel and increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport, ensuring high standards of connectivity and accessibility to services for all. Reduce dependency on the private car as a mode of travel, facilitating the creation of a net-zero-carbon transport network.



### **Theme 2: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy**

**SO 6:** Support a strong and sustainable economy within the district, including the visitor economy and agriculture, and ensure sufficient land is allocated to meet our identified needs.

**SO 7:** Increase education, training and skills, and encourage investment in the local workforce; improve and enhance digital connectivity and infrastructure, to support a sustainable and resilient economy, reduce inequality and help to reduce unnecessary transport.

**SO 8:** Support Cherwell’s urban centres, including where beneficial, redevelopment and renewal, to maintain and enhance their vitality, viability, distinctiveness and safety.

**SO 9:** Recognise the economic benefits of preserving and enhancing the character and beauty of Cherwell’s built and natural heritage, and landscape, and the wider benefits from its natural capital and ecosystem services to ensure Cherwell remains attractive to business and as a place to live, work and visit for current and future communities.

	<p><b>Theme 3: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities.</b></p> <p><b>SO 10:</b> Meet the housing needs of all sectors of Cherwell’s communities, in a way that creates sustainable, well designed, safe, inclusive and mixed communities, promoting inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods.</p> <p><b>SO 11:</b> Create sustainable, well-designed, distinctive places where healthy behaviours (being active, having opportunities to access a healthy diet, and having good social connections) are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging, safety, and a sense of community.</p> <p><b>SO 12:</b> Focus development in Cherwell’s sustainable locations, making efficient and effective use of land, conserving and enhancing the countryside, landscape, the natural environment, and the setting of its towns and villages.</p> <p><b>SO 13:</b> Protect and enhance the historic environment, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and archaeology, and promoting inclusive access to local assets where appropriate.</p> <p><b>SO 14:</b> Provide sufficient accessible, well maintained good quality services, facilities and infrastructure, to meet health, education, transport, open space, sport, recreations, cultural, social and other community needs.</p>
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**Figure 3.1 Strategic Objectives informing the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040**

## 4. Chapter 4: Strategy for Development in Cherwell – the Spatial Strategy

### Introduction

- 4.1. Implementing the **Spatial Vision** for Cherwell District up to 2040, as shown by **Chapter 3**, will be through our **Spatial Strategy** that informs decision making about the direction and nature of development in our district. The Spatial Strategy identifies the appropriate level of housing to plan for, the amount of employment land to meet our needs to maintain and develop our local economy and to provide a range of services, as well as the facilities and infrastructure we need. It also ensures we address the challenges of climate change, support biodiversity gain, achieve sustainable development and to protect the environment.
- 4.2. Our **Spatial Strategy** for Cherwell District is shown below by **Figures 4.1 and 4.2**.
- 4.3. The Spatial Strategy is underpinned by six core (strategic) policies:
- **Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change** – which sets out criteria for development to ensure they respond to the challenge of climate change appropriately.
  - **Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing, ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
  - **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in Cherwell according to their role and function
  - **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across Cherwell in appropriate locations
  - **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** – which ensures that new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment, and
  - **Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt** – which ensures the continued protection of the Oxford Green Belt within Cherwell.

## Area Strategies

4.4. We have also developed five area strategies, which ensure we plan appropriately for different parts of Cherwell, taking account of what makes them locally distinctive and focused on their individual needs. These are set out in **Chapters 5 to 9** (and refer to **Figure 4.2**). The five area strategies are for:

- **Banbury**
- **Bicester**
- **Kidlington**
- **Heyford Park, and**
- **The Rural Areas** (i.e., the rest of the district).

<b>Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 - Spatial Strategy</b>	
<b>Banbury</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banbury will form the basis for some growth up to 2040, albeit to a lesser extent than Bicester, and at a reduced level compared to our previous Plan adopted in 2015.</li> <li>• Town Centre regeneration will be a focus. Masterplanning will be supported.</li> </ul>
<b>Bicester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bicester will continue to form the main location for new development within the district as part of the Council's commitment to deliver a sustainable Garden Town, along with the associated sustainable, connectivity and green infrastructure, services and facilities needed.</li> <li>• Town Centre regeneration will also be a focus. Masterplanning will be supported.</li> </ul>
<b>Kidlington</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidlington is recognised as a Local Service Centre to reflect the role this area is already playing in providing housing to contribute to meeting the unmet housing need for Oxford City, but also to recognise its important role and highly sustainable location within Cherwell. Economic development will continue to be supported close to the Airport and nearby at Begbroke Park along with some strategic housing growth in this area, although there will be only limited allocations in the Green Belt.</li> <li>• The regeneration of Kidlington's Village Centre is also a priority. Masterplanning will be supported.</li> </ul>
<b>Heyford Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heyford Park is also recognised as a Local Service Centre to reflect its status as an existing location for strategic growth, with additional development identified in this plan, albeit with growth linked to future necessary infrastructure improvements for the area being secured and delivered. This recognises the area's long-term potential, helps to make the area more sustainable, but also links larger scale and longer-term growth to important and more strategic scale infrastructure delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth across the rest of the district will continue to be more limited, focusing on meeting local community and business needs and helping to support the vitality of these more rural settlements. Proposals for new dwellings will be directed towards the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well connected than the smaller villages.</li> <li>• Development in the open countryside will not be permitted unless consistent with the exception policies in this plan or within national policy. In the south of the District, the Green Belt will be maintained, with only limited allocations in the Green Belt where the Council consider there are exceptional circumstances to do so. In the north-west of the district, the small area lying within the Cotswolds National Landscape will also continue to be similarly protected in accordance with national policy.</li> </ul>

**Figure 4.1 Cherwell Local Plan 2040 – Spatial Strategy**

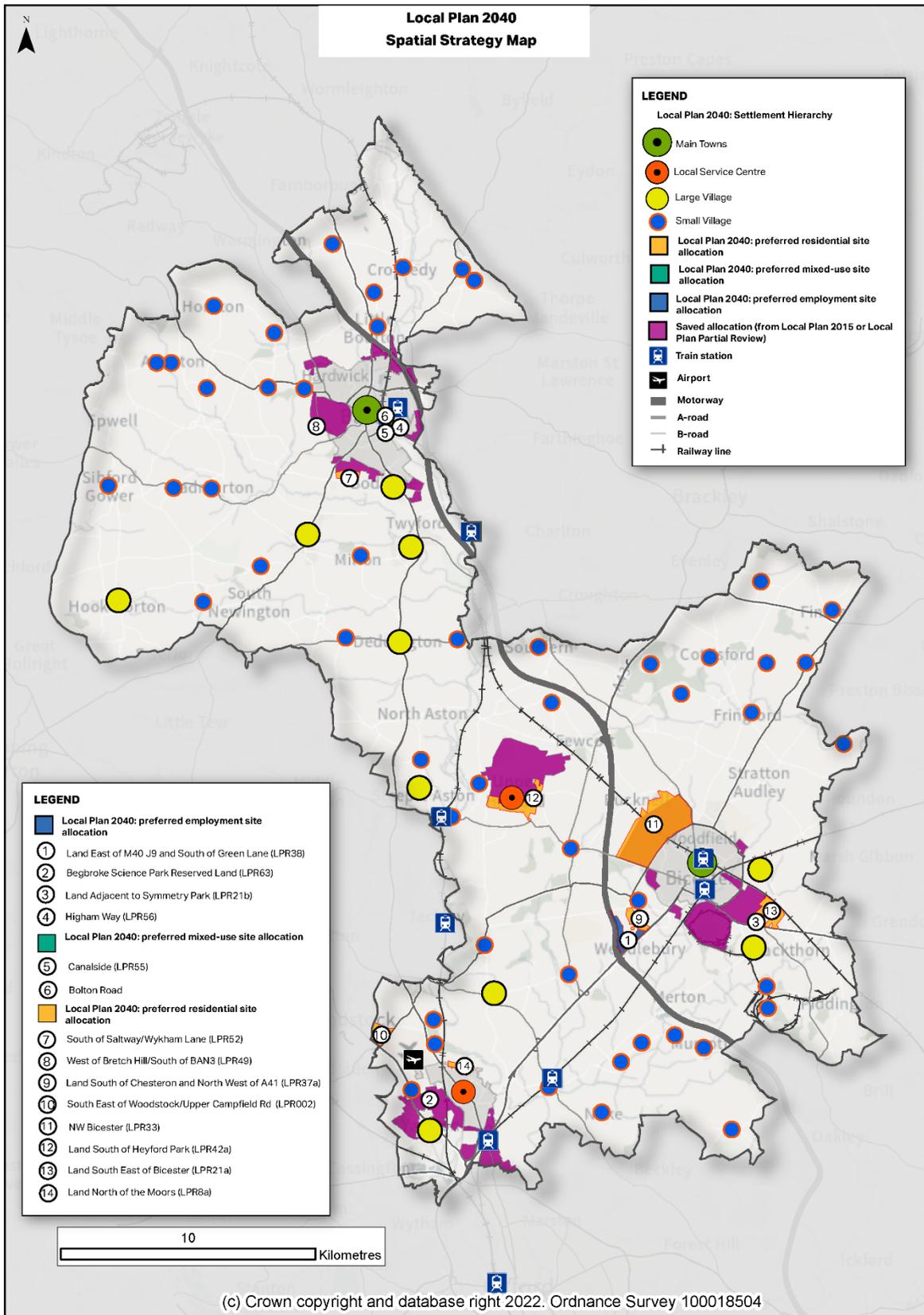


Figure 4.2 Key Diagram – Cherwell’s Spatial and Areas Strategies

## District Wide Policies

- 4.5. Finally, we have developed some district-wide policies that apply to Cherwell as a whole and these are set out in **Chapters 10 to 12**. These policies are needed to complement the **Spatial Strategy** and **Area Strategies** to help ensure the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives can be delivered successfully. These policies are locally specific and are important to help us meet the Plan's objectives.
- 4.6. In most cases, policies from previous Cherwell Local Plans have been replaced and updated by the policies set out in this Plan, but in some instances, it has been necessary to save some existing policies. These are clearly annotated and listed by **Appendix 2**.

## Responding to Climate Change

- 4.7. Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing society. A challenge recognised when the Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.8. Climate change impacts how we live now and in the future. Its impacts are already evident locally in the form of extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and extreme temperatures. The UK's ten hottest years on record have all been since 2002, and six of the ten wettest years have occurred since 1998<sup>21</sup>. It is estimated that the centre and south-east of the UK will experience the most extreme temperature peak rises in coming decades. At the same time, despite being an area of water stress, the catchments of the region's major rivers (e.g., the Thames basin, which includes the River Cherwell) will be most under threat from increased flooding in winter, increasing flood risk in Banbury and some of our villages.
- 4.9. Cherwell's Climate Action Framework<sup>22</sup> confirms the Council's commitment to become a carbon neutral organisation via a range of actions including reduced/cleaner travel, reduced electricity use, addition of solar panels, and retrofit council buildings with clean heat such as heat pumps or networks.
- 4.10. The Framework reiterates the commitment to enable the whole district to be net zero carbon by 2030. Recognising that the Council cannot achieve this alone, it commits to work with businesses, the other Oxfordshire District Councils and County Council (via Oxfordshire's Local Connectivity & Transport Plan, and OxLEP's Energy Strategy). Quoting the OxLEP Energy Strategy, Cherwell's Framework document recognises that to halve emissions by 2030, Oxfordshire needs:
- a 5x increase in solar electricity generation

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<sup>21</sup> <https://rmets.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/joc.6213>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/9828/climate-action-framework-2020>

- 40% of heating to be renewable
- new housing to meet very high energy standards
- retrofitting 4,000 existing homes each year to C-grade Energy Performance Certificate
- electric and active travel to become the new normal.

4.11. The above suite of actions were identified to realise the OxLEP Energy Strategy's goal of halving the County's emissions by 2030. To realise the rest of Cherwell's goal of net zero by the same date, Cherwell would need to go proportionally further on all of the above actions, or expand the suite of actions to include more sectors and carbon sequestration as well as cutting emissions at source.

4.12. In recognition of the importance of mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change this Local Plan is focused on achieving sustainable development, as far as this is possible.

4.13. **Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change**, sets out the overarching requirements that all development will need to consider and is complemented by a wider suite of over twenty policies set out in Chapter 10. This chapter addresses the 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development' thematic area and includes five policies relating to sustainable transport and connectivity and five further policies focused on energy and carbon reduction.

### **Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change**

All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing buildings) will be required to ensure and demonstrate that development is resilient to climate change impacts and that the impact of the development on climate change is mitigated. This will include:

- i. distributing growth to the most sustainable locations as defined in this Plan
- ii. making the most efficient use of land and buildings, having regard to the character of the locality
- iii. delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which prioritises sustainable travel options, including active travel
- iv. designing and delivering developments that, wherever possible, have zero carbon emissions and use resources efficiently, including water. All new residential development will be required to meet a water efficiency of no more than 110 litres/person/day mains water consumption.
- v. promoting the use of decentralised and renewable energy where appropriate
- vi. taking account of known physical and environmental constraints when considering locations for development
- vii. delivering developments that are designed to be resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling
- viii. minimising the risk of flooding and using sustainable drainage methods
- ix. minimising the effects of development on the microclimate through the provision of green infrastructure, including open space, water, planting and green roofs.
- x. minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology
- xi. using recycled and energy efficient materials, and
- xii. minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality.

## District Wide Housing Distribution

4.14. The Local Plan 2040 seeks to meet housing needs; to provide homes and access to the housing market and to deliver affordable housing for those priced out or unable to access housing at market prices. It also seeks to provide a mix and type of housing that will help meet the needs of the whole community.

4.15. With these aims, the Plan makes provision for at least 26,267 new homes to be delivered during the plan period (2020 to 2040) as set out by **Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution**. This reflects the Objectively Assessed Need for housing for Cherwell District up to 2040 as identified in the updated Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA 2022)<sup>23</sup>. The figure of 26,267 new homes comprises the housing requirement. As set out below, however, the Plan makes for provision in excess of the housing requirement.

4.16. This housing requirement takes account of the need to provide a limited number of additional homes to help meet Oxford's housing needs that it cannot meet itself. A Statement of Common Ground sets out the agreement between the two Councils on this approach<sup>24</sup>.

4.17. Overall, the Plan provides for 6,087 homes for Oxford's needs including the 4,400 homes that are already planned. This approach is based upon:

1. the identified housing scenario to inform Cherwell's need applying to Oxfordshire as a whole (the Economic Trend Scenario – as set out in the HENA 2022)
2. the annual housing delivery for Oxford City is constrained by the physical limitations of the administrative area for Oxford, and
3. an apportionment between Oxfordshire authorities also based on the Economic Trend HENA scenario with Cherwell contributing 32.8% of the identified unmet need for Oxford. This is broadly consistent with that agreed for the previous round of local plans, where Cherwell contributed 31% of the identified unmet need for Oxford.

4.18. This approach is considered to be a positive and pro-active approach to planning for Cherwell, ensuring that it makes an appropriate contribution towards unmet housing need and fulfils its commitments through the Duty-to-Cooperate. The approach also allows Cherwell to progress its Local Plan quickly, without having to

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<sup>23</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

<sup>24</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

wait for the other Oxfordshire authorities now the commitment to prepare a joint plan has ceased.

- 4.19. This approach does not seek to impose an approach on other Oxfordshire authorities, it is for the other authorities to identify an appropriate housing requirement for their own areas and to identify an appropriate contribution for contributing towards Oxford's unmet need.
- 4.20. If the total quantum of unmet need, following the completion of all Local Plan updates by Oxfordshire authorities, was lower than that set out above, then Cherwell would continue to make what it considers to be a positive and appropriate contribution to housing supply.
- 4.21. If the total quantum of unmet need, was ultimately found to be higher than that set out above, Cherwell will consider any shortfall in a future iteration of the Local Plan, most likely through its five-year review.
- 4.22. Cherwell has already made provision for 4,400 homes for Oxford, through its Local Plan Partial Review, adopted in 2020, and these allocations are saved through this Local Plan 2040. Our Local Plan Review, through the identified allocations, also makes provision for 'at least' 1,687 homes elsewhere in Cherwell (i.e., giving a total of 6,087 as set out above), that are accessible to Oxford, including for example at Bicester. Bicester is easily accessible to Oxford by sustainable transport modes. Specific sites and homes will not be identified for Oxford at Bicester, other than for the provision of 844 affordable homes, thus maintaining the commitment to deliver 50% affordable homes provision for Oxford as part of the identified unmet need. The Council will use the same mechanism for allocating affordable homes for Oxford City as for the saved Partial Review Plan allocations<sup>25</sup>.

## Sources of Housing Supply

4.23. A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the Plan period. These include:

- strategic allocations made within this Plan
- retained allocations from the Local Plan (2015) or Partial Review Plan (2020)
- any existing planning commitments

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/83/local-plans/215/partial-review-of-cherwell-local-plan-2011-2031-part-1-oxfords-unmet-housing-need>

- non-strategic allocations that may be included in the final version of this Plan or that are identified through Neighbourhood Plans (refer to **Core Policy 2**), and
- sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in this Local Plan 2040. These are sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.

4.24. The strategic allocations listed in **Core Policy 2** and outlined in more detail within the Area Strategies and are central to the delivery of the Local Plan 2040 and our Strategic Objectives for Cherwell.

4.25. To identify the strategic allocations, the Council has followed a comprehensive selection process, which began with an assessment of land at each of our most sustainable settlements (shown by our updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – HELAA)<sup>26</sup>. This approach helped to identify broad locations that offered the most suitable locations for development, which were then comprehensively tested, including by the Sustainability Appraisal, Transport Assessment, Viability Study, Landscape Sensitivity, and a review of responses to earlier stages of consultation<sup>27</sup>.

4.26. The scale of development at the identified strategic allocations will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.

4.27. Overall, the Plan makes provision for more housing than the identified requirement. This is to ensure there is a supply buffer, to provide greater Plan resilience and flexibility, and to help ensure the Plan can achieve and maintain a five-year housing land supply, as required by national policy.

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<sup>26</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

<sup>27</sup> ADD REFERENCE to SITE SELECTION TOPIC PAPER AND OTHER EVIDENCE

## Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution

The identified housing requirement for Cherwell for the 2020 to 2040 period is 26,267 homes. This includes 6,087 homes to contribute towards the unmet housing need of Oxford City.

This will ensure that the total housing need of 26,267 will be met.

The Plan provides for an additional 3,292 homes by 2040 (a total of 29,759 homes) in the interest of providing contingency.

Development will be permitted in order to achieve the housing supply set out below:

**Table 4.1: Cherwell Housing Requirement and Housing Supply 2020 to 2040**

Category	Number of Dwellings
<b>Housing Requirement</b>	
Cherwell's Requirement	20,180
Oxford's unmet need to be met within Cherwell	6,087
Total Housing Requirement*	26,267 (1,313 homes per annum)
<b>Housing Supply</b>	
Housing completions (Apr 2020 to Mar 2022)	2,367
Housing commitments (deliverable or developable supply)	18,287
New strategic site allocations (100 or more homes)	5,605
New provision for non-strategic sites (5-99 homes)	500
Total Windfalls	2,800
Total Housing Supply*	29,559
Contingency	3,292

### Strategic Allocations

Development will be supported at the new strategic site allocations shown below where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates at **Appendix 3** and in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan taken as a whole. A developer-led, comprehensive masterplanned approach will be expected with consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

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**Table 4.2 Strategic Allocations identified in the Local Plan 2040**

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Number of Dwellings	
Banbury and Drayton	West of Bretch Hill	220	1,320
Banbury	South of Saltway/ Wykham Lane	600	
	Canalside Regeneration	500	
Bicester/ Chesterton	Land South of Chesterton and North-West of A41	500	2,300
Bicester/ Bucknall	North-West Bicester <sup>a</sup>	1,000	
Bicester	Land South-East of Bicester	800	
Shipton on Cherwell	South-East of Woodstock Road/ Upper Campfield Road	450	750
Kidlington	North of the Moors	300	
Upper Heyford	Land at Heyford Park	1,235	1,235
<b>Overall Total</b>			<b>5,605</b>

<sup>a</sup> North-West Bicester is an existing allocation in the 2015 Local Plan for 6,000 dwellings – this plan increases the potential for this site to deliver an additional 1,000 homes (around 7,000 in total, although some of this falls outside of the plan period up to 2040).

### Non-Strategic Allocations

Development will also be supported at non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**Appendix 3**) or within Neighbourhood Plans, and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Non-strategic allocations at the Larger Villages will either be identified in this plan, adopted Neighbourhood Plans, or future parts of the Local Plan, in accordance with the identified housing requirement figures for the Larger Villages as shown within the **Rural Area Strategy**.

### Unmet Housing for Oxford

The quantum of housing for Oxford will be provided on sites identified that are either saved allocations from previous plans or new allocations made by this plan (**Table 4.3**).

**Table 4.3 Cherwell Sites contributing to Oxford Unmet Need**

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
North Oxford	PR6a – Land East of Oxford Road – Saved Allocation*	690
	PR6b – Land West of Oxford Road – Saved Allocation*	670
Kidlington	PR7a – Land South-East of Kidlington – Saved Allocation*	430
	PR7b – Land at Stratfield Farm – Saved Allocation*	120
Begbroke	PR8 – Land East of the A44 – Saved Allocation*	1,950
Yarnton	PR9 – Land West of Yarnton – Saved Allocation*	540
Bicester	Housing allocations at Bicester in this Plan and previous plans will make up the balance of Cherwell contributions to unmet housing need for Oxford.	1,687
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,087</b>

\* The Partial Review (PR) sites are 'Saved' from the 2020 Local Plan.

## Settlement Hierarchy

4.28. The Settlement Hierarchy (**Core Policy 3**) defines the settlements across Cherwell into four tiers based on an assessment of their population size, the number and range of facilities and services, their characteristics, accessibility, local employment opportunities and their functional relationship with their surrounding areas. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role:

- Main Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Larger Villages, and
- Smaller Villages.

4.29. The Local Plan 2040 protects and enhances the services and facilities provided by the Main Towns, Local Service Centres and our Larger Villages and ensures that any new facilities, homes and jobs are focused on these settlements. This will help to ensure the delivery of sustainable development because:

- these settlements provide the best range of services and facilities, and new development will help to support and enhance them
- locating new homes in the communities with the best services and facilities will enable the residents in the new homes to access them by walking, cycling and public transport, so reducing the need to travel by car
- it will enable more affordable homes to be built where there is most need, and
- the main service providers, including Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the County Council and emergency services, prefer this approach because it will help them to deliver their services more efficiently.

4.30. The Settlement Hierarchy provides a new categorisation for all settlements. The sustainability of the hierarchy has been reviewed to ensure that new development is focused in the most appropriate locations. The hierarchy allows for greatest flexibility in the largest and most sustainable locations, but is more restrictive at the smallest and least sustainable settlements.

4.31. Some development in smaller rural settlements can be very important to preserve their vitality and viability, but this needs to be carefully managed to ensure that the pattern of development overall is sustainable. For example, ensuring the strategy supports the maximum possible use of sustainable modes of transportation.

**Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy**

Development will be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and Settlement Classifications as set out below:

**Main Towns**

Main Towns are defined as settlements that have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the district through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Main Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development to provide the jobs and homes to help sustain, and where appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.

**Local Service Centres**

Local Service Centres are defined as large villages with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside the Main Towns.

**Larger Villages**

Larger Villages are defined as settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.

**Smaller Villages**

The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs.

<b>The Settlement Classifications are:</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Type of Development</b>
<b>Main Towns</b>	Banbury, Bicester	There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Main Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages.
<b>Local Services Centres</b>	Kidlington, Heyford Park	
<b>Larger Villages</b>	Adderbury, Ambrosden, Bletchingdon (part *), Bloxham, Bodicote, Deddington, Hook Norton, Kirtlington, Launton, Steeple Aston, Yarnton (*)	<p>Development outside the existing built areas of these settlements will only be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2040 or has been allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan, or future parts of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Development at washed over GB settlements should be in accordance with National Policy.</p>
<b>Smaller Villages</b>	Arncott, Balscote, Begbroke (*), Bourtons, Charlton on Otmoor (GB), Chesterton, Clifton, Cottisford, Cropredy, Drayton, Fencott (GB), Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Godington, Hardwick with Tusmore, Hempton, Lower Heyford, Upper Heyford, Horley, Hornton, Horton cum Studley (GB), Islip(GB), Mercott (GB), Middle Aston, Middleton Stoney, Milcombe (GB), Milton, Milcombe, Mixbury, Mollington, Newton Purcell with Shelswell, Noke (GB), Oddington (GB), Shenington with Alkerton, Shipton on Cherwell (GB), Sibford Gower, Souldern, Swalcliffe, Tadmarton, Thrupp (GB), Wardington, Weston on the Green (part GB), Wiggington, Wroxton,	<p>At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. in keeping with local character, and</li> <li>ii. proportionate in scale, and</li> <li>iii. meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Countryside</b>	Those villages not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the Open Countryside.	Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

(GB) These settlements are washed over by Green Belt. (\*) These settlements are inset to the Green Belt. (part GB) These settlements are partly in the Green Belt.

## Meeting Business and Employment Needs

4.32. Cherwell has a diverse economy with sectoral strengths in manufacturing, retail, health, and science and technology. Cherwell sits at the northern point of the Oxfordshire ‘Knowledge Spine’ linking the Science Vale Enterprise Zone and Oxford to Kidlington and Bicester. Cherwell also sits at the intersection between the Knowledge Spine and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc that is identified by Government as hosting one of the fastest growing economies in England.

4.33. The key commercial centres in Cherwell District are Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. The rural commercial market in the district is very small with only piecemeal availability of secondary industrial units or storage units. Cherwell lies to the north of Oxford and has historically been seen as an industrial location given its links to the northern end of the A34 and the M40 corridor.

4.34. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022)<sup>28</sup> identifies a need for 225ha of employment land in Cherwell over the period 2020 to 2040. This is an update on the Cherwell Economic Needs Assessment from 2021. However, there is already a significant amount of employment development allocated in the district, mainly through the 2015 Local Plan, that provides much of this identified need. The current supply position is shown by **Table 4.4**.

4.35. Our latest evidence on the supply of employment land over the period 2021-2040 from completions, commitments (sites with planning permission) and allocated sites is that there is a residual need for 72ha of employment land to be delivered over the Plan period.

**Table 4.4: Cherwell Employment Land Supply as at November 2022**

Component	Employment land (hectares)
<b>Need 2021-2040</b>	<b>225</b>
Completions 2021/22	31
Committed supply (excluding allocations, at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022)	30.1
Residual supply from allocations	96.5
New strategic allocations	72.3
Non-strategic allowance	15
<b>Total supply</b>	<b>244.9</b>
Overall balance	-19.9 (oversupply of 19.9ha)

<sup>28</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

- 4.36. The Local Plan Partial Review in 2020 was focused on housing allocations to meet Oxford's unmet needs and so did not make any employment allocations. However, Policy PR8 at Begbroke, did identify an area of 14.7ha, to be reviewed through a future plan process (this Plan) and was safeguarded as reserve land for the future expansion of Begbroke Science Park. This site is now formally allocated for employment land in this Local Plan 2040 through **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** that will allow the internationally significant Begbroke Science Park to expand its research activities whilst providing floorspace for spin-out businesses to locate within the local area.
- 4.37. The Partial Review was silent on the Langford Lane area (around Kidlington Airport) as no housing was allocated in this location. This Local Plan does not make any new strategic site allocations at Langford Lane, however, in accordance with Policy Kidlington 1, it does amend the Green Belt in this location (**Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt**) to remove existing developed areas from the Green Belt that are no longer considered to make a strong contribution to the 'five purposes' of the Green Belt (i.e., because they are built out). Removing this employment site from the Green Belt will provide greater flexibility to businesses in this location, including London Oxford Airport and the recently constructed Oxford Technology Park, to respond to future economic opportunities over the Plan period. The exceptional circumstances for removing sites from the Green Belt are set out in a supporting Topic Paper<sup>29</sup>.
- 4.38. The Spatial Strategy in this Local Plan identifies additional growth at Banbury, Bicester and Heyford Park, but the area that will grow the most over the period 2020-2040 is the Garden Town of Bicester. Land East of M40 J9 and south of Green Lane is allocated for additional employment development to align employment and housing growth so that commuting distances are minimised, and to comprehensively plan for a high-tech employment cluster adjacent to the recently permitted Siemens offices in this location. This site falls within the parish of Chesterton, but adjoins the settlement of Bicester. An allocation is also made at Symmetry Park, south-east Bicester, expanding on the existing allocation at Wretchwick Green (Policy Bicester 12 in the 2015 Local Plan) for 6.3 hectares.
- 4.39. The mixed-use Canalside allocation at Banbury remains in this Plan however the allocation has been amended to increase the amount of employment land

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<sup>29</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

supported, with a reduced quantum of residential, to reflect the latest market conditions and to facilitate the regeneration of a key site in Banbury Town Centre. The Higham Way site has also been reallocated for employment use as the residential allocation from the 2015 Local Plan is not deliverable.

4.40. No further strategic employment allocations are made at Banbury or Heyford Park, however to retain flexibility over the Plan period additional employment land on unallocated sites is still permissible under criteria-based **Core Policy 61**.

4.41. Through its engagement with the local business community and stakeholders the Council understands the importance of smaller site allocations and sites within the rural area. This is to support the organic growth of local businesses and ensure an appropriate supply of appropriately sized sites for businesses within the district, in terms of unit size and location. The Council wants to support the growth of existing businesses within the district, for which large strategic sites may not be appropriate and so will consider adding smaller (non-strategic) employment sites to the publication version of this Plan.

4.42. For the reasons set out above, an allowance has been made within **Core Policy 4** for the publication version of the Plan to make smaller non-strategic employment site allocations, informed by a future Employment Land Review. This will provide an up-to-date evidence base considering our existing employment sites within the district, identify those that should be retained as employment land, those that are suitable for expansion and those that could be redeveloped.

**Consultation Question:**

We would welcome evidence and submissions from businesses and landowners within the district that would like to expand in their existing location or potentially relocate. This will inform the Employment Land Review and any non-strategic employment site allocations to be set out in the Publication Version of the Local Plan.

#### Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

225 hectares of land is identified for employment development within the 2020 to 2040 period. 72.3 hectares of land is identified for future development on the following strategic and retained Local Plan 2015 allocations:

**Table 4.5 Local Plan 2040 Employment Allocations**

Site Name	Type of Site (Uses Class)	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Higham Way – Banbury	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	3.0
Canalside – Banbury*	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	5.0
Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane – Bicester	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	40.0
Land adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41 – Bicester	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	6.3
Bicester Business Park (Bicester 4)**	Saved 2015 LP Allocation for B1 (a) and E (g)(i)	3.3
Begbroke Science Park	Science Park - E (g) (ii)	14.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>72.3</b>

\* the precise quantum of employment land at Canalside may be updated in the Publication Plan.

\*\*Bicester Business Park is an existing 2015 Local Plan allocation with residual capacity of 3.3 ha that is saved through this Local Plan.

Planning Applications for employment and business development will be supported at the allocated sites where they meet the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3**, and in accordance with the Area Strategies.

Proposals for employment related development on unallocated sites will be supported in accordance with **Core Policy 61: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**.

In addition to the strategic allocations identified above, an allowance of 15ha is made for non-strategic employment site allocations. These will be included within the Publication version of the Plan or through Neighbourhood Plans.

## Infrastructure: supporting Local Plan delivery to 2040

4.43. Providing adequate supporting infrastructure is one of the most important ways the Local Plan can contribute towards achieving a sustainable local economy, as well as meeting the Plan's Climate Action and Healthy Place-shaping objectives. The Spatial Strategy focuses development in the most accessible parts of the district thus helping to ensure the Plan's proposals are well served by transport links and the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure.

4.44. The Council's approach to infrastructure planning in the district will identify the infrastructure required to meet the district's growth, to support the strategic site allocations and to ensure delivery by:

- working with partners, including central Government, and other local authorities, to provide physical, community and green infrastructure
- identifying infrastructure needs and costs, phasing of development, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery
- completing a Developer Contributions SPD to set out the Council's approach to the provision of essential infrastructure including affordable housing, education, transport, health, flood defences and open space, and
- development proposals will be required to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.

4.45. **Essential Infrastructure** is that which is required to make development happen in a timely and sustainable manner. Such infrastructure is therefore needed to ensure that the impacts of development are mitigated and that new development comes forward with necessary supporting facilities. Not investing in this infrastructure may result in delays to development coming forward. Examples of essential infrastructure associated with developments are roads, public transport improvements, schools, and foul water upgrades.

4.46. **Other Infrastructure** is that which is important to meet the overall cumulative need of development, but is not seen as likely to prevent an individual development coming forward in the short-term.

4.47. The Area Strategies set out in Chapter 5 include policies to help us plan for some of the key infrastructure requirements within each part of the district, and where necessary, also for safeguarding land to ensure that the delivery of these schemes will not be compromised.

- 4.48. Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertakings and/or other agreements as secured through planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.
- 4.49. We will secure funding for any in-kind infrastructure through Planning Obligations where they are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposal.
- 4.50. The Council will pool planning obligations if the infrastructure relates to more than one development site and is required to make more than one development site acceptable in planning terms. Strategic infrastructure could also be pooled.
- 4.51. The Council's approach to delivering infrastructure will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a Supplementary Planning Document for Section 106 and will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.
- 4.52. Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.
- 4.53. Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

### **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all other relevant policies of this plan.

If infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council, and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence the Council will:

- i. prioritise developer contributions for essential and then other infrastructure in line with the definitions as set out in Paragraphs 4.37 - 4.38 and the detail of the requirements outlined in the IDP, and/or
- ii. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, or
- iii. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere including CIL.

The Council's Delivering Infrastructure Strategy will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a Supplementary Planning Document for Section 106 agreements that will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.

Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.

Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertaking and/or other agreement as secured through the planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.

## The Oxford Green Belt

4.54. Parts of the south of the district fall within the Oxford Green Belt. The primary aim of Green Belt designation is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Oxford Green Belt serves five purposes, which are:

1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford
2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
4. to preserve the setting and special character of Oxford, and
5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.55. The outer boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt were approved in 1975. The inner boundary within Cherwell was first defined in 1992. It was subsequently amended in 2020, by the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review, with the release of land for development to help meet Oxford's unmet housing needs in the Kidlington, Yarnton, Begbroke, Gosford and Water Eaton areas. The current Green Belt boundary is shown on the Policies Map.

4.56. A number of villages are washed over by the Green Belt, and the villages of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke (east) are surrounded by the Green Belt but excluded from it. The villages of Bletchington, Merton, Murcott and Weston-on-the-Green lie partly within and partly outside the Green Belt. Proposals for development within the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** and **Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt**.

4.57. Our previous 2015 adopted Cherwell Local Plan identified exceptional circumstances to justify a small-scale local review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of Langford Lane, Kidlington and Begbroke Science Park to address the then identified need for additional employment land in the Kidlington area. As this original study was undertaken in 2016 we have undertaken an update that has confirmed the importance of these areas for employment development as explained at Paragraph 4.28 – 4.29, especially as they are built out. These areas are therefore removed from the Green Belt by this plan.

4.58. The Council considers there are exceptional circumstances to justify one other limited release of the Green Belt with a residential allocation to the north of Kidlington. This is discussed further within the Kidlington Area Strategy. The

Council's evidence demonstrating the exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release are set out in the supporting Topic Paper<sup>30</sup>.

### **Core Policy 6: The Oxford Green Belt**

The Oxford Green Belt boundaries within Cherwell District will be maintained in order to:

- i. preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford,
- ii. check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl,
- iii. prevent the coalescence of settlements,
- iv. assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and
- v. assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with government policy contained in the NPPF. Proposals for residential development will also be assessed against other relevant Development Plan policies.

As a result of a small-scale review of the Green Belt boundary the following areas of land are removed from the Green Belt (shown by **Appendix 4** and the Policies Map):

*Langford Lane, including London Oxford Airport and Oxford Technology Park*

*Land North of the Moors*

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<sup>30</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

## 5. Chapter 5: Banbury Area Strategy

### Introduction

- 5.1. Banbury is the district's largest town. It plays an important role as one of Cherwell's two 'Main Towns', along with Bicester, providing a focus for retail, employment, housing, leisure, health care and other community facilities, for a wide area including parts of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.
- 5.2. Banbury has a notable history, which is particularly evident in its attractive town centre, with many former industrial buildings, in part related to the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell running north-south through the town.
- 5.3. Banbury has seen significant growth in recent years but planning for the future provides us with both opportunities and challenges. The town's landscape and topographical setting constrains development on the edge of Banbury in some directions, but there are also significant opportunities for town centre regeneration and development. These opportunities will help to build on the successes of the previous Plan and help to improve the range of facilities and revitalise the built environment. For this reason, this area strategy is particularly focused on the town centre and the areas of opportunity that have been identified.
- 5.4. The previous Plan, adopted in 2015, highlighted some of the issues facing parts of the town and whilst progress has been made, selected wards remain in the 20% most deprived areas in England.<sup>31</sup> So, increasing opportunities for regeneration and delivering new facilities and infrastructure are a priority. Building upon the Council's Brighter Futures Project, this Plan aims to provide development in a way that helps address Banbury's social issues, particularly by continuing to contribute to new services and facilities and by enabling some development and regeneration within and adjacent to the town centre.
- 5.5. The strategic developments identified in this Plan are designed to complement growth identified in previous plans, by maximising opportunities for supporting sustainable connectivity and delivering additional services and facilities for the area.

### How the Banbury Area will change by 2040

- 5.6. Our approach for delivering Banbury's vision is to:

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<sup>31</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

- revitalise the town centre, improving the public realm and raising the quality of design, particularly in the town centre and on the identified regeneration and opportunity areas, especially where improvements in design and environmental quality can be achieved
- bring about quality regeneration of Canalside, including enhancing the gateway to the town and improving access to the railway station, for the benefit of the whole town
- encourage residential development within the town centre on appropriate sites
- support the role of the town centre by resisting further major out of centre retail developments
- help reduce the level of deprivation by delivering new services and facilities through specific development proposals and by economic growth and diversification
- continue to provide for a new secondary school for the town and for the relocation of Banbury United Football Club and for the delivery of improved community and health facilities
- deliver an improved and enhanced green infrastructure network across the town, including access to green spaces, the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridor, and children's play space, allotments, and community gardens
- deliver schemes that reduce transport congestion, particularly along Hennef Way and in areas around the town centre, and
- ensure new developments deliver improved active travel routes in and around the town, radiating to surrounding villages.

## **Our strategy for the Banbury Area**

### **Housing**

5.7. Banbury has been a key location for housing growth in the district for many years, although the 2015 Local Plan supported less development at Banbury compared to Bicester, recognising some of the constraints affecting the town.

5.8. As explained above, some additional development is supported in this plan at Banbury, partly recognising that it is one of Cherwell's largest and most sustainable settlements, and partly to support the delivery of important services and facilities for the town. However, the scale of development is greatly reduced in comparison to the previous Plan with more focus directed to regenerating and supporting town centre development. It will be important that residential development in the town centre supports the growth of the town centre economy and complements surrounding areas.

5.9. **Core Policy 7: Banbury Area Strategy** sets out the distribution of new housing across the district and allocates two strategic housing sites at the town (**Figure 5.1**).

These are:

- i) land West of Bretch Hill/ Withycombe Farm, and
- ii) South of Saltway/Wykham Lane.

5.10. The Plan also 'saves' many of the strategic housing allocation policies from the 2015 Plan and a full list of these 'saved' policies are in set out in **Appendix 2**.

## **Economy**

5.11. Banbury's economy is focused on manufacturing, distribution, service industries, local government, and health. The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy identifies the town as an important industrial area for motorsport, building on its links to Silverstone Park in neighbouring Northamptonshire.

5.12. The economy of the town benefits from its location on the M40, and its excellent transport links to Oxford, the South-East, and the Midlands. It also benefits from having the most employment floorspace in Cherwell.

5.13. Our last Local Plan (2015) recognised the importance of Banbury to the local economy by:

- allocating approximately 60 hectares of employment land, most of which has now been developed
- promoting the town as an important location for higher technology and knowledge-based industries
- encouraging high-end manufacturing
- maintaining an increase in motorsport industries
- encouraging retailing and commercial leisure development
- encouraging higher value distribution companies, and
- maximising the town's location and transport links.

5.14. The subsequent 2016 Banbury Masterplan<sup>32</sup> embraced these aims and highlighted how, by driving the engineering economy and investing in infrastructure and skills, economic growth could be achieved.

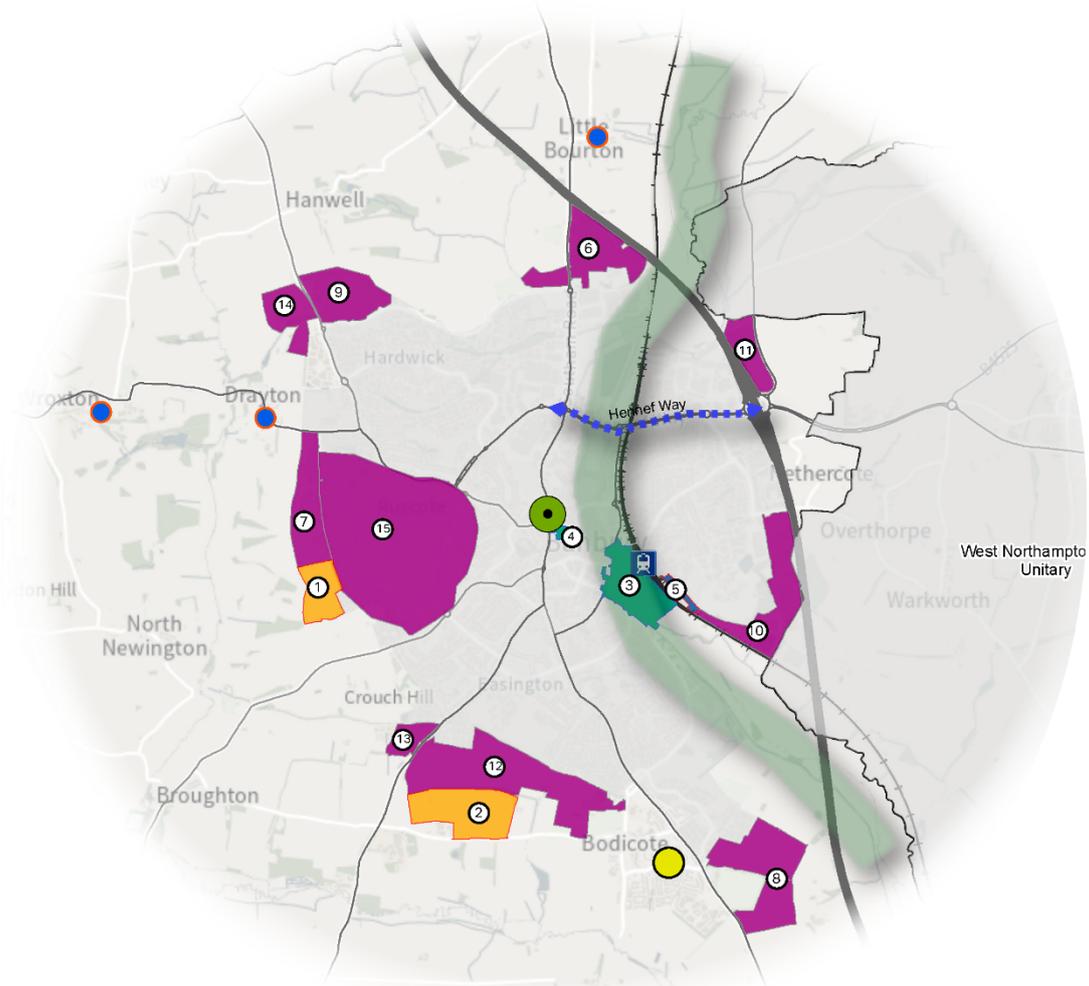
5.15. We have generally been successful in delivering our objectives from 2015. Most of the allocated employment land has now been developed and there continues to be strong interest for employment land in or adjacent to the town. Much of this new

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1133/banbury-vision-and-masterplan-supplementary-planning-document-december-2016>

development has been in the form of large logistics warehousing, but our evidence indicates that there is a strong unmet demand for smaller employment units to meet the needs of start-up firms, local businesses, or those that wish to expand in the local area.

5.16. To meet this identified need we are supporting a number of existing employment sites at Banbury where there is considerable potential for redevelopment, but we are also seeking to identify and support opportunities for smaller, non-strategic, employment sites in the next version of the plan (the Publication Version) to be published later in 2023 (this is discussed more in Chapter 11).



LEGEND					
	Local Plan 2040: preferred residential site allocation		7 West of Bretch Hill		Train Station
	1 West of Bretch Hill/South of BAN3 (LPR49)		8 Land at Bankside Phase 2		Road network improvements
	2 South of Saltway/Wykham Lane (LPR52)		9 North of Hanwell Fields		Green infrastructure improvements
	Local Plan 2040: preferred mixed-use site allocation		10 Employment Land West of M40	<b>Local Plan Review 2040: Settlement Hierarchy</b>	
	3 Canalside (LPR55)		11 Employment Land North East of Junction 11		Main Towns
	4 Bolton Road		12 Land South of Salt Way (East)		Local Service Centre
	Local Plan 2040: preferred employment site allocation		13 Land South of Salt Way (West)		Large Village
	5 Higham Way (LPR56)		14 Land at Drayton Lodge Farm		Small Village
	Saved Allocations: Local Plan 2030		15 Bretch Hill Regeneration Area		
	6 Hardwick Farm, Southam Rd (East and West)				

Figure 5.1 Banbury Area Strategy Map

### **Core Policy 7: Banbury Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development along with supporting town centre regeneration.

Development in the Banbury Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**:

#### **Housing Delivery**

1,320 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations will also be delivered through this Plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3** and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the Banbury Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

**Table 5.1 Banbury Area Strategy Allocations**

<b>Settlement/ Parish</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>
Banbury	South of Saltway/ Wykham Lane	600
	Canalside	500
Banbury/ Drayton	West of Bretch Hill	220
Total		1,320

There are also a number of allocations identified in the 2015 Local Plan that are Saved by this Local Plan as they are not currently fully complete. These are:

- Policy Banbury 2: Land to the West of Southam Road
- Policy Banbury 3: West of Bretch Hill
- Policy Banbury 4: Bankside Phase 2
- Banbury 5: North of Hanwell Fields
- Banbury 16: South of Salt Way West
- Banbury 17: South of Salt Way East
- Banbury 18: Land at Drayton Lodge Farm

**(Continued over page)**

**Core Policy 7: Banbury Area Strategy (continued)**

**Employment**

8 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 3** on the following strategic employment sites:

**Table 5.2 Banbury Area Strategic Employment Sites**

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Hectares
Banbury	Higham Way	3.0
Banbury	Canalside – Regeneration	5.0
Total		8.0

**Delivery of strategic transport infrastructure within the Banbury Area**

5.17. This Local Plan is focused on supporting sustainable connectivity and ensuring new development is located where we can maximise opportunities for sustainable development and transportation. Banbury does currently suffer from congestion and so it is important the Plan minimises additional traffic and supports development where sustainable transportation can be utilised to the maximum extent.

5.18. Consultation by Oxfordshire County Council during the preparation of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4 - adopted in 2015 and subsequently updated in 2016) identified traffic congestion as a major concern, which needed to be addressed together with transport solutions to manage the growth of the town. The environmental and physical constraints in and around Banbury, together with the canal, river and railway line running north-south through the town, make the delivery of a new strategic road network both challenging and costly. Therefore, new and innovative solutions will be needed, and this work is being led by the County Council through the preparation of updated Area Travel Plans to support the recently adopted Local Connectivity Transport Plan Update (2022). This context has informed the relatively modest level of additional growth we are proposing in Banbury in this Plan, that also ensures development is focused on locations best suited to supporting the most sustainable modes of travel.

5.19. The current transport strategy is based on the need to improve connectivity to and from residential areas, employment locations and the town centre. The aim is to

deliver infrastructure improvements to promote sustainable travel in and around the town by bus, walking, and cycling, and to increase capacity on the road network.

5.20. There has been investment in electric vehicle charging points in recent years and the take up of ultra-low emission vehicles in Banbury is significantly higher than the national average. Furthermore, Banbury also benefits from the highest share of active travel (23%) in the Oxfordshire towns.

5.21. However, there are still transport related issues that this Plan needs to address.

Banbury's key transport challenges are:

- transport and transport congestion, particularly along Hennef Way and in areas around the town centre
- limited options for a new strategic route between the east and west of the town
- the need to strengthen the connection between the town centre and railway station
- the need to refurbish or relocate Banbury Bus Station
- the need for further improvements to bus services and access into and across the town centre, and
- the continued improvement of cycling and walking routes radiating from the town centre to satellite settlements encouraging the adoption of alternative transport methods and easing the existing pressure on the road infrastructure.

#### 5.22. **Core Policy 8: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area**

identifies transport related schemes that are particularly important for this Plan to support and deliver.

#### **Core Policy 8: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area**

In order to deliver the growth in the Banbury Area, highway infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Banbury and the Banbury Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Transport infrastructure at Banbury will be required as follows:

- new M40 junction/ enlarged slip roads at Southam Road in Banbury
- rejuvenating or relocating Banbury Bus Station
- re-designing Banbury Station forecourt to improve multi-modal interchange
- improving capacity of north south routes: Cherwell Street/ Bridge Street/A4620 Windsor Street corridor
- east-west strategic movements: Hennef Way corridor A422 Improvements
- east-west strategic movements: Warwick Road Corridor Improvements
- review of Banbury Town Centre traffic circulation
- car parking routing and guidance system
- potential link road crossing from Tramway to Higham Way or a South East Link Road Promotion of Bankside to include bus services
- new spine road and increased level of bus service – east of Bloxham Road

#### **Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the Banbury Area**

5.23. There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 8** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 9: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Banbury Area**, set out below.

### **Core Policy 9: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Banbury Area**

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following transport schemes as listed by **Core Policy 8**.

- Enlarged M40 slip roads at Southam Road in Banbury

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (to be shown by maps in **Appendix 5** and the Adopted Policies Map)\* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

\*the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

Please note that the map for this scheme will be added to the Publication Version of the Local Plan.

### **Hennef Way**

5.24. There is a particular need to help reduce emissions and achieve cleaner air in relation to Hennef Way. The Plan's approach to maximising sustainable modes of travel will help with this objective, but further action is also required.

5.25. The Banbury Inner Relief Road from Oxford Road to Hennef Way was opened in June 1991. This road provides an important link between the south of Banbury and the motorway link road to the north, to reduce traffic congestion within Banbury town centre and Grimsbury.

5.26. The main purpose of the Inner Relief Road is to ease, as much as is possible, Banbury town centre of local traffic generation and traffic generated by the M40. The function and safety of the Inner Relief Road would be negatively impacted by the creation of unnecessary access points to the road. Access points for transport

should therefore be focused on place-shaping and align with the Oxfordshire transport hierarchy. Within the plan period, and in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council and National Highways, there will likely be improvement works to Hennef Way to address existing congestion issues and support growth within Banbury.

5.27. **Development Policy 1** sets out how the Council will consider proposals that affect Hennef Way.

**Development Policy 1: Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way**

The creation of new accesses to the Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way that would affect the function and safety of the road will not be permitted unless there is evidence to prove that a new access is essential. Any proposal for new access off Banbury Inner Relief Road and Hennef Way will require approval from Oxfordshire County Council and National Highways.

**Banbury Railway station**

5.28. Banbury Railway Station provides rail links across the country including services to London, Birmingham, Oxford and the South Coast. Banbury Railway Station also offers local rail services from Banbury to Bicester North and Didcot Parkway.

5.29. Demand on the rail network is expected to increase with the move towards increasing use of sustainable transport modes and future developments putting pressure on the rail network. The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study 2021 indicates there will be additional capacity to the rail service between Oxford and Banbury from 2024.

5.30. Cherwell wants to encourage the use of public transport and improve active travel routes by improving access to Banbury railway station and its facilities. Over the Plan period we will work with Network Rail, Chiltern Railways and Oxfordshire County Council to secure improvements to Banbury Railway Station to upgrade the services and support increasing passenger numbers. Cherwell recognises the opportunities these bring and when required will safeguard the land needed for improvements to the line.

5.31. A significant increase in vehicular use of the Station Approach/Bridge Street junction, north of Canalside, would worsen congestion caused by right-turning movements and threaten the free flow of traffic on the Banbury Inner Relief Road (Cherwell Street) at the Bridge Street junction. The private roads leading from

Station Approach lack the width and alignment to accommodate a significant increase in traffic.

- 5.32. Planned Tramway Road improvements<sup>33</sup> will support an improved road layout and facilities around Banbury train station, improve bus journey reliability into the town centre from southern areas of the town, and reduce trips taken using the A4260/Bridge Street junction.
- 5.33. This scheme will provide an important opportunity to improve access to the station for buses, cyclists and pedestrians, both generally and in particular between the station and the town centre and should reduce traffic and waiting times on Cherwell Street, a key part of Banbury's north-south transport corridor. All development proposals will be assessed against their impact upon the access to Banbury train station (Tramway Road improvements) scheme.
- 5.34. To eliminate any risk to railway operations and to ensure the safe operation of the railway, applicants must demonstrate that they have met any requirements set out by Network Rail.
- 5.35. **Core Policy 10: Development in the vicinity of Banbury Railway Station** sets out how the Council will consider proposals in the vicinity of Banbury railway station.

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<sup>33</sup> [Access to Banbury Station- Tramway Road project](#)

### Core Policy 10: Development in the vicinity of Banbury Railway Station

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of improvements to Banbury Railway Station, and in particular, any improvements proposed by Oxfordshire County Council including the Banbury Train Station (Tramway Road Improvements) Scheme (as shown by **Figure 5.2** and the Adopted Policies Map)\* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Proposals for improvements to Banbury Railway Station will be supported where they demonstrate how they:

- i. increase network capacity and access to the station and its facilities and to the town centre
- ii. facilitate and encourage non-car modes of transportation
- iii. improve the design and quality of the station and its facilities, and
- iv. achieve an increase to the capacity of the station as a result of the development.

\*the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

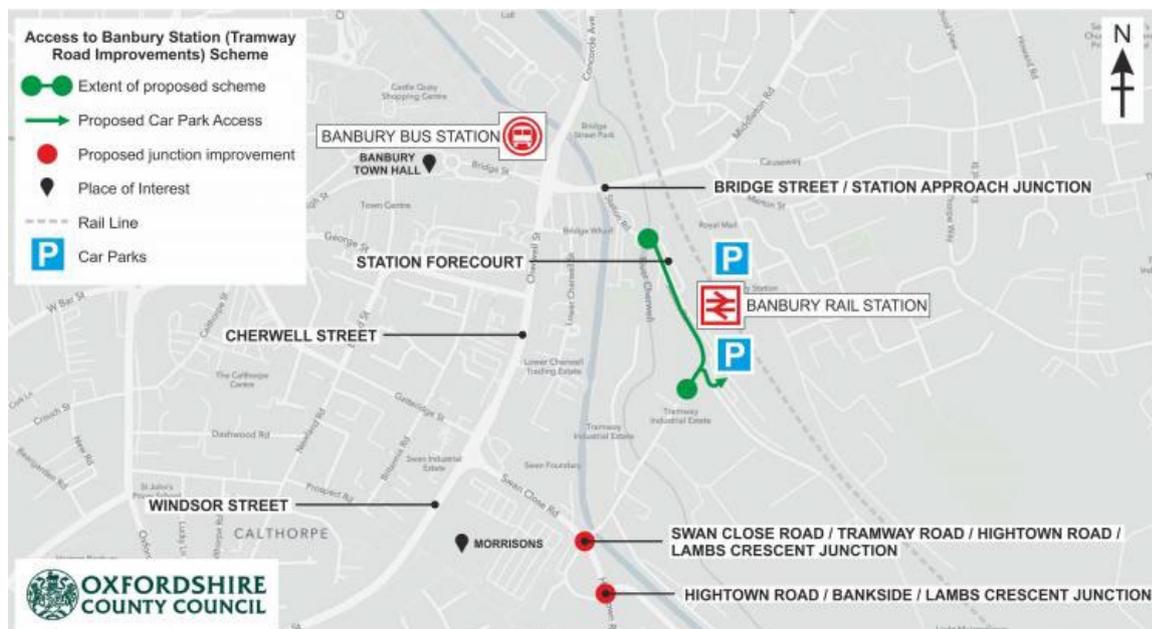


Figure 5.2: Banbury Tramway Road Improvements

## Delivery of green and blue strategic infrastructure in the Banbury Area

- 5.36. Banbury has a wide range of green spaces including formal sports pitches, play areas, parks and also Spiceball Country Park, in the centre of the town. Most of the spaces are maintained and managed by Banbury Town Council.
- 5.37. The 2015 Local Plan included a long term objective to establish a series of open spaces based on the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors linked by public footpaths/cycleways, to create a linear park and thoroughfare from the north of the town and Grimsbury reservoir to a new park at Longford Park south of Bankside. The existing Spiceball Country Park forms the central section of the park, the new community park at Longford Park provides a focus at the southern end and the Banbury Country Park, provides a major component at the northern end of the town. Grimsbury reservoir and the Banbury Ornithological Society nature reserve also form part of this central corridor of open space. The potential for ecological enhancement has been recognised through the whole corridor being included within the North Cherwell Conservation Target Area.
- 5.38. In our review of the development proposals for Canalside, as set out in this Plan, it is recognised that the canal/river corridor provides an opportunity for an enhanced linear park, which could open up the canal frontage to the town centre, thereby creating a new, attractive public space and a gateway to the town. The Canalside policy sets out these requirements in more detail.
- 5.39. The town has two indoor leisure centres at Spiceball and Woodgreen, together with some private leisure facilities. Local schools, including the North Oxfordshire Academy, play an important role in providing sports facilities for the community. Our last Local Plan sought to secure a site for the relocation of Banbury United Football Club, adjacent to Banbury Rugby Club to the south of the town. The club's current site forms part of the Canalside regeneration area meaning that an alternative site may be needed and this Plan 'saves' the relevant policy, thereby continuing to support the relocation of the club.
- 5.40. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal corridor offers potential for flat, traffic free and pleasant footpath/cycleway routes linking residential areas to employment areas, the town centre, railway station and bus station. The provision of these routes is an important measure in seeking to reduce the growth of private car use.
- 5.41. **Core Policy 11: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area** identifies the priorities for this area that are supported by the Plan.

### **Core Policy 11: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area**

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Bicester area as shown by maps in **Appendix 6** and the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Bicester area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- i. the need for an improved interface between Spiceball Park and the canal/river green corridor linking with the town centre. This should be delivered as part of the town centre enhancements and form a fundamental part of any development proposals
- ii. the continued development of the country park extending the green corridor to the north of the town connecting the urban area with the rural hinterland beyond
- iii. the greening of the town centre, improving east – west connectivity from People’s Park to an enhanced green corridor along the river/canal corridor
- iv. the greening of the primary north – south vehicular route along the South Bar Street/ Horsefair corridor in conjunction with improved traffic solutions to ease congestion in these areas
- v. the development of a new green, accessible link along the southern edge of the development to the south of Salt Way connecting new development and associated open space adjacent to the Bloxham Road in the west and Longford Park in the east, and
- vi. the connection of Salt Way to the improved north – south green corridor along the canal/ river corridor.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

### **Horton Hospital**

5.42. The Horton General Hospital in Banbury, which is part of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust (OUHT), is an acute general hospital serving the north of Oxfordshire and surrounding areas. It provides a wide range of services, including the Emergency Department. It is a major employer in the town, employing approximately 1,000 people.

5.43. The OUHT has made a commitment to the long term future of the hospital and is seeking to make significant improvements to its services and facilities over the plan period. Many of the current buildings on the site are low-quality, single-storey buildings and there is scope for increasing the floorspace by redeveloping some of the buildings at an appropriate density and scale. The original Victorian hospital building that fronts the Oxford Road is Grade II listed and so any redevelopment proposals would need to retain these buildings and protect them in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole.

5.44. The Council will encourage and support improved hospital related facilities on the site to serve our existing and future communities. **Core Policy 12: Horton Hospital Site** outlines the uses appropriate for the site.

#### **Core Policy 12: Horton Hospital Site**

Proposals for redevelopment at the Horton Hospital will be supported where they provide:

- i. further hospital related uses or improvements to existing medical services at the site, or
- ii. other uses, which have a direct and demonstrable operational link, and provide benefit to the continued provision or improvement of hospital services at the site.

Improvements to public transport access will be required. Mitigation measures will be required to ensure that proposals do not lead to increased parking pressure on nearby residential streets.

The special architectural and historic interest of the original Grade II listed hospital buildings on Oxford Road will be protected in accordance with the wider Development Plan policies.

#### **Primary Care**

5.45. Evidence from the Oxfordshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) indicates that there is a pressing need for additional primary care space and associated infrastructure within Banbury. The Council will therefore support proposals for additional primary care facilities in the town, in appropriate locations. Such locations could include the town centre or on the Horton Hospital site. The Council will continue to work closely with

the ICB and local GP practices to help secure improved primary care capacity across Banbury to meet the needs of its growing population.

## **Banbury Town Centre and Areas of Change**

- 5.46. A successful and vibrant town centre is important to the local economy and helps to engender local pride in the town. Independent retailers are well represented in Banbury, particularly in the High Street and along Parson's Street, and these are complimented by Castle Quay with its range of national retailers.
- 5.47. Since our last Local Plan there has been significant investment in the town centre with the recent opening of Castle Quay 2 to the east of the existing centre. This major investment by the Council provides a new hotel, cinema, leisure facilities, and restaurants in a canalside location.
- 5.48. The Council does, however, recognise that some out of town development has drawn some retailers out of the town centre, and along with the impacts of the Covid pandemic, and a change in retail habits, there has been some impact on the existing town centre. It is therefore important this Plan focuses on strengthening the town centre and support effective regeneration and improvements.
- 5.49. To understand the current strengths and weaknesses and health of the town centre we commissioned a town centre and retail strategy to inform this Local Plan. This Strategy<sup>34</sup> made the following recommendations for Banbury Town Centre:
- contract the extent of the town centre to create a more compact layout and address the identified oversupply of retail floorspace
  - resist Out of Centre Expansion as any further expansion will be seriously detrimental to the town centre
  - there should be greater encouragement for residential development in the town centre, to increase the vibrancy of the centre. This will create a stronger in-town community and provide a boost to the local economy from this captive market
  - support town centre masterplanning to ensure a comprehensive strategy
  - opportunities should be explored to improve the outdoor markets so that they become stand-alone attractions, including by making the market square an attractive destination
  - the centre would benefit from further investment into its public realm and the quality of the environment, to create a more attractive and distinctive space. A Public Realm Strategy would be recommended to raise the profile of the centre

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<sup>34</sup> Retail strategy details ....

- open up the Oxford Canal to the town centre
- explore partnership options to provide charging points and to meet green agenda targets. Adopt a 'plain English' approach to car park messaging. Consider free car parking on market days to stimulate renewed interest in this struggling but important retail offer, and
- raise the profile of the centre as a night-time economy destination. There should focus be a on making the town centre more attractive for residents and visitors to use in the evening and to attract new business to open new restaurants and provide more choice. This should be accompanied by improvements to accessibility, the public realm and the sense of safety.

5.50. The Study also identifies a number of sites suitable for redevelopment, together with areas that need regeneration. Building on the work of the Retail consultants we have undertaken further technical and feasibility work and have identified the following sites as being important to meeting the Plan's objectives (**Figure 5.3**).

- Site 1 Banbury Canalside
- Site 2 Bolton Road / Castle Street
- Site 3 Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road
- Site 4 Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue
- Site 5: George Street, Cherwell Street and Bridge Street

#### **Site 1: Banbury Canalside**

5.51. The area of land between Banbury railway station and the town centre, and to the east and west of Tramway Road, is referred to as the Canalside site. It is currently occupied by a range of important businesses, railway carparking, some limited residential development, and Banbury United Football Club. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal also run through the area.

5.52. It is a prominent site immediately adjacent to the town centre and forms part of the gateway to the town for visitors arriving by train and by road. It is, however, currently a relatively unattractive environment that feels segregated and underused. There are vacant areas, high business turnover and industrial uses immediately adjacent to the river and canal towpath, creating a poor environment and experience for those using the canal and river for leisure purposes. Some have reported this area as feeling unsafe.

5.53. Our previous Plan made provision for a comprehensive residential led scheme for the site including 700 new homes, retail, office and leisure uses, public open space, enhancement of the canal and river corridor, new pedestrian and cycle links and crossings and new carparking. Since 2015, planning permission has been granted on a small number of sites within the wider allocated area, mainly for new apartments.

5.54. This Plan seeks to encourage high quality development that will contribute to comprehensive regeneration of the site. A combination of employment and residential led development will be expected with new homes focused in the northern section of the site and along the Cherwell Street frontage.

5.55. This Plan includes the following policy that updates and revises the previous 2015 policy. Masterplanning of the Canalside area will be supported and a high level of integration with the town centre expected. Significant improvements to the canal and river corridor must be secured as part of the vision for the area.

### **Core Policy 13: Banbury Canalside**

Development proposals that contribute towards the comprehensive regeneration of the Canalside Area (as shown on the Policies Map and **Figure 5.3**) will be supported where they address the principles and site constraints set out in **Appendix 3** including the provision of 500 homes and around 5 ha employment uses. Proposals for parts of the site will be supported provided they demonstrate how they contribute towards the comprehensive and integrated regeneration of the site as a whole.

Favourable consideration will be given to masterplanned and design reviewed proposals that receive positive appraisal and demonstrate a high level of integration with the town centre and Banbury Railway Station.

### **Other Opportunity Areas in Banbury centre**

5.56. The other opportunity areas listed above provide opportunities for development/ regeneration and for helping to deliver public realm enhancements as part of the wider vision for Banbury centre. It is important that any proposals are consistent with the new vision/ masterplan for Banbury as part of an aspirational approach to delivering improvements to the public realm, support high quality design and achieve sustainable and successful communities. **Core Policy 14: Banbury Areas of Change** sets out the Council's approach for supporting development on these sites.

### **Site 2: Bolton Road/ Castle Street**

5.57. This site lies immediately to the west of the Castle Quay shopping centre and to the north of Parson's Street. It comprises a large public car park, a number of smaller car parks and service areas associated with the commercial units fronting Parson's

Street, a former car repair workshop, a former bingo hall and a number of historic buildings.

5.58. The 2015 Local Plan allocated this site for retail and other town centre uses and residential. Our recent evidence now indicates that town centre uses would not be appropriate in this location and the site is therefore allocated in this plan for a residential led mixed use development.

### **Site 3: Calthorpe Street & Marlborough Road**

5.59. The site is within the designated Banbury Conservation Area and is suited for residential development, with the existing retail operators being relocated within the town centre.

5.60. The Council will support comprehensive and sensitive residential led redevelopment proposals that incorporate the rebuilding of the frontages to Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road. Proposals must preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Banbury Conservation Area. There is a need to provide walking and cycling permeability.

### **Site 4: Bridge Street / Concorde Avenue**

5.61. The site includes the bus station and the eastern end of Castle Quay shopping centre which has a number of vacant units. The site acts as a gateway to the town centre. This site is suited to mixed-use development, including cultural, community, health, and leisure facilities, and residential. Development of this site would require the bus station to be relocated in the town centre.

### **Site 5: George Street, Cherwell Street & Bridge Street**

5.62. The site currently comprises a free-standing bowling alley, adjacent retail unit and car parking accessed from George Street, and retail, commercial and residential buildings fronting Bridge Street. The site is located on a key gateway to the town centre but the built environment, particularly around the Bridge Street/Cherwell Street junction is fragmented and poor. This Plan will support proposals for residential or mixed use proposals on this site which provide a high quality landmark gateway to the town centre.

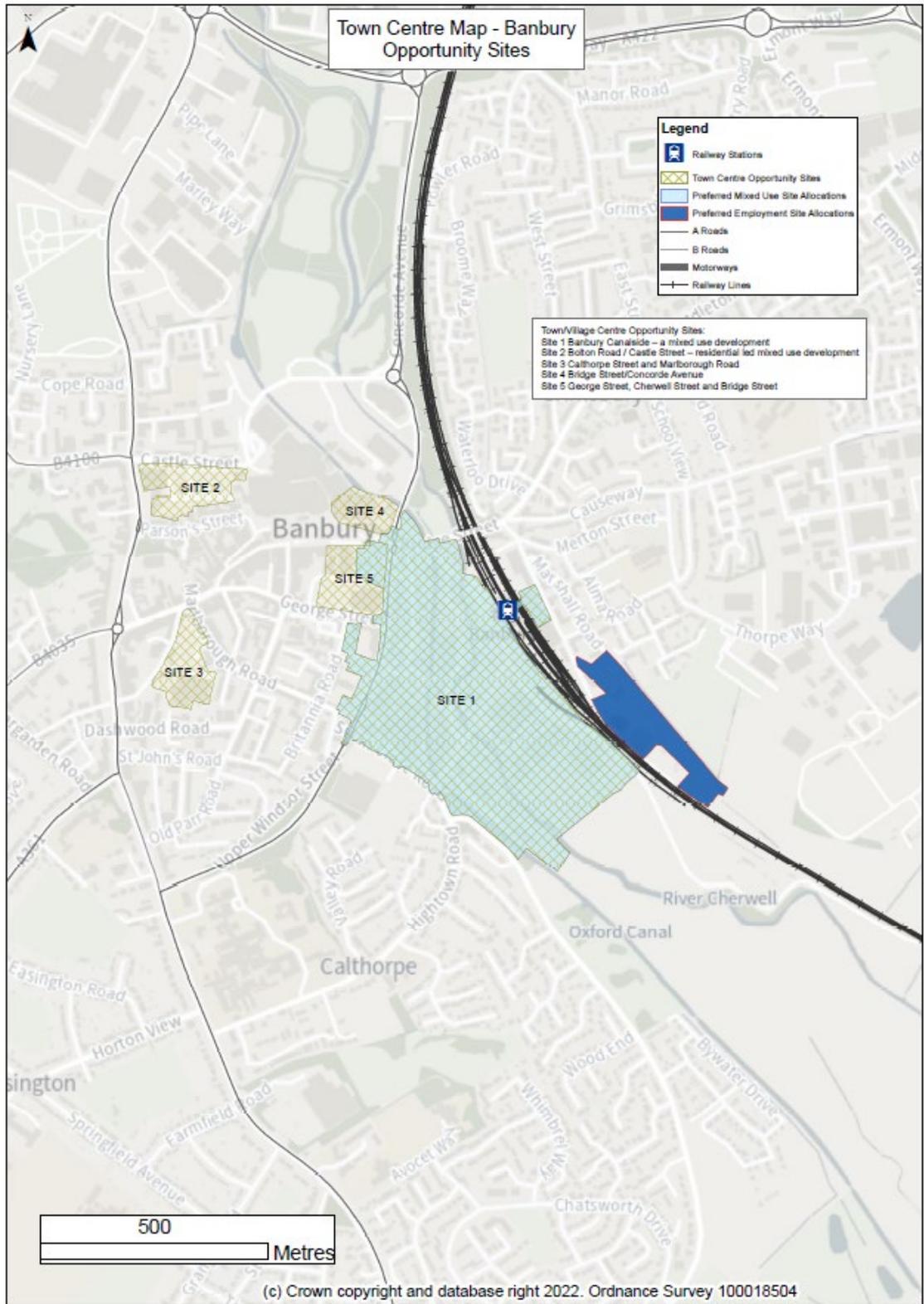


Figure 5.3 Banbury Town Centre Areas of Change

### **Core Policy 14: Banbury Areas of Change**

In addition to Site 1: Canalside, identified in **Core Policy 13**, there are four additional areas of change identified within or close to the centre of Banbury as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and **Figure 5.3**:

Site 2: Bolton Road/ Castle Street\*

Site 3: Calthorpe Street/ Marlborough Road

Site 4: Bridge Street/ Concorde Avenue

Site 5: George Street/ Cherwell Street/ Bridge Street

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Banbury
- ii. proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment
- iii. be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the historic core of the town centre
- iv. make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Banbury, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities and providing for walking and cycling permeability
- v. be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels, and
- vi. improve the public realm and by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials
- vii. residential development will be supported on the identified sites, particularly above ground floors.

Masterplanning of Banbury town centre will be supported.

\* Proposals for Site 2 should also demonstrate how the criteria identified in Appendix 3 have been considered.

## **Banbury's Built Heritage**

5.63. Banbury has a rich and varied history, which is valued by residents and visitors. The town centre is characterised by its medieval street pattern and across the town there are numerous designated and non-designated heritage assets that contribute to Banbury's character. Within Banbury there are approximately 225 listed buildings. There are also three designated Conservation Areas. Banbury Conservation Area is centred on the town centre; Grimsbury Conservation Area lies to the east of the railway and canal; and the Oxford Canal is designated along its whole length, including through Banbury. The Council has a duty to protect these important heritage assets and will continue to protect heritage assets in accordance with the Development Plan policies considered in the round.

## 6. Chapter 6: Bicester Area Strategy

### Introduction

- 6.1. Bicester is Cherwell's second largest town, located in the south of the district and identified as a Garden Town. It is an historic market town that has grown rapidly over the last few decades and where significant opportunity exists as part of developing a sustainable Garden Town, incorporating improved sustainable connectivity, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, a renewed town centre and an improved range of services and facilities.
- 6.2. Bicester is set within a rural landscape and is surrounded by arable farmland containing several attractive, historic villages. Nearby villages include Launton, Wendlebury, Chesterton, Bucknell, Caversfield and Ambrosden. The landscape is relatively flat with wooded estate lands to the north and west, including Bignell Park. To the south and east the land is low lying and contains watercourses and associated floodplains. Bicester is generally less constrained than Banbury in terms of landscape sensitivity, but it has areas of ecological importance such as Stratton Audley quarry.
- 6.3. Bicester lies within areas of significant economic interest and influence. First it is situated on an Oxford – Cambridge technology corridor with internationally renowned Universities at either end. Second, it is located at the northern edge of the Oxfordshire's own 'Knowledge Spine'. The growing town is therefore an attractive place to invest with new employment sites coming forward on the edge of the town for local and international businesses. It is well connected to Oxford and other centres by road and rail, located close to the M40 motorway and with excellent rail connectivity to London, Oxford and the South-East and the Midlands. The East-West Rail project linking Oxford to Cambridge is being delivered with improved connectivity between Bicester and Oxford already open and further extensions to Milton Keynes under construction.
- 6.4. Bicester was awarded Garden Town status in December 2014 and is acknowledged as a key area for growth in the UK, receiving central government funding to provide a range of desirable and innovative new homes, located in well planned communities. It is also now a Healthy New Town with the aim of encouraging healthy living and effective care across the town. New open spaces and walking and cycling routes have been secured through recent development and there is scope for this to be further expanded to help achieve these objectives.
- 6.5. The area around Bicester contains a number of military sites, both historic and existing. The former RAF airfield at Bicester is partly being redeveloped as an innovation and technology hub, whilst protecting its historic significance.
- 6.6. The town has retail, leisure and other services that have been under provided for in some areas, but where opportunities exist for redevelopment and regeneration to

enhance the town centre and offer. Masterplanning of the town centre will be supported, helping to ensure that the opportunity areas are redeveloped in a coordinated and effective way to help strengthen the town. Bicester Village shopping outlet is an internationally significant tourist attraction and makes an important contribution to the town's economy.

## **How the Bicester Area will change by 2040**

6.7. Our strategy for delivering Bicester's vision is to:

- bring about exemplar sustainable development, achieving high climate change standards, which will establish new sustainable communities, integrated with, and for the benefit of, the whole of Bicester
- deliver development that will increase Bicester's self-containment and reduce the proportion of out-commuting
- provide for new development in accessible locations that will maximise opportunities for providing sustainable transport choices and for managing and reducing traffic congestion
- provide for new development that contributes towards achieving net zero and encourages walking and cycling and sustainable travel
- improve the attractiveness of existing employment areas and provide for new employment space that will be attractive to knowledge based, higher-technology businesses
- support masterplanning of central Bicester, build on the recent town centre redevelopment scheme, secure improvements to Market Square and other areas in Bicester Town Centre, and provide for development that will improve the appearance and image of Bicester whilst ensuring accessibility to the town centre
- provide services, facilities and new infrastructure required to accommodate major growth that will help reduce deprivation
- deliver strategic open space and recreation, providing opportunities to address existing deficiencies and meet the future needs of development, including provision of a new cemetery, and
- protect and enhance areas of ecological importance and historic value, deliver significant areas of new green infrastructure and secure biodiversity enhancement.

## **Area strategy for the Bicester Area**

### **Housing**

6.8. The 2015 Local Plan made provision for around 10,626 homes across five strategic housing sites. There has been considerable progress made with delivery across these sites with some of the planned housing now completed or committed. However, given the scale of some of the sites in question and the expectation that some of these sites would always deliver over an extended timeframe, a number of

the 2015 allocations are 'saved' by this Plan where they are not yet fully completed to ensure the policies remain in place.

- 6.9. This Local Plan makes provision for two additional allocations at Bicester and makes one amendment to the existing 2015 allocation for North-West Bicester. In total, these three sites add 2,300 homes to Bicester up to 2040, although some of the identified housing across the two plans will continue to deliver beyond 2040. The level of housing allocated in this Plan is clearly a substantial reduction in the scale of growth proposed in the previous plan, but it still represents the largest concentration of development in the LP40.
- 6.10. As set out in the Spatial Strategy, Bicester remains the most sustainable location for development within the district, where some additional growth will not only provide the greatest opportunity for sustainable connectivity and development, but also to contribute to the wider infrastructure package needed to ensure Bicester functions as a sustainable and successful place overall.
- 6.11. The largest of the original 2015 allocations was at North-West Bicester, this formed one of the original 'eco-town' proposals for 6,000 homes, with an exemplar component of this allocation being delivered to the north of the site providing high standards of sustainable construction and renewable energy generation.
- 6.12. This Plan extends this site to the north and increases the number of dwellings to be provided by 1,000, although the additional housing will not all be provided by the extension, instead, the site policy is updated, and it is expected the masterplan for the site will be reconfigured. This approach provides an opportunity to maximise the efficiency of the use of land and ensuring the site continues to provide for extensive green infrastructure and a wide range of services and facilities and employment, whilst still achieving very high climate change standards with on-site renewable energy provision. The importance of protecting the separation between Bucknell is recognised by the policy.
- 6.13. The other two new allocations provided by this Plan are South of Chesterton and South-East Bicester, which provide for 500 and 800 additional homes respectively. The detailed policy requirements for these sites are set out in the Site Development Templates set out in **Appendix 3**. However, it is important to stress, in particular, that the Plan is seeking to maximise use of sustainable modes of travel (these sites are located on some of our most sustainable corridors), and to provide for extensive green infrastructure, to protect the identity of existing settlements (such as Chesterton) and to protect areas important for wildlife and deliver biodiversity net-gain.

## Economy

- 6.14. Bicester supports a range of employment sectors, including service industries, distribution, defence, motorsports and manufacturing. The largest employment areas in the area are located in the eastern and southern parts of the town. The

economy of the town benefits from its location close to the M40, and its excellent transport links to Oxford, London, the Midlands and towards Cambridge. It has the second most employment floorspace in Cherwell after Banbury.

6.15. Bicester is identified in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) as a Living Labs Testbed. This includes an Eco Zone and corporate headquarters. It involves a cluster of technology companies acting as 'living labs' to help develop technologies for environmental change, including the advent of connected and autonomous travel, all electric energy, smart homes and sustainable living.

6.16. The Oxfordshire LEP Investment Plan (2020) identifies potential for wider regeneration under the umbrella of the Bicester Garden Town scheme to transform Bicester from a traditional Oxfordshire County Market Town into a dynamic and vibrant economy drawing on attractions such as Bicester Village and Bicester Motion.

6.17. Our last Local Plan recognised the importance of Bicester to the local economy by:

- allocating approximately 140 hectares of employment land
- encouraging green technology and the knowledge-based and logistics sectors, exploiting its position in the Oxford/Cambridge Corridor
- exploiting the towns transport connections
- utilising the Ex-MoD land
- creating new opportunities for additional retail, leisure and cultural activities in an extended town centre encouraging retailers and visitors to Bicester Town Centre
- continuing to promote and expand Bicester Village where complementary to improving the town centre
- improving its utilities infrastructure to improve its sustainability and self-sufficiency.

6.18. We have generally been successful in delivering our objectives from 2015. A significant proportion of the allocated employment land has now been developed and there continues to be strong interest for employment land at Bicester. The Council's updated employment evidence identifies that Bicester is the most suitable location for accommodating identified employment needs to 2040 and the Council continues to focus new allocations in this area.

6.19. This Local Plan allocates two new sites for employment at Junction 9 of the M40 and north of the A41 adjacent to the development at South-East Bicester. The existing sites, identified in the 2015 plan will continue to be saved.

6.20. The new strategic employment site located adjacent to the M40 junction, adjoins existing employment land. Consolidating employment at Bicester helps to maximise the opportunities for improving the balance of homes and jobs and ensure that employment can be accessed by sustainable modes of travel. The second new

employment site, east of Symmetry Park and adjoining the A41, provides for a mix of employment uses on another highly accessible location and close to Bicester.

6.21. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, further evidence will be prepared to inform the next version of the Local Plan, the Publication Version (to be published later in 2023), that will also consider the need for smaller, non-strategic, employment sites, to support more local businesses and business start-ups.

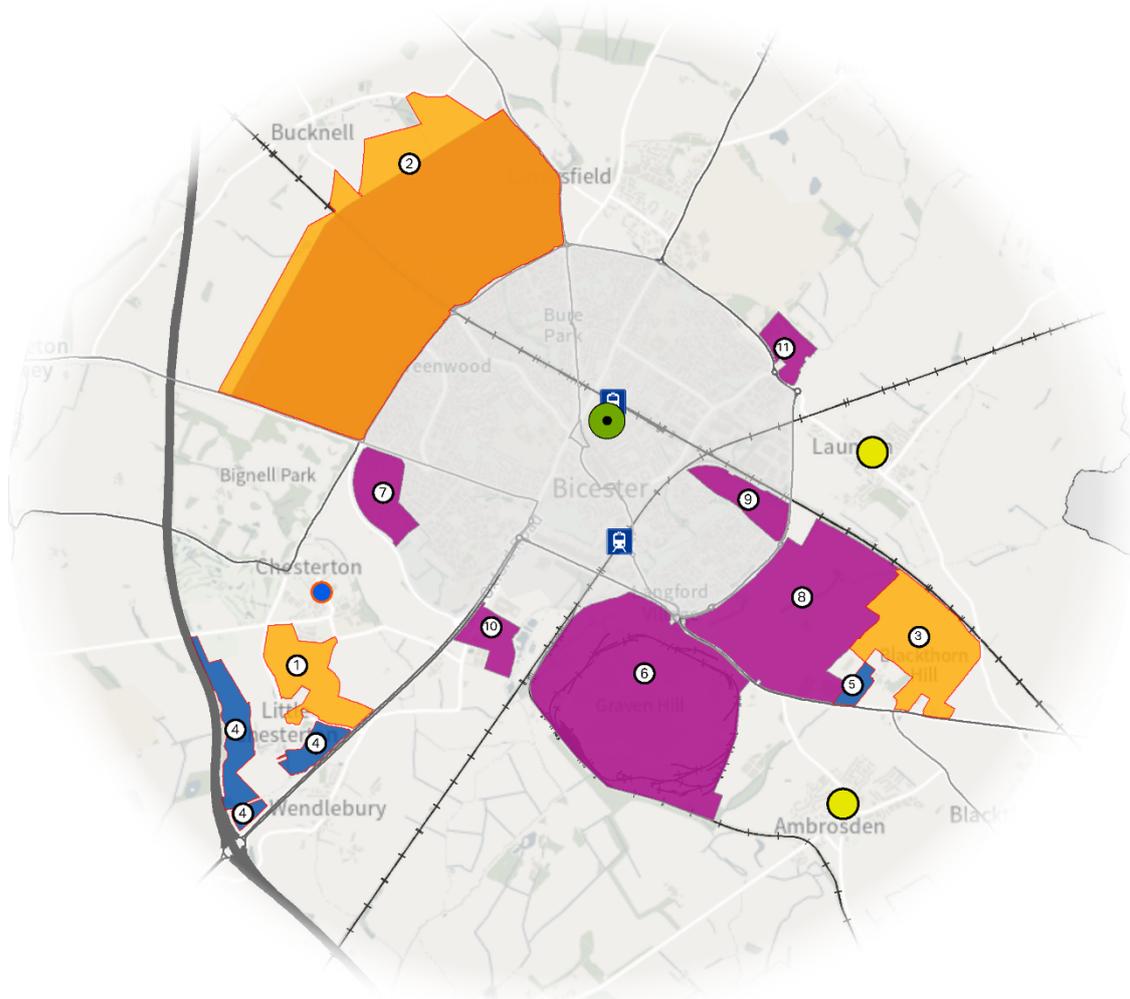


Figure 6.1 Bicester Area Strategy Map



### **Core Policy 15: Bicester Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development as part of a coherent Garden Town.

Development in the Bicester Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

#### **Housing Delivery**

2,300 dwellings will be delivered through new strategic allocations made by this plan. Non-strategic allocations will also be delivered through this plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations in accordance with the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3** and the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the Bicester Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

**Table 6.1 Bicester Area Strategy Allocations**

<b>Settlement/ Parish</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>
Bicester/ Chesterton	Land South of Chesterton and North-West of A41	500
Bicester/ Bucknall	North-West Bicester <sup>a</sup>	1,000
Bicester	Land South-East of Bicester	800
Total		2,300

**a North-West Bicester is an existing allocation in the 2015 Local Plan for 6,000 dwellings – this plan increases the potential for this site to deliver an additional 1,000 homes (around 7,000 in total) however some of this will deliver beyond 2040.**

There are also a number of allocations identified in the 2015 Local Plan that are Saved by this Local Plan as they are not currently fully complete. These are:

- Bicester 2: Graven Hill
- Bicester 3: SW Bicester
- Bicester 12: SE Bicester
- Bicester 13: Gavray Drive

**(Continued on overpage)**

## Core Policy 15: Bicester Area Strategy (Continued from Previous Page)

### Employment Sites

49.6 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on new strategic employment allocations as follows:

**Table 6.2 Bicester Area Strategic Employment Sites**

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Type of Site (Uses Class)	Hectares
Bicester	Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	40.0
	Land Adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41, South East Bicester	Mixed Use – B2, B8 and E (g)	6.3
	**Bicester 4 (Bicester Business Park)	Saved LPP1 Allocation for B1(a) / E(g)(i)	3.3
<b>Total</b>			<b>49.6</b>

\*\* Bicester Business Park (Policy Bicester 4 in the 2015 Plan) is an existing allocation with residual capacity of 3.3ha beyond completions and extant planning permissions at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 that is being saved through this Local Plan.

### Delivery of strategic transport infrastructure within the Bicester Area

6.22. Bicester is located near to two motorway junctions on the M40 and has good transport links to Banbury, Oxford, London and beyond. It currently suffers from some congestion on its main routes, particularly on the A41, and on those that provide access to the town centre.

6.23. Key challenges for Bicester's transport network include:

- addressing the barriers created by the peripheral roads that segregate the town centre from the new residential areas
- improving access to Bicester's hinterland by active travel and public transport
- addressing capacity of the A41 and identifying a solution for the London Road Level crossing that enables access to and from the town centre
- deliver a better environment for walking and cycling in Bicester town centre including at Market Square and for sustainable travel, and
- improving the scope for and attractiveness of walking and cycling on Bicester's key routes.

6.24. The new Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2022) identifies a number of key projects in the Bicester Area Strategy that include:

- an on-going partnership with Highways England to improve connectivity to the strategic highway (M40 junctions 9 and 10)
- reviewing key county road links out of Bicester, including those that cross the county boundary (the A41) which is ongoing with Buckinghamshire Council
- investigating options for infrastructure improvements and bus priority to enable greater reliability on the A41 corridor to/from Junction 9 to the A41 Bicester Services roundabout, with schemes for accessing Wendlebury
- delivery of the bridge under the railway (A4095) as part of the project to deliver effective peripheral routes around the town - western peripheral corridor with design work for the realigning of the A4095 Howes Lane on-going
- as part of the eastern peripheral corridor upgrade, the section through Wretchwick Green has been designed as part of the development site at south-east Bicester
- A41 Study (due for completion in 2022) exploring options for the provision of a South-East Perimeter Road
- the completion in early 2022 of the Charbridge Lane bridge to deliver solutions at the Charbridge Lane level crossing affected by the East-West Rail Project
- working with the rail industry and the Department for Transport to develop a solution, based on an options assessment, to the likely restrictions affecting the London Road as a result of the East-West Rail project and national rail programme
- ongoing work to improve Bicester's bus services along key routes and providing improved public transport infrastructure
- continuing to enhance pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to the Bicester Village Station, Bicester North Station and key employment sites
- implementing Bicester town centre highway modifications, in combination with improvements to the peripheral routes, involving consideration of highway restrictions in Bicester Town Centre on through routes in order to reduce through traffic in the town centre, constraining it to the peripheral routes and promoting more sustainable travel options in the town
- building on the pre-design work for highway restrictions, parking and improvements for Market Square
- ongoing work with active travel groups identifying new sections of urban routes for pedestrian and cycling
- the delivery of the Wayfinding Project for Bicester with the aim of improving signage across the town
- developing a coordinated parking strategy, including for electric vehicles, in partnership with Cherwell District Council, and
- the delivery of parking restrictions to protect residential areas from inappropriate commuter parking.

6.25. Cherwell District Council is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure the transport strategy for Bicester is aligned with the Local Plan and delivers the best possible outcomes supporting sustainable connectivity.

6.26. Oxfordshire County Council has progressed a series of other strategies to inform transport planning for Bicester, including:

- Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP; 2020). This document sets out a programme of measures to improve cycling and walking and identifies targets for at least a 200% increase in cycling and 50% increase in walking for trips within Bicester from 2020 to 2031
- Public Rights of Way Management Plan to 2025 sets a strategy for the improvement and management of public rights of Way in Oxfordshire
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP; 2021), which proposes to create additional flexible bus services to connect rural communities with larger town centres and mobility hubs. New development at Bicester will be required to contribute towards the delivery of these routes and services. A Park and Ride has been delivered at Bicester and is an integral part of Oxfordshire's public transport network
- Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS; 2021) considers the rail implications of the current housing and employment commitments for the county. Of particular note is the first phase of East-West Rail between Oxford and Milton Keynes (via Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village) was confirmed in 2020 with £760m committed by the government to have trains running by 2025. This proposal will provide a significant opportunity to reduce out commuting from Bicester providing residents with transport choices other than the private car.

6.27. The infrastructure and mitigation measures proposed in this Plan and secured through development will seek to limit the traffic impact of development on communities. The new and re-configured housing sites in this Plan at Chesterton, North-West Bicester and South-East Bicester are located at one of the districts most sustainable settlements and provide the opportunity for new development to link to existing and planned transport infrastructure. New residents will be able to walk and cycle to local services and facilities in adjacent sustainable urban extensions and within the wider town. Significant areas of green infrastructure, schools, employment opportunities and shops are within easy reach as well as Bicester town centre and the town's employment areas.

6.28. The transport assessment accompanying this Plan shows that areas south of Bicester are within 15 minutes public transport to employment areas in the town and in terms of connectivity, the proposed sites and their implications for traffic flow, generally score well against the criteria used in the assessment.

### **Core Policy 16: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Bicester Area**

In order to deliver the growth in the Bicester Area, transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Bicester and the Bicester Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

All development within the Bicester area will be required to contribute in accordance with **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**. Within the Bicester Area this will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- a south-east link road north of Wendlebury
- improvements associated with London Road level crossing changes
- a bus priority route adjacent to the A41, on the Banbury Road, and
- the realignment of Howes Lane.

### **Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the Bicester Area**

6.29. With the identification of Bicester in this Plan as the place which will accommodate the most identified housing and employment needs it will be important the necessary highway improvements are secured to support this growth. A south east link road is identified in Oxfordshire County Councils Bicester Area Strategy, which will be designed to include segregated walking and cycling infrastructure. The road will connect the two sections of the A41 north of the village of Wendlebury. The exact location and alignment of the road will be confirmed as the Local Plan Review is progressed. Careful consideration will need to be given to ecological constraints, historic assets, the crossing of the railway line, the relationship with employment land and potential impacts on Wendlebury, and designed to support active travel.

6.30. There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 16** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 17: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area**, set out below.

### **Core Policy 17: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area**

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the identified transport schemes listed below:

- Land for a south-east link road north of Wendlebury
- a bus priority route adjacent to the A41, on the Banbury Road\*, and
- the realignment of Howes Lane\*.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (as shown by maps in **Appendix 5** and the Adopted Policies Map)\*\* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

\*Please note that these maps will be added to the Plan at the Publication Stage.

\*\*the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

### **Delivery of green and other strategic infrastructure in the Bicester Area**

6.31. Bicester's Garden Town status and its designation as a Healthy New Town emphasise the importance of protecting and enhancing the Green Infrastructure network and developing new Green Infrastructure as Bicester grows.

6.32. The 2015 Local Plan continued previous strategies in seeking to secure an urban edge park around the town. Core components of the existing open space network include Bure Park, Pingle Fields and Bicester Fields. Garth Park is the main town park providing a mix of recreation provision. Local Wildlife Sites at Gavray Drive, Graven Hill and Bicester Wetland Reserve also form part of the town's Green Infrastructure network, and the Ray Conservation Target Area incorporates the first of these sites

in the south-east of the town. Land has also been secured to form the new Burnehyll Community Woodland to the south-west of the town.

6.33. The Council has published a Green Infrastructure Strategy alongside this plan that identifies a number of challenges, but also opportunities, for Bicester to develop a successful green infrastructure network. The Strategy identifies a number of priorities, including:

- **connecting Bicester's Greenways** - Protecting, connecting and enhancing the existing network of greenways through the town and out to local villages, including longer distance walking and cycling routes outside of the town. There are opportunities at the following locations to:
  - **Ardley cutting and Quarry SSSI** – extend existing cycling and walking connections along the railway line through Bicester and onwards to join up with the Oxford Canal Path, connecting to the Mid-Cherwell River Corridor Focus Area
  - **Langford Meadows and Gavray wildlife meadows** – extend existing off road cycle lanes through Langford Meadows to Gavray Wildlife Meadows through and onwards to join up with Island Pond Wood, Blackthorn Hill, and the village of Ambrosden
  - **connections to Bignell Park and past the reservoir between Bicester and Chesterton**- extend existing sections of greenway and public right of way to link through the village of Chesterton to Bignell Park
  - **connections to local nature sites surrounding Bicester Airfield** - extend sections of greenway and public right of way to provide greater access to these sites
  - **connections to local nature sites to the south of Bicester** – extend sections of greenway and public right of way to these locations
  - **Meadows NW Blackthorn Hill Local Wildlife Site** – consider how site is ecologically linked
- **greening Bicester town centre** - Creating an attractive, green town centre enhancing Bicester's historic assets and making a more attractive retail, leisure and social offer in the town's centre
- **Bicester strategic green corridors** - Safeguarding and enhancing a series of existing and new "green corridors" in Bicester which are integrated into existing urban areas and provide a network of park spaces and green connections through new development in the town.

The study identifies Garth Park, Langford Meadows, Gavray Wildlife Meadows, Bure Park and railway path and areas adjacent to Langford Brook that should be protected and the opportunity for a green corridor to be provided along Vendee Drive, connecting to Whitelands Farm recreation area, the reservoir and Gagle Brook, and Chesterton village. There is an opportunity for wetland, woodland and meadow habitat to be created with paths and boardwalks providing walking and cycling connections through the green corridor, enhancement of the reservoir for people and nature and connections through the green corridor to local destinations such as

Bignell Park. Improvements should also include softer measures such as the provision of seating to promote accessibility.

- **restoring Bicester's river corridors** - Re-naturalising and enhancing Bicester's river corridors and floodplains as multi-functional areas: including Langford Brook at Langford Meadows, through South Bicester and beyond the A41 and the River Bure and the floodplain around Bure Park.

### **Open Space and Recreation Facilities**

- 6.34. The Council's existing evidence, which is based on surveys undertaken in 2018, for open space and play provision recommended that the standards for play space set out in our 2015 Plan should be retained.
- 6.35. The Council's emerging The Playing Pitch Strategy identifies shortfalls of provision to meet quantitative needs for football (both natural grass pitches and artificial grass pitches) and rugby union, and recommends qualitative improvements to grass pitches for all pitch sports and associated facilities.
- 6.36. Initial indications from the 2022 Built Facilities Study are that there is a requirement to continue to invest in indoor and built facilities in Cherwell and there is a need for new provision in the Bicester area in order to support expected population growth. This could take the form of an expansion of the existing leisure centre provision that needs to be replaced due to its age.
- 6.37. The Council will expect that all the strategic allocations at Bicester will provide for open space and recreation. There is potential for each of the strategic sites in Bicester to become specialist hubs for different types of sports facilities and recreation. The provision of open space and recreation facilities at strategic sites will be confirmed as the Local Plan progresses. Areas of existing open space in Bicester will continue to be protected.

### **Core Policy 18: Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Bicester Area**

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Bicester area as shown by maps in **Appendix 6** and the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Bicester area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- establishing an urban edge park around the outskirts of the town, by protecting the existing network of green spaces and securing new open space and linear route provision linked with public footpaths/ cycleways, to create a circular route with connections to the town centre and the countryside beyond
- establish a green corridor containing a community woodland between Vendee Drive and Chesterton
- encourage proposals for the restoration and use of Stratton Audley Quarry for informal outdoor recreation, provided that the proposals are compatible with the site's designation as a Local Wildlife Site and partial SSSI
- extend and enhance connections from residential areas to the town centre and outward from Bicester to and within; Ardley cutting and Quarry SSSI, Langford Meadows and Gavray wildlife meadows, Bignell Park and past the reservoir between Bicester and Chesterton, local nature sites surrounding Bicester Airfield, and to the south of Bicester
- seek to ensure the greening of; Sheep Street, Causeway and Church Street, Market Square, Garth Park, Bicester North Station, Bicester village station, and Bicester village
- re-naturalise and enhance Bicester's river corridors and floodplains as multi-functional areas: including Langford Brook at Langford Meadows, through South Bicester and beyond the A41 and the River Bure and the floodplain around Bure Park, and
- developer contributions will be sought towards the establishment of new burial grounds in Bicester.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

## Bicester Town Centre and Areas of Change

- 6.38. Bicester has a small historic town centre with a market and retail centre. In recent years there has been significant investment in Bicester including: the opening of Pioneer Square with a new seven screen cinema, large supermarket, multi-storey car park, smaller retail outlets, and civic buildings including a library and a new hotel. However, in common with many high streets, the closure of some shops has resulted in vacancies and empty units. This has made some areas of the centre feel less vibrant and less attractive to visitors. A successful and vibrant town centre is important to the local economy, and it also engenders local pride in the town.
- 6.39. Bicester Village is a premium designer shopping and tourist destination of regional, national, and international significance. It comprises of 170 units and 28,800 sqm of floorspace. The existing offer is centred around high-end fashion with complementary eating-out units designed to cater for the needs of the shopping customers. It was established in 1995 and has been extended a number of times. The goods sold are restricted by planning conditions that are designed to limit competition with Bicester Town Centre. Bicester Village is also a key economic driver within Cherwell and employs around 3,500 people directly and a number of people indirectly through cleaning services, landscaping and local farmers.
- 6.40. The Council's new retail assessment identifies challenges and opportunities in Bicester town centre. It identifies that in particular, the centre would benefit from further investment into its public realm and the quality of the environment, to create a more attractive and distinctive space.
- 6.41. The majority of Bicester town centre is made up of retail and leisure venues. However, there is an opportunity for increased leisure and eating-out venues, which could go some way to repurposing the excess and vacant shopping units. Bicester Market is popular but does not perform to its full potential.
- 6.42. The Retail Study also identifies that there are a lack of connections between the town centre and Bicester Village which could be improved but also states that there are also opportunities for the town centre to capitalise on the visitors brought to Bicester by the outlet village by offering an alternative and complementary experience.
- 6.43. Bicester Village should continue to function as a premium high-end designer shopping outlet park, with complementary food and beverage units designed to cater for the needs of its shopping customers (as opposed to be an attraction in their own right). Planning conditions which are designed to limit competition with Bicester Town Centre should continue to be in place.
- 6.44. The Retail Study concluded that there was an over provision of comparison retail floorspace, in both Banbury and Bicester, and that overall, there was no additional need for comparison or convenience floorspace across the district up to 2040. The study also concluded that any further out of centre expansion to Banbury or

Bicester's comparison fashion offer would be seriously detrimental to the vitality and viability of both town centres.

- 6.45. To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the town centres, the Council will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services, and other main town centre uses in accordance with the established hierarchy of centres. New retail development will continue to be focused in Bicester town centre and all new development will be required to be built to high design standards. Town centre uses are those defined by the NPPF and include retail, leisure, cultural and community uses. We will resist further major out of centre retail development, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of Bicester town centre.
- 6.46. Several changes to the Permitted Development Rights affecting change of use to and from retail have been introduced in recent years. Use Class MA allows for the change of use from class E to class C under certain circumstances including for proposals where the existing floor space is under 1500 sq metres. Where prior approval is needed, the Council will interpret 'key shopping areas' referred to in the General Permitted Development Order as being designated Primary Shopping Frontages.
- 6.47. There may be some circumstances where the loss of town centre uses is acceptable in order to achieve wider regeneration objectives. The Council will permit proposals for residential development, which lead to the loss of main town centre uses, where it contributes significantly to the regeneration of the town centre. This will not apply to planning applications for individual retail units.

### **Bicester Areas of Changes**

- 6.48. A number of opportunity areas or 'areas of change' have been identified within and close to Bicester Town Centre that provide an opportunity to make a significant contribution to enhancing and re-developing Bicester. The areas of change have been identified through the Retail Study and through ongoing partnership between the Council, Oxfordshire County Council and other partners. They also take into account the recommendations in the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 6.49. The specific areas identified include:

Site 1 – Claremont Car Park/ Deans Court: This site lends itself to residential use given its proximity to the Town Centre and existing housing areas.

Site 2 – Bure Place/ Sheep Street: This site provides an opportunity for sensitive remodelling to provide public realm and design improvements and could include new restaurants or space for leisure operators fronting Bure Place. Residential units on upper floors would help improve the attractiveness of this area and improve footfall, vibrancy and greater commercial returns for the leisure, food and beverage sector.

Site 3 - Market Place (Square) - This area offers the opportunity to become a focal point of the Town Centre and a venue for periodic events that could drive interest and footfall in Bicester. Removal of car parking would facilitate improvements to the public realm, including widening of pavements, enable outside seating for the nearby food and beverage traders and create an attractive 'café culture' environment where visitors will want to spend more time. It is important this area provides a successful multi-functional space, enhanced landscaping and a high-quality pedestrian environment.

Site 4 - London Road Area – The upgrades to East West Rail will necessitate the existing level crossing being closed for up to 50 minutes every hour and so clearly an alternative approach to planning for this area is required. Sensitive remodelling of this area provides an opportunity to support the wider vision for a more sustainable and well connected Bicester with new parking and cycling/ pedestrian connectivity across the railway line and making a significant contribution to enhancing the public realm in the town.

Site 5 – Bicester Council Depot – The Council owns this site which is currently used for Council functions. The site is surrounded by residential development and there is a need for Council operations to locate to another site in Bicester. A site at Graven Hill has been identified. The existing site would be suitable for redevelopment for residential development.

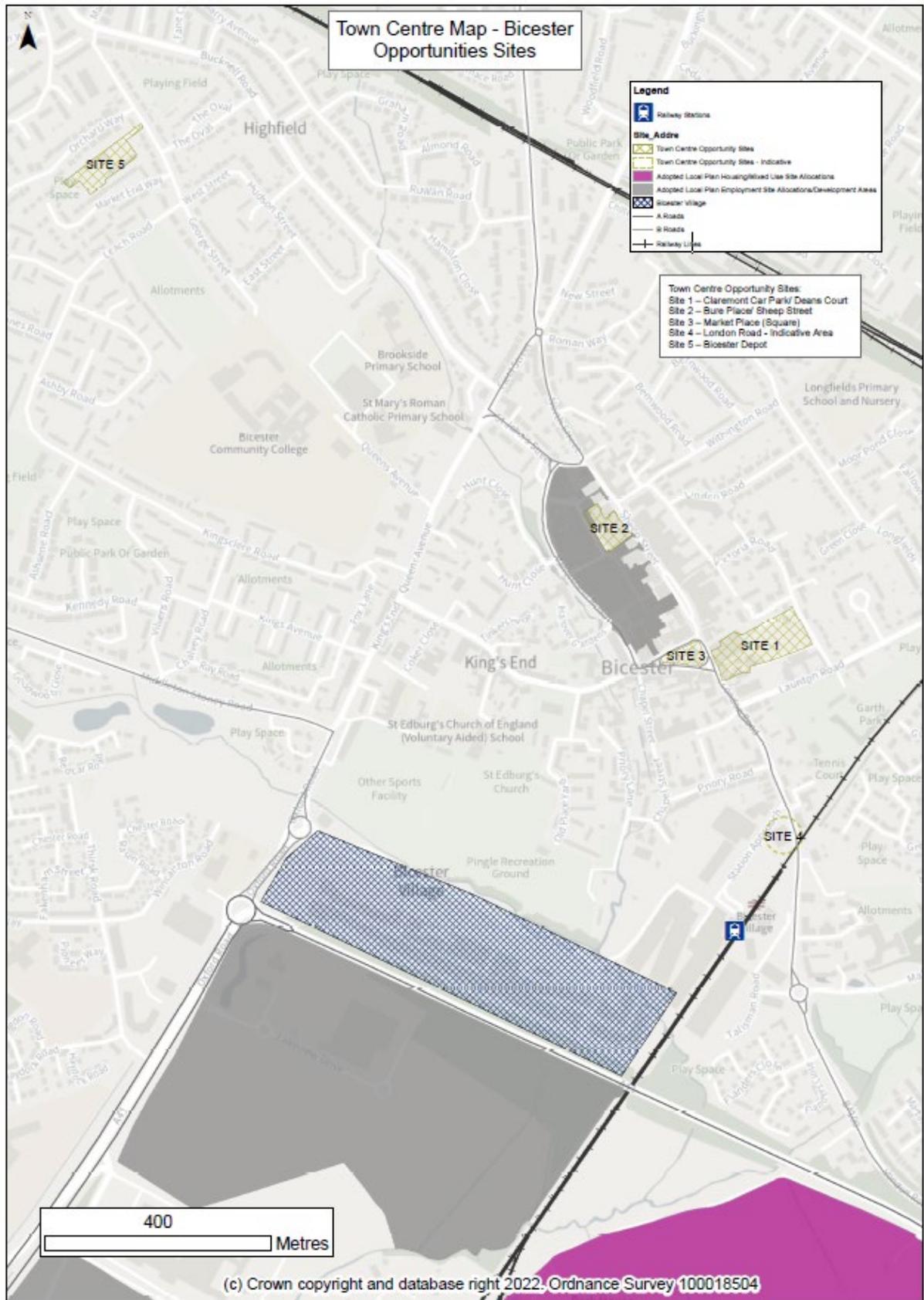


Figure 6.2 Bicester Town Centre Areas of Change

### **Core Policy 19: Bicester Areas of Change**

Five areas of change have been identified within or close to the centre of Bicester as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and Figure 6.2, which are identified for specific change:

Site 1 – Claremont Car Park/ Deans Court

Site 2 – Bure Place/ Sheep Street

Site 3 – Market Place (Square)

Site 4 – London Road Area

Site 5 – Bicester Depot

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Bicester and provide opportunities for the 'greening' of Bicester town centre
- ii. proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment
- iii. be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the historic core and wider town centre
- iv. make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Bicester, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities
- v. be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels
- vi. improve the public realm, particularly in areas of historic value, such Sheep Street and Market square, including by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials
- vii. residential development will be supported within proposals for the identified sites, particularly on above ground floors.

Masterplanning of Bicester town centre will be supported.

## Bicester's Built Heritage

- 6.50. Bicester's interesting and varied history is perhaps not as widely known or appreciated as other places in the district. The Roman settlement of Alchester scheduled monument lies to the southwest of the town and the remains of an Augustinian priory founded between 1182 and 1185 survive within the town centre which is largely Medieval in origin focused on Sheep Street, King's End and the Causeway. Wretchwick deserted medieval settlement is in the south-east of the town and RAF Bicester in the north, now the home of Bicester Motion.
- 6.51. We have a duty to protect these important heritage assets. A key challenge for this Plan is therefore to manage growth in a way that will not unacceptably harm the town's important heritage assets, and that will preserve and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the urban area including the historic street pattern of the town centre.

## Former RAF Bicester

- 6.52. The Former RAF Bicester is an inter-war airfield situated immediately to the north-east of Bicester. Historically it comprised a 'Domestic Site' and 'Technical Site' together with the large open space of the flying field. The whole of the site is a Conservation Area, which was reviewed and extended in 2008, and most of the buildings and structures are protected by listing and scheduling. In addition, a Local Wildlife Site and proposed extension to the Local Wildlife Site covers a large part of the site.
- 6.53. The Council worked with the MOD and English Heritage and prepared a planning brief for the site in 2009. This brief recognised the complex issues, and the unique opportunities, raised by the site and the need to maintain and re-use its historic buildings and the flying field. The brief proposed a 'conservation-led' approach to the site, recognising that finding a use that can best preserve the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings may require a flexible approach in terms of the use to which the buildings are put.
- 6.54. Bicester airfield is being developed providing new jobs and as a key destination for motorsport, new technologies, and events for historic car ownership reflecting the sites history. A number of companies now occupy converted and new buildings in the south-eastern part of the site. The Council is keen to support the continued development of the site and as an increasingly important tourist and leisure destination.
- 6.55. **Core Policy 20** seeks to secure appropriate uses for a long-lasting 'conservation-led' approach to the technical site and flying field. It aims to establish uses that will be complementary to, and help enhance, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the nationally important heritage value of the site. It seeks to encourage a mix of uses that will best preserve the sensitive historic fabric and

layout of the buildings and the openness of the grass airfield. However, the need to allow some flexibility in the interests of securing an economically viable future for the site is recognised.

#### **Core Policy 20: Former RAF Bicester**

Conservation-led proposals for the former RAF Bicester site will be encouraged that help to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the technical site and flying field.

Proposals for heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses will be particularly encouraged. The development of hotel and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses.

All proposals will be required to accord with the latest Conservation Area Appraisal for the site.

Any proposals for the former RAF Bicester site should demonstrate how they will maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield. The biodiversity of the site should be protected and enhanced and habitats and species surveys (including a Great Crested Newt survey) should be undertaken.

The continuation of flying use will be supported at the site and opportunities for improving access to the countryside will also be encouraged.

Proposals for the restoration and use of Stratton Audley Quarry will be supported for informal outdoor recreation uses provided that the proposals are compatible with the uses of the wider RAF Bicester site and the quarry site's designation as a Local Wildlife Site and partial SSSI.

Proposals should be in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

## 7. Chapter 7 - Kidlington Area Strategy

### Introduction

- 7.1. Kidlington is the district's third largest urban area and largest village. At mid-2019, the estimated population of Kidlington was c. 14,000. The settlement of Kidlington functions as a Local Service Centre, as defined in our Settlement Hierarchy, and together with nearby Gosford, Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton, provides an important service and employment area for the district with regional importance for technology, innovation and research.
- 7.2. Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp to the northeast forms the Cherwell boundary with West Oxfordshire north of the Oxford-London Airport and south-east of Woodstock.
- 7.3. The area is well connected to Bicester, Oxford, Woodstock, Banbury and the wider region via the A44 (Woodstock Road), A4260 (Oxford Road), Oxford Parkway rail station and the A34/A40.
- 7.4. The opening of Oxford Parkway railway station in 2015, with links to Oxford, Bicester and to London, has helped to promote this area as a focal point for technology-based companies. This has supported the already well-established commercial, industrial and research areas at Langford Lane and Begbroke. The area also benefits from the Oxford-London Airport, main headquarters of UK companies, Thames Valley Police HQ, along with the Science Park and Technology Park, Langford Locks and the Oxford Industrial Park at Yarnton.
- 7.5. The area is surrounded by Green Belt and areas of green and blue open space and infrastructure. These provide an important landscape setting to heritage landmarks such as the church of St Mary's, the wider setting of the villages in this area and that of Oxford.
- 7.6. The Oxford Canal built in the 18 Century is now a leisure route and a designated Conservation Area.
- 7.7. Kidlington has a thriving village centre with shopping, recreational and community facilities in or near the centre as well as throughout the village, although the local community has ambitions to enhance this centre with identified areas of opportunity.

7.8. The existing Kidlington Framework Masterplan was published in 2016. Its vision statement captures key issues still relevant today.

**“In 2031, Kidlington is a distinctive and sustainable community with a strong sense of identity.**

**Its landscape setting, access to high quality homes and community facilities and revitalised Village Centre make it an attractive place to live and work. Its strong connections with Oxford, Bicester, rail link to London and London Oxford airport support a growing high value employment base which is well integrated with the wider village”.**

*Kidlington Framework Masterplan SPD (2016)*

7.9. The Council adopted the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review in 2020. This plan addresses the apportionment of unmet housing needs for Oxford in Cherwell and contains policies associated with their delivery. The 2020 Plan addressed Oxford’s needs while also providing benefits to the existing communities in the Kidlington area of Cherwell. As part of the 2020 Local Plan, the Council committed to some of the matters identified in the 2016 Kidlington Masterplan, including:

- improvements to the quantity and quality of new public open space and green infrastructure and the provision of additional facilities at Kidlington, Gosford & Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton
- small-scale Green Belt Review to accommodate High Value Employment Needs at Kidlington/Begbroke, and
- policies and infrastructure schemes to deliver: sustainable transport links to Kidlington village centre, public realm improvements on the A4260 (Oxford/Banbury Road) to increase the priority given to pedestrians and cyclists, and improvements to the A44 to facilitate public transport and pedestrian and cycling facilities.

7.10. The focus of this Local Plan (2020 to 2040) is to meet our commitments to 2031 and plan for future needs up to 2040. In collaboration with the Parish Councils, we will support any Neighbourhood Planning, or similar process, that considers town centre masterplanning. We will also support the emerging Area Travel Plans in the 2022 Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) prepared by the County Council.

## **Kidlington and the surrounding villages in 2040.**

- 7.11. Our main priorities for this area to 2040 will be to:
1. support a sustainable local economy by continuing to promote an integrated cluster of high value employment uses at Langford Lane and Begbroke centred on the Oxford Technology Park, London Oxford Airport and Begbroke Science Park
  2. promote an enhanced role for Kidlington village centre, supported by any Neighbourhood Plan, or similar process
  3. redraw Green Belt boundaries to remove existing developed areas at Langford Lane which no longer contribute to the five Green Belt purposes. Maintain all other Oxford Green Belt boundaries, except for two proposed allocations (as set out in this section of the plan), and increase the contribution to recreation, biodiversity and landscape enhancements
  4. maximise use of land for housing and employment within the strategy area, by focusing on village centre opportunity areas and providing more limited strategic scale housing in one of the most sustainable areas in Cherwell
  5. improve connectivity by public transport walking and cycling
  6. protect and enhance the townscape and landscape features that form the setting of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp, Begbroke and Yarnton and maintain their physical separation, identities and distinctiveness
  7. protect and enhance areas of high natural capital value within the landscape setting of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp, Begbroke and Yarnton and the wider region including Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the proposed Otmoor, Bernwood and Ray Nature Park
  8. enhance existing green and blue corridors and improve connectivity between existing open spaces through access improvements and new crossings along the canal and river
  9. enhance access for all residents to high quality community facilities, sports and recreation spaces, and
  10. work with the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council to mitigate surface water run off through appropriate sustainable drainage infrastructure and look for opportunities for betterment where flood risk is already present.

## **Area Strategy for Kidlington**

### **Housing**

- 7.12. There were no strategic housing allocations at Kidlington included in the 2015 Local Plan and the Partial Review Plan (adopted in 2020) was focused on providing housing for Oxford. This Local Plan (2020 to 2040) does support some limited

strategic development at our most sustainable settlements, including Kidlington, in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy. This approach set out within this Plan will help to:

- i. maximise use of land for housing within Kidlington village centre opportunity areas; and
- ii. provide strategic scale housing in one of the most sustainable areas in Cherwell (**Core Policy 2**) to support the cluster of high- value employment in the north of the Kidlington strategy area and improve access to market and affordable housing for local needs.

7.13. There are two strategic allocations set out in this plan (**Core Policy 21**) within the Kidlington area that helps to ensure some development is planned for Cherwell within one of its most sustainable areas, whilst balancing the importance of protecting the Green Belt with wider sustainability factors. These sites are:

- i. **South-East of Woodstock**, which is well connected by sustainable transport modes to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, and
- ii. **Land North of the Moors**, which is a highly sustainable site, is well connected to a wide range of existing services and facilities, including public transport connectivity, but also makes limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes. Around one third of this site, will be undeveloped to provide for new open space, create areas of nature-rich accessible green space in the ‘nature recovery zone area’ and provide a landscape edge to Kidlington which retains the areas relationship to the wider countryside and historic environment and acting as a buffer for the open countryside to the north, the Cherwell Valley and the setting of the listed buildings and Conservation Areas in the immediacy of the site. The area could also include a new Cricket Pitch, which would help to further minimise any impacts and protect the historic setting of the nearby church. The need for and suitability of the site for formal sports pitches will be further informed by the Councils emerging playing pitches and sports facilities strategy.

7.14. The exceptional circumstances for supporting this proposed limited allocation in the Green Belt is set out in the supporting Topic Paper<sup>35</sup>.

7.15. The Council’s Partial Review Plan, adopted in 2020, identified a number of strategic allocations to address the identified quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be allocated within Cherwell, 4,400 homes across six strategic sites, which all fall within the wider Kidlington area and are close to and accessible to Oxford. These are located north of Oxford (PR6a and PR6b), Kidlington and southeast of Kidlington

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<sup>35</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

(PR7a and PR7b) and east and west of the A44 at Yarnton and Begbroke (PR8 and PR9) Refer to **Figure 7.1**.

- 7.16. The policies for these Partial Review (2020) sites are saved in this Local Plan (2020 to 2040) by **Core Policy 21: Kidlington Area Strategy (Figure 7.1)**. Development briefs have been prepared for these sites to ensure a comprehensive approach to developing these sites and deliver a wide range of benefits to the existing local communities, such as for improved green infrastructure, access to the countryside, active travel and public transport. These allocations remain as existing commitments and the policies are saved by this plan.
- 7.17. Should the Parish Councils wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to explore regeneration and brownfield site options in Kidlington in more detail, this process will be supported.

## **Employment**

- 7.18. As explained in the introduction, the economy in the Kidlington area is based on research and development, light industrial and commercial businesses and has strong links with Oxford.
- 7.19. The 2011 Census travel to work data indicates there were c. 9,700 people living in Kidlington in employment and around 77% of those (8,100 people) were commuting to work. The majority of the commuting to work (44%) travelled to Oxford.
- 7.20. Improving the integration of strategic housing and employment in this area with its good connectivity to Oxford, Bicester and Oxford Parkway and planned investment in public and active travel, is likely to support further changes in commuting patterns, aligned to sustainable transportation, especially to parts of Oxford and key growth locations in Cherwell.
- 7.21. There is nonetheless an opportunity for the Kidlington Area to play a significant role in diversification of Cherwell's economic base. In accordance **with Core Policy 4** and the updated economic needs evidence, this plan allocates 14.7 ha of additional employment land adjoining the existing and highly successful Begbroke Science Park. This follows a limited Green Belt Review as discussed in **Chapter 4**.
- 7.22. Small amendments are proposed to Green Belt boundaries removing existing developed areas at Langford Lane which no longer contribute to the five Green Belt purposes (**Core Policy 3**). All other Oxford Green Belt boundaries, except for one

exception at Land North of the Moors (described above) will be retained and the Green Belt contribution to recreation, biodiversity and landscape will be enhanced (**Core Policy 6**).

- 7.23. Begbroke Science Park hosts the Oxford University departments of Engineering Science and Materials, the Oxford Materials Characterisation Service and a large number of successful spin-outs and start-ups leading on research and technology. The proposed expansion will support Oxford University in transforming the science park into an Innovation District and deliver Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy<sup>36</sup> aspirations for the development of a major innovation quarter for UK and international collaboration and commercial Research and Development.
- 7.24. Saved Policy PR8 together with the allocation for the extension of Begbroke Science Park in this Plan 2020-2040 will establish an innovative new contemporary, urban neighbourhood with strong links to Kidlington Village Centre, to Oxford, and to the adjacent communities of Yarnton and Begbroke.
- 7.25. The expansion of the University's Begbroke Science Park will be integrated within a distinctive, urban neighbourhood featuring innovation and high levels of sustainability. The Development Brief for PR8 will guide the design principles for the integration of the Science Park expansion.

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<sup>36</sup> [Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy: Investment Plan \(August 2020\)](#)



### **Core Policy 21: Kidlington Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development.

Development in the Kidlington Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

#### **Housing Delivery**

5,150 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. Non-strategic allocations will also be delivered through this plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans. 4,400 of the homes planned within this area will contribute towards the quantum of unmet housing needs arising from Oxford to be met within Cherwell. These will be met on the Saved Allocations from the 2020 Partial Review Plan.

Development will be supported at the new strategic site allocations in accordance with community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3** and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the Kidlington Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

**Table 7.1 Kidlington Area Strategy Allocations**

<b>Settlement/ Parish</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>
<b>Shipton-on-Cherwell</b>	<b>South-East Woodstock/ Upper Campfield Road</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>Kidlington</b>	<b>North of the Moors</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Water Eaton/North Oxford</b>	<b>Policy PR6a – Land East of Oxford Road*</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>Water Eaton/North Oxford</b>	<b>Policy PR6b – Land West of Oxford Road*</b>	<b>670</b>
<b>Kidlington/Water Eaton</b>	<b>Policy PR7a – Land South East of Kidlington*</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>Kidlington</b>	<b>Policy PR7b – Land at Stratfield Farm 1*</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Begbroke/Yarnton</b>	<b>Policy PR8 – Land East of the A44*</b>	<b>1,950</b>
<b>Yarnton</b>	<b>Policy PR9 – Land West of Yarnton*</b>	<b>540</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,150</b>

\*These sites are existing allocations made in the 2020 Partial Review plan that are Saved by this 2040 plan.

(Continued over page)

## Core Policy 21: Kidlington Area Strategy (Continued from Previous Page)

### Employment

14.7 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on new strategic employment allocations as follows:

**Table 7.2 Kidlington Area Strategic Employment Sites**

Settlement/ Parish	Site Name	Hectares
Begbroke	Begbroke Science Park – Expansion	14.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>14.7</b>

### London Oxford Airport

- 7.26. The London-Oxford Airport (LOA) operates as a private airport and is the area's primary regional and business aviation centre. LOA is the only commercial airport between Birmingham and London Heathrow and makes a significant contribution to the local and regional economy as a major infrastructure facility, local employer and supporting the growing knowledge base and innovation sector in the area.
- 7.27. Current airport activities include general and business aviation uses, pilot training base (CAE Oxford Aviation Academy) and aircraft maintenance. Airbus Helicopters UK's headquarters are based at the airport. Complementary activities include aerospace/aviation related industries and research and development.
- 7.28. Construction of a new c. 7,000sqm hangar with two bays including rear offices, stores and workshops commenced in 2021.
- 7.29. LOA intends to set a program for the replacement of existing older hangars with new facilities. It will be important that the airport's future and modernisation plans embrace all opportunities for carbon reduction, from the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (lifecycle carbon reduction of up to 80% compared to the traditional jet fuel) to more efficient aircraft design, and the development of future technologies like electrification.
- 7.30. LOA benefits from permitted development rights<sup>37</sup> which in consultation with the Council could allow airport related development on the airport's operational land. A

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<sup>37</sup> Class F of Part 8 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 as amended. Development is not permitted by Class F if it would consist of or include: (a) the construction or extension of a runway; (b) the construction of a passenger terminal the floor space of which would exceed 500 square metres; (c) the extension or alteration of a passenger terminal, where the floor space of the building as existing at 5th December 1988 or, if built after that date, of

S106 agreement restricts the airport's maximum annual operating capacity to 160,000 movements per year.

- 7.31. Support will be given to appropriate aviation related development proposals and the airport's contribution to the local and regional economy. The Council will seek clear mitigation measures effectively addressing any aviation related environmental or health concerns.
- 7.32. The Council's approach to development proposals within the airport's safeguarded areas are set out in **Core Policy 22**. This seeks to ensure that any development is appropriate, not unreasonably impacted by the airspace, and that the Airport Operator is given due consultation.
- 7.33. Airport safeguarded areas refer to a designated zone of exclusion, in which the Aerodrome Operator can, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority, consult on development proposals to protect the environment surrounding the airport from development. Reasons for preventing development would include activities that have the potential to impact the aerodrome's safe operation, or sensitive development that would likely be negatively and inappropriately impacted by the aerospace itself. Safeguarding ensures:
- i. buildings and structures in the area do not pose a danger to aircraft
  - ii. the integrity of radar and other electronic aids to navigation are not affected
  - iii. inappropriate lighting is not present, to avoid confusion with aeronautical lighting
  - iv. no increase in wildlife risk (e.g. bird strikes)
  - v. operations that could create interference through construction processes are prevented, and
  - vi. aircraft are not impacted by potential 'glint & glare' from development (e.g. solar panels).
- 7.34. LOA's safeguarded airspace measures 2 nautical miles (3.704 km) in radius, centred around the Airfield Reference Point, the mid-point of the main instrument runway.
- 7.35. Airport related development within the safeguard area, and elsewhere, must be held to the same standards as other development, as set out within the supporting policies.

### **Aircraft noise**

- 7.36. Aircraft noise is generally exempt from the general noise nuisance controls. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the control of aircraft noise. However, the Civil Aviation Authority indicates the overall policy is that noise issues

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the building as built, would be exceeded by more than 15%; (d)the erection of a building other than an operational building; or (e)the alteration or reconstruction of a building other than an operational building, where its design or external appearance would be materially affected.

are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise.

7.37. In order to determine whether or not any specific development is likely to increase 'noise nuisance' from aircraft, the Council will seek to assess the impact of that development in terms of:

- i. the number, location, duration and frequency of aircraft activities or movements
- ii. the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with individual aircraft activities or movements
- iii. the noise levels and sound frequencies (Hz) associated with overall aircraft activities or movements
- iv. seasonality of aircraft activities or movements, and
- v. the time of day at which aircraft activities or movements take place

7.38. Where planning permission is granted for development, the Council may impose conditions in accordance with NPPF noise guidance and **Core Policy 47: Pollution and Noise**.

#### **Core Policy 22: London-Oxford Airport**

The Council will support the continued use of London-Oxford Airport for commercial aviation and ancillary uses.

It will consult with the airport operator on proposals in the airport's safeguarded areas, as shown by the Policies Map and **Appendix 5**. Development that may be a hazard to aircraft safety will not be permitted.

In consultation with the Airport Operator, the Council will ensure that:

- i. areas included in airport safeguarding areas are protected from development, and
- ii. sensitive uses such as housing, education and hospitals are not located in areas significantly affected by aircraft noise without acceptable mitigation measures.

Development proposals at the airport should include mitigation measures to address any environmental and health impacts, particularly in respect of noise, air quality, health, and climate change in compliance with other Development Plan policies.

Any proposals for development on the wider Airport, that fall within the Oxford Green Belt, will need to comply with related Development Plan policies, including for development in the Green Belt.

## Delivery of strategic transport infrastructure within the Kidlington Area

- 7.39. The Oxford Road/Banbury Road (A4260) and Woodstock Road (A44) connect Kidlington and surrounding villages with Oxford City centre, Woodstock and the north of Cherwell. The A34, A40 and Oxford Parkway railway station connects the area with Bicester, Oxford, London and the wider region.
- 7.40. Langford Lane and Upper Campsfield Road (A4095) to the north and Frieze Farm to the south are important east-west connecting routes between the A44 and A4260 corridors.
- 7.41. The A34 is a major strategic route carrying freight from Southampton to the Midlands. It crosses the western edge of Kidlington and Gosford as it runs from Bicester Junction 9 of the M40 to Peartree interchange north of Oxford.
- 7.42. Similar to the rest of the UK, road congestion is having an impact on journey times. The road network north of Oxford suffers from congestion on main routes. Major road and rail intersections exacerbate congestion in this area.
- 7.43. Air quality (**Core Policy 45**) sets out requirements from development proposals regarding likely impact of air pollutants particularly in and around Air Quality Management Areas. A small section of the Bicester Road at Gosford on the south-eastern edge of Kidlington is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Cherwell's Air Quality Annual Status Report 2022<sup>38</sup> indicates emission levels 10% below the AQM objective for a third year. The Council will consider whether this AQMA should remain in place. Core Policy 45, described above, also gives consideration to the nearby Oxford Meadows SAC to ensure this is appropriately considered.
- 7.44. Kidlington is well-served by a combination of public transport services that provide a frequent bus corridor into Oxford and Bicester, with opportunities for continuing to enhance the sustainable connectivity of the area.
- 7.45. Peartree and Oxford Parkway/Water Eaton Park and Ride sites on the boundary with Oxford and provide approximately 1,800 car parking spaces between them. As well as being served by bus, Oxford Parkway/Water Eaton Park and Ride is also within walking distance of Oxford Parkway Railway Station. The Park and Rides together with planned new provision on the A44 have the important function of removing private vehicles from the main corridors to help reduce congestion.
- 7.46. Oxfordshire County Council are exploring the future of Park & Rides and their potential to function as transport hubs and electric vehicle charging facilities.

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<sup>38</sup> [Air Quality Status Report 2022](#)

- 7.47. Oxford Parkway station is located some 2.4 km from Kidlington village centre, between Kidlington and Oxford and adjacent to Water Eaton Park and Ride. The Parkway provides direct rail services to Bicester Village Station, Oxford, High Wycombe and London Marylebone.
- 7.48. The A44/A4260 Corridor Study<sup>39</sup> helped inform the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review 2020 and Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2021<sup>40</sup>. It supported Oxfordshire's Rapid Transit (high quality and frequency bus services) routes and helped improve access to employment and housing locations in the area and Oxford City centre.
- 7.49. **Core Policy 23: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Kidlington Area**, identifies a number of transport schemes that need to be delivered as part of this Local Plan (2040) as informed by the transport studies and Infrastructure Delivery Plan accompanying this Plan, and the Area Strategies that form part of the County Council's Local Connectivity and Transport.

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<sup>39</sup> [A44 and A4260 Corridor Study \(2017\)](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Kidlington LCWIP \(Dec. 2021\)](#)

### **Core Policy 23: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Kidlington Area**

In order to deliver the growth in the Kidlington Area, transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth that is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Kidlington and the Kidlington Area. The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

All development within the Kidlington area will be required to contribute in accordance with **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**. Within the Kidlington Area this will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- i. improved bus services and facilities along:
  - a. the A44/A4144 corridor linking Woodstock and Oxford
  - b. the A4260/A4165 (Oxford Road) linking Kidlington, Gosford, Water Eaton and Oxford
  - c. Langford Lane
  - d. A44 P&R/ Transport Hub.
- ii. the enhancement of the off-carriageway Cycle Track/ Shared Use Path along the western side of the A44 and the provision of at least one pedestrian and cycle and wheelchair crossing over the A44.
- iii. the prioritisation of the A44 over the A4260 as the primary north-south through route for private motor vehicles into and out of Oxford.
- iv. improved rapid transit/bus services and associated Super Cycleway along the A4260 into Oxford.
- v. improvements to the public realm through the centre of Kidlington associated with (d) above.
- vi. the provision of new and enhanced pedestrian, cycling and wheelchair routes into and out of Oxford.
- vii. the provision of the proposed cycle route network in Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP).

## Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the Kidlington Area

7.50. The strategy of this Plan (2020-2040) established in Chapter 4, the principle of safeguarding land for infrastructure projects, when necessary to protect them from conflicting developments and support infrastructure planning and delivery over the Plan period.

7.51. **Core Policy 24: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Kidlington Area**, identifies any schemes that will be safeguarded to ensure development does not prejudice the Council's ability to deliver the Plan.

### **Core Policy 24: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Kidlington Area**

**Land** is safeguarded to support the delivery of the identified transport schemes listed below:

- improved bus services and facilities along:
  - A44 P&R/ Transport Hub.
- the provision of the proposed cycle route network in Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP)\*.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (as shown by maps in **Appendix 5** and the Policies Map)\*\* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

\* Please note that these maps will be added to the Plan at the Publication Stage.

\*\*the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where the **policy** will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

## **Delivery of green and other strategic infrastructure in the Kidlington area**

- 7.52. The Kidlington area has a good range of community facilities. Recreational spaces and sports grounds at Orchard and Park Hill recreation grounds, Ron Groves, Exeter Close and Streatfield Break provide green space, sports and play facilities serving the wider area alongside smaller green spaces and play parks.
- 7.53. Six primary schools at Kidlington, Gosford and Yarnton, a secondary school at Gosford Hill and further planned primary and secondary schools at Begbroke and Water Eaton will serve current and future education needs.
- 7.54. The Integrated Care Board, local GP practices and parish and district councils have explored opportunities for new health care facilities to extend the patient capacity of the two GP practices with Exeter Hall being a preferred location as part of its redevelopment as a community hub. With the practices already at capacity, other opportunities will need to be secured if feasibility work undertaken by the Parish Council shows the site cannot accommodate a health centre expansion.
- 7.55. Evidence supporting the 2015 Local Plan and the 2016 Kidlington Master Plan indicated a shortage of parks and gardens, allotments and playing pitches in the area which the Plan addressed through policies seeking their protection and setting standards for new provision through new development.
- 7.56. The leisure centre at Gosford and health & fitness offer at Langford Lane provide for indoor sports facilities but further facilities will be required to 2040. The planned secondary school at Begbroke is expected to offer shared use of a new four-court sports hall and the swimming facilities at Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre will require expansion.
- 7.57. The 2020 Local Plan Partial Review addressed some of the green Infrastructure and recreational open space opportunities along the canal identified in the 2016 Master Plan and provides for additional facilities in the area including c. 4 hectares of land for strategic sports provision south-east of Kidlington complementing key sports facilities at neighbouring Streatfield Break.
- 7.58. The need for new and improved community and strategic infrastructure including education, health, sports and community facilities is being considered through the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that accompanies this Plan to ensure facilities are secured from new development.
- 7.59. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal are important green infrastructure corridors for biodiversity and active travel connecting Kidlington towards Oxford and gives access to the wider countryside beyond. Open spaces and areas of high natural and landscape value stretch along the river and canal lengths and frame the setting of Kidlington, surrounding villages and that of Oxford. The area includes open spaces

such as the woodland and wetland habitats at Stratfield Brake, Begbroke Wood Local Wildlife Site and Rushy Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as the open spaces in the Lower Cherwell Conservation Target Area. All of which contribute to Oxfordshire's nature recovery network<sup>41</sup>

- 7.60. The Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2022<sup>42</sup> has been prepared to ensure we, our partners and local community, have a framework which supports increased access to nature, open space and the Green Belt, help us conserve our heritage, landscape and natural environment, makes us more resilient to climate change and support active travel.
- 7.61. In the Kidlington Area, the strategy addresses the network of green spaces and routes, landscape and water features shaped by the canal and River Cherwell as well as the greening of Kidlington's urban area. The strategy identifies area specific opportunities and sets projects for the protection of green spaces and increased wider benefits to people and biodiversity. Importantly, it sets the area in a wider natural context with links to important spaces within the Oxford Meadows and Farmoor conservation target area and the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation further south.
- 7.62. Priorities to 2040 include:
- i. protecting the function of the river Cherwell floodplain
  - ii. protecting areas of green space of high natural capital and nature recovery value surrounding Kidlington and surrounding villages set within the two conservation target areas: Lower Cherwell Valley CTA and Oxford Meadows and Farmoor CTA
  - iii. improving blue corridor connectivity along the canal and river corridors
  - iv. supporting active travel through integrated green infrastructure to help reduce daily commutes to Oxford, and
  - v. supporting improvements to the River Cherwell's water quality
- 7.63. The Council will protect and enhance Cherwell's network of open spaces and infrastructure identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and support the identified strategic priorities as set out in **Core Policy 25: Kidlington Green and Blue Infrastructure**.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/oxfordshires-nature-recovery-network/>

<sup>42</sup> ADD link to G&B IS when available

### **Core Policy 25: Kidlington Green and Blue Infrastructure**

The Council will require all development proposals to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Kidlington area as shown by maps in **Appendix 6** and the Adopted Policies Map.

The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Kidlington area including their enhancement and on-going management costs, including:

- i. expanding and enhancing Kidlington's network of footpaths and trails
- ii. enhancing the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell blue corridors
- iii. new and enhanced access to the canal and river, and
- iv. greening Kidlington village centre and supporting walking and cycling

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the schemes listed.

### **Strengthening Kidlington village centre/supporting Kidlington's Local Service Centre**

7.64. Kidlington centre provides the main service centre in this area, mainly offering convenience facilities and retail/financial services. Recent retail/town centre developments, with office and residential uses over, have helped to consolidate the village centre, but the challenge remains to continue to establish a visually more attractive centre that provides ongoing support for the vitality of the centre into the future.

7.65. Kidlington village centre has low vacancy rates. Since the previous Retail Study (2012), the centre has seen the loss of just one convenience store but has experienced a considerable drop in comparison stores. However, the number of services (retail, leisure and financial and business services) has increased significantly accounting now for around 60% of the total, which is above the UK average of 50%).

7.66. Similarly, to our other district centres, investing in the consumer experience in Kidlington is anticipated to secure the resilience in retail stores and town centres as a whole in the future. We commissioned a town centre and retail study<sup>43</sup> to inform the Plan. Its recommendations for Kidlington, include:

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<sup>43</sup> [Town Centre and Retail Study \(September 2021\)](#)

- i. prioritise improvements to the public realm and arrival experience to the centre:
  - improve the attractiveness of the Banbury Road/Oxford Road approach to the village centre to enhance arrival experience
  - provision of a gateway to the village centre
  - increase the visibility Kidlington Centre as a whole and Kidlington Centre arcade including further signage
  - improvements to make the west of High Street / Watts Way area a focal point and increase its use
- ii. encourage clustering of evening economy/leisure uses for example around the pedestrianised square (west of High Street / Watts Way).
- iii. improve the availability of private & affordable housing and senior living in the village centre
- iv. the village centre boundary should broadly reflect the existing boundary except for a residential dwelling to the west of the Black Bull Public House which is recommended to be removed, and
- v. drawing a compact Primary Shopping Area.

7.67. The 2012 Retail Study which informed the Local Plan 2015 has now been superseded by the 2021 Town Centre and Retail Study. The Local Plan 2015 proposals map and the Kidlington Framework Master Plan indicate an area to strengthen and extend the village centre to include the western side of the Oxford Road. However, latest evidence in the Retail Strategy 2021 advises directing retail development to the Primary Shopping Area only and leisure uses to the village centre as a whole.

7.68. A minor amendment is proposed to the Local Plan 2015 village centre boundary and a primary shopping area added in accordance with the recommendations in the updated Town Centre and Retail Study 2021. This is to address the overprovision of retail floorspace, encourage the reoccupation of vacant units, and create a layout that encourages stronger relationships and connections between its individual retail uses.

7.69. Saved Policies PR6a and PR8 will enable the provision of a small-scale neighbourhood centre at Gosford and Water Eaton in proximity to the Oxford Parkway and at Yarnton on the east side of the A44 to support existing and planned communities in the area.

## Opportunity areas

7.70. The Town Centre and Retail Study 2021 study identifies two sites with regeneration opportunities within and close to Kidlington village centre:

Site 1 - Skoda Garage, Oxford Road/Lyne Road

Site 2 - Watts Way Piazza.

7.71. Further technical and feasibility work will need to be carried out to understand the potential of these opportunity areas, but the sites are considered important to improve the visibility and attractiveness of the village centre and secure public realm enhancements. Any future proposals should not preclude the delivery of these village centre improvement opportunities.

7.72. The Kidlington Framework Master Plan identified potential regeneration on other opportunity sites, including Exeter Close. Exeter Close is an important civic space in the vicinity of the village centre with uses including a community hall, medical practice, recreational open space and sports provision. This site was considered suitable for small scale residential development alongside the replacement of civic facilities, including health uses, on site. The masterplan indicates that a more efficient arrangement of community uses on this site could release land for small scale residential development and estimates a housing capacity of 15-20 homes.

7.73. The Council is committed to supporting the Parish Council to update their Masterplan for Kidlington Centre and supports regeneration opportunities in accordance with **Core Policy 26: Kidlington Areas of Change**.

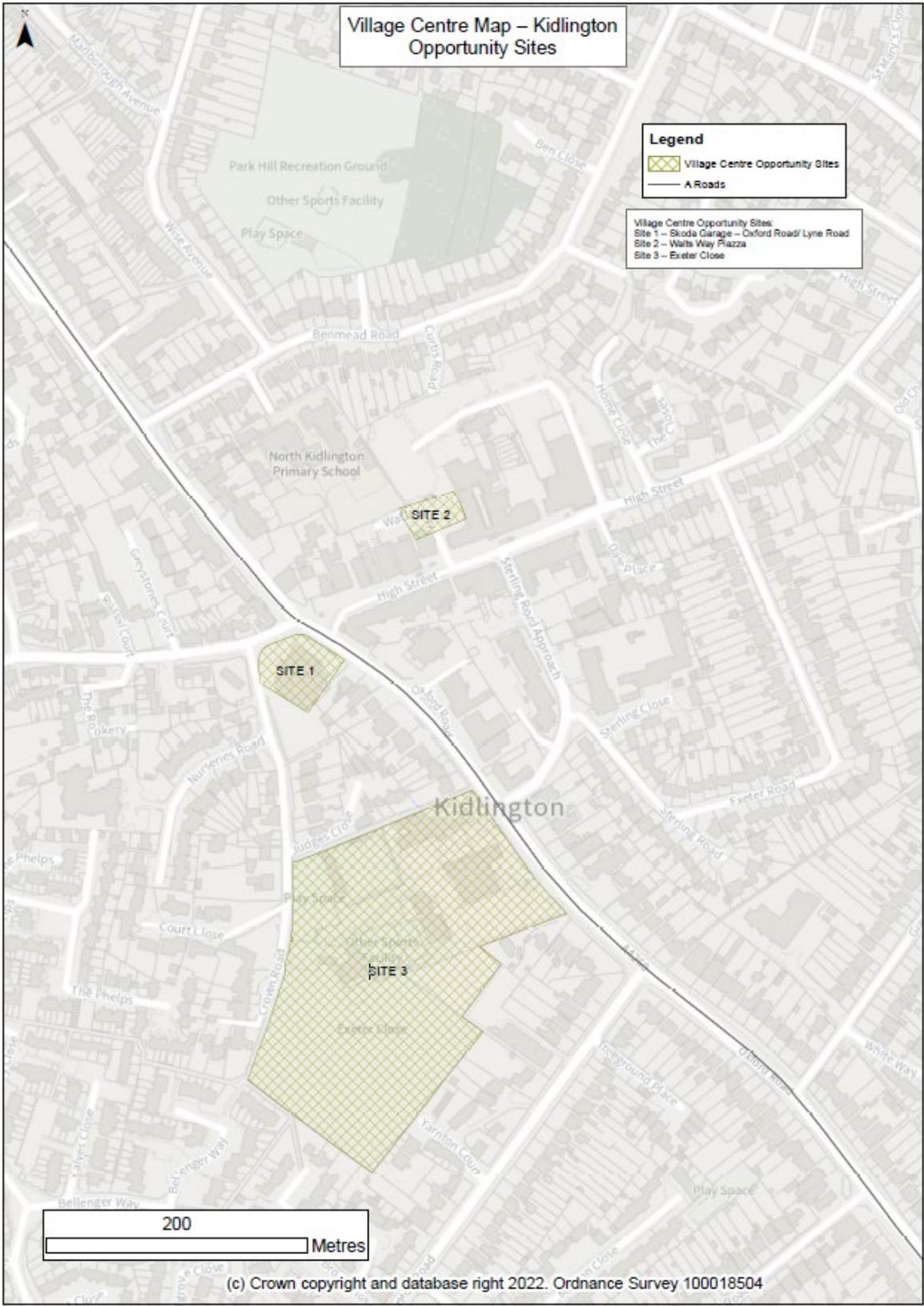


Figure 7.2 Kidlington Town Centre Areas of Change

### **Core Policy 26: Kidlington Areas of Change**

Three principal areas of change have been identified within or close to the centre of Kidlington as listed below and shown on the Policies Map and Figure 7.2, which are identified for specific change/ redevelopment as part of the Kidlington Master Plan. Other areas may be identified through a Neighbourhood Plan.

Site 1 – Skoda Garage – Oxford Road/ Lyne Road

Site 2 – Walts Way Piazza

Site 3 – Exeter Close

These areas are supported as locations for change and/ or redevelopment in accordance with the following criteria where development should:

- i. be of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Kidlington
- ii. proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment
- iii. be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and promote linkages to the village centre
- iv. make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Kidlington, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities
- v. be focused on providing access by sustainable modes of transport including improvements for pedestrians and cyclists such as managed cycle parking facilities, and with no increase in car parking above current levels
- vi. improve the public realm and by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials, and
- vii. residential development will be supported within proposals for the identified sites, particularly above ground floors and where consistent with the other criteria of this policy and the respective site masterplans.

### **Heritage**

7.74. The heritage and history of Kidlington and surrounding villages is closely related to the setting of the River Cherwell, their proximity to Oxford and the 19 Century developments of the Oxford Canal and railway.

7.75. The grounds of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS) are situated to the east of the A44 in close proximity to London Oxford Airport that sits in the Oxford Green Belt. To the north of the Airport and adjoining Woodstock's boundary there are the buried remains of a Roman villa and associated fields, the designated Blenheim Villa Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

- 7.76. The World Heritage Site (WHS) of Blenheim Palace, registered park and associated setting on the southeast edge of Woodstock are of high significance. The setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the ancient route of the 'Ridgeway' along the West Oxfordshire/Cherwell Border and the proximity of Bladon Conservation Area are also important heritage considerations.
- 7.77. North of Campsfield Road existing woodland belts contain views of the approach to Woodstock and alongside other wooded areas such as Campsfield Wood, contrast with the openness of the landscape to the south.
- 7.78. The Oxford Canal is a designated Conservation Area along its whole length, including through Kidlington and many of the Canal bridges and locks are listed.
- 7.79. The 13th Century Grade I Listed Church of St Mary the Virgin is the focal point of the Church Street character area, prominent in views from across the flood meadows of the River Cherwell and forms an important view to the wider setting of Hampton Poyle Conservation Area north of the River Cherwell.
- 7.80. Begbroke's Conservation Area is located west of the A44. It comprises nine buildings and their grounds on the west of the A44. The special character of the Conservation Area is the use of local materials in traditional styles within large maturely vegetated plots, bordered by dry stone walls.
- 7.81. Care should be taken to ensure that the open parts of the Conservation Area and the land which make up its setting and impact positively on its appearance remain open.
- 7.82. Development proposals will be considered carefully in accordance with **Core Policies 21** and **26** in relation to designated heritage assets and the wider setting of Kidlington and surrounding villages including topography, vegetation, open spaces and landscape character to prevent harming the historic built and natural environment.

## 8. Chapter 8: Heyford Area Strategy

### Introduction

- 8.1. The Heyford Area contains the saved strategic allocation at Heyford Park, identified in the 2015 Local Plan, which provides for over 2,300 dwellings as part of a sustainable mixed community. This is located approximately 6 miles west of Bicester and occupies part of the former US Airbase within the Parish of Heyford Park. Neighbouring Parishes include: Upper Heyford, Somerton, Ardley, Middleton Stoney and Lower Heyford. The site is located close to Junction 10 of the M40 Motorway, which forms a key strategic link within this area.
- 8.2. The Heyford Park site is located at the top of a plateau that is part of a large previously developed site but is otherwise set within open countryside. Land to the west falls sharply to the Cherwell Valley and the Oxford Canal. The Grade 1 listed Rousham Park is to the southwest and is considered the first ‘picturesque’ landscape by William Kent. The Rousham, Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford Conservation Areas adjoin the site and the former airbase itself has been designated a Conservation Area. The former airfield has national and international heritage importance associated with its former use as a Cold War military base that was finally vacated in 1994.
- 8.3. The site has been divided into three main functional character areas: the main flying field, a technical site to the north of Camp Road, and the residential area that is mainly to the south of Camp Road.
- 8.4. The 2015 Local Plan provided for a sustainable new settlement at the site focused to the south of the flying field, thus avoiding the most historically significant and sensitive parts of the site. The original proposal supports significant community and other infrastructure, including a ‘free school’, a children’s nursery and a new village centre that includes a dentist, pharmacy, food shop, and other retail units. A planning application for this development was approved in 2022.
- 8.5. This Plan provides an opportunity to further improve the sustainability, connectivity and infrastructure and facilities associated with the development in the longer-term. However, it is recognised that the further development envisaged by this Local Plan will be dependent on the successful delivery of the development already approved and further investment in sustainable transportation. Consequently, the additional development provided for will not come forward before 2030 (as set out in the Development Templates – **Appendix 3**).
- 8.6. The wider Heyford Park site is also recognised as part of the Oxfordshire network of Business Parks and is identified in the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy (2019) and consists of approximately 39,000 sq metres of commercial floorspace. It has proved to be an attractive location for several businesses, including the reuse of a large number of the buildings on the former flying airfield for employment purposes.

Recent employment developments at Heyford Park have included a new Film City that will provide a mixture of film and sound studios, workshops and ancillary offices.

## Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.7. The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in May 2019 and covers Heyford Park and a number of the neighbouring Parishes in the central part of the district. It contains a Plan Vision, objectives and policies on matters such as housing and employment and identifies important views and vistas. The Conservation Area at the airbase, Rousham, Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford are also identified within the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan as having particular local significance and importance. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a small number of dwellings to be delivered within some of its villages.
- 8.8 A neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with, and plan positively to support, the strategic policies of the Development Plan. This would be a consideration for any update on the Mid-Cherwell plan. However, any non-strategic allocations, identified in this plan for the Heyford area could be brought forward through future Neighbourhood Plans if the communities wished to do so.

## How the Heyford Area will change by 2040

- the implementation of the approved (2022) masterplan for Heyford Plan
- the construction of additional development on land allocated to the south subject to the achievement of a comprehensive approach that ensures effective integration of existing, approved and planned development
- a sustainable community with a mix of new homes, including affordable homes, and jobs
- improved transport infrastructure for the area, including improved bus services
- small scale, sustainable housing and employment development at villages within the area where consistent with **Core Policy 3**
- new services, community facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities
- more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public
- the preservation and enhancement of ecological areas and a net gain in biodiversity
- the continued preservation of the historic environment and environmental improvement of the former airbase in the interest of maintaining a lasting arrangement for site
- improved walking and cycling routes within Heyford Park and to the wider countryside
- high quality, well designed development which reflects the local character and historical importance

- the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas, landscapes and the countryside, and
- environmental and recreational improvements to the wider area beyond Heyford Park, including to the Canal and River corridors with improved public access and an enhanced natural environment.

## Strategy for the Heyford Area

- 8.9. The overarching strategy for the Heyford Area recognises its potential for additional development in the longer-term to help achieve and improve its sustainability. This will include helping to improve the range of employment, community facilities and infrastructure and further enhance the sustainable transport and connectivity credentials of the area. It is recognised that any such development must be linked to the successful implementation of the approved masterplan (2022) and to the delivery of further transport investment to avoid unacceptable impacts on the highway network and to maximise the opportunity to use sustainable modes of travel. The additional development is therefore planned to come forward later in the plan period.
- 8.10. The strategy for Heyford Park is to achieve a long-term comprehensive approach to development with the integration of new development with that to be developed as part of the approved masterplan. The existing allocation in 2015 Local Plan has yet to be fully built out and Policy Villages 5 - The Former RAF Upper Heyford (from the 2015 plan) remains an important consideration for planning applications. The policy is 'Saved' by this Plan within **Core Policy 31**).
- 8.11. The additional development at Heyford Park, identified in this plan and shown on **Figure 8.1** will be expected to provide approximately 1,235 dwellings, in addition to approximately 2,800 built and permitted on the existing site, with an appropriate mix of sizes and tenures including affordable homes, extra care housing, and the opportunity for self-build and custom build housing. Please note the existing planned development for around 2,800 homes is more than the original allocation for 2,361 homes.
- 8.12. The development of the additional 1,235 homes on the newly allocated land at Heyford Park must be guided by a developer led masterplan prepared in close collaboration with the developers of the approved (2022) masterplan for the wider site and demonstrating how the developments will be mutually beneficial and integrated. On this basis, **Core Policy 27: Heyford Area Strategy**, and **Appendix 3**, makes provision for an additional housing allocation provided for within this Plan.
- 8.13. The proposed allocation of around 1,235 new homes recognises the Mid-Cherwell area's long-term potential in terms of improved sustainability, infrastructure provision and environmental improvements beyond Heyford Park. However, further growth at Heyford Park needs to be planned strategically so infrastructure and

community facilities can be provided to ensure any adverse environmental effects, on local communities and on the road network are minimised.

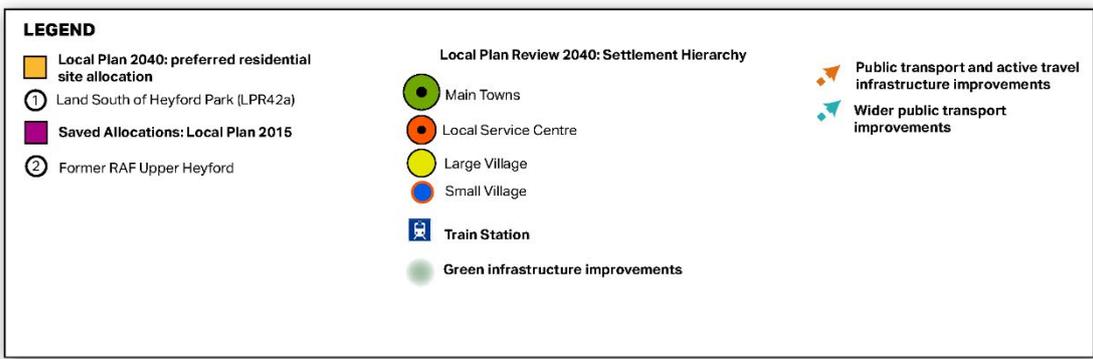
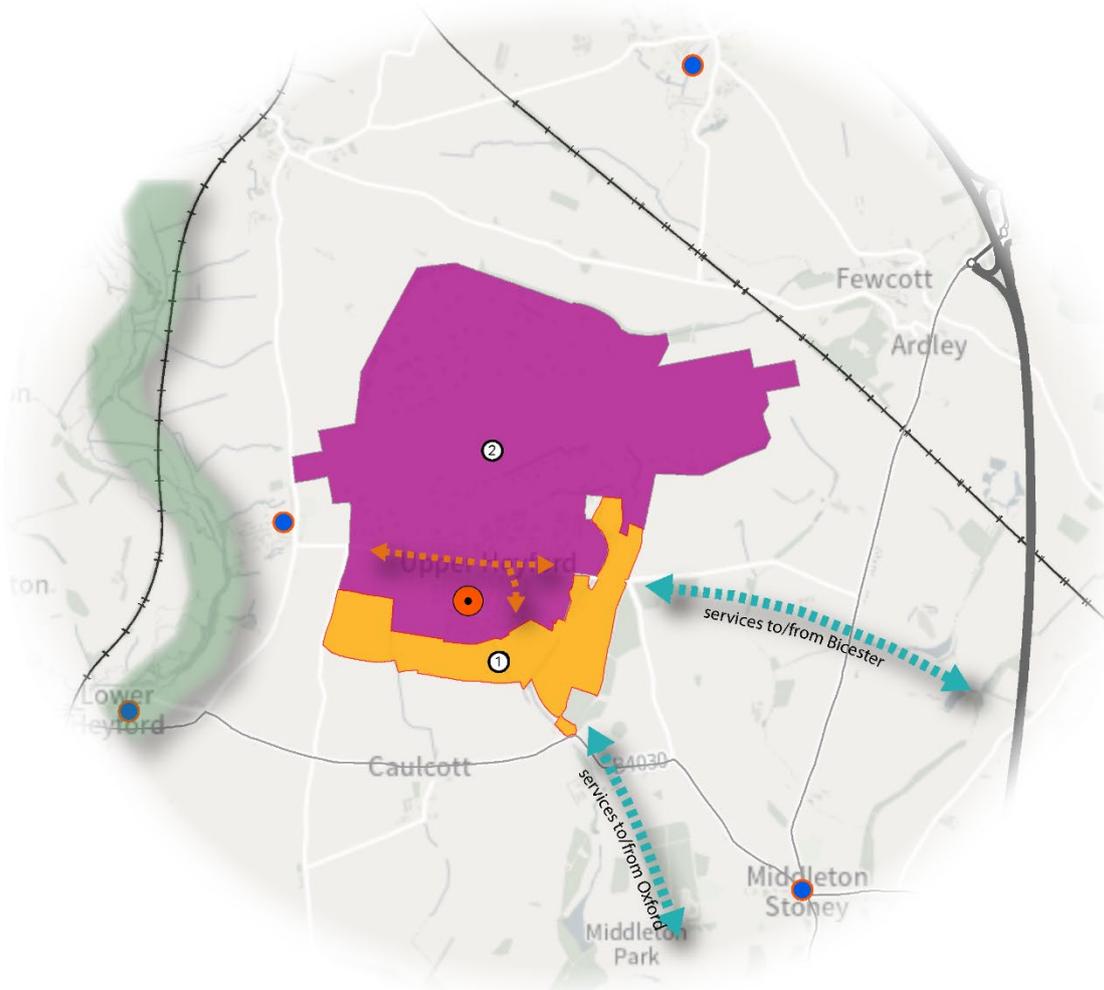


Figure 8.1 Heyford Area Strategy Map

### **Core Policy 27: Heyford Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development as part of a comprehensive approach.

Development in the Heyford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**.

#### **Housing Delivery**

Around 1,235 dwellings will be delivered through a new strategic site allocation. Non-strategic allocations will also be delivered through this plan or through Neighbourhood Development Plans..

Development will be supported on the newly allocated site after 2030 in the interests of first ensuring the delivery of the approved (2022) masterplan under Saved Policy Villages 5 to enable the securing of further sustainable transport investment necessary to support the additional homes. Development will be expected to meet the requirements set out within the Site Development Template at **Appendix 3** and to be in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table shows how the level of planned housing within the Heyford Area through strategic development sites will be distributed:

**Table 8.1 Heyford Area Strategy Allocations**

<b>Settlement/ Parish</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>
Heyford Park	Land South of Heyford Park	1,235
<b>Total</b>		1,235

There is also an allocation identified in the 2015 Local Plan that is Saved by this Local Plan as it is currently not fully implemented. As follows:

- Policy Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford

## Delivery of strategic transport infrastructure within the Heyford Area

- 8.14. The development of a further 1,235 homes at Heyford Park will require a significant package of transport and other infrastructure that is identified in **Core Policy 28** (see below). The proposal for additional development at Heyford Park, later in the Plan period, provides an opportunity to strengthen the sustainable and active travel solutions for the site, thus helping to respond to the Council's Climate change declaration and the County Council's clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system by 2030. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (July 2022<sup>44</sup>) includes a target to reduce 1 in 4 car trips by 2030 and deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040.
- 8.15. Oxfordshire County Council's Bus & Rapid Transit Strategy identifies how growth at Upper Heyford will need to be considered in terms of improved public transport frequency and connectivity with Bicester. The County Council's Active Travel Strategy (July 2022) focuses on active travel modes (walking, wheeling and cycling), and contains a county-wide target to increase the number of cycle trips to 1 million per week by 2031, from our current level of 600,000 cycle trips per week.
- 8.16. As an existing strategic growth location it is important the Local Plan seeks to maximise opportunities to deliver the most sustainable form of development possible, but it is also important that any development is linked directly to the necessary identified infrastructure coming forward. For this reason, the additional growth at Heyford Park is contingent on the delivery of the necessary infrastructure coming forward later in the Plan period.
- 8.17. The new development should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport and minimising the need to travel by private car. There are planned improvements between the bus services between Heyford Park and Bicester and the additional development provides opportunities to deliver improvements to this service and to other destinations, including Banbury. Layouts should enable a high degree of integration and connectivity with the existing and planned communities at Heyford Park and which maximise the potential for walkable neighbourhoods with a legible hierarchy of routes. Further requirements for transport provision and for walking and cycling are set at in the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3**.

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/LocalTransportandConnectivityPlan.pdf>

### **Core Policy 28: Delivery of Strategic Transport Schemes within the Heyford Area**

Transport infrastructure for the development of the additional 1,235 homes at Heyford Park will include:

- i. extended walking / cycling provision including eastwards along Camp Road and westwards connecting to Lower Heyford station through public rights of way improvement utilising the canal towpath
- ii. a new spine road within the new proposed allocation to accommodate buses and to provide for active travel
- iii. walking / cycling connections through the new development linking Lower Heyford Road to Camp Road via Tait Drive
- iv. a commuter cycle route to Bicester linking to an improved bridleway to Bicester to the east of Heyford Park
- v. mobility hubs with cycling provision and electric car charging points
- vi. appropriate contributions necessary to capacity upgrades to M40 Junction 10 along with wider highway capacity improvements, and
- vii. upgrading of the access road to the B430 to the east of Heyford Park.

All development within the Heyford area will be required to contribute to infrastructure in accordance with **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**.

## Safeguarding of land for strategic transport improvements within the Heyford Area

8.18. There are a number of strategic transport improvements, set out within **Core Policy 28** (shown above) that will require land to be safeguarded to help ensure that development is sustainable and deliverable. For this reason, selected schemes are identified within **Core Policy 29: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Heyford Area**, set out below.

### **Core Policy 29: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Heyford Area**

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following transport schemes as listed by **Core Policy 28**.

- a new spine road within the new proposed allocation to accommodate buses and to provide for active travel\*
- a commuter cycle route to Bicester linking to an improved bridleway to Bicester to the east of Heyford Park\*
- capacity upgrades to M40 Junction 10 along with wider highway capacity improvements\*, and
- upgrading of the access road to the B430 to the east of Heyford Park\*.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (to be shown by maps in **Appendix 5** and the Adopted Policies Map)\*\* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport scheme listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

\*Please note that these maps will be added to the Plan at the Publication Stage.

\*the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

## New Railway Station

- 8.19. The Heyford area is already served by a railway station at Lower Heyford on the line between Oxford and Banbury. However, there was originally a station at Ardley on the Chiltern Main line that runs between Birmingham and London, which closed in 1963. To ensure that opportunities for sustainable public transport and connectivity in the area is maximised, especially in the longer-term, land is safeguarded for a railway station at Ardley on the railway line to the south of the settlement of Ardley. This will help to maximise opportunities for the development of the additional 1,235 homes at Heyford Park and the wider area to be served by public transport. The land is safeguarded in accordance with **Core Policy 29** and shown in the **Appendix 5**.

### **Core Policy 30: Ardley Railway Station**

The reopening of Ardley Railway station for passenger services will be supported. The Council will work with Network Rail and others to ensure opportunities to deliver a new passenger railway station are brought forward during the plan period.

Land at the original Ardley station is safeguarded to support the delivery of a new station and suitable access to it. The area identified (**Appendix 5** and the Policies Map) illustrates where this policy will apply; the precise alignment for the scheme, will be informed by detailed design work.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to adversely impact upon the delivery of passenger services at Ardley will not be supported.

## Delivery of green and other strategic infrastructure in the Heyford Area

### Community facilities

- 8.20. There is an existing 2 form entry all-through school at Heyford Park that is split across two sites and expansion is proposed as part of the new masterplan for the existing site. It is proposed that further primary and secondary school provision is provided on the land identified in this Plan to the south-west of the existing school site (south of Broadway Road), although this can be informed by the wider master-planning work. To avoid impacts on Rousham Conservation Area, this would likely involve building on the existing playfields of the existing school and the provision of new replacement playing fields within the proposed allocation. Within the existing site current and immediate proposed school provision is expected to continue to be provided on existing school sites. Further consultation will take place with the education authority, Oxfordshire County Council, to confirm provision and requirements.

- 8.21. Community facilities, including health and leisure facilities, near to new recreation and play provision should be provided within the proposed new development area. The existing local centre is expected to provide for the majority of the needs of the new community. Further requirements for community facilities are set out in Site Development Template (**Appendix 3**).

## Green Infrastructure

- 8.22. The Council's Green Infrastructure strategy (2022)<sup>45</sup> has identified areas near to Heyford Park for green infrastructure improvements linked to the river Cherwell corridor and Oxford Canal which provide an opportunity to serve the residents of Heyford Park as well as providing for ecological, ecosystem services and public access enhancement.
- 8.23. The study identifies that 'the Mid-Cherwell River Corridor Focus Area' is anchored by a swath of land along the Cherwell Valley that closely follows the Upper Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) and runs from Clifton past Lower Heyford in the south. Habitats here are primarily low-lying arable fields and meadows sitting within the floodplain either side of the river corridor and there are a series of sites protected for the habitats they provide lying along this corridor.
- 8.24. The Ardley and Upper Heyford CTA runs along a limestone plateau between Ardley and Upper Heyford and includes Upper Heyford Airfield, several quarries near Ardley and the railway line. Key habitats and species include calcareous grassland (supporting 50% of this habitat for the Cherwell District).
- 8.25. The study describes a larger cluster of protected habitat lies further to the east at Upper Heyford - including the Ardley Trackways SSSI, the linear Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI, as well as multiple local wildlife sites at the former RAF Airfield and at Stoke Wood.
- 8.26. The following opportunities have been identified for the Heyford Area, and development proposals are expected to demonstrate how they contribute to delivering the overall package of schemes. More site-specific requirements are included within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3**.
- preventative upstream flood mitigation, including nature based solutions, which would minimise impacts downstream
  - the creation of a nature-rich "green lung" through the central part of Cherwell, enhancing access to the landscape along the green-blue spine of the River Cherwell and allowing for landscape-scale nature recovery.
  - the creation of a landscape-scale River Cherwell Waterway Park

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<sup>45</sup> ADD REFERENCE

- restoration of the health of the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal -enhancing water quality through vegetation, floodplain restoration, and the removal of barriers
- new spaces for habitat and recreation - connecting Steeple Aston and Lower Heyford, providing a Gateway to Upper Heyford, and nature-exploration park at Somerton near Bestmoor SSSI
- green corridor connections - connections provided to Ardley Trackways SSSI, between the Oxford Canal and Upper Heyford and Lower Heyford Station with enhanced canal access.

## Historic Environment and Landscape

- 8.27. As explained earlier in the Plan and Area Strategy, the former RAF Base at Upper Heyford is important from a heritage perspective at a national level and this area is protected as a Conservation Area. The flying field represents the core area of historic significance and is nationally important due to its Cold War heritage. There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of national importance on site, as well as other unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and much of the airfield is of ecological importance, including a Local Wildlife Site.
- 8.28. Heyford Park is surrounded by open countryside in an area containing historic rural villages, important landscapes, views and vistas. Rousham Conservation Area also lies partly within this area and includes the designated landscape to the north of Rousham House.
- 8.29. The proposed extension to Heyford Park is within a small part of the Rousham Conservation Area and adjacent to the Heyford Park Conservation Area. New proposals within the Heyford Area will therefore need to take account of important views and vistas, seek to limit of the impact of development on the surrounding countryside and preserve and enhance the historic environment. They will need to be considered against policy (saved Policy Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford) the wider Development Plan policies relating to the Historic Environment and for the Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape. Any site-specific requirements are set out in Site Development Template shown by **Appendix 3**.

## 9. Chapter 9: Rural Areas Strategy

### Introduction

- 9.1. Beyond the Main Towns of Banbury and Bicester and the Local Service Centres of Kidlington and Heyford Park, Cherwell District contains 12 Larger Villages, 38 Smaller Villages and a number of smaller settlements and hamlets that fall within the open countryside. At the time of the 2011 Census, 31% of the district lived within the rural area.
  
- 9.2. Most of the villages and hamlets within the rural area retain their traditional character. The rural area is host to an outstanding natural and historic environment with the Cotswolds National Landscape, ironstone downs and Otmoor to the south of the district, however there are also some issues relating to housing affordability and access to employment opportunities, shops and services, with public transport connectivity limited by the loss of bus services in some areas. There is a need for some non-strategic growth at the larger and most sustainable of the rural villages (classified as Larger Villages) to help sustain their viability and vitality. There are also opportunities for some small-scale employment within the rural areas and for new technologies supporting home working.
  
- 9.3. This section identifies the housing requirements for the Larger Villages (as identified in the **Settlement Hierarchy - Core Policy 3**). It also includes a number of policies to guide the development process within the rural areas as listed below:
  - Core Policy 31: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures
  - Development Policy 2: Rural Exception Sites
  - Development Policy 3: New Dwellings in the Countryside
  - Development Policy 4: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling

## How the Rural Area will change by 2040

- 9.4. Through this Local Plan over the period 2020-2040 housing and employment growth will be predominantly focused at the most sustainable locations in the district: Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Heyford Park. The Rural Area (i.e., the rest of the district) will not accommodate strategic scale growth. However, to deliver the plan vision and objectives it is important that Cherwell's most sustainable villages continue to see an appropriate level of non-strategic growth to help maintain service provision and rural employment. There is also a need to deliver affordable housing in the rural area where house prices are amongst the highest within the district through non-strategic housing development and rural exception sites where they are supported by the community.
- 9.5. Growth across the rest of the district will continue to be more limited, focusing on meeting local community and business needs and helping to support the vitality of these more rural settlements. Any development will be directed towards the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services and are more well connected than the smaller villages and in accordance with **Core Policies 3: Settlement Hierarchy** and **Core Policy 31: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures**.

## Housing in the Rural Area

- 9.6. The largest and most sustainable villages within the rural area, the Larger Villages, as set out within **Core Policy 3**, will accommodate the non-strategic growth allocation of 500 additional dwellings outlined in **Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution**. It should be noted that Windfall development is not included in the 500 dwellings allowed for in the rural areas and will occur in accordance with the relevant policies in this plan, such as within the existing settlements for the Main Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages, or for rural exception sites.
- 9.7. NPPF paragraph 66 states that strategic policies should “set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations”<sup>46</sup>. NPPF paragraph 67 requires local planning authorities to set “indicative housing requirements” for neighbourhood areas “if requested to do so”, taking into account factors “including the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/5-delivering-a-sufficient-supply-of-homes>

planning authority”<sup>47</sup>. This Local Plan will future-proof this by identifying housing requirement figures for all designated neighbourhood areas and all larger villages (regardless of whether they are designated neighbourhood areas) for the plan period.

9.8. Housing requirement figures are required for all designated neighbourhood areas; however, some designated areas contain settlements which are classed as ‘Smaller Villages’ in the settlement hierarchy and therefore, in line with the spatial strategy, these villages are not apportioned any non-strategic growth.

9.9. There are 12 Larger Villages in Cherwell District and a number of designated Neighbourhood Areas that contain smaller villages. **Table 9.1** shows the different tiers, settlements, parishes, and Neighbourhood Plan status, alongside Green Belt constraints and whether there are any strategic allocations in the area.

**Table 9.1 Larger Village and designated neighbourhood areas in Cherwell District**

Tier	Settlement	Parish	Planning Policy status	Neighbourhood Plan Status
Larger Villages	Adderbury	Adderbury	N/A	Made 16 July 2018
Larger Villages	Ambrosden	Ambrosden	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Bletchington	Bletchington	Part Green Belt	Bletchington, Hampton Poyle & Gay Area designated tbc
Larger Villages	Bloxham	Bloxham	N/A	Made 19 December 2016
Larger Villages	Bodicote	Bodicote	N/A	Area designated 4 January 2016
Larger Villages	Deddington	Deddington	N/A	Designated, plan under preparation
Larger Villages	Hook Norton	Hook Norton	N/A	Made 19 October 2015
Larger Villages	Kirtlington	Kirtlington	Conservation Area and Historic Park and Garden	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Made 14 May 2019
Larger Villages	Launton	Launton	N/A	N/A
Larger Villages	Steeple Aston	Steeple Aston	N/A	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/5-delivering-a-sufficient-supply-of-homes>

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Planning Policy status</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plan Status</b>
				Plan Made 14 May 2019
Larger Villages	Yarnton	Yarnton	Strategic allocation LPP1 Partial Review PR9 Land West of Yarnton	N/A
Smaller Villages	Fritwell	Fritwell	N/A	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Made 14 May 2019
Smaller Village	Hampton Gay and Poyle	Hampton Gay and Poyle	Green Belt	Bletchington, Hampton Poyle & Gay Area designated tbc
Smaller Villages	Islip	Islip	Green Belt	Designated 7 January 2022
Smaller Villages	Lower Heyford	Lower Heyford	N/A	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Made 14 May 2019
Smaller Villages	Merton	Merton	Green Belt (part)	Designated 13 December 2013
Smaller Villages	Middle Aston	Middle Aston	N/A	Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Made 14 May 2019
Smaller Villages	Milcombe	Milcombe	N/A	Designated TBC
Smaller Villages	Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp	Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp	Green Belt	Designated 11 February 2019
Smaller Villages	Stratton Audley	Stratton Audley	N/A	Designated 7 June 2013
Smaller Villages	Weston on the Green	Weston on the Green	Green Belt (part)	Made 19 May 2021

- 9.10. The NPPF requires housing requirement figures to reflect the strategy for the area. In Cherwell the strategy includes a number of strategic allocations at the Main Towns and Local Service Centres. It is proposed that Larger Villages already subject to strategic scale development during the plan period should not additionally be apportioned non-strategic development, and also that larger villages in the Green Belt would not be appropriate for non-strategic development unless it is within the built-up area of the settlement and consistent with other policies in the development plan.
- 9.11. In terms of the settlements in **Table 9.1** this means that the parishes containing larger villages where strategic growth is planned (i.e., Bodicote and Yarnton) are not apportioned non-strategic housing growth. Furthermore, Islip is constrained by Green Belt and the village of Bletchingdon is partially constrained by Green Belt to the south, so these also see a proportionate reduction.
- 9.12. **Core Policy 31: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures** sets out the housing requirement figures for the rural area over the plan period (2020-2040) and also the residual to be allocated through non-strategic allocations. The figures have been calculated in accordance with methodology set out in the supporting Topic Paper<sup>48</sup>. Taking into account the relative size of the population, population growth trends since 2011, development that has been completed since the beginning of the plan period and development that is already ‘committed’ through the granting of planning permission.

### Consultation Question:

There is an opportunity for the Parish Councils for the Larger Villages with an identified need for non-strategic allocations (**Table 9.2**) to take responsibility for making these allocations through a Neighbourhood Plan process if they wish to. Where Parish Council make a formal commitment to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to meet the identified non-strategic allocations, there will be no further detail provided in the Local Plan. Where Parish Councils do not wish to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, the District Council will work with those communities to identify non-strategic allocations and add them to the Publication Version of the Plan, to be published later in 2023.

We are asking the Parish Councils for the Larger Villages listed in Table 9.2 to confirm their intentions in response to this consultation.

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<sup>48</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

### Core Policy 31: Rural Area Housing Requirement Figures

In accordance with the spatial strategy and **Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution**, the 500 dwelling non-strategic housing requirement for the rural area will be distributed across the Larger Villages as shown in the following **Table 9.2**.

For clarity, the housing requirement, identified in the following table, for the plan period 2020-2040, is the figure to be met through non-strategic development in each Parish in total, taking into account completions since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and known commitments (at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022). The residual allocation figures are to be delivered through non-strategic allocations, either through a Neighbourhood Plan process, where a Parish Council or Qualifying Body wishes to do so, or by this Local Plan.

For any non-strategic allocations (to be identified in the Publication Version of Plan to be published in Summer 2023) development will be supported at the Larger Villages where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates (**to be added for the Publication Plan**) or within Neighbourhood Plans, and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

**Table 9.2 Housing Requirement Figures for Larger Villages and Other Villages preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.**

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Parish	2020-40 Housing Requirement Figure	Residual requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations (at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022)
Larger Villages	Adderbury	110	63
Larger Villages	Ambrosden	204	87
Larger Villages	Bletchington	50	23
Larger Villages	Bloxham	129	106
Larger Villages	Bodicote	0	0
Larger Villages	Deddington	96	43
Larger Villages	Hook Norton	122	42
Larger Villages	Islip	0	0
Larger Villages	Kirtlington	46	46
Larger Villages	Launton	112	43
Larger Villages	Steeple Aston	59	47
Larger Villages	Yarnton	0	0
Smaller Villages	Fritwell	0	0
Smaller Villages	Lower Heyford	0	0
Smaller Villages	Middle Aston	0	0
Smaller Villages	Upper Heyford	0	0
Smaller Villages	Weston on the Green	0	0
Open Countryside	Hampton Gay & Poyle	0	0

## Rural Exception Sites

9.13. The rural area of Cherwell District contains many areas with high house prices and a limited supply of affordable homes. There is justification therefore for an exception to be made against normally restrictive policy beyond built-up areas, to allow for affordable housing to be provided on sites that would not normally be considered for housing use, if they are in accordance with **Development Policy 2: Rural Exception Sites**.

9.14. The NPPF requires local planning policies to support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and to consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would enable the scheme to be viable. In these circumstances, it will be expected that a development appraisal will need to accompany any planning application. The inclusion of any element of open market housing must serve to benefit the provision of rural affordable housing and must not inflate the 'threshold land value', that is, the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land.

### **Development Policy 2: Rural Exception Sites**

Development proposals for limited affordable housing within the rural areas, to meet local needs only, will be permitted as an exception, where all of the following criteria are met:

- i. a demonstrable local community need for affordable housing has been established
- ii. the number, size and tenure of the dwellings are suitable to meet the identified need
- iii. the site and the development proposal are well related to an existing settlement
- iv. the proposed development will not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets
- v. the proposal is designed to respect the characteristics of the local area including the countryside setting, and
- vi. schools with capacity, health, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance.

In addition to the criteria above, proposals for rural exception sites within the Green Belt should be limited in scale to meet local community needs and deliver affordable housing only.

A development appraisal should accompany the application that clearly demonstrates how the above criteria have been met.

## New Dwellings in the Countryside

- 9.15. The NPPF requires that planning policies should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and that development is sympathetic to local character and landscape setting. Housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be generally avoided.
- 9.16. This Plan allows for some new development in the rural areas, in accordance with the Rural Exceptions policies (**Development Policies 3: New Dwellings in the Countryside** and **Development Policies 4: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling**), although it is important that the open countryside, landscapes and views are protected. The Council recognises that it may be necessary or beneficial to permit the replacement of a dwelling both within villages and in the countryside, for example where an existing dwelling is unfit or substandard. There may be opportunities to improve the quality of local environments through the re-development of some sites.
- 9.17. All planning permissions for agricultural dwellings outside the villages will have an agricultural-occupancy condition restricting their occupation to a person or persons employed or last employed in agriculture and their immediate dependants. Such conditions will only be removed if it can clearly be demonstrated that there is no need for an agricultural worker's dwelling in the locality. The requirements of any given farm holding will be considered secondary to the needs of agriculture as a whole. Sufficient details should be provided to enable an assessment of the size, nature and viability of the existing or proposed enterprise together with details of the number and tenure of existing dwellings related to the holding or estate. Where there is any doubt that a dwelling is required for the proper functioning of an enterprise, or where a new business is being proposed, it will be necessary to supply adequate financial information to demonstrate that the proposals are sound (covering a three-year period).
- 9.18. Appropriate conversions are preferable to use land efficiently and reduce impacts on the countryside. The erection of a new dwelling will normally be expected to be of traditional design and be closely related to existing buildings in the interest of protecting the appearance and open character of the countryside.
- 9.19. Within villages, proposals for the replacement of a single dwelling by two or more new dwellings may be appropriate, however, **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy**, will apply.

### **Development Policy 3: New Dwellings in the Countryside**

The Council will permit the development of an agricultural workers dwelling if there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Dwellings beyond the built up limits of settlements, which are not agricultural workers dwellings, will not be permitted unless one or more of the following apply:

- i. the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate small scale development that secures the future of associated heritage assets
- ii. the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings
- iii. the development would involve the one for one replacement of an existing dwelling
- iv. the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling, and
- v. the development is for an individual dwelling where the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: - is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas and - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

All development must comply with other appropriate Development Plan policies including: **Core Policy 70** on well-designed places and **Core Policy 50** on protection and enhancement of landscape.

### **Conversion of Rural Buildings**

9.20. The conversion of rural buildings to dwellings will help contribute towards meeting the districts housing needs as well as allowing farms to diversify and remain economically viable. However, it is also important that employment is provided for in our rural areas and that farms continue to operate where-ever possible.

9.21. **Development Policy 4** applies to rural buildings both within villages and in the open countryside. By seeking to prioritise employment re-use over residential conversion, the policy also aims to assist in the diversification of the rural economy by providing the opportunity to create alternative sources of employment. Employment generating development will normally be regarded as development other than for

retail purposes. In the case of clause (i) of the policy, the applicant will be expected to submit a statement indicating what efforts have been made to secure a suitable employment use for the site. Any works for the conversion of rural buildings should refer to the latest revision of the CDC Design Guide for the conversion of farm buildings.

9.22. Permitted development rights allow farm buildings to be converted into residential dwellings where certain criteria can be satisfied that are set out in Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order.

9.23. Where planning permission is required for the conversion of a rural building, permitted development rights will be removed to ensure no further inappropriate alteration to its form, character and setting.

#### **Development Policy 4: Conversion of a Rural Building to a Dwelling**

The conversion of a rural building to a dwelling will be permitted provided that:

- i. the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable employment re-use
- ii. the building's form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings
- iii. the building is of permanent and substantial construction, evidenced through a structural engineers report appropriate to the building
- iv. in the case of a building beyond the built-up limits of a village, conversion can be achieved without major rebuilding or major extension and without inappropriate alteration to its form and character
- v. the proposal would not harm the special character and interest of a heritage asset or its setting
- vi. the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the countryside or the immediate setting of the building, and
- vii. there are no significant transport, highways and noise impacts.

All development must comply with other appropriate Development Plan policies, including Core Policy 83 : Historic Environment and Archaeology.

## Employment land in the Rural Area

- 9.24. **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** makes a nominal allowance of 15 ha for non-strategic employment sites. Further work is being undertaken to inform the Publication Version of the Plan to be published later in 2023 and so any non-strategic sites we identify will be included in that version of the plan.

### **Consultation Question:**

As part of this consultation, we are asking for submissions for any small scale (below 3 ha) sites that may be suitable for non-strategic employment development to support local Cherwell needs. To be in conformity with Core Policy 2 and Core Policy 4 it is proposed that the non-strategic allocations will be at Larger Villages or extensions to existing employment sites, however, we will consider any sites that are submitted through the consultation.

# 10. Chapter 10: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development

## Introduction

10.1. This chapter sets out the policies that will be used to inform decision making on planning applications that fall within the 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development' theme.

- Connectivity and Transport
  - Core Policy 32: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements
  - Core Policy 33: Active Travel - Walking and Cycling
  - Core Policy 34: Public Rights of Way
  - Core Policy 35: Assessing Transport Impacts/ Decide and Provide
  - Core Policy 36: Freight
- Sustainable design and construction and Renewable Energy
  - Core Policy 37: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Schemes
  - Core Policy 38: The Energy Hierarchy and Energy Efficiency
  - Core Policy 39: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development
  - Core Policy 40: Carbon Offsetting
  - Core Policy 41: Renewable Energy
- Flood Risk
  - Core Policy 42: Sustainable Flood Risk Management
  - Core Policy 43: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)
- Natural Resources
  - Core Policy 44: Water Resources
  - Core Policy 45: Air Quality
  - Core Policy 46: Hazardous Substances
  - Core Policy 47: Pollution and Noise
  - Core Policy 48: Soil Contamination and Stability
  - Core Policy 49: Waste Collection and Recycling
- Landscape
  - Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape
  - Core Policy 51: Settlement Gaps
  - Core Policy 52: Light Pollution
- Green Infrastructure
  - Core Policy 53: Green Infrastructure
  - Core Policy 54: Local Green Space
- Biodiversity
  - Core Policy 55: Protection of Oxford Meadows SAC

- Core Policy 56: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity
- Core Policy 57: Biodiversity Net Gain
- Core Policy 58: Conservation Target Areas
- Core Policy 59: Natural Capital Ecosystems Services

## Connectivity & Transport

- 10.2. This Local Plan will ensure housing and employment are located within sustainable locations, in addition to encouraging sustainable transport modes and low-carbon technologies such as electric vehicles. Living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities can lead to reduced need to travel, reduced carbon emissions and more sustainable communities in the long-term.
- 10.3. Sustainable travel modes play a key role in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. Cherwell benefits from good physical transport connections, including road and rail and the Oxford-London Airport in south Cherwell. A large area of the district is within easy reach of the M40 motorway, which connects with the wider strategic road network. This has made Oxfordshire an attractive place to live and commute from, as well as a place to invest. However, Oxfordshire experiences severe congestion issues, and although its good connections are an asset, they also present a significant challenge. Emissions originating from transport account for 20% of the County's total emissions, made worse due to the high numbers of people who live in rural areas. Further to this, traffic congestion is a major cost to the local economy and has the potential to constrain future growth. If traffic growth continues with a reliance on the private car, many more of the district's urban and interurban routes will become increasingly congested.
- 10.4. As well as the road network, railway stations connecting to the national network are located at Banbury, Bicester, Lower Heyford, Islip and Oxford Parkway at Water Eaton. Since the adoption of the previous Local Plan in 2015, there have been improvements to rail infrastructure in Cherwell. This has included:
- a direct link from Oxford to Bicester via a new station at Oxford Parkway
  - a new station at Islip
  - improvements to Bicester Village Station, and
  - fast services from Banbury and Bicester to London Marylebone.
- 10.5. Over the period to 2040, improvements are planned to East-West Rail between Oxford and Milton Keynes, in particular, re-opening passenger services between Bicester and Bletchley, thus opening up this east-west corridor between Oxford and Cambridge. As well as passengers, our railways carry significant amounts of freight. There is an expectation that over the life of the plan some freight will be transferred to rail, and rail investments such as those identified in the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (2021)<sup>49</sup> could help support a shift of through freight movements to rail in

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Oxfordshire-Rail-Corridor-Study-.pdf>

Oxfordshire. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP;2022)<sup>50</sup> provides further details on planned improvement works within the district.

- 10.6. The County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 (LTCP)<sup>51</sup> sets out the transport strategy for the county. In addition, three initial supporting strategies for freight and logistics, active travel, and innovation were produced in 2021 and more are in production. The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive, while also protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. This will be achieved by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.
- 10.7. Substantial investment and funding will be required to support net zero carbon growth in Cherwell and across Oxfordshire. Cherwell's updated IDP, that accompanies this plan, sets out how we intend to secure investment from the government, transport operators, the development industry, and other sources over the plan period.

#### **Improved Sustainable Transport & Connections**

- 10.8. The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to promote a sustainable pattern of development in Cherwell. Core Policies in Section 4 of this Plan and our Area Strategies direct development to Cherwell's 'best connected' places offering the best possible opportunities to reduce the need to travel, linking residential, employment and town centre uses and the provision of high-quality active and sustainable transport infrastructure improvements.
- 10.9. To make a difference to current travel patterns will require quality infrastructure for sustainable modes to make them the first choice for certain movements. Development proposals will be required to plan for improved walking, cycling and public transport at an early stage and indicate an appropriate delivery phase to support active travel and public transport use in accordance with **Core Policy 32**.
- 10.10. Cherwell will seek better connectivity, quality, accessibility and capacity of public transport and active travel. For this, our main transport corridors and facilities will need upgrading to enable efficient use of public transport and safe walking and cycling routes. Cherwell will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways, Network Rail, and other public providers to bring forward improvements to infrastructure and services. Development should support and

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<sup>50</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/LocalTransportandConnectivityPlan.pdf>

enable these projects, where appropriate in accordance with **Core Policy 32** and our Area Strategy policies for Cherwell's places.

- 10.11. The Council will apply 20-minute neighbourhood principles and as well as a 'Healthy Streets Approach'<sup>52</sup> to development and infrastructure provision to facilitate trips by walking and cycling alongside reducing health inequalities.
  
- 10.12. The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to support sustainable freight movements within and through Cherwell to ensure we support economic prosperity while reducing congestion and the use of inappropriate rural routes.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.healthystreets.com/resources> LTCP Policy 8

### **Core Policy 32: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements**

The Council will support measures identified in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the area travel plans and work with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that transport improvements contribute positively to the attractiveness and safety of our places, quality of life in Cherwell, and respond sensitively to our natural and historic environment.

Area strategy policies for Bicester, Banbury, Kidlington and Heyford Park and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify specific schemes addressing sustainable transport and connectivity.

All major development should take a 'decide and provide' approach to manage travel demand by reducing the need to travel, planning for sustainable travel modes, and providing for zero emission vehicle use. Development is expected to follow the transport hierarchy set out below.

The Council will give priority to the movement of people according to the following hierarchy and this should be reflected in development proposals and infrastructure provision:

- i. walking (including running, mobility aids, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters)
- ii. cycling and riding (bicycles, non-standard cycles, e-bikes, cargo bikes, e-scooters and horse riding)
- iii. public transport (bus, scheduled coach, rail, and taxis)
- iv. motorcycles
- v. shared vehicles (car clubs and carpooling), and
- vi. other motorised modes (cars, vans, and lorries)

All strategic developments as set out in Chapter 4 and Area Strategy policies will be expected to provide direct bus access, rapid electric charging points, car and electric vehicle community sharing clubs and mobility hubs in accessible locations, preferably close to public services/amenities on site.

Cycle, motorcycle and car parking provision, including electric charging points, in new development should be made in line with Oxfordshire County Council parking standards and street design guidance and, where relevant, the Area strategies for Cherwell Places and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

### **Active travel**

10.13. Prioritising active travel infrastructure, including connections between town centres, villages and to transport hubs is vital to reducing emissions from transport,

especially the private car. Reducing dependence on the private car as a mode of travel will help facilitate the creation of a net-zero carbon transport network, at the same time as helping to tackle traffic congestion.

- 10.14. The Council seeks to increase uptake in active travel modes, specifically walking and cycling, through the measures outlined in **Core Policy 33**. This involves giving greater priority to walkers and cyclists, and public transport in the use of road space, in addition to improvements to the public realm that make it an attractive place for walking and cycling. Further to this, creating public spaces and green routes that are open and accessible to all help play a role in encouraging active travel.
- 10.15. This is particularly important when rising obesity levels within the district, partly caused by a rise in sedentary lifestyles, can be tackled through the delivery of attractive, well-designed environments and realistic alternative travel choices. The IDP (2022) outlines the planned improvement works to the district's transport network, including walking and cycling routes.
- 10.16. Oxfordshire County Council's Active Travel Strategy supports the LTCP in its vision to create an inclusive and safe net-zero transport system, with a focus on active travel modes.

- 10.17. Additional guidance on encouraging walking and cycling is provided in Cherwell's Residential Design Guide SPD, which requires developments to establish a movement network and street design that prioritises walking and cycling over vehicle movements. Routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be safe, direct, attractive and legible. The design criteria for accommodating pedestrians and cyclists are detailed in Oxfordshire's Walking and Cycling Design and Street Design guides.

### **Core Policy 33: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling**

The Council will support the delivery of public realm improvements and infrastructure designed to create attractive places that make walking and cycling a safer, healthier, and more attractive as a travel choice.

New development and infrastructure proposals should:

- i. promote walking and cycling by ensuring proposals give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability
- ii. deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs
- iii. ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and public rights of way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate
- iv. identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicted active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements
- v. reduce road danger from other transport modes
- vi. be expected to enable and contribute towards improvements and delivery of local and strategic active travel routes and links as identified in the Bicester, Banbury Kidlington and Heyford Park Area Strategies and associated IDP and LCWIPS, and
- vii. ensure provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Oxfordshire County Council latest guidance.

### **Public Rights of Way**

- 10.18. Cherwell benefits from many hundreds of miles of public rights of way. Public rights of way within Cherwell are a valuable resource for local people to support healthy and active lifestyles and they form an important component of our strategy for sustainable transport. Public rights of way are protected in law and comprise four

types: footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOAT). Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for managing and maintaining this extensive network of public rights of way in Cherwell alongside local councils and land-managers.

- 10.19. The Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Plan<sup>53</sup> 2015-2025, and any subsequent versions, sets out the vision for managing and improving access on public rights of way network. The Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan promotes routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders in order to encourage sustainable access to the countryside. In recognition of the health benefits of walking, cycling and horse riding the Council also promotes a number of circular walks and rides.
- 10.20. Development must contribute towards mitigation measures on the nearby public rights of way network. This can be achieved through financial contributions appropriate to the scale and impact of the development.

#### **Core Policy 34: Public Rights of Way**

Public rights of way will be protected and enhanced to ensure access to public rights of way and the connectivity of these networks.

Any development that will result in the loss of a Public Rights of Way or significant reduction in amenity or connectivity will not be permitted. In exceptional cases, development that negatively affects a public right of way may be permitted where it is essential that an alternative route is provided or where an altered public right of way provides better access for users or more connections to wider networks. Any changes to public rights of way requires a separate legal process.

#### **Addressing transport impact/decide and provide**

- 10.21. Our strategy for managing growth across the district is to locate development in sustainable locations that help to minimise the distance and duration of a journey, in addition to identifying appropriate and deliverable measures to meet the transport needs of the district. New development is therefore proposed within areas that are accessible by public transport and that have the capacity to accommodate the number of trips generated as a result of new development and/or provide financial contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of new development. This will support the delivery of the infrastructure needed to facilitate travel by sustainable modes, whilst also enabling improvements to be made to the

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<sup>53</sup> [Oxfordshire RoW Management Plan \(2015-2025\)](#)

local and strategic road network. Sustainable accessibility also improves the ability of local communities, in particular disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, to access employment and important services including education, healthcare, open spaces, leisure and shopping.

- 10.22. The Local Plan seeks to increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport. A strong focus is required on reducing the need to travel and encouraging use of other modes of transport (travel choices), especially for shorter trips to improve accessibility and tackle traffic congestion. It is important that new development can be accessed safely and that, to help manage car use, development is accessible by means of transport other than the private car. The layout of large-scale sites should provide access for public transport vehicles.
- 10.23. Proposals will need to quantify the likely transport impacts that the proposed development will have and describe any mitigation measures to reduce them. Proposals for development that will generate significant amounts of transport movements will need to be accompanied by a transport assessment, and potentially by a travel plan.
- 10.24. Further details on this can be found in Oxfordshire County Council's 'Decide and Provide': Requirements for Transport Assessments (September 2022)<sup>54</sup>.
- 10.25. The promotion of travel plans is essential to encourage residents and employees to make use of sustainable transport networks, and to inform them of the travel choices available. A key element of this is the marketing of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 10.26. The Council will seek infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles where it is appropriate and viable, and with reference to the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy<sup>55</sup>. This could be in the form of electric vehicle charging points or make ready infrastructure for charging stations. The design and operation of such infrastructure should follow best practice so that their operation does not undermine the quality of the public realm.

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<sup>54</sup> [Decide and Provide: Requirements for Transport Assessments \(Sep 2022\)](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#)

### **Core Policy 35: Assessing Transport Impact/Decide and Provide**

The Plan supports Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 'decide and provide' approach to help the delivery of public transport and active travel improvements as well as to manage the County's road network in a manner which reduces traffic and congestion.

Development that generates a significant number of trips\* will be required to be located in an area with an appropriate level of public transport accessibility and where public transport capacity can accommodate the proposed increase in the number of trips, or where capacity can be increased to an appropriate level through contributions, or other infrastructure funding.

These developments will be required to submit a Transport Assessment or a Transport Statement and where relevant a Travel Plan. Transport Assessments should follow latest guidance from Oxfordshire County Council.

Development proposals should:

- i. contribute towards the improvement of public transport and the improvement and delivery of walking and cycling routes that serve the site. This could be achieved through the design of development and/or through financial contributions appropriate to the scale and impact of the development
- ii. be expected to provide, or contribute to the provision of, new and/or improved public transport infrastructure and services proportionate to the projected number of additional trips arising from the development and considering cumulative impacts of other approved developments in the area
- iii. limit motor vehicle trips and identify and deliver highway safety measures at and around the development site, including temporary measures during the construction phase. This measure should reduce road danger and facilitate safer movements for all users and transport modes
- iv. comply with the latest Oxfordshire guidance on design, parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure.

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Proposals to improve or provide new public transport infrastructure and facilities will be supported subject to:

- v. being acceptable in terms of impact on the environment including townscape, public realm and amenity of adjoining areas
- vi. being designed to be safe, convenient, attractive and accessible for use especially for people with disabilities and specific mobility needs, and
- vii. providing adequate cycle parking and ease of access on foot, including consideration of pedestrian desire lines.

\*significance will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance

## **Freight**

10.27. The Council will work with partners to minimise freight trips on the road network and promote safe, clean and efficient freight movements.

### **Core Policy 36: Freight**

Development proposals for logistics and distribution, that generate a significant number or intensity of transport movements, will be required to demonstrate that:

- i. they are conveniently located to enable direct routeing to the strategic road network, and
- ii. there is no unacceptable impact on residential areas, local air quality, local amenity, or the highway network
- iii. there would be no unacceptable impact on landscape, local character and biodiversity.

Local delivery hubs to reduce traffic in Cherwell will be supported subject to their acceptability on the road network and demonstration of a reduction in noise and emissions from local freight trips and enable sustainable last-mile movements.

## Sustainable design and construction and Renewable Energy

### Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

- 10.28. As explained in Chapter 4, Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing society and one recognised when the Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 10.29. It is important though that we recognise that the Local Plan will not be able to address all climate issues alone. The Council will need to work alongside other stakeholders to help meet the obligations of the Climate Change Act 2008 and the legally binding targets to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- 10.30. Across Oxfordshire, there are various existing and emerging strategies to help meet these targets including the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy (2019)<sup>56</sup> prepared by OxLEP and, more recently, the 2021 Pathways to a Zero-Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO)<sup>57</sup>.
- 10.31. Whilst we have made progress in recent years, our biggest challenges remain how to decarbonise transport, reduce reliance on fossil fuels for heating, and protect and enhance carbon stored in the natural environment. Moreover, we also need to invest more in retrofitting our existing housing stock, install cleaner heating systems, and replace petrol and diesel vehicles with electric ones, as well as encouraging individual behavioural changes such as active travel, dietary changes and reducing our energy demand.
- 10.32. Similarly, it is important to ensure that we adapt to the inevitable changes to future climate. This applies to built development, its location, design, layout and proposed land uses, as well as the natural environment.
- 10.33. With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 20% of CO2 emissions in the UK<sup>58</sup> there is also an increasing recognition that constructing new buildings using sustainable construction techniques is essential in addressing climate change.
- 10.34. For these reasons, this Local Plan includes a suite of new policies focused on addressing the challenge of climate change, partly through Core Policy 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change, and with further more detailed policies relating to energy and net-zero carbon development, which are set out in the following section.

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/energystrategy>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/publications/downloads/PazCo-final.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> and <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2022-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>

## Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources

10.35. The Council will expect developers to consider all available zero or low carbon energy sources that could be incorporated or utilised so that the energy used in the development causes the minimum possible carbon emissions. Options could include on site renewable energy and low carbon energy generation for individual buildings including solar photovoltaics, solar thermal systems and heat pumps and any other sources of energy/heat that may be applicable, direct, off grid connections to local offsite renewable energy sources such as solar farms or wind turbines, or large scale sources of energy/heat such as a direct connection to low carbon heat networks.

10.36. The definition of 'zero carbon technologies' will not include speculative technologies whose transition to zero carbon relies on highly uncertain energy sectoral changes that are technically unproven at scale or whose trajectory is likely to be highly localised for the near future. Examples of technologies that would not count are:

- 'hydrogen-ready' gas boilers (unless it is demonstrated that the development site is in an area earmarked for imminent development of a green hydrogen grid)
- fossil-fuel powered CHP, unless there is a concrete credible and funded plan to imminently transition the system to an electrical or fossil-free energy source, and
- fossil-fuel powered heat system that relies on future carbon capture technology, unless at the time of the development it is proven that this technology is available, viable and suitable within the near future at the system supplying the development.

10.37. By contrast, any highly efficient electrically-powered technology would count as 'zero carbon ready' because there is a credible timeline for the electricity grid's transition to net zero carbon, which can be delivered across the UK, relies primarily on existing common technologies (renewables and nuclear power), and is accompanied by official national projections<sup>59</sup> of carbon intensity per kWh.

#### **Core Policy 37: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources**

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more should deliver zero and low carbon energy technologies on-site to achieve on-site net zero operational carbon (regulated and unregulated energy) wherever possible. This energy demand to be met with renewable technologies should be calculated using the following methodologies:

- regulated energy: SAP or SBEM methodologies (latest versions available)
- unregulated energy: SAP Appendix L or BREDEM (homes) or CIBSE TM54 (non-residential buildings), and/or
- alternatively, total energy demand may be calculated using CIBSE TM54 or the Passivhaus Planning Package.

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable proposals must:

- i. demonstrate through the energy statement that additional renewable, zero and low carbon energy technologies have been provided to the greatest extent feasible and viable, and
- ii. incorporate 'zero carbon ready'\* (as opposed to immediately providing 'low/zero carbon') technologies.
  - a. \*this may include off site existing or planned zero, low carbon or renewable energy generation or heat network provision where there is a direct off-grid connection to the development which has capacity to serve the development.

#### **The Energy Hierarchy and Energy Efficiency**

10.38. The Energy Hierarchy will be used to assess proposals against our climate change objectives in accordance with **Core Policy 38**. The energy hierarchy should inform the design, construction and operation of new buildings. The priority is to minimise energy demand, and then address how energy will be supplied and renewable technologies incorporated.

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<sup>59</sup> See downloadable file "Data tables 1-19", Table 1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-of-energy-use-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-appraisal>

- 10.39. To demonstrate compliance with **Core Policy 38**, calculations should be performed using latest version of SAP methodology (current version at the time of writing is SAP10.2, dated 21/04/22<sup>60</sup>).
- 10.40. Proposals should provide data that is consistent with the building performance metrics set out in the Government’s response to the Future Homes Standard consultation (January 2021) or any subsequent set of metrics required through the Building Regulations.
- 10.41. On all new dwellings and commercial development over 1,000sqm it will be expected that the development is tested through the most up to date SAP calculations to demonstrate the performance gap between design and construction. For sites of over 10 dwellings where standard house types are used, a sample of at least 20% of all dwellings (and including all house types) shall be tested.

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<sup>60</sup> <https://bregroup.com/sap/sap10/>

### **Core Policy 38: The Energy Hierarchy and Energy Efficiency**

All new development will be expected to achieve net zero carbon emissions from total operational energy use (regulated and unregulated) by incorporating measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in operation and minimising both annual and peak energy demand in accordance with the following energy hierarchy:

- i. be lean: use less energy and manage demand during operation
- ii. be clean: exploit local energy resources (such as secondary heat) and supply energy efficiently and cleanly
- iii. be green: maximise opportunities for renewable energy by producing, storing and using renewable energy on-site, and
- iv. be seen: monitor, verify and report on energy performance.

All Major development proposals will be required to be supported by a detailed energy statement that demonstrates how the net zero-carbon target will be met within the framework of the energy hierarchy.

For steps i-ii. of the energy hierarchy, all new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more should deliver:

- v. residential: achieve a Part L Fabric Energy Efficiency metric of no more than 15-20kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year
- vi. non-residential: a 19% reduction in carbon emissions compared to Part L 2013 through energy efficiency measures (fabric efficiency, efficient services and efficient energy supply)

Performance against the above targets should be using the latest version of SAP.

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate through the energy statement that carbon reductions to the greatest extent feasible through energy efficiency measures have been considered and incorporated.

### **Sustainable Design & Construction**

10.42. Wherever possible, all developments should maximise opportunities for on-site electricity and heat production from solar technologies (photovoltaic and thermal) and use innovative sustainable building materials and smart technologies. This approach will reduce carbon emissions, reduce energy costs to occupants, improve energy resilience, and support the growth of green jobs.

- 10.43. As a minimum, energy statements, as required by **Core Policy 39**, should contain the following information:
- a. a calculation of the energy demand and carbon emissions covered by Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from any other part of the development, including plant or equipment, that are not covered by the Building Regulations (i.e., the unregulated emissions), at each stage of the energy hierarchy
  - b. proposals to reduce carbon emissions and energy use beyond the respective standards set by the Building Regulations Part L2021, through the energy efficient design of the site, buildings and services, whether it is categorised as a new build, a major refurbishment or a consequential improvement
  - c. proposals to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low-emission decentralised energy where feasible
  - d. proposals to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site
  - e. proposals to address air quality risks, where a separate air quality assessment has not been undertaken
  - f. proposals for demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage, as well as consideration of smart grids and local micro grids where feasible
  - g. a plan for monitoring and annual reporting (for major development) of energy demand and carbon emissions post-construction for at least five years
  - h. proposals explaining how the site has been future-proofed to achieve zero carbon on-site emissions by 2050
  - i. confirmation of offsetting arrangements, if required
  - j. a whole life-cycle carbon emissions assessment, and actions to reduce lifecycle carbon emissions
  - k. analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy, and

- I. proposals that connect to or create new heat networks should include details of the design and specification criteria and standards for their systems.

10.44. In 2021, the Government tightened building regulations on energy and carbon as a first step towards the implementation of the Future Homes Standard<sup>61</sup> planned to be introduced in 2025. Homes built under the Future Homes Standard should produce 75-80% less carbon emissions compared with the standard set by pre-2021 building regulations<sup>62</sup>, and eventually become net zero as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise (because the Future Homes Standard is designed to rule out gas boilers). The Future Homes Standard also comes with a higher standard of fabric thermal performance compared to today's building regulations (2021). The Government's intention is that homes built to the Future Homes Standard will not need to be retrofitted with any additional measures or technology to reach the energy and carbon performance standards that are needed as part of the UK's overall transition to net zero carbon in 2050.

10.45. **Core Policy 39: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development** reflects the ambitions set out by Government described above, whilst also seeking to achieve the objectives of Cherwell Council's Climate Action Framework.

10.46. Developers will be required to perform SAP or SBEM calculations at:

1. Pre-planning, using design values and submitted within the planning application energy statement.
2. Post-construction and preoccupation, using figures from the building as constructed.

10.47. Calculations should be performed using the latest available version of the SAP methodology (currently SAP 10.2). If the completed building fails to meet the conditioned standard, the developer must take reasonable remediation measures. Any residual operational carbon emissions (regulated and unregulated) will be required to be offset whether identified at application stage or pre-occupation, unless this is demonstrated to be unviable.

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>

<sup>62</sup> This translates into an approximately 63% reduction against the carbon emissions standard set by the new 2021 Building Regulations.

- 10.48. To ensure the energy performance gap is minimised we recommend the use of a recognised quality assurance process that ensures the ‘as built’ performance (energy use, carbon emissions, indoor air quality, and overheating risk) matches the calculated design performance of buildings. Examples of these include BEPIT (Building Energy Performance Improvement Toolkit), the Passivhaus accreditation process and the Assured Performance Process (NEF/GHA).

#### **Core Policy 40: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development**

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more should achieve net zero operational regulated carbon emissions by implementing the energy hierarchy.

- i. for new dwellings, a minimum 63% reduction in carbon emissions should be achieved by on-site measures (before the addition of renewable electricity measures), as compared to the baseline emission rate set by Building Regulations Part L 2021
- ii. in new non-residential buildings, at least a 35% reduction in carbon emissions through on-site measures compared to the rate set by Building Regulations 2013 (or equivalent percentage reduction on Building Regulations 2021) should be achieved before addition of renewable electricity measures
- iii. subsequent to points (i) and (ii) above, deliver sufficient renewable energy generation to comply with **Core Policy 37: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources**
- iv. where any residual operational carbon emissions remain (over the course of 30 years; regulated and unregulated), these should be calculated and offset to zero. Offsetting will only be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that achieving net zero operational carbon development via on-site measures (and near-site renewables) is demonstrably unfeasible or unviable.

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate through the energy statement that carbon reductions to the greatest extent feasible have been considered in accordance with the energy hierarchy (as per **Core Policy 38**).

#### **Implementation and monitoring**

- 10.49. We recommend the use of a recognised quality assurance process that ensures the ‘as built’ performance (energy use, carbon emissions, indoor air quality, and

overheating risk) matches the calculated design performance of buildings. Examples of these include BEPIT (Building Energy Performance Improvement Toolkit), the Passivhaus accreditation process and the Assured Performance Process (NEF/GHA).

### **Carbon Offsetting**

- 10.50. Carbon offsetting will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated that it is the only feasible and viable option available to enable necessary development to be brought forward. As such the Council considers offsetting to be an option of final resort. Using the most up to date Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) or SBEM, planning applications will be required to set out in full the anticipated annual operational carbon emissions from the development for each of the 30 years after completion. The sum of this will be the amount of carbon to be offset over the 30 year building life.
- 10.51. Further details of how this policy will be implemented will be set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD.

#### **Core Policy 40: Carbon Offsetting**

All new dwellings and new non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more that cannot achieve net zero carbon (regulated and unregulated energy uses) will be required to address any residual carbon emissions forecast over a period of 30 years, by a financial contribution to the Council's carbon offsetting fund.

Contributions to an offsetting scheme shall be secured through Section 106 Agreements and will be required to be paid prior to the occupation of the development.

### **Renewable Energy**

- 10.52. Since the 2015 Local Plan, the way we produce energy has evolved with increasing renewable energy generation, particularly solar and offshore wind. There has also been a move to de-centralisation and smaller, community, renewable energy schemes are becoming more common.
- 10.53. Cherwell is Oxfordshire's second largest renewable energy producer. Except for a small dip in 2019, renewable energy generation in the district has increased every year since 2015. This Local Plan needs to consider the land use implications to meet the requirements of future renewable energy generation that is necessary for the local and national carbon reduction targets.

10.54. The Council recognises the need to provide a positive framework for renewable and low carbon energy generation that can have environmental, economic, social and other benefits and also acknowledges that national policy makes clear that such schemes are no longer required to justify the need for them<sup>63</sup>. However, development, including wind and solar energy developments, within the district needs to be managed carefully to maximise their potential contribution towards energy needs, while at the same time ensuring that the important characteristics of the environment and landscape are not unacceptably harmed.

### **Onshore Wind**

10.55. In 2019 a study<sup>64</sup> was undertaken to identify areas of potential suitability for wind energy development within the district. The study involved two key tasks, firstly, an assessment of the technical potential for wind energy within the area, and secondly, an analysis of the sensitivity of the landscape within the district to wind turbines. The Study concluded that the potential for wind generation sites within the district was very limited. We therefore do not propose to identify specific sites for commercial wind generation in this Plan.

10.56. The Study did, however, conclude that there may be scope for some limited development for turbines of less than 50 metres (to tip). Any proposals for such turbines will therefore be considered on their merits having regard to national advice, the findings of the 2019 Study, together with a site-specific assessment and design considerations.

10.57. When assessing proposals for renewable energy the cumulative impacts of existing operational consented and proposed developments will need to be considered and, if necessary, suitable mitigation measures proposed, to minimise impacts on biodiversity and landscape character, public rights of way and users, and quality. Applicants will need to demonstrate that cumulative effects do not become a significant or defining characteristic of the wider landscape. Special attention and protection will, in particular, need to be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

10.58. Community energy has the potential to deliver significant long-term benefits to local communities including reduced energy bills and increased energy sustainability and security. Community energy can also help foster greater support and

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<sup>63</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2021) paragraph 158.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> LUC 2019 Wind Study

acceptance of renewable energy development. Renewable energy developments that are genuinely led by or meet the needs of local communities will be encouraged and supported. The neighbourhood planning process provides a good opportunity for the detailed consideration of community energy schemes.

#### **Core Policy 41: Renewable Energy**

The Council supports renewable and low carbon energy provision providing any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.

Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative impact, on the following issues, which are considered to be of particular local significance in Cherwell:

- i. landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas
- ii. visual impacts on local landscapes
- iii. best and most versatile agricultural land
- iv. the historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings
- v. the Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness
- vi. aviation activities
- vii. public rights of way and pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
- viii. highways and access issues, and
- ix. residential amenity.

## Flood Risk

### Sustainable Flood Risk Management

- 10.59. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 assigns Local Authorities with responsibility for managing flood risk. In Cherwell, Oxfordshire County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), with the District Council having an important supporting role to play as a Risk Management Authority.
- 10.60. The probability of flooding can be reduced through the management of land, river systems and flood defences, and the impact reduced through influencing the type of development located in flood risk areas. Flooding events within the district are detailed in the Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>65</sup>. **Core Policy 42** will be used to manage and reduce flood risk in the district.

#### **Core Policy 42: Sustainable Flood Risk Management**

The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the district using a sequential approach to development, and where necessary, the exceptions test in accordance with national policy and guidance and locating vulnerable development in areas at lower risk of flooding. Any residual risk will be managed taking account of the impacts of climate change. Development will only be permitted in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and the benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding.

All development proposals must be assessed against the current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment(s). Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented and maintained.

- 10.61. Any application for change in use will only be acceptable were the change of use impacts the flood risk vulnerability (i.e., change of use should ideally not result in a less vulnerable development becoming more vulnerable in terms of flood risk).
- 10.62. Vulnerable developments should be located within areas at lower risk of flooding. The vulnerability classification of a proposed development is detailed within Table 2 of Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice guidance.

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<sup>65</sup> ADD REFERENCE

- 10.63. In addition to safeguarding floodplains from development, opportunities will be sought to restore natural river flows and floodplains, increasing their amenity and biodiversity value and green infrastructure network. Building over or culverting of watercourses should be avoided and the removal of existing culverts will be encouraged.
- 10.64. Existing flood defences will be protected from damaging development and where development is considered appropriate in areas protected by such defences it must allow for the maintenance and management of the defences and be designed to be resilient to flooding.
- 10.65. Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals in the following situations:
- all development proposals located in flood zones 2 or 3
  - development proposals of 1 hectare or more located in flood zone 1
  - development sites located in an area known to have experienced flooding problems, and
  - development sites located within 9m of any watercourse
- 10.66. Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood-risk and demonstrate that:
- there will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year storm event with an allowance for climate change (the design storm event)
  - developments will not flood from surface water up to and including the design storm event or any surface water flooding beyond the 1 in 30 years storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.
- 10.67. Development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.
- 10.68. **Core Policy 42** reflects government policy and guidance. The suitability of development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and where necessary the exceptions test as set out in the NPPF and PPG. Defended areas should be sequentially tested as though the defences are not there. Applications will also be assessed against the Environment Agency's standing advice on flood risk.
- 10.69. The Council's Level 1 SFRA provides the framework for applying the sequential and exceptions tests in the district. The SFRA identifies and maps the risk of flooding across the district based on a range of data and taking into account the predicted climate change impacts and is a useful source of information in undertaking site

specific flood risk assessments particularly in relation to specific locations across the district. The SFRA also highlights the biodiversity opportunities associated with the use of sustainable flood risk management techniques, for example in enhancing or creating priority habitats such as grazing marsh, wet grassland, wetlands and aquatic habitats (particularly so in the Conservation Target Areas – see **Core Policy 58: Conservation Target Areas**).

- 10.70. The Council has also prepared Level 2 SFRA's<sup>66</sup> to assess the level of Flood Risk for strategic site allocations in more detail. The assessments provide site specific guidance for flood risk assessments, policy recommendations and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance. The findings of the assessments will be taken into account in the final determination of planning applications at the strategic sites.
- 10.71. Site specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRA's) may be required in accordance with national policy and guidance. The FRA should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account. Fluvial flood events up to and including the 1 in 100 year event with an allowance for climate change should be considered. For major development in Flood Zone 1, the FRA should identify opportunities to reduce the probability and consequences of flooding. The FRA should also include investigation of the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (see also **Core Policy 43: Sustainable Drainage Systems**).
- 10.72. There are three levels of FRA, which are:
- Level 1 – Screening: this identifies if a development site has any flood risk.
  - Level 2 – Scoping: this is a qualitative assessment to determine how flood sources affect the site and any options available for mitigation.
  - Level 3 – Detailed Modelling: where the quality and/or quantity of information is insufficient to enable a robust assessment of the flood risk, further investigation will be required potentially involving hydraulic modelling.
- 10.73. An FRA does not need to go through every stage (i.e., if it is known that detailed modelling is required then only a Level 3 FRA is required). The Council's SFRA makes a number of recommendations for how FRA's should be approached in particular locations across the district, as follows shown by **Table 10.1**.

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<sup>66</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

**Table 10.1 Site specific FRA requirements by location**

Location	Site Specific Requirements
Wherever applicable	Where a site is in close proximity of the Oxford Canal, the Level 3 FRA should include breach analysis.
Wherever applicable	Flood defended areas will require an FRA to include assessment of risk from catastrophic failure of defences.
Banbury	A detailed Level 3 FRA is required for development within the River Cherwell Floodplain to include flood compensation.  Groundwater risk to be highlighted at Couch Hill.
North-East Bicester	Need to be clearer what areas are being referred to. Does this just refer to the site allocation etc?  A Level 2 FRA using existing data can be applied.
South-East Bicester	A Level 3 FRA including hydraulic modelling will be required in the vicinities of these watercourses.
Kidlington	Where EA modelled data is available a Level 2 FRA can be completed using existing modelled flood levels. Where no data is available a Level 3 FRA including hydraulic modelling may be required for sites in close proximity to the Rowell Brook or the River Cherwell.  A Level 2 FRA to include detailed assessment of groundwater flood risk should be included at all sites.
Rural Areas	There are village specific recommendations contained in the SFRA.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

10.74. **Core Policy 43** sets out the Councils approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Potential flooding and pollution risks from surface water can be reduced by reducing the volume and rate of water entering the sewerage system and watercourses. Managing drainage more sustainably in this way can ensure that developments are better adapted to the predicted impacts of climate change. **Core Policy 43** is supported by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010<sup>67</sup> that presumes SuDS will be used for all new development and redevelopment and the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems<sup>68</sup> published by DEFRA.

10.75. SuDS seek to manage surface water as close to its source as possible, mimicking surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development. Typically, this approach involves a move away from piped systems to softer engineering solutions. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required to be submitted to accompany development proposals these should be used to

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

<sup>68</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf)

investigate how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

- 10.76. In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect water quality must be considered, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, multiple benefits including for recreation and wildlife should be delivered. Proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the drainage structures.
- 10.77. All relevant organisations should meet at an early stage to agree on the most appropriate drainage system for the particular development. These organisations may include the Local Authority, the Sewage Undertaker, Oxfordshire County Council as Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) and Highways Authority, and the Environment Agency. Highways SuDS will be adopted by Oxfordshire County Council but must be located on the most appropriate land, requiring consideration of the need to provide access for maintenance purposes and topographical factors. Non-highway SuDS draining two properties or more will also be adopted by the LLFA.
- 10.78. Advice on SuDS and their various techniques is provided in the Council's Level 1 SFRA. All areas of the district are suitable for SuDS in one form or another but the SFRA contains maps of a range of geological and ground condition data that can be used to identify the general permeability of the underlying ground conditions (bedrock, superficial deposits and soil) and the vulnerability of the groundwater resources (aquifers), to determine which SuDS system might be suitable. However, the SFRA's mapping of SuDS opportunity does not provide a detailed and definitive investigation at site specific level, and so further assessment may be required to consider opportunities on individual sites. The Council's Level 2 SFRA contains additional guidance relating to the use of SUDS on the proposed strategic site allocations set out within this plan.

### **Core Policy 43: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

All major development, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate, will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off. The use of natural flood management techniques is encouraged, in particular green infrastructure. Developers should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites.

Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality and biodiversity must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution, and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features. Advice should be sought from Oxfordshire County Council, the relevant lead local flood authority, including reference to the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.

Sustainable Drainage Systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive.

## **Our Core Assets**

### **Water Resources**

10.79. In considering development proposals, the Council will use **Core Policy 44** together with **Core Policy 42: Sustainable Flood Risk Management** and **Core Policy 43: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)** to reduce the impact of development on the water environment, maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use. This will assist in contributing to the objectives of the Water Framework Directive<sup>69</sup> which seeks to protect and enhance the quality of water bodies and indicates that development should not result in any deterioration in the status of surface water bodies. Some development can remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on controlled water and human health. These policies together with **Core Policy 44** are also

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<sup>69</sup> [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)

intended to help deliver the actions contained in the Thames River Basin Management Plan<sup>70</sup>. These actions highlight the importance of development proposals contributing to an improved water environment through the use of sustainable design and construction techniques for water efficiency, water quality and sustainable flood management, and the incorporation of appropriate green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements.

- 10.80. Research carried out by the Environment Agency and set out in the Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies<sup>71</sup> (CAMs) shows that Cherwell District lies within an area of serious water stress and the Upper Cherwell area, including Banbury, has been over abstracted. **Core Policy 44** will be used to ensure that new development is located in areas where adequate water supply can be provided from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. In addition, **Core Policy 1: Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change** will ensure new development incorporates water efficiency measures, reducing demand.

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cherwell-thame-and-wye-catchment-abstraction-licensing-strategy>

#### **Core Policy 44: Water Resources**

The Council will seek to protect and enhance water quality including surface water and groundwater; ensure adequate water resources, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity; and, and promote sustainable water use. Water quality will be protected and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted. Where it is likely that a proposal would have a significant adverse impact on water quality then a more detailed assessment will be required. The assessment should form part of the Environment Statement.

Development that has the potential to reduce water quality will not be permitted in sensitive areas, particularly those within the vicinity of drinking water supplies and those protected under the Water Environment Regulations 2017.

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment. Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted.

Development will only be permitted where adequate water resources exist, or can be provided without detriment to existing uses. Where appropriate, phasing of development will be used to enable the relevant water infrastructure to be put in place in advance of the development commencing.

New developments are required to be designed to a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/head/day (l/h/d) for new homes.\*

\*In 2015, the Government updated Building Regulations Part G, introducing an 'optional' requirement of 110 l/p/day for new residential development, which should be implemented through local policy where there is a clear evidence need.

## Protecting health, quality of life and our natural environment from the effects of pollution

10.81. Our strategy for the limitation of pollution related to development is to ensure sustainable and appropriate locations are put forward for proposals that help to minimise all potential forms of pollution and waste where possible, and maximise use of renewable materials, this includes but is not limited to:

- **Transport** – positioning development to reduce the need for long car journeys, encourage active travel opportunities, and increase usage of accessible and high-quality public transport
- **Waste** – ensuring materials used in construction are locally sourced where possible, and that waste developed through the construction process is effectively dealt with in a sustainable manner – also bearing in mind that once the waste material leaves the construction site it becomes a County Matter and subject to the policies of the Waste Planning Authority
- **Recycling** – development on brownfield sites should reuse and repurpose existing materials and buildings where possible, to limit unnecessary demolition and reconstruction, and
- **Green infrastructure** – development should ensure a biodiversity net gain is achieved by suitably providing new habitats and green infrastructure alongside development.

10.82. It is the responsibility of developers to evidence how proposals will not detrimentally affect health, quality of life, and the natural environment as far as reasonably practicable, and mitigation measures should be provided in line with national planning policy and in compliance with the Local Plan policies.

10.83. Proposals should consider the wider effects of the development on its surrounding areas and ensure that the quality of life and health of residents and visitors is not decreased. This should include reference to the Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit<sup>72</sup>. Should a development proposal require risk assessments in relation to potential impacts on health and safety, all forms of potential pollution will need to be identified and mitigated against (e.g. noise, odour, light, and air pollution).

10.84. The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways, Environment Agency, Natural England, the Health and Safety Executive and others to ensure development addresses the effects of pollution through the appropriate location of new development and by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being adversely affected, or put at risk by unacceptable levels

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<sup>72</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/public-health-and-wellbeing/healthy-place-shaping/policies-and-resources>

of soil, air, water, noise or light pollution and land instability. This should include during the construction phase with any public rights of way, for example, remaining open with appropriate mitigation in place.

10.85. Development proposals are required to improve or mitigate air quality impacts through traffic management and green and blue infrastructure provision using information from transport assessments and travel plans and having regard to the measures identified in Cherwell's Air Quality Action Plan.

10.86. **Core Policies 46 and 52** detail how the Council will consider applications in relation to hazardous substances and light pollution, and land contamination as well as any referrals to the Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency to address the need for protection to and from hazardous installations.

### **Air quality**

10.87. Development proposals that are likely to have an impact on local air quality, including those in, or within relative proximity to, existing or potential Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) will need to demonstrate measures/mitigation that are incorporated into the design to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

10.88. Where sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and/or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment will be required.

10.89. The Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development, either through a re-design of the development proposal, or where this is not possible or sufficient, through appropriate mitigation in accordance with current guidance.

10.90. Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

10.91. Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition and/or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

### **Core Policy 45: Air Quality**

Development proposals that are likely to have an impact on local air quality, including those in, or within relative proximity to, existing or potential Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) will need to demonstrate measures / mitigation that are incorporated into the design to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

Where sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and / or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment will be required. The Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development, either through a redesign of the development proposal or, where this is not possible or sufficient, through appropriate mitigation in accordance with current guidance.

Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan. Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition and / or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

## **Hazardous Substances**

10.92. The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 aims to prevent major accidents and limit the consequences of such accidents. In considering proposals for development which may involve hazardous substances, the Council will need to be completely satisfied that the proposal will not constitute a hazard to existing communities or the local environment. Similarly, existing consents will be an important consideration in the determination of sensitive uses such as housing.

10.93. Advice will be sought from the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) competent authority concerning off-site risks to the public arising from any proposed development which would introduce hazardous substances, or of existing hazardous installations to proposed developments. Careful consideration will be given to the degree of risk and the likely hazard or consequence of an accident occurring.

### **Core Policy 46: Hazardous Substances**

Proposals for development involving the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances, will only be permitted where the relevant authorities are satisfied that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure there is no unacceptable risk on human health, safety and the environment.

Development of a site in the vicinity of where hazardous substances already exist, will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that development will not constitute an unacceptable risk to human health, safety and the environment. Where necessary, appropriate measures to protect the public and the environment will be required.

## **Pollution and Noise**

10.94. The health and safety of residents and visitors to Cherwell can be affected by pollution of the air, water and land as well as light and noise pollution. The Council seeks to minimise the exposure to pollutants both during construction and over the lifetime of the development to ensure the creation of safe and healthy places to live, visit and work in the district.

10.95. Pollution can take many forms including chemical, dust, light, noise, fumes, smell and vibration, all of which can have detrimental impacts on the environment and quality of life. These potential adverse effects must be carefully considered in the assessment of any planning application and can be the basis for the refusal of an application if not adequately addressed. Developers are encouraged to have pre-application discussions with the Council to be advised on the specific requirements.

10.96. Assessments should:

- identify the sensitive receptor(s) which may be affected by the proposed development, including residents, businesses, land users and sensitive environmental assets
- consider the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or approved development, and
- demonstrate the measures which would be implemented to ensure adverse impacts would be avoided at source or, where this is not possible, outline the proposed management and mitigation measures to reduce effects to an acceptable level; and identify the significance of any residual effects.

10.97. Developers are expected to proactively monitor impacts and emissions to enable issues to be addressed swiftly. Close liaison with communities can support this approach, enabling feedback and dialogue on the need for and effectiveness of any mitigation measures.

#### **Core Policy 47: Pollution and Noise**

Proposals will be supported that will not result in an unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the environment, general amenity or existing uses due to the potential of air pollution, noise nuisance, vibration, odour, light pollution, surface / ground water sources or land pollution.

In order to reduce, manage and mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life, residential and other development proposals should manage noise by:

- i. avoiding significant adverse noise impacts on health and quality of life
- ii. mitigating and minimising the existing and potential adverse impacts of noise on, from, within, as a result of, or in the vicinity of new development without placing unreasonable restrictions on existing noise-generating uses
- iii. separating new noise-sensitive development from major noise sources (such as road, rail, air transport and some types of industrial use) through the use of distance, screening, layout, orientation, uses and materials – in preference to sole reliance on sound insulation
- iv. where it is not possible to achieve separation of noise-sensitive development and noise sources without undue impact on other sustainable development objectives, then any potential adverse effects should be controlled and mitigated through applying good acoustic design principles, and
- v. promoting new technologies and improved practices to reduce noise at source, and on the transmission path from source to receiver.

Development should be designed to ensure that established noise and other nuisance-generating uses remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them. Development proposals that have not clearly demonstrated how noise and other nuisances will be mitigated and managed should not be permitted.

### **Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability**

10.98. The NPPF clearly sets out, in broad terms, that pollution and land instability are material planning considerations. Contaminated land is land that has been polluted with harmful substances to the point where it now poses an unacceptable risk to health and the environment. Cherwell District has a history of industrial and

defence land uses and we want to ensure that the impacts of these past and current land uses do not affect the health of people and the environment. Any site which is potentially contaminated will be required to carry out a site investigation and agree a scheme of mitigation with us to ensure that contaminated land issues are considered at the planning application stage.

10.99. A verification report will be required through condition in order to provide confirmation that the remediation work has been undertaken properly in line with best practice.

10.100. The term 'poor ground conditions' referred to in Core Policy 49 may include, but is not limited to the following:

- poorly consolidated made ground and fill material
- soft, weak and wet natural soils, or
- areas of shallow mine-workings and mineshafts.

10.101. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil. These factors together with the interactions between them form the basis for classifying land into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside of these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'land predominantly in urban use'. The NPPF defines Grades 1-3a as 'best and most versatile' and states that planning policies should recognise the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile land.

### **Core Policy 48: Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability**

Development proposals will not be permitted where the land is contaminated and not capable of appropriate remediation without compromising development viability or the delivery of sustainable development. For sites where land contamination is suspected, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrate that land contamination issues have been fully addressed or can be satisfactorily addressed through the development.

Development proposals will not be permitted in locations where there are risks from land instability. Development proposals within areas known or suspected to be at risk of slope instability or poor ground conditions will need to demonstrate the following:

- i. its structural integrity will not be compromised by slope instability
- ii. the development does not exacerbate any instability on the site or elsewhere
- iii. the development can tolerate ground conditions by special design, and
- iv. there is long-term stability of any structured built on made, filled or mined ground.

For sites suspected of land instability, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrate that land instability issues have been fully addressed.

Applications for development on best and most versatile agricultural land will be resisted where the site has not been allocated in the development plan.

## **Waste Collection and Recycling**

10.102. National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) sets out national waste planning policies. It should be read in conjunction with the NPPF, the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste, or any successor documents.

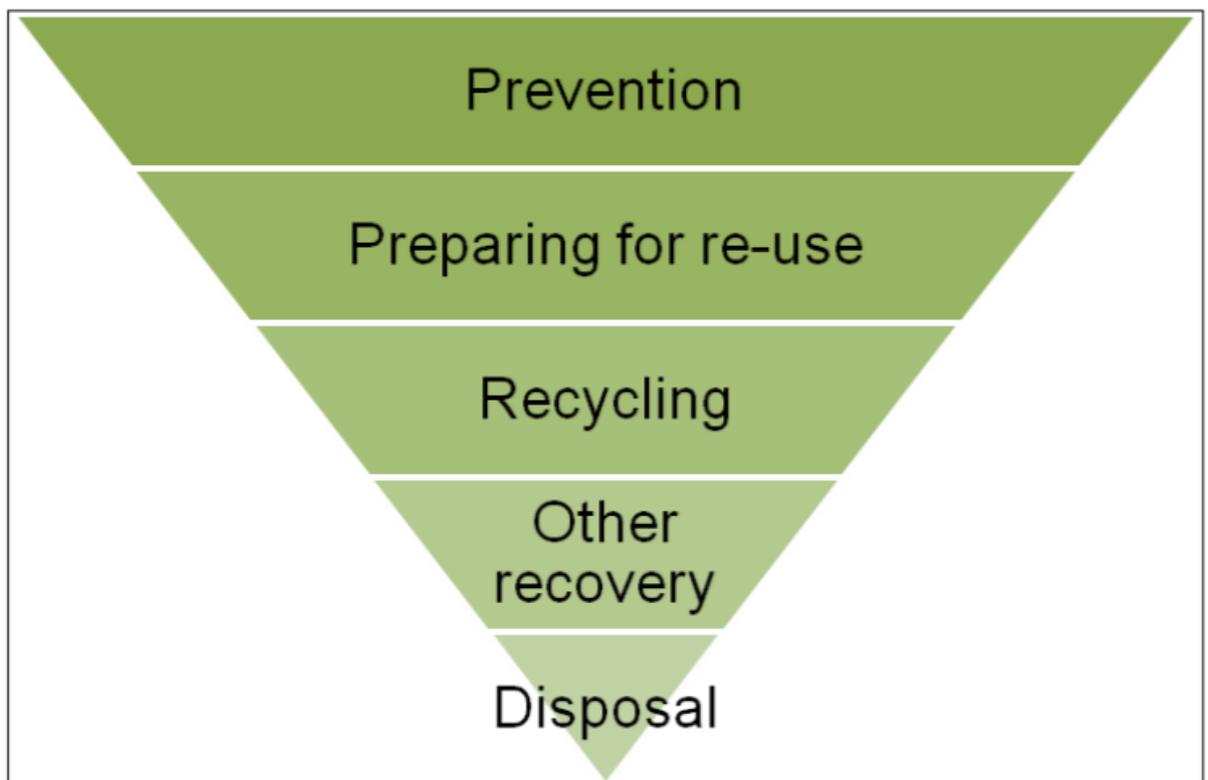
10.103. Planning applications relating to the use of land (and buildings) for the purposes of waste management will be determined by Oxfordshire County Council. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy<sup>73</sup>, adopted by Oxfordshire County Council in September 2017 and covers the period up to 2031, is

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<sup>73</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/adopted-core-strategy#paragraph-761>

complementary to the Cherwell Local Plan Review and forms part of the development plan. Policy W2 in the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) sets targets to move waste up the hierarchy and maximise diversion of waste from landfill. The County Council are working on a new MWLP which will include site allocations and will replace the existing MWLP. Oxfordshire County Council are consulted on all planning applications for non-waste related development that affect safeguarded waste management sites.

10.104. To minimise waste and pollution, and to reduce the impact of waste on climate change, the Council expects future developments to support the application of the waste hierarchy (**Figure 10.1**). The waste hierarchy gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. Where waste is generated, the next priority sequentially is to reuse, then recycle, then other forms of recovery such as energy recover and then as a last resort dispose of the waste (e.g., landfill).



**Figure 10.1 Waste Hierarchy**

10.105. Given the pressing urgency of climate change and the need to embed the principles of the circulate economy into all areas of our society, we encourage developers to consider including community spaces that help reduce waste and build community cohesion through assets such as community fridges, space for the sharing economy (library of things), refill stations, space for local food growing etc.

- 10.106. In order to facilitate the sustainable management of waste in the future it is essential that all developments provide adequate facilities for the separation of waste and recyclables and for its satisfactory storage prior to collection. On-site facilities for separating or storing waste should be adequate to meet the needs of occupiers of any proposed new development. Such facilities should be well-designed so that they do not result in harm to the local environment, for example in terms of amenity or local character.
- 10.107. On smaller sites, provision might include collection points for segregated waste. On larger sites, particularly where significant areas of new housing or employment land are proposed, waste storage facilities will almost always be needed and provision might also include on-site treatment facilities such as community composting, anaerobic digestion forming part of a district heating system or, in the case of industrial operations, the management of specific wastes produced on-site. If innovative collection or storage facilities are proposed for residential development it is recommended that early discussion and consultation with waste officers is carried out in order to ensure compatibility with existing systems.
- 10.108. Specifications for the minimum standards for the type and scale of facilities and vehicular manoeuvrability needed for new commercial and mixed-use developments will be informed by the ADEPT report 'Making Space for Waste' (June 2010)<sup>74</sup>. All applications will be assessed against this guidance. Residential development should be designed in accordance with waste management policies in Cherwell District Councils waste planning guidance. Bin storage areas must be able to accommodate the correct number of mixed recycling, refuse and food recycling bins; be safe and easy to use for residents and waste collection crews and meet the requirements of the waste collection authority.

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<sup>74</sup> Available here: <https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/making-space-waste-designing-waste-management-new-developments>

### **Development Policy 49: Waste Collection and Recycling**

To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local environment and landscape.

Proposals for new development should include adequate facilities into the design to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery unless existing provision is adequate. Such facilities should be well designed having regard to published guidance including (but not limited to) ADEPT 'Making Space for Waste' Designing Waste Management in New Developments: A Practical Guide for Developers and Local Authorities (2010).

The Council will support residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals that:

- i. provide adequate internal storage space within their premises to enable the occupiers to separate, store and recycle their waste;
- ii. provide adequate, secure, external or communal storage facilities on site which allow for the separate storage and collection of waste, reusable items, recyclable materials and compostable waste;
- iii. include on-site waste management, which minimises the need for waste transfer, where it is feasible to do so;
- iv. allow for convenient and safe access to manage waste, including for older persons or persons with disabilities;
- v. allow for convenient and safe access for waste collection services;
- vi. implements high quality design solutions to minimise the adverse visual impact of waste facilities on site;
- vii. enable waste from mixed-use schemes to be segregated in separate secured areas; and
- viii. provide innovative solutions to reduce waste at source.
- ix. all major development proposals must be accompanied by a Waste Management Plan which demonstrates how the criteria set out above will be achieved.

## **Landscape**

### **Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape**

- 10.109. The protection of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is a core principle of national planning policy.
- 10.110. Cherwell enjoys a varied and distinctive local landscape character that is greatly valued by the community. A small part of the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB) is within the north-west of the district. The Council will use the policies in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan to assess any development proposals within the designated area.
- 10.111. The character of the Cherwell landscape is formed by many different factors including landform, drainage, geology, farming practices, land uses, ecology, settlement patterns and forms of enclosure. It is important that those features that positively add to the local character are protected wherever possible.
- 10.112. Cherwell falls within three areas of Natural England's National Character Areas, which it uses to define a specific combination of landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, history, culture and economic activity in the area. These are:
- NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands
  - NCA 107 Cotswolds
  - NCA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales
- 10.113. The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)<sup>75</sup> defines 19 landscape character types across Cherwell. It identifies the 'forces for change' in a particular location and includes landscape/biodiversity strategies that set guidelines for how developments can contribute towards landscape character. Further landscape sensitivity character assessments have been undertaken to inform this Local Plan.
- 10.114. We also recognise that local landscape features are important elements of our local landscape character and identity that insensitive development can cause harm to the character and setting of such features and the surrounding countryside. Such important features include Muswell Hill, Crouch Hill, Madmarston Hill, the River Cherwell and Otmoor. Many form landmarks valued by local communities.
- 10.115. Other key landforms and landscape features identified, particularly around Banbury and Bicester are:

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<sup>75</sup> <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Districts/Oxfordshire+Districts+-+Landscape+Types/Cherwell+Landscape+Types/>

- the open and agricultural setting and identity of the outlying villages surrounding Banbury and Bicester, many with locally distinctive historic cores
- ironstone ridges and valleys
- medieval ridge and furrow
- the historic villages and parkland of Hanwell and Wroxton
- Broughton Castle and Grade II Registered Park
- Crouch Hill, an important landmark overlooking Banbury and the surrounding area
- the landscape to the east of the M40 motorway at Banbury which retains a distinct historic pattern
- Salt Way and other ancient routeway and their setting
- the Sor Brook Valley
- the setting of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridor
- specific features at Bicester noted for their value include those showing notable 'time depth' including Former RAF Bicester, Wretchwick deserted medieval village, Bignell Park and the Roman roads
- Graven Hill and Blackthorn Hill that contrast with the relatively flat surrounding landform
- the River Ray floodplains, and
- Cropredy Bridge Historic Battlefield.

10.116. Inward investment into the district should not come at the expense of the valued landscapes that make the district a pleasurable place to live and work. The Council recognises the need for landscape enhancement and that innovative changes to landscapes are sometimes required in order to reinforce aspects that make areas special. Development proposals should demonstrate how they represent a sensitive and contextual response to the landscape to ensure they respond positively to landscape areas and features.

10.117. Many of the district's settlements are located within or adjacent to the landscapes valued by local communities, there is therefore particular significance placed on the fringe areas of these settlement to ensure a sensitive transition is achieved between built environments and the open countryside. Development proposals set in close proximity to these fringe areas will need to give special regard to their impact on landscape character of nearby rural areas. Greater emphasis in terms of visual impact will be placed on proposals that would extend the boundaries of a settlement into the open countryside.

10.118. Development proposals will be expected to justify any loss of woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features that are important to the character of local landscapes as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value. Retention

of these features should be prioritised, and any harm should be minimised and appropriately mitigated against.

10.119. The Council's most up to date landscape evidence and design guidance will be used to assess development proposals in terms of design and appearance to ensure that the type of development, scale and design enhance their immediate and wider setting with the landscape. Innovative design proposals using contemporary construction techniques and architectural styles will be assessed in terms of how they complement the landscapes in which they are located.

10.120. When considering the effect on landscape character, development proposals should not be viewed in isolation. The introduction of numerous clusters of built forms across a landscape can change the way the landscape is perceived and enjoyed. The Council will consider the cumulative impacts of developments on the landscape when considering development proposals to assess if the combined impact would cause excessive harm to the landscape and, therefore, be regarded as unacceptable.

10.121. The Council will expect all major development proposals to be supported by a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to enable the impact of the proposals on the immediate and wider landscape to be understood in accordance with **Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape**.

### **Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape**

Development proposals will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the landscape through the restoration, management and enhancement of existing areas, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- i. cause an unacceptable visual intrusion into the open countryside
- ii. be inconsistent with local character
- iii. introduce disturbances to areas with a high level of tranquillity
- iv. cause coalescence between settlements
- v. harm the setting of natural and built landmark features, or
- vi. reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

All major developments proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

In determining development proposals within or adjacent to the Cotswolds National Landscape, great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's scenic beauty and landscape qualities, including its wildlife and heritage.

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan will be used as supplementary guidance in decision making relevant to the National Landscape.

Development proposals within the National Landscape will only be permitted if they are small scale, sustainably located and designed, and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of the area.

All development must comply with other appropriate Development Plan policies including **Core Policy 83: Historic Environment and Archaeology**.

### **Settlement Gaps**

10.122. Each of Cherwell's towns and villages has its own separate identity, and it is important that development on areas of open land between them is avoided where this would lead to coalescence. Some gaps are more vulnerable than others and

some rural communities may feel particularly threatened where they are in close proximity to urban areas. An example might be between Banbury and Bodicote. In addition, there are villages that are separated by small stretches of open land that should be preserved to maintain the villages' identity and an example might include between Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower.

#### **Core Policy 51: Settlement Gaps**

Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the settlements character is retained, and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements.

Development proposals will be considered in the context of **Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape** in this Local Plan and in addition, will only be permitted provided that:

- i. the physical and visual separation between the two separate settlements is not diminished
- ii. cumulatively, with other existing or proposed development, it does not compromise the physical and visual separation between settlements, and
- iii. it does not lead to a loss of environmental or historical assets that individually or collectively contribute towards their local identity.

#### **Light Pollution**

10.123. Light pollution mapping shows high levels of light pollution above Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Yarnton. However, there are still significant areas of the district with relatively low levels of light pollution. Cherwell is ranked the 103<sup>rd</sup> darkest district out of 326 in England<sup>76</sup>.

10.124. Artificial lighting is necessary in many circumstances including for public safety and enabling nighttime activities. Yet artificial lighting also has the potential to harm local amenity and wildlife, whilst also undermining people's enjoyment of the open countryside, areas of tranquility and dark skies.

10.125. However, any light which does not shine on its target serves no useful purpose, can lead to light pollution and can be a danger to highway safety. There are three main types of light pollution. First, light leakage where light from a source falls on areas not designated as a target, second, sky glow where a halo effect is produced in the night sky and third, glare when there is unpleasant brightness which can have a serious impact on highway safety.

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<sup>76</sup> <https://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

10.126. Careful location and design of lighting can minimise the above impacts. Lighting schemes should therefore use best practice for the reduction of light pollution.

10.127. In certain locations in the rural areas where existing background lighting levels are low it may not be appropriate for certain types of lighting development, as it will have a detrimental impact on the rural character of the area. Proposals will be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 52: Light Pollution** and also the landscape character policy set out earlier in this section.

#### **Core Policy 52: Light Pollution**

In determining planning applications the Council will seek to avoid unnecessary light pollution. Proposals for any external lighting scheme that requires planning permission will need to demonstrate that:

- i. the lighting scheme is the minimum required for its intended use
- ii. light pollution is minimised, and
- iii. there is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity, the character and appearance of the landscape, nature conservation or highway safety.

## **Green and Blue Infrastructure**

### **Green and Blue Infrastructure**

10.128. The district's green and blue infrastructure network is made up of many features. These can include: parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green space, green and blue corridors (including cycleways, rights of way, canals and rivers), outdoor sports facilities, amenity green space, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, woodlands, green roofs and walls. Together, these assets offer a range of health and quality of life benefits for local communities and provide refuges for wildlife species inhabiting these environments. Establishing new linkages and reinforcing existing connections between these assets will often benefit the network as a whole.

10.129. The predominant areas and features of green and blue infrastructure in the larger settlements of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington are comprised of open space used

for sports and recreation that, in certain locations feature green corridors between them in the form of Public Rights of Way.

- 10.130. Other key green infrastructure features across the district, include the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal corridors, statutory designated sites such as Local Nature Reserves, and other areas such as RSPB Otmoor and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's nature reserves. The district also has designated Conservation Target Areas (indicated on the Policies Map) that form an important component of the green and blue infrastructure network. These are key locations for biodiversity enhancement.
- 10.131. A large proportion of the areas and features that contribute to the district's green and blue infrastructure network are not managed or owned by the Council. We are actively committed to engaging with those concerned to provide and manage the network in partnership to achieve the aims and objectives of **Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape**.
- 10.132. Green and blue corridors consist of canals, rivers, woodland and hedgerows, together with public rights of way which offer routes for sustainable travel options as well as providing opportunities for wildlife migration. By enabling species to explore new habitats and by enhancing green and blue corridors; species can adapt more easily to habitat loss. Development proposals will be expected to retain and enhance existing green and blue corridors and maximise the opportunity to form new connections between existing green and blue infrastructure assets.
- 10.133. Proposals for major developments can offer the opportunity to improve the green and blue infrastructure network. Relevant policies such as **Core Policy 56: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity** concerning how biodiversity can add to the network by protecting existing habitats and reducing fragmentation. The incorporation of sustainable drainage systems can also contribute to green and blue infrastructure provision and can perform dual roles of helping to alleviate flooding and benefit biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
- 10.134. The 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)<sup>77</sup> is the government's commitment to adopt national standards for green infrastructure that will be formulated in collaboration with Natural England. The standards are due to be published in late 2022 and are expected to outline the contribution required from new developments towards green infrastructure. Consideration will be given to how development proposals

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

implement the recommendations concerning green infrastructure provision in line with these national standards once they have been adopted.

10.135. A draft Nature Recovery Network and Strategy has been produced at the county level to encompass Oxfordshire as a whole. This will identify key locations for biodiversity gain that will build on the principles of Conservation Target Areas to focus efforts on habitat restoration and enable wildlife species to migrate over wider areas.

10.136. The Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022)<sup>78</sup> provides guidance to developers and other stakeholders on how to integrate green and blue infrastructure enhancements into proposals. It also spatially represents the current green and blue infrastructure network and provides recommendations to address challenges and opportunities to improve existing green and blue infrastructure provision.

10.137. Informed by the GBI Strategy, **Core Policy 53** addresses the integration of green areas and features to help their management for environmental and community need.

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<sup>78</sup> ADD REFERENCE (TBC)

### **Core Policy 53: Green and Blue Infrastructure**

The Council will promote the protection and enhancement of sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network and will support improving sustainable connections between sites in accordance with relevant policies within this Plan. The Council will work with developers and other relevant parties to encourage the inclusion of meaningful and integrated GBI in development proposals.

Regarding the planning of major developments, priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

Both strategic and non-strategic developments will be required to demonstrate strategies to both protect and enhance existing GBI and to also incorporate new GBI in the design approach for each site. Where applicable, applicants will be expected to demonstrate:

- i. how existing GBI identified on-site will be protected and incorporated into the layout, design and appearance of proposals
- ii. where connection(s) proposed between existing and new GBI on-site can be established including identifying opportunities for connectivity with off-site GBI
- iii. how restored or re-created habitats can be accommodated within the proposed development and how biodiversity net gain can be achieved
- iv. how existing trees and hedgerows will be protected both during and after development and the opportunities for increasing tree cover through new planting
- v. how the existing and proposed built and natural landscape can be improved through the provision of GBI including for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment
- vi. how GBI will be provided along movement corridors for all modes of transport on-site (including motorised and non-motorised means of travel)
- vii. where multi-functioning GBI can be achieved on-site, including to adapt and mitigate against climate change impacts, to protect and enhance biodiversity, manage flood risk, to improve air quality, and to promote health and well-being in the local community
- viii. how the appropriate use and permanence of the Green Belt will be maintained and enhanced by existing and new GBI on-site, and
- ix. how existing and new GBI will be maintained and managed post development.

Financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where it has been agreed that it will not be possible to provide on-site net biodiversity gains.

## Local Green Space

10.138. Local Green Space designation affords local communities the opportunity to identify and protect green spaces of particular importance to them, subject to criteria being met as set out in national policy.

10.139. Once designated, the level of protection given to Local Green Space is similar to that given to the Green Belt, thereby preventing inappropriate development other than in very special circumstances.

10.140. There are a number of existing designated Local Green Spaces in the district that have been created by Neighbourhood Plans. The Council will continue to encourage future Neighbourhood Plans to consider whether it is appropriate to designate further local green spaces.

10.141. Several proposals for Local Green Space have been received through the preparation of this plan and these have been evaluated against the criteria contained in Government guidance. Those green spaces assessed as meeting the tests are identified as Local Green Space by Development **Core Policy 54**. Further detail is provided by the supporting evidence published alongside this plan<sup>79</sup>.

10.142. Local Green Space does not have to be publicly accessible, or in public ownership, and designation does not confer any rights of public access. However, it is important that development proposals do not compromise the community value of a space, and that opportunities are taken to enhance any community use of the site wherever possible

### **Core Policy 54: Local Green Space**

Development will not be permitted within a designated Local Green Space unless consistent with the national policy approach to development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development within a designated Local Green Space will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.

The following sites are identified as Local Green Space as shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 7**:

- Derwent Green - Bicester
- Gavray Drive - Bicester
- Langford – Bicester

The community value of a designated Local Green Space should be maintained and where

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<sup>79</sup> ADD REFERENCE TO Supporting Evidence Web-link

appropriate, enhanced through improvements in access and community use, whilst also protecting the character of the space.

Any new development adjacent to a designated publicly accessible Local Green Space should provide active frontages to facilitate natural surveillance, as well as maintaining access points and the use of sensitive boundary treatments.

## Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

10.143. Our natural environment and varied landscapes are part of what makes Cherwell distinctive. Maintaining and enhancing a healthy and stable natural environment contributes to the district's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit, and is also important to its economic prosperity. The natural environment provides crucial services of value including fertile soils, clean water, flood prevention, flood and carbon storage, and access to nature which contribute to people's health and well-being.

10.144. However, there is a world-wide ecological emergency, as well as a climate emergency with a decline in biodiversity nationally and locally. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>80</sup> requires us to "*leave our environment in a better state than we found it and to pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future*" and the subsequent Environment Act will bring new responsibilities relating to the natural environment. In Oxfordshire, these include:

- production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (Oxfordshire County Council is the County's responsible authority and will have the statutory obligation to produce this strategy), to agree priorities for nature's recovery and identify opportunities and priorities for enhancing biodiversity and supporting wider objectives such as mitigating or adapting to climate change
- identification of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) to help deliver the LNRS (a draft Oxfordshire NRN has been produced by a collaborative partnership of local nature organisations)
- a requirement making it mandatory for housing and development (with a few exemptions) to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity, requiring habitats for wildlife to be left in a measurably better state than before the development, and allowing local authorities to require more than 10% net gain where justified

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<sup>80</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

10.145. Cherwell has a number of areas of high ecological value including sites of international and national importance. The district is home to many legally protected species as well as priority species and habitats. Much of this biodiversity resource is mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and this is used as an information source by local authorities and conservation organisations. The data has also been used to identify Conservation Target Areas and the emerging Nature Recovery Networks across Oxfordshire. Wild Oxfordshire's 'State of Nature in Oxfordshire 2017'<sup>81</sup> report highlighted the need for investment in nature and wildlife and conservation action to help recover species and habitats in the County.

### **Oxford Meadows SAC**

10.146. Cherwell contains one site of European importance; part of Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located in the southwest corner of the district. The SAC receives statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

10.147. Oxford Meadows SAC has been designated as internationally important due to the lowland hay meadow habitats it supports. The site includes vegetation communities that are potentially unique in the world (due to the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting). The site has been traditionally managed for several centuries and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. It is also designated as internationally important as it supports creeping marshwort, being one of only two known sites in the UK that support this plant species. The River Thames flows through the centre of the site and the hydrological regime makes an important contribution to the integrity of the site in supporting these habitats and species.

10.148. The SAC receives groundwater supplies from the River Cherwell and the River Thames (and their catchments). Alteration to adjacent rivers or obstruction of natural groundwater flows may alter the flooding regime of the SAC and lead to a degradation of the internationally important habitats and biodiversity that it supports. However, the current groundwater recharge could be maintained using Sustainable Drainage Systems, including porous surfacing, which maintains infiltration of groundwater without exacerbating flood risk.

10.149. If new development is situated next to watercourses that flow into the River Thames upstream of the SAC, it is possible that there could be a decrease in water

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<sup>81</sup> <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/stateofnature/reports/>

quality flowing through the SAC during the construction and the operation of development. This could potentially alter or prevent the nutrient enrichment of the habitats and species that the SAC supports, leading to degradation or loss.

10.150. **Core Policy 55** aims to prevent any obstruction of groundwater flows and to preserve water quality, to maintain the stability of the hydrological regime within the SAC and therefore its integrity as a site of international importance. The policy will be applied to development proposals likely to impact on groundwater flows or watercourses that flow into the River Thames upstream of the SAC.

#### **Core Policy 55: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC**

Developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- i. during construction of the development there will be no adverse effects on the water quality or quantity of any adjacent or nearby watercourse
- ii. during operation of the development any run-off of water into adjacent or surrounding watercourses will meet Environmental Quality Standards (and where necessary oil interceptors, silt traps and Sustainable Drainage Systems will be included)
- iii. new development will not significantly alter groundwater flows and that the hydrological regime of the Oxford Meadows SAC is maintained in terms of water quantity and quality, and
- iv. run-off rates of surface water from the development will be maintained at greenfield rates.

#### **Biodiversity**

10.151. Other sites of national importance include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs). There are 18 SSSI's wholly or partly within Cherwell covering approximately 1.1% of the district.

10.152. Sites of regional/local importance include Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), non-statutory nature reserves and other sites of importance for nature conservation including District Wildlife Sites (DWSs – value at a district level due to the presence of important habitats and species), ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees, and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats (habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act). Cherwell contains 13 LGSs, 4 LNRs, 89 Local Wildlife sites (completely or partly within the district), 13 proposed LWSs and proposed extensions 27 DWS's and 37 proposed DWS's (as of October 2022). A live list of Local Wildlife Sites and associated maps are available at <https://www.tverc.org/cms/>

- 10.153. It is not just designated sites that are of importance to the biodiversity resource of the district. Areas adjacent to designated sites can be of value as they can form part of the overall ecological unit and may provide important linkages. Moreover, landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, trees, rivers and riverbanks, ponds and floodplains can be of importance both in urban and rural areas, and often form wildlife corridors and steppingstones. Similarly, it is not just greenfield sites that can be of value; previously developed land can also make an important contribution to biodiversity. Some development can remediate contaminated land that may be having an adverse impact on ecology.
- 10.154. It is important that any features of value are identified early in the planning process so that adequate measures can be taken to secure their protection. Developers will be expected to incorporate and enhance such features within a site wherever possible and adequate measures should be taken to protect them from damage during construction. Networks of habitats including trees will be protected from development and where possible strengthened by it.
- 10.155. This Plan seeks to create a net gain legacy, in perpetuity. There are a number of features which can be incorporated into developments to encourage biodiversity including green and brown roofs, green walls, SUDs, using native and locally characteristic species in landscaping schemes, using landscaping to link up existing areas supporting biodiversity, and including features such as bird and bat boxes. Further guidance on incorporating features into residential development to encourage biodiversity can be found in the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD and BBOWT's "Homes for People, Homes for Wildlife" which was endorsed by the Council in 2018<sup>82</sup>.
- 10.156. Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site of known biodiversity value or the biodiversity/natural environment of the local area. A biodiversity survey and report will also be required where it is likely that previously unrecorded biodiversity interest may be present which could be affected by the development. All developments around Bicester will require surveys carried out for the brown hairstreak butterfly. Surveys should include consideration of the site's value as a wildlife corridor and the contribution it makes to ecological networks. In addition to identifying biodiversity impacts, biodiversity surveys and reports should identify opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements in accordance with **Core Policy 57: Biodiversity Net Gain**.

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<sup>82</sup> [https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes\\_for\\_people\\_and\\_wildlife\\_lr\\_-\\_spreads.pdf](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_-_spreads.pdf)

10.157. The emerging Nature Recovery Network (NRN) reflects the hierarchy of sites, identifying three zones (as illustrated by **Appendix 8**):

- core zone comprising the most important sites for biodiversity including all nationally and locally designated sites, nature reserves, priority habitats and ancient woodland. The focus is to protect and manage these important sites to support the greatest amount of biodiversity and ecosystem services, restore them to favourable condition, and avoid habitat damage to or increase fragmentation
- recovery zone comprising Conservation Target Areas (CTAs), important freshwater areas and areas to provide improved habitat connectivity and linkages to buffer and connect core sites or provide stepping stones between them. New development will be expected to contribute to and the target habitats and species of the CTAs and specific projects identified in Nature Recovery Plans and Projects, and
- wider landscape zone comprising the remainder of the district, where the focus is on strengthening the character of the landscape, including agricultural and urban landscapes, and making nature accessible, including restoration or creation of hedgerows and other landscape features, managing farmland or improving access to the countryside.

## **Core Policy 56: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity**

All new development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to Cherwell's nature recovery through the protection, restoration and expansion of protected sites, habitats and species, facilitating their adaptation to climate change and improving connections between wildlife corridors and protected sites at a landscape scale, in line with the hierarchy of designations set out in legislation and the NRN zones:

- i. development which is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and/or Ramsar site will not be permitted\*
- ii. development which is likely to have a significant adverse impact on nationally important sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs and NNRs and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity, and
- iii. development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance, in addition to irreplaceable habits such as ancient woodland, and aged or veteran trees, will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site.

Any development with the potential to impact on a SAC, SPA and/or Ramsar site within the district will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the international site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, or that effects can be mitigated to avoid any effect on integrity.

Development that would compromise the favourable condition, or make it less likely that favourable condition can be reached, of a SSSI, will only be permitted if the need for and the public benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss.

Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to enhance biodiversity such as green and brown roofs, green walls, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), soft landscaping and nest boxes, in addition to retaining and where possible enhancing existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks including those identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy should be maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation and ensure habitat connectivity.

Relevant habitat and species surveys proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed will be required to accompany planning applications that may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value.

Where, having followed the mitigation hierarchy, there is an unavoidable requirement for offsite biodiversity compensation to offset any harm as a result of the development, this should be proportionate in scale to the proposed development.

Planning conditions/obligations will be used to help deliver the Conservation Target Areas habitat and species targets and the wider Nature Recovery Network where appropriate.

Any new development will be required to secure the long-term management and monitoring of biodiversity features created on-site and those created off-site to compensate for development impacts, through a Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan.

\*Unless it meets the relevant subsequent legal tests (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and No Alternatives) and provides adequate compensation.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

10.158. Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from November 2023. BNG will be measured using Defra's biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

10.159. In line with the requirements of the Environment Act, the Council will expect all development proposals to demonstrate a minimum 20% increase in BNG and will encourage applications to consider achieving higher net gains.

10.160. Development proposals will need to be supported by a statement outlining how BNG has been addressed.

10.161. Other biodiversity principles also need to be considered alongside BNG that does not replace existing protections and does not apply to irreplaceable habitat.

10.162. In assessing BNG the Council will firstly consider proposals against the 'mitigation hierarchy' as illustrated by **Figure 10.2** and applications will be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 57**.



**Figure 10.2 Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy**

10.163. Net gain is additional to the hierarchy and will only be applied once the impacts of the development on biodiversity have been avoided, mitigated and compensated.

10.164. The net gain mitigation hierarchy takes the following approach:

- avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout
- enhance and restore biodiversity on-site
- create or enhance off-site habitats (either on other land which the developer owns, agreements with other landowners, or through the purchase of biodiversity units from third party habitat banks), and
- use national statutory biodiversity credits (as a last resort where there is no viable local alternative)

10.165. Where off site delivery of BNG is required, this should take place as close as possible to the development site, focused on opportunities identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy or within the core or recovery zone of the NRN, with measures put in place to ensure biodiversity net gain is maintained long term.

### **Core Policy 57: Biodiversity Net Gain**

Development will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 20% net gain in biodiversity (measured using the DEFRA biodiversity metric 3.1 or successor) by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value or geological value and soils, in addition to recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. At least 20% biodiversity net gain will be sought in the Nature Recovery Network Core and Recovery zones, and new urban extensions will be required to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain.

All major applications should be accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Ecological Enhancement Scheme, setting out how the site will be improved and maintained over a thirty-year period.

Delivery of biodiversity net gain should follow the mitigation hierarchy with gains delivered on site as first preference.

Where the required delivery of biodiversity net gain is not possible on site, gain should be delivered as close as possible on projects identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy or within the core zone or recovery zone of the Nature Recovery Network, where they can secure the greatest benefits to Oxfordshire's wildlife and ecosystems.

### **Conservation Target Areas**

10.166. Conservation Target Areas form a key part of the emerging NRN recovery zone and should be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 58**. They were mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) in consultation with local authorities and nature conservation organisations in Oxfordshire. The Target Areas were identified to focus work to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of UK BAP priority habitats (habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act), and this is their principal aim. Addressing habitat fragmentation through the linking of sites to form strategic ecological networks can help species adapt to the impact of climate change and represent areas of greatest opportunity for strategic biodiversity improvement in the district. Development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the target habitats and species of the target areas through avoiding habitat damage/ fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.

10.167. Sixteen Conservation Target Areas lie wholly or partly within Cherwell District. The boundaries of the Conservation Target Areas are shown by the map (**Appendix 9**). 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.

10.168. 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. Further guidance on the approach to be taken is expected to be developed as part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

#### **Core Policy 59: 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 that would have an adverse impact on the target habitats and species of a CTA 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 of the target habitats and species of the Conservation Target Area.

#### **Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services**

10.169. One approach to understanding the value of the natural environment for people is through an approach known as 'natural capital' and identifying the 'ecosystem services' it provides. Further information on these terms and what they mean is available on our website as part of the evidence base. The Council recognises the value of natural capital assets in terms of the ecosystem services they provide and will ensure that this is taken into account in the consideration of planning applications so that the wider benefits of natural capital are delivered.

10.170. The Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire (2021)<sup>83</sup> presents the natural capital assets present in Cherwell, whilst Cherwell's Natural Capital Assets report (2021)<sup>84</sup> provides a preliminary register of natural capital assets present in the district. The

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<sup>83</sup> Alison Smith (2021). Natural capital in Oxfordshire: Short report. (see <https://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/research/ecosystems/bio-clim-adaptation/downloads/bicester-Natural-capital-mapping-in-Oxfordshire-Short-report-V3.pdf>)

<sup>84</sup> Alison Smith (2021). Cherwell District: Natural Capital Assets. (see <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10563/cherwell-district-natural-capital-report-september-2021.pdf>)

Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire will be used to inform the distribution of uses within development sites allocated within the Local Plan Review and should also be referred to in the consideration of planning applications. Where an environmental impact assessment is required, planning applications will be expected to provide an assessment of the long-term impacts of the proposed development on natural capital and ecosystem services to enhance the design of new buildings and spaces across the site.

10.171. A Natural Capital Investment Plan will be produced and encourage investment in Cherwell's natural environment to secure financial and social returns.

**Core Policy 59: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services**

The Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire will be expected to be used to inform the planning of development sites to ensure the protection of those areas with high value natural capital assets.

All new major development proposals will be supported by a natural capital assessment to demonstrate the impact of the development on the environment and any environmental net gain to be secured.

## 11. Chapter 11: Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

### Introduction

11.1. This section sets out a series of policies relating to the sustainable local economy theme to ensure any proposals and decisions taken are appropriately considering this important matter. This section includes policies relating to employment, tourism, town centres and retail, education and utilities and infrastructure (as listed below). Taken together, these policies complement those set out in the **Area Strategies**, to help deliver the Council's **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** identified in Chapter 3.

- Employment
  - Core Policy 60: Development at Existing Employment Sites
  - Core Policy 61: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites
  - Core Policy 62: Ancillary Uses on Designated Employment Sites
  - Core Policy 63: Community Employment Plans
  - Core Policy 64: Rural Diversification
- Tourism
  - Core Policy 65: Tourism
- Town Centres & Retail
  - Core Policy 66: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses
  - Core Policy 67: Primary Shopping Areas
  - Development Policy 5: Hot Food Takeaways
  - Development Policy 6: Outdoor Markets
  - Development Policy 7: Shopfronts and Signage
- Education
  - Core Policy 68: Meeting Education Needs
- Utilities and Infrastructure
  - Core Policy 69: Public Services and Utilities

## Employment

### Development at Existing Employment Sites

- 11.2. **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** provides the framework for supporting new employment development, but it is important the plan also protects our existing employment sites across Cherwell. This helps to ensure an appropriate level of employment provision is provided for over the Local Plan period. **Core Policy 60: Development at Existing Employment Sites** will apply to any proposals for changes of use at our existing employment sites that require planning permission.
- 11.3. The retention of our existing strategic employment sites, which are primarily focused at our main settlements, is important to ensure the plan will contribute towards delivering our overall Spatial Strategy. These strategic employment sites are listed in **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** and the Area Strategies that are set out in Chapter 5. **Core Policy 60: Development at Existing Employment Sites** sets out the Council's intention to safeguard these sites, and any sites allocated by this Plan, for employment uses.
- 11.4. In addition to the strategic sites discussed above, there are also a number of non-strategic employment sites that make an important contribution to our local economy and often provide smaller, more local employment opportunities, including in our rural areas. Any non-strategic sites that need to be protected, or where new sites need to be identified, these will be set out in the Publication version of the Plan.
- 11.5. In seeking to protect our existing employment sites, **Core Policy 62: Ancillary Uses on Designated Employment Sites** will also ensure that where a site no longer has reasonable prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present, or any other realistic and suitable, employment use. They must demonstrate that the site has remained un-sold or un-let for at least 12 months. In addition, applicants will need to provide evidence relating to the marketing of the site for its present use for a minimum period of 12 months up to the date at which the planning application was lodged. This should demonstrate that despite genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let a site on reasonable terms for employment use, they have failed to do so.
- 11.6. The site's potential contribution to the local and wider economy must be considered, both currently and in the long term, taking proper account of the economic cycle and the likely future needs of the economy. The Council will need to be satisfied that the change of use of the employment site would not jeopardise the provision of sufficient employment land across the district to meet the identified need.

### **Core Policy 60: Development at Existing Employment Sites**

The strategic employment sites, as listed in **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** are safeguarded for employment uses\*. Alternative uses will be considered if they provide ancillary supporting services (in accordance with **Core Policy 62**) or meet a need identified through a subsequent Local Plan Review, or exceptionally where a reassessment of the latest available district-wide Employment Land Review, demonstrates that these sites are no longer needed over the full plan period. All new strategic employment allocations made in **Core Policy 4** are to be treated as though they are strategic employment sites after completion and are covered by this policy.

Elsewhere in the district, including at non-strategic employment sites, as identified within the Area Strategies, and other existing employment sites, where there is no reasonable prospect of land or premises being used for continued employment use, a mixed-use enabling development which incorporates employment space should first be considered. If a mixed-use scheme is not viable, the extent to which the proposed use generates new employment will be considered in determining the relevant planning application.

Proposals for alternative uses must demonstrate that the site has remained un-sold or un-let for at least 12 months and, where relevant, marketing evidence has been provided for a minimum period of 12 months.

Proposals for alternative uses will need to demonstrate compliance with other relevant Development Plan policies.

\*Defined as use classes B2, B8 and E(g)

## **New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**

- 11.7. The Local Plan Review 2040 sets out employment allocations within **Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs**. There is a strong focus on our Main Settlements (Banbury and Bicester) and Local Service Centres (Kidlington and Heyford Park) in accordance with the Spatial Strategy. **Core Policy 61** complements these allocations by supporting appropriate employment development on unallocated sites across the district, where there is a demonstrable need.
- 11.8. In the wider district, including outside the Main Settlements, Local Service Centres and our Larger Villages, new employment activities can be accommodated with least impact on the landscape through the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings. However, there is some flexibility for new employment buildings to come forward in the rural areas if there are no suitable existing buildings available for re-use, providing that the proposals meet the other criteria set out in the Core Policy 61.

### **Core Policy 61: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**

Proposals for new employment development (Use Classes E(g), B2 or B8) will be supported on unallocated sites in or on the edge of, the built-up area of Main Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages, where there are exceptional circumstances, provided that the benefits are not outweighed by any harmful impacts, taking into account the following:

- i. a demonstrable need for the employment that cannot be accommodated on existing allocated sites
- ii. the effect on the amenity of nearby residents and businesses
- iii. the provision of safe site access for pedestrians and cyclists and for all types of vehicles likely to visit the sites, and measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible, and
- iv. the scale, nature and appearance of the employment development on, and its relationship with, the settlement, its character and its landscape setting.

In Smaller Villages and the open countryside, the re-use, conversion, or adaptation of suitable existing buildings for employment will also be supported subject to criteria (i)-(iii) where applicable. Other proposals in Small Villages and the open countryside will be considered, provided that, in addition to criteria (i)-(iii) where applicable:

- iv. the proposal cannot reasonably be accommodated on existing employment land identified as vacant or developable, and
- v. it can be demonstrated that the proposal will benefit the local economy and will not undermine the delivery of the strategic employment allocations.

## Ancillary Uses on Designated Employment Sites

- 11.9. Providing facilities ancillary to the main business uses on large employment sites helps to make them more attractive to incoming firms and improves the quality of the working environment for employees. Ancillary facilities also help employment sites to develop sustainably by reducing the need for traffic movements.
- 11.10. It is important that any ancillary uses are appropriate, to support the main employment uses of the sites and where it is demonstrated that there are not facilities nearby that can be sustainably accessed. The provision of larger scale retailing, such as food superstores and non-food retail warehouses, for example, could prejudice the availability of land for other business uses, as well as undermine existing retail areas.
- 11.11. In accordance with the above, **Core Policy 62** sets out criteria to support the provision of ancillary uses on existing employment sites, including business parks and industrial estates, provided the proposals are small in scale.

### **Core Policy 62: Ancillary Uses on Designated Employment Sites**

Proposals for uses other than E(g), B2 and B8 business uses on designated employment sites will be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- i. the proposal is primarily designed to provide for users of the employment site
- ii. the use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site, and
- iii. the use, either alone or combined with other existing or proposed uses, would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centre or shopping centre (including local centres) or the social and community vitality of a nearby village.

In connection with any planning permission, conditions may be imposed to limit the scale of the operation and to restrict the range of activities proposed or goods sold, where necessary, to ensure that the criteria set out above are met.

## Community Employment Plans

- 11.12. Sustainable development should include some provision for new jobs, wherever this is possible, and should make it easier for those jobs to be created locally. Development should therefore consider opportunities to deliver the greatest benefit for local communities by maximising opportunities for local employment and education.
- 11.13. Providing jobs and training for the local community offers the opportunity to generate and share increased economic prosperity. Community Employment Plans (CEPs) prepared in partnership with developers, the Council, and training providers can play an important role in achieving this. A CEP is an employer-led initiative which can form part of planning obligations for significant developments. The measures contained within a CEP seek to mitigate the impacts of development through ensuring local people can better access employment, skills, and training opportunities arising from development. CEPs can also help to create the proper alignment between the jobs created and a local labour force with the appropriate skills.
- 11.14. CEPs can also reduce the need to source employees from outside of the area, reducing the need for longer distance commuting and thus helping our commitments towards addressing climate change. CEPs can also support green skills training within construction and development by identifying opportunities on site for greener apprenticeships and work placements.
- 11.15. The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan identifies the importance of CEPs as an action to help deliver the People Programme, in particular by addressing exclusion from the labour market, upskilling, and other measures to help young people and adults who are marginalised or disadvantaged from work<sup>85</sup>. CEPs will assist with delivering the Council's strategic priorities to optimise employment opportunities; encourage local apprenticeships and local workforce schemes that benefit our young people; support the Government's objective of achieving full employment, and; ensure that the skills needed by our employers are identified, and that training programmes are in place to provide a skilled labour force.
- 11.16. To support this approach, all new development is encouraged to maximise opportunities for local economic development and we may seek the preparation of CEPs for major development. Where a CEP is required, developers will be provided with a template as a basis. Through discussion with the Council, working in partnership with the LEP, appropriate targets and outcomes for the site-specific CEP will be agreed. The CEP will then be subject to regular review and monitoring meetings with the Council. We will provide assistance to identify appropriate local partner agencies and organisations to work with and support the developer to facilitate the timely delivery of the CEP.

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<sup>85</sup> <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s24538/Oxfordshire%20LEP%20SEP.pdf>

### **Core Policy 63: Community Employment Plans**

Proposals for major development should demonstrate how opportunities for local employment, apprenticeships, and training would be created, and seek to maximise the opportunities for sourcing local produce, suppliers and services, during both construction and operation.

The Council will require the submission of a site-specific Community Employment Plan (CEP) for the construction and operation of significant \* development sites, using a planning condition or legal agreement. The CEP should be prepared in partnership with the District Council and any other partners to deliver the agreed CEP.

The CEP should cover, but not be limited to:

- i. local procurement agreements
- ii. apprenticeships, employment and training initiatives for all ages and abilities, and
- iii. training and work experience for younger people including those not in education, employment, or training.

\*Significant' is defined in the context of this policy as sites over 1,000 dwellings or 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace (Classes E(g), B2 and B8).

## Rural Diversification

11.17. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF supports economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development, including the promotion of the advancement and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

11.18. Diversification provides opportunities to generate additional income for rural businesses, reduces reliance on a single income stream, as well as reduce risk. **Core Policy 64** sets out the criteria within which rural diversification can contribute to a prosperous and viable rural economy in the rural areas. In doing so, the policy ensures that farm diversification as promoted in paragraph 84 meets the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. It also ensures that farm holdings can remain viable, and agricultural buildings can remain in use, without causing harm to the environment by new construction, and without increasing traffic hazards on rural roads.

### **Core Policy 64: Rural Diversification**

In rural areas, proposals for economic activities that bring about rural diversification shall normally be permitted, providing that:

- i. the development is operated as part of a viable rural business (including farm holding) and contributes to the viability of the holding
- ii. it is not detrimental to the character and appearance of existing buildings and their setting within the landscape
- iii. existing buildings are used in preference to new buildings or extensions
- iv. utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided, and
- v. there is access by means of an existing road; no highway hazards are created or increased; and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required.

## Tourism

- 11.19. Tourism is a major contributor to Cherwell's economy with nearly 9,000 local jobs provided in the sector<sup>86</sup>. In 2019, there were approximately 8.2<sup>87</sup> million visitors to the district contributing £495 million to the local economy.
- 11.20. The district's attractive countryside, historic villages and market towns, and the Oxford Canal contribute to its distinctive tourism offer. The district also benefits from its location between London and Birmingham and its proximity to national attractions such as Blenheim Palace, Stratford upon Avon and Warwick Castle. However, Bicester Village is the largest visitor attraction in the district with more than 6 million visitors annually<sup>88</sup>.
- 11.21. We recognise the significant contribution that tourism makes to the wider Cherwell economy, and we want to support further sustainable tourism developments, particularly those that can demonstrate direct benefits for the local 'visitor' economy, and which will sustain the rural economy.
- 11.22. Since our last Local Plan, a number of new hotels have been built in the district and new major visitor attractions currently being developed include Bicester Motion, a major attraction based on motorsport and aviation on the site of the former RAF Bicester. A Great Wolf Resort comprising a waterpark and 498 room hotel is currently under construction at Chesterton.
- 11.23. Tourism also benefits local programmes of events, including the arts, sports and festivals, where local traditions can be shared with visitors, including Banbury Canal Festival and Bicester Food Festival. These activities help to build local pride and provide opportunities for new businesses, business growth and development.
- 11.24. As a catalyst for economic growth and employment, tourism provides opportunities for an increase in demand for businesses as well as tourist attractions for both visitors and residents. It is important to ensure tourism works to the advantage of the district by attracting and dispersing visitors to discover and experience the wide range of attractions the district has to offer and to maximise opportunities to increase the number of overnight stays, length of visitor stay, and visitor spending.
- 11.25. **Core Policy 65:** Tourism sets out the Council's key requirements for proposed tourism developments.
- 11.26. Whilst supporting proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, larger new attractions, which generate significant visitor numbers, are

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<sup>86</sup> <https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Cherwell-2019.pdf>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Cherwell-2019.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> [https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Oxfordshire-2017\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Oxfordshire-2017_FINAL.pdf)

most appropriately located in or adjacent to our main towns. These locations have good public transport links and support active travel opportunities. We will also apply a town centre first approach for other visitor facilities, including for hotels and restaurants although other locations may be acceptable taking into account specific locational and functional requirements.

- 11.27. In our rural areas visitor-related facilities may offer benefits to existing local communities, such as supporting local food producers, shops and pubs, or new recreational opportunities. Locating new visitor related development within or close to existing settlements will enable the potential wider community benefits to be realised whilst minimising the spread of development into the open countryside. In some cases, tourism development in the open countryside may be justified if associated with a particular countryside attraction or a farm diversification scheme. Existing buildings should be utilised wherever possible although replacement buildings should be considered where this would result in a more sustainable development.
- 11.28. There are a number of camping and touring caravan sites throughout the district. New or extensions to existing sites will need careful consideration to minimise visual or environmental impacts. Wherever possible, existing buildings should be used for associated facilities, such as club houses and shower blocks.
- 11.29. The location, scale and design of any new visitor related development must be appropriate to the area and its environmental impact will be carefully assessed and weighed against any economic and community health and wellbeing benefits. Where tourist accommodation is proposed in locations where new dwellings would not normally be permitted, we will impose planning conditions or require legal agreements restricting buildings to holiday accommodation use.

### **Core Policy 65: Tourism**

New tourist and visitor facilities, including hotels, will be supporting in accordance with the 'town centre first' principles and should be located within or adjacent to town or service centres and reuse appropriate existing buildings wherever possible.

New tourism and visitor facilities will also generally be supported in villages and the open countryside where they:

- have a functional linkage with a specific countryside attraction, or
- secure the diversification of an agricultural enterprise, or
- complement the rural character of the area and deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community or nature conservation benefits, or
- are unable to be reasonably located within or close to a town or service centre by the nature of the facility.

## **Town Centres & Retail Policies**

11.30. Retail is very important to the local economy, being one of the top employers in Cherwell. Retail premises make up nearly a fifth of Cherwell's business floorspace and from 2000 to 2019 Cherwell experienced a 36% growth in retail floorspace (89,000sqm), performing strongly when compared to retail growth in Oxfordshire, and England.<sup>89</sup>

11.31. In particular, Banbury and Bicester Town Centres, and to a lesser extent Kidlington village centre, are the main focus for shopping, commerce, leisure and other facilities serving Cherwell's communities, businesses and visitors. They also play an increasingly important role as places to live.

11.32. However, notwithstanding recent growth, in common with many town centres across the country our urban centres have come under pressure in recent years, particularly with competition from other centres, and the shift to online retailing, which has been accelerated by the pandemic.

11.33. We are committed to supporting our town centres and to enhancing and strengthening their vitality and viability. In doing so we also recognise the important role that further residential development, in appropriate town centre locations, can play in strengthening vitality and viability in the longer term. Further details on our

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<sup>89</sup> Valuation Office Agency (2019) Non-domestic rating business floorspace tables: table FS2.0

approach for residential development in our town centres is provided in our **Area Strategies** and Housing sections.

- 11.34. In addition to our traditional high streets, there are also significant retail provision at out of centre locations, particularly at Banbury and Bicester. Many residential areas across the district are also served by small parades of local shops, restaurants and other community-based facilities.
- 11.35. Cherwell is home to Bicester Village Outlet Centre. Bicester Village is the district's most visited tourist destination. The Council recognises the role Bicester Village performs in the local economy and will continue to support its role as a major national and international destination, whilst at the same time ensuring that the vitality and viability of Bicester Town Centre is enhanced and protected.
- 11.36. In our villages and rural areas local shops provide a vital service for local communities and contribute significantly to their sustainability. The Council will seek to resist the loss of these vital local facilities.
- 11.37. In order to fully understand the retail and leisure development needs of the district, we commissioned a Town Centre and Retail Study in 2021.<sup>90</sup> This study concluded that there was an over provision of comparison retail floorspace, in both Banbury and Bicester, and that overall, there was no additional need for comparison or convenience floorspace across the district up to 2040. The study also concluded that any further out of centre expansion to Banbury or Bicester's comparison fashion offer would be seriously detrimental to the vitality and viability of each of the town centres.
- 11.38. Some additional detail and specific policies for each of the centres and is included within the **Area Strategies** (Chapters 5 to 9).

### **Town Centre Hierarchy**

- 11.39. New retail development will continue to be focused on our town centres and all new development will be required to be built to high design standards. Town centre uses are those defined by the NPPF and include retail, leisure, cultural and community uses. We will also support the role that new restaurants and cafes can have in attracting people into our town centres and we will support uses that contribute to the evening economy in appropriate locations.
- 11.40. Based on the conclusions of the 2021 Town Centre and Retail Study we will resist further major out of centre retail development, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of our urban centres, particularly Banbury and Bicester.

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<sup>90</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/10579/cherwell-town-centre-retail-study-september-2021-report>

11.41. We will continue to work with our local communities and other stakeholders to promote and enhance the attractiveness of our urban centres. Particular priorities highlighted by the Town Centre and Retail Study include the need for improvements to the public realm, accessibility, signage, publicity and design.

11.42. **Core Policies 66: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses** and **67: Primary Shopping Area** define the network and hierarchy of centres within the district and seek to promote their long term vitality and viability. The Policies Map defines the extent of the town centres and associated primary shopping areas and sets out the range of uses supported by the Council in these locations (also refer to **Appendix 10**).

### **Core Policy 66: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses**

The Council will promote the continued role and functions of its town/urban centres to positively contribute towards their viability, vitality, character and public realm. The hierarchy of centres in the district is:

- Main Towns (Town Centres): Banbury, Bicester
- Local Service Centres (Local/Village Centre): Kidlington, Heyford Park

The boundaries of the Town Centres' and their respective Primary Shopping Areas are defined on the Policies Map and by **Appendix 10**.

To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the Town Centres, the Council will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services and other main town centre uses in accordance with the established hierarchy of centres.

Retail and other 'Main Town Centre Uses' will be directed towards these centres. Where such uses are proposed outside these centres the Council will apply the sequential approach as set out in the NPPF.

Where planning permission is required for any retail or leisure proposal outside these centres, they will be subject to an impact assessment, appropriate to the use. In Banbury, the threshold for such an impact assessment is over 2000 sqm (gross), 1500 sqm (gross) in Bicester and 350 sqm (gross) elsewhere.

The Council will support the provision of new local centres containing a small number of shops of limited size within the allocated strategic housing sites set out in this Local Plan and as specified within the Development Site Templates (**Appendix 3**).

The Council will support proposals for new small shops or extensions to existing shops within or adjacent to existing settlements that are required to serve local needs.

### **Core Policy 67: Primary Shopping Areas**

Where planning permission is required, proposals resulting in the loss of an E Class Use at ground floor level within a primary shopping area must demonstrate that:

- i. the unit has been proactively and appropriately marketed for at least 12 months and it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a realistic prospect of the unit being used for E Class uses in the foreseeable future
- ii. the proposal meets the needs of residents within the local neighbourhood, and
- iii. the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

### **Permitted Development Rights**

11.43. Several changes to the Permitted Development Rights affecting change of use to and from retail have been introduced. Where prior approval is needed, the Council will interpret 'key shopping areas' referred to in the General Permitted Development Order as being designated Primary Shopping Frontages.

### **Local Shopping Needs**

11.44. Outside the main shopping centres of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Heyford Park, local shopping requirements are met by a number of local shopping centres. These provide for the day to day convenience shopping needs of the population and complement the range of shopping facilities offered by the main centres. **Core Policy 66: Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses** is intended to allow existing local shops outside the main centres to adapt to changing circumstances, and to allow new shops serving a small local catchment to be established in suitable locations.

### **Hot Food Takeaways**

11.45. We are committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for its local residents, and to reduce health inequalities. One of the challenges we face in promoting healthy eating is the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in local neighbourhoods, including the prevalence of hot food takeaways in some areas. We will therefore support opportunities for communities to access a wider choice of healthier food options and resist the proliferation of particular types of hot food takeaways in inappropriate locations, such as adjacent to schools and playgrounds as set out in **Development Policy 5**.

- 11.46. Hot food takeaways also have the potential to cause nuisance to nearby residents due to general activity, particularly during the late evening, cooking odours, increased traffic movements and litter.
- 11.47. To minimise the likelihood of disturbance, hot food takeaways will be resisted in predominantly residential areas unless the premises are situated within a neighbourhood shopping centre or other commercial frontage. Even in those situations, permission may be refused if an existing residential property is likely to experience nuisance. In predominantly residential areas, we will seek to impose planning conditions to limit the late-night opening hours of hot food takeaways.
- 11.48. Proposals for hot food takeaways in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington town/village centres are likely to be acceptable without restriction on hours of opening unless the proximity of existing residential property is such that any restriction would be justified in order to protect residential amenity.

#### **Development Policy 5: Hot Food Takeaways**

Proposals for hot food takeaways will be permitted provided they:

- i. would not result in significant harm to the amenity of local residents, or highway safety
- ii. would not result in harmful cumulative impacts because of any existing or consented outlets in the immediate vicinity, and
- iii. the proposal is not located within a five-minute walk of a school or playground, unless within an established local shopping centre.

#### **Outdoor Markets**

- 11.49. Outdoor markets add to the vibrancy, social value and character of our towns and villages. Cherwell's markets are well established and popular with local communities and visitors and help support local businesses. However, if poorly designed and managed they can cause harm to surrounding areas in terms of congestion of local roads and pavements, generate rubbish storage and noise issues, and impact on access and accessibility.
- 11.50. We wish to see all of the outdoor markets in the district continue to thrive and will encourage a coordinated approach to their development and management in accordance with **Development Policy 6: Outdoor Markets**.

### **Development Policy 6: Outdoor Markets**

Proposals for new off-street permanent street markets, car boot sales, and temporary markets will be supported provided that:

- i. the scale, nature, and location would not harm existing shopping facilities or markets located within town centres
- ii. there would not be an unacceptable impact on local amenity or the general environment
- iii. adequate provision is made for traders' parking, deliveries and servicing, set-up and storage of stalls, power supply and storage and disposal of refuse, and
- iv. there would not be an unacceptable impact on traffic flow or increase in traffic congestion in the area.

We will seek to maintain, and support the enhancement of, existing outdoor markets within the district. Developments that would adversely affect existing outdoor markets will not be permitted.

Where construction of a development could adversely affect an outdoor market, applicants should assess this impact and propose mitigation measures to ensure the outdoor market can continue to operate.

### **Shopfronts and signage**

11.51. Outdoor advertisements and signs can impact on amenity and public safety, and therefore sometimes require advertisement consent. Well-designed signs and advertisements will integrate well with buildings and the character of an area as well as meeting the commercial need for the advertisement. However, obtrusive designs and inappropriately sited signs and advertisements can cause clutter and have a detrimental effect on visual amenity or on the character of an area, particularly in Conservation Areas.

11.52. The Council will ensure that new or changed shopfronts that require planning permission (or listed buildings consent) and adverts and signs that require advertisements consent are of a design, size and materials that complement the character of the host building and the surrounding public realm in accordance with **Development Policy 7**. Compromises may need to be made to 'corporate' designs in particularly sensitive areas to meet the requirements of the policy. For example,

internally illuminated box fascias and projecting signs will not generally be appropriate in Conservation Areas.

## Education

### Meeting Education Needs

- 11.53. The provision of new or extended primary and secondary education together with early years, tertiary and lifelong learning provision will be required during the plan period to meet the needs of our growing population.
- 11.54. We will support the growth plans of schools across the district and we recognise the important role that viable schools have to play in maintaining and contributing to community cohesion.
- 11.55. Oxfordshire County Council, as the Local Education Authority, has a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places to meet demand across the district.
- 11.56. We will work with the County Council and others to provide nursery, primary and secondary schools, further and higher education facilities, community learning facilities, special schools, free schools and other educational facilities. This will include appropriate provision for the strategic site allocations set out in this plan. The specific policy requirements for these sites, including where any new education provision is required, is set out within the Development Site Templates (**Appendix 3**).
- 11.57. Our support for education may include seeking the provision of new schools, contributions towards these facilities, or contributions towards expanding existing facilities. Our previous adopted Local Plan identified a need for a new secondary school at Banbury and a site to the south of the Longford Park development has been proposed. Oxfordshire County Council has advised that this school is still required, therefore we will continue to safeguard this land. Further detail is provided in the Banbury Area Strategy.
- 11.58. We will seek to ensure that new and extended schools are built to the highest sustainable construction standards with proposals required to meet the requirements set out in **Core Policy 68** and in accordance with County Council requirements. New facilities should also be designed to be flexible enough to accommodate the future changing needs of users and the communities they serve. Where appropriate, the use of school and college buildings and land after hours, will be encouraged to support learning across the wider community and community use of education facilities, for example sport and recreation facilities, will be supported.
- 11.59. Any new school buildings not identified within this plan should be located in sustainable locations on the edge or within the built-up limits of settlements.

11.60. The district has historically had a relatively low education and skills base. We will therefore encourage development that will diversify and develop the skills base of the district in the future. This will include the requirement for developers to produce and implement Community Employment Plans when developing major sites (refer to **Core Policy 63**).

11.61. The Council's Developer Contributions SPD provides further details on how developer contributions for education facilities will be sought.

#### **Core Policy 68: Meeting Education Needs**

The Council, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and others, will ensure the provision of pre-school, school, community learning, and other facilities that provide for the education needs, and skills development, of our communities. New educational buildings should be located in sustainable locations and built to net zero standards as required by Core Policy 39. Wherever possible, schools should be located within close proximity to other services and facilities to create community hubs.

Education facilities should be designed to:

- i. achieve a high degree of environmental efficiency to minimise running costs
- ii. provide a safe, secure and pleasant learning environment
- iii. be located to promote sustainable and active modes of travel, and
- iv. be designed to enable future expansion, if required.

## **Utilities and Infrastructure**

### **Public Services and Utilities**

11.62. Securing investment in strategic infrastructure such as water, waste, sewerage, electricity and digital connections helps address both current and future needs.

11.63. Gas, electricity and heat supply and investment in electricity infrastructure is provided by the private sector and the Council will continue to work with providers to ensure the necessary services to strategic sites are available. Developers should consult with the relevant utility companies in identifying the infrastructure requirements and constraints to a development site. Developers will need to take account of the location of existing services and will need to contribute financially to their relocation on development sites.

- 11.64. Thames Water, Anglian Water, and Severn Trent Water provide the majority of the water supply and waste services in the district. The Council will work with the water companies to plan the delivery of specific projects. The County Council are the Planning Authority for waste-water services in the County. The management and disposal of waste-water and sewage sludge is contained within Policy W10 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy. Planning application for waste-water treatment are also determined by the County Council in consultation with the district. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan is part of the development plan, against which the District Council must consider planning applications<sup>91</sup>.
- 11.65. The internet provides an opportunity to reduce the need to travel as recommended in the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan<sup>92</sup>. Good internet connectivity means that location is increasingly less important for businesses and enables greater possibilities for home-working. The Local Plan therefore recognises the role of the internet and seeks to promote it as a means of reducing the need to travel and supporting the economy. The provision of high-speed broadband will support new and relocating businesses as well as facilitating home-working for residents.
- 11.66. Increasing provision of gigabit capable broadband coverage across the district in line with the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Programme will help deliver the rollout of next-generation mobile broadband particularly in rural areas. Development proposals will ensure there are connections to a number of internet providers offering high speed broadband and the latest mobile data connectivity where possible.
- 11.67. Oxfordshire currently has good levels of superfast broadband connectivity. Between 2014 and 2021 the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme has increased superfast broadband availability from 69% to 98% of premises across the county. In March 2022, approximately 22% of premises in the county had full fibre connectivity. The digital infrastructure program aims to achieve 99% superfast coverage and 23.5% gigabit capable coverage by the end of 2022.
- 11.68. Cherwell seeks to ensure the provision of gigabit capable broadband connectivity to all new developments, and supports network enhancements including supporting infrastructure, to provide high speed broadband to all existing homes and businesses in the district in accordance with **Core Policy 69**. It is essential that the strategic site allocations provide appropriate infrastructure to ensure all properties can be connected to high-speed broadband without any further works post development.
- 11.69. Wider infrastructure needs are set out by **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**.

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<sup>91</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/adopted-core-strategy>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp>

**Core Policy 69: Public Services and Utilities**

The Council will support proposals that involve new or improvements to public services/utilities if they are required to enable the delivery of sites and where they accord with other relevant policies in the Development Plan.

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to promote faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications and allow businesses and residents to access services and information more effectively, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel.

All new developments will be required to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to enable access to high-speed broadband and mobile data connectivity from a range of providers.

## 12. Chapter 12: Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

### Introduction

12.1. This section contains policies that will be used to inform decision making on planning proposals that affecting any part of the district that relate to our third thematic policy area, namely - Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities.

#### **Achieving Well Designed and Healthy Places**

- Core Policy 70: Achieving Well Designed Places
- Core Policy 71: Health Facilities
- Core Policy 72: Creating Healthy Communities
- Core Policy 73: Local Services and Community Facilities
- Core Policy 74: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

#### **Housing**

- Core Policy 75: Housing Density
- Core Policy 76: Affordable Housing
- Core Policy 77: Housing Mix
- Core Policy 78: Specialist Housing
- Core Policy 79: Residential Space Standards
- Core Policy 80: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing
- Core Policy 81: Sub-Division of Dwellings and HMO's
- Development Policy 8: Residential Caravans
- Core Policy 82: Travelling Communities

#### **Historic Environment**

- Core Policy 83: Historic Environment and Archaeology
- Core Policy 84: Conservation Areas
- Core Policy 85: Listed Buildings
- Core Policy 86: The Oxford Canal
- Core Policy 87: Residential Canal Moorings

## Placemaking and Design

12.2. Our places are at the heart of everything we do, whether for work, shop, for leisure and recreation, to visit and for living. It is therefore essential we support high quality and healthy places that are accessible and inclusively designed for people at different stages of life and with different abilities, including for children, young people, adults, families and the elderly. All new development should contribute to the creation or enhancement of well-designed and well-built places that are inclusive and benefit people and communities through all aspects of their life.

12.3. The National Design Guide<sup>93</sup>, first published by government in 2019, addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities in the form of ten characteristics that are shown by **Figure 12.1**.



**Figure 12.1** The ten characteristics of well-designed places (National Design Guide)

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962113/National\\_design\\_guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf)

- 12.4. We are committed to securing exemplary standards of design across the district that contribute positively to vibrant, sustainable, safe and attractive places for our communities, whether in an urban or rural setting.
- 12.5. We also recognise that innovation and sustainability can provide the foundation to creating healthy and sustainable places. We will therefore promote exemplar architectural innovation in appropriate locations, for example, within our strategic site allocations.
- 12.6. Buildings are an important component of places and proposals for development. However good design also involves careful attention to other important components of our places. These can include:
- the context and setting of proposed places and buildings
  - the existing and proposed hard and soft landscape
  - technical infrastructure, such as transport, utilities, and drainage, and
  - social infrastructure that support social, commercial, and leisure activities.
- 12.7. A well-designed place is therefore unlikely to be achieved by just focusing on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including the layout, the form and scale of buildings, their appearance, landscape, materials, their detailing, and supporting infrastructure.
- 12.8. Where appropriate, proposals should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the district. The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD<sup>94</sup>, Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Appraisal, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds National Landscape guidance documents are all key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.
- 12.9. Masterplans are an important tool used by designers to set out the strategy for a new development and to demonstrate that the general layout, scale and other aspects of the design are based on good urban design principles. The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD sets out the principles of good design that must be demonstrated through the preparation of a masterplan as part of applications for major development and development of allocated sites. **Core Policy 2: District Wide Housing Distribution**, requires a masterplan led approach for the strategic sites allocated in this plan. These, and other masterplans, should be produced in partnership with Cherwell District Council, the community and other stakeholders. For smaller developments, proposals need only be supported by a design and access statement which should provide a detailed design assessment proportionate to the scheme proposed.

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<sup>94</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8106/cherwell-residential-design-spd-adopted-july-2018.pdf>

12.10. **Core Policy 70: Achieving Well Designed Places** will be used to inform the approach to planning and design for all new developments.

### **Core Policy 70: Achieving Well Designed Places**

All new development will be expected to complement and enhance its surroundings through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. Poorly designed developments will not be permitted.

New development proposals should:

- i. be designed to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and healthy places for living and working
- ii. be designed to improve the quality, function, and appearance of its locality
- iii. deliver buildings, places and public spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions, including resilience to the effects of climate change
- iv. support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and densities
- v. adopt the principles of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods where appropriate
- vi. contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within Conservation Areas and their setting
- vii. respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages
- viii. reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette
- ix. promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through actively and sustainably, and have recognisable landmark features
- x. demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed
- xi. consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space
- xii. limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- xiii. be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation

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- xiv. consider sustainable design and layout at the outset, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also refer to the climate change policies set out within this plan)
- xv. integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see **Core Policy 50: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **Core Policy 53: Green Infrastructure**). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro-climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality
- xvi. use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible
- xvii. demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced, and
- xviii. not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties.

## **Residential Extensions**

12.11. The quality of both the urban and rural environments can very often be adversely affected by residential extensions. Insensitive designs and styles, together with the use of discordant materials, often detract from traditional street scenes within which modern developments may have otherwise been sympathetically introduced. The Council, in dealing with planning applications for house extensions, will therefore pay particular regard to details of scale, design and materials so as to ensure that the character of an area is maintained. Further guidance in relation to this is set out within the Council's Residential Design Guide SPD<sup>95</sup>.

## **Public Realm**

12.12. Investing in the quality of the public realm and the space between buildings is as important as investing in the quality of new buildings, all of which together, create the places in which we live, work, visit and enjoy. Design should always be inclusive, and the design of the public realm and outdoor spaces should cater for all potential users.

12.13. Good quality landscaping is a fundamental part of successful outdoor spaces. It is essential that landscape schemes/designs evolve alongside the architectural designs

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<sup>95</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/8106/cherwell-residential-design-spd-adopted-july-2018>

to ensure that there is a strong relationship between buildings and spaces. Trees and plants are important elements of any landscape scheme as they provide visual interest, add colour, shape and texture that help to frame outside spaces and make them more attractive. The careful choice of hard surface materials can have a big impact on the success and overall quality of outdoor spaces. In selecting materials for hard surfacing, thought should be given to their durability, compatibility with the local context, and relationship with the overall design vision. It is also important to consider practical issues of any landscape scheme, such as lifespan and climate resilience, it is important that the benefits are long term, and how maintenance requirements will be managed over time.

### **Public art**

12.14. Public art is an excellent way to add interest, create a sense of place and provide a focal point. The Council will work with developers to bring about the incorporation of public art into schemes where this is important to establish or reinforce a sense of place and identity. Public art should not be seen as an embellishment of a scheme or appear as an add-on or afterthought. Rather, it should be part of design considerations from the start and integrated into the overall design concept. Opportunities to reflect local culture and heritage should also be explored.

### **Secure by design**

12.15. High quality design means creating places that are safe for all, and where crime and disorder, including terrorism, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. New developments should be designed to meet the principles and physical security standards of the Secure by Design<sup>96</sup> scheme. Secure by Design is proven to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and provides a well-established approach for designing safer developments to minimise opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour, and for creating spaces that reduce the fear of crime for everyone

### **20 Minute Neighbourhoods**

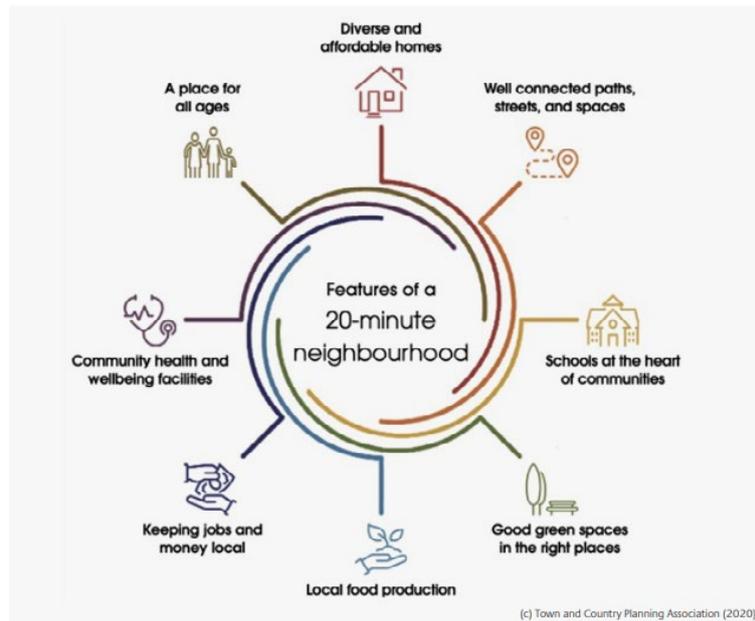
12.16. The 20-minute neighbourhood<sup>97</sup> is about creating attractive, interesting, safe, walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively for short distances from home to the destinations that they visit and the services they need to use day to day, such as for shopping, school, community and healthcare facilities, places of work, green spaces, and more. These places need to be easily accessible on foot, by cycle or by public transport, and accessible to everyone, whatever their budget or physical ability, without having to use a car. This is partly why the strategy set out within this plan focuses development to the most sustainable and accessible places and where there are maximum opportunities for

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.securedbydesign.com/>

<sup>97</sup> [https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final\\_20mnguide-compressed.pdf](https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final_20mnguide-compressed.pdf)

delivering enhancements, especially by using sustainable modes of transport. The 20-minute neighbourhood idea is also about strengthening local economies by keeping jobs and money local and thus facilitating local food production, to help create jobs and the supply affordable and healthy food, more locally for all.



**Figure 12.2 The 20-Minute Neighbourhood<sup>98</sup>**

## The Circular Economy

12.17. In addition to the 20 minute neighbourhood concept, the Local Plan also supports a 'circular economy' principle, that aims to keep resources in use as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them, minimizing waste and promoting resource efficiency. This approach helps to minimise the use of new materials, and we will therefore encourage circular economy principles to be taken into account throughout the design process. These principles are:

- building in layers – ensuring that different parts of the building are accessible and can be maintained and replaced where necessary
- designing out waste – ensuring that waste reduction is planned in from project inception to completion, including consideration of standardised components, modular build and re-use of secondary products and materials
- designing for longevity
- designing for adaptability or flexibility
- designing for disassembly, and
- using systems, elements or materials that can be re-used and recycled.

<sup>98</sup> [https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final\\_20mnguide-compressed.pdf](https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final_20mnguide-compressed.pdf)

## Health, Wellbeing and Healthy Places

- 12.18. Evidence suggests that only 10% of our health and well-being is determined by access to health care. The rest is largely influenced by our lifestyle, behaviours and interaction with urban and green and blue environments, which in turn influences our social, mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 12.19. We know planning influences health, but do we really appreciate just how much? Cancer, mental health and dementia are things we will all experience directly or indirectly in our lives, and when they happen, there isn't anything we wouldn't give to have prevented it. The Local Plan, the policies it contains and the influence it has on planning will have more power to prevent these conditions than the NHS will ever be able to treat, and yet we often don't communicate it, and the opportunities to prevent them, and the often-disproportionate distribution to our most vulnerable members of society are lessened as a consequence.
- 12.20. We therefore consider that significant benefits for local people can be achieved by adopting the principles of Healthy Place Shaping as we plan for housing, infrastructure and the economy together with planning for our residents' health and well-being.
- 12.21. The principles of healthy place shaping are based on the following three concepts:
1. shaping the built environment, green spaces and infrastructure at a local level to improve health and well-being
  2. working with local people and local organisations, schools etc to engage them in planning and enjoying the health benefits of places, facilities and services through 'community activation', and
  3. re-shaping health, well-being and care services and the infrastructure which supports them to achieve health benefits, including health services, social care, leisure and recreation services, and community facilities.
- 12.22. The provision of health services in the district is overseen by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS), which has recently been formed to replace the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG). It works in partnership with others across the health and care system to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.
- 12.23. A Health and Wellbeing Board for Oxfordshire also exists to ensure effective joint working and cooperation throughout the system. The strategic focus of Oxfordshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023<sup>99</sup> is to:
- prevent avoidable illnesses
  - reduce need for treatment, and

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<sup>99</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/constitution/oxfordshirejointwbstrategy.pdf>

- lower the impact of illness by supporting independence and delaying the need for care.

12.24. As part of their work the Health and Wellbeing Board regularly produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) a study looking at current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of residents. The JSNA (2021)<sup>100</sup> is a snapshot of local health circumstance, priority and need that can be directly applied to inform vision statements, healthy place-shaping and prioritise healthy urban design features to ensure developments are supportive of public health and the Local Plan Vision.

12.25. To ensure that development promotes and contributes to a healthy living environment, proposals should consider health outcomes as early as possible, including at the vision document and pre-application stage. All major development proposals will be required to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to maximise the opportunities for promoting healthy lifestyles within new development in accordance with **Core Policy 71**. HIAs should be prepared following the methodology set out in the Oxfordshire HIA toolkit<sup>101</sup>

#### **Core Policy 71: Health Facilities**

The Council will support the provision, extension and co-location of health facilities in sustainable locations.

Facilities should:

- i. be designed to accommodate a range of health-related services through multifunctional and adaptable facilities, and
- ii. be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. and
- iii. be informed by discussion with relevant health providers to ensure facilities meet the identified health needs of the communities they are intended to serve.

12.26. We will continue to work closely with healthcare providers, partners and the NHS across its delivery bodies to:

- ensure the provision of additional and reconfigured health and social care facilities
- identify the anticipated primary care needs of local communities
- identify the capacity needs of local communities

<sup>100</sup> [https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/JSNA\\_Final\\_20210331.pdf](https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/JSNA_Final_20210331.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> <https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/210126-Oxon-HIA-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf>

- meet the healthcare requirements of local communities.
- 12.27. Our last local plan identified a need for more GP provision in Bicester and some progress has been made in securing expanded facilities for the growing town. We do, however, recognise that further additional provision is required.
- 12.28. Primary care facilities for Banbury, the Kidlington area, and the rural areas more generally are also at or nearing capacity and this Plan seeks to address these capacity issues by supporting new health facilities in appropriate locations (**Core Policy 71: Health Facilities**). Furthermore, our Area Strategies provides a more detailed overview of the needs and potential solutions for our places.

### **Core Policy 72: Creating Healthy Communities**

The Council will support and promote developments that aim to reduce health inequalities, promote healthier lifestyles and improve the health and well-being of our existing and new communities more generally by requiring all major developments to:

- i. Include health and wellbeing as a key section in Vision Documents and pre-application discussions and outline planning applications, communicating how the project supports the delivery of local health objectives, priorities and needs (as detailed in the JSNA)
- ii. be supported by an appropriate and proportionate Health Impact Assessment
- iii. contribute towards shaping healthy communities by demonstrating that they adhere to the following principles to deliver high-quality sustainable places:
  - a. address the projected health and wellbeing needs of an area, including addressing health inequalities and avoiding and mitigating any adverse health and sustainability impacts
  - b. design in opportunities for people to be more active e.g., street layout and public realm to encourage walking and cycling as modes of transport, open spaces/green spaces for play and recreation, sports and leisure
  - c. enable good mental wellbeing through reducing social isolation and loneliness by encouraging social community infrastructure and opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another
  - d. enable access to green spaces and connection with nature to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing and to deliver multiple benefits for people, place and the environment
  - e. provide diversity in the residential offer that improves accessibility, affordability and promotes inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods, and
  - f. make it easier for people to make healthier food choices by promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally sourced food, for example by providing opportunities for food growing.

## Community Facilities

- 12.29. Local services and community facilities make a significant contribution towards the health, wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. They also assist in maintaining healthy and inclusive communities, sustainable travel patterns and local employment opportunities. Such facilities include town, village and neighbourhood shops, post offices, pubs, community centres and halls, theatres and museums, sports and leisure facilities, schools, libraries, doctor's surgeries and health centres, places of worship and other facilities which meet people's day to day needs.
- 12.30. The sustainability and social cohesion of our communities can be harmed when these facilities are lost, particularly in the rural areas.
- 12.31. In recognition of this, the Government, through the Localism Act, has introduced the Community Right to Bid whereby communities can apply for services and facilities which further the wellbeing or social interest of the local community to be listed as Assets of Community Value. When listed, assets become available, the Community Right to Bid provides a delay in the disposal process to give community groups the time to develop a bid and seek to buy the asset when it comes on the open market. The provisions apply to the sale of land or assets, not to their use, which continues to be decided through the planning process. However, where assets have been listed under the provisions, this reflects the importance of a facility to a community and the Council will have regard to this in the consideration of planning proposals for a change of use.
- 12.32. In recognition of the important role of many community facilities, the Council will resist the loss of local services and community facilities. In considering such proposals, the Council, in consultation with the local community, will take into account the importance of the facility to the local community particularly in meeting day to day needs.
- 12.33. To justify the loss of facilities, it will need to be demonstrated that they are no longer viable and are no longer required because equivalent or alternative provision will remain, or will be provided to meet local needs.
- 12.34. For commercially run facilities such as local shops and pubs, the Council considers that a robust marketing exercise is the most transparent way of demonstrating that such facilities are no longer viable. This allows local communities to consider making a bid to run or acquire premises of value through the Community Right to Bid.
- 12.35. In seeking to justify the loss of local services or community facilities, applicants will also be required to consider whether existing premises or sites can be adapted to retain a viable community facility or service. In the case of the potential loss of any

healthcare facilities, the Council will have regard to relevant circumstances including any programme of modernisation/rationalisation by the NHS.

12.36. In 2016/2017 the Council commissioned a 'Cherwell Community Spaces and Development Study (CCSDS)<sup>102</sup> to provide evidence and policy proposals to inform community development and community indoor space provision in relation to new housing developments. The CCSDS Study recommended a local minimum standard of provision for community hall facilities required to meet the needs of residents generated by new development. That minimum standard is 0.185m<sup>2</sup> per person. The Study also supported the value of having a community development worker available at an early stage in a new development to 'kick start' the process of bringing people together, developing new activities and putting in place the building blocks of a strong community. The Council will therefore seek financial contributions towards the provision of a community activation fund and community development worker for its strategic allocations.

12.37. The Council will apply this standard to all residential developments of 10 or more dwellings which generate a requirement for additional or improved community hall provision. This may include financial contributions and/or the provision of land and buildings to enable new community facilities to be provided or for existing facilities to be extended or improved.

12.38. Detailed guidance on the implementation of **Core Policy 73: Local Services and Community Facilities** is set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD. Planning for Infrastructure is also considered by **Core Policy 5** and site specific requirements are identified within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix 3**.

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<sup>102</sup> CCSDS Reference

### **Core Policy 73: Local Services and Community Facilities**

The Council will support the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities, and will encourage partnership working to ensure that provision is maintained to meet the needs of local communities by;

- i. protecting and enhancing the quality of existing facilities
- ii. improving access to existing facilities, and
- iii. ensuring that development proposals contribute towards the provision of new or improved facilities where the development would generate a need which cannot be met by existing provision.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities and services will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that:

- iv. appropriate alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, will remain, and
- v. in the case of pubs, shops and other commercially run services and facilities, the existing use is no longer viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted to retain a viable service or facility including as a community run enterprise. A robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate that the use or premises is unviable in accordance with separate guidance published by the Council.

In considering development proposals for the loss of local services and community facilities, the Council will have regard to whether a site or facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

### **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision**

12.39. The responsibility for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the district is shared between ourselves, County, Town and Parish Councils, education providers, and private sports clubs and associations. We will continue to work with these partners to deliver the required facilities to meet the needs of our communities.

12.40. Well designed, attractive and functional open space, including allotments and other community food growing schemes are essential for health and wellbeing, as well as the creation and maintenance of attractive, strong and vibrant communities. It can

also play a role in biodiversity enhancement and mitigating the negative effects of climate change.

- 12.41. The Council's existing evidence, which is based on surveys undertaken in 2018, for open space and play provision recommended that the standards for play space set out in our 2015 Plan should be retained. This evidence is being reviewed and will inform the next stage of the Local Plan (Publication Stage) to be published later in the 2023.
- 12.42. The Council's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy<sup>103</sup> identifies shortfalls of provision to meet quantitative needs for football, rugby union and hockey (both natural grass pitches and artificial grass pitches) and recommends qualitative improvements to pitches for all pitch sports and associated facilities. It also identifies capacity shortfalls, particularly for tennis facilities.
- 12.43. Initial indications from the 2022 Built Facilities Study are that there is a requirement to continue to invest in indoor and built facilities in Cherwell. There is at least a need for new provision in the Bicester area in order to support expected population growth. This could take the form of an expansion of the existing leisure centre provision.
- 12.44. There is also a requirement for a long-term plan to replace/refurbish/possibly extend the swimming pool facilities at Kidlington and Gosford leisure centre.
- 12.45. All development proposals should investigate and maximise opportunities to enhance open space, play, sport and recreation facilities, particularly in areas of deficiency in quantity and quality. Where it is not feasible or appropriate to deliver new provision on site, new development can help to enhance existing provision locally.
- 12.46. All proposals, where appropriate, will be required to comply with the Council's local standards for the provision of open space as set out in **Table 12.1** and **12.2** or any subsequent updates.
- 12.47. The minimum size of provision and thresholds for on-site provision are intended to act as a guide to developers. The precise composition of the provision will depend on the details of the proposal and its location. For example, combined play area schemes or other innovative proposals maybe preferable to the provision of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in some cases.
- 12.48. The underlying principles are that all new dwellings should contribute towards the provision of open space. Where on-site provision is not achievable or appropriate a financial contribution will be sought from developers towards the improvement of provision elsewhere in the locality.

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<sup>103</sup> Reference when known

12.49. It may also be appropriate to seek green space provision or a contribution towards such provision in association with non-residential development.

12.50. In addition, the Council encourages developers to design schemes that provide ‘play friendly’ environments, such as pocket parks and play streets. Such schemes will need to be considered at the initial design stage and the Council will take measures to ensure that well maintained, attractive and safe environments for children’s play.

12.51. Detailed guidance on the implementation of this policy is set out in the Council’s Developer Contributions SPD, which will be updated for publication alongside the final version of the Local Plan later in 2023.

**Table 12.1 Local Cherwell Standards for Open Space Provision**

<b>Outdoor Sport</b>	<b>Provision for 1000 people (hectares)</b>	
Children’s & Teenagers Playing Space	0.78ha per 1000 people	
Allotments & Community Gardens	0.37ha per 1000 people	
General Green Space	Urban	Rural
	2.4ha per 1000 people	2.74ha/1000 people

**Table 12.2 Local Cherwell Standards for Leisure Provision**

<b>Type of Provision</b>	<b>Accessibility Standard</b>	<b>Minimum Size of Provision</b>	<b>Threshold for on-site provision</b>
<b>Playspace</b> (combining provision for younger and older provision, including MUGAs)	5 minutes walk (400m) except for NEAPs 15minute walk (1200m)	<b>LAP</b> – 100 sqm activity zone; 400 sqm including buffer zone	10 dwellings
		<b>LEAP</b> – 400sqm activity zone; 3600 sqm including buffer	50 dwellings
		<b>NEAP</b> – 1000 sqm activity zone; 8500 sqm including buffer	100 dwellings
		In some cases a combined all-age area of play will be preferable to the provision of LAPs/LEAPs/NEAPs.  In addition, the provision of pocket parks, play streets and other innovative provision of pay will be encouraged in appropriate locations.	
General green space(parks and gardens, natural and semi natural/amenity green	5 minute walk (amenity open space) (400m)	200 sqm	10 urban dwellings  6 rural dwellings

Type of Provision	Accessibility Standard	Minimum Size of Provision	Threshold for on-site provision
space)	15 minute walk other (1200m)		
Allotments/Community Gardens	10 minute walk (800m)	0.2 ha	275 dwellings

12.52. The requirements from developments for new sports and recreation provision will be based on the Council’s up to date evidence in conjunction with the Sport England’s Playing Pitch Demand Calculator. This calculates a development’s playing pitch requirements, associated costs for providing the required pitches and associated ancillary facilities (such as changing rooms and car parking) to meet the demand generated by the development.

12.53. Similarly, the requirements for built sports facilities will be assessed using Sport England’s Built Facilities calculator and local evidence.

12.54. Detailed guidance on the implementation of this policy is set out in the Council’s Developer Contributions SPD, which will be updated to accompany the Council’s proposed CIL Charging Schedule to be completed in parallel to completing the Local Plan during 2023.

12.55. Development proposals that would result in the loss of sites or facilities will be assessed against **Core Policy 74** and guidance in the NPPF and PPG. Sport England will be consulted on proposals which would result in the loss of sports and recreation facilities.

#### **Core Policy 74: Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

All open spaces, sport and recreation facilities will be protected and where necessary enhanced to ensure access to a network of high quality sport, play and recreation provision within the district.

The loss of open spaces, sports, play and recreation provision, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the provision and the function it performs is surplus to requirements, or
- ii. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable, accessible location within the local catchment area, or
- iii. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

New development is required to maximise opportunities to incorporate new publicly accessible, high quality and multi-functional open space and/or, where appropriate, enhance existing provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.

In determining the nature of new or improved sports and recreation provision the Council will be guided by the most up to date evidence and Sports England's Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Calculators. The Council will also consult with Town and Parish Councils, together with potential users wherever possible, to ensure the provision meets local needs.

The Council will require children's play, and general green space to meet the minimum standards set out in **Tables 12.1 and 12.2**.

**(Continued over page).**

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Where it can be clearly demonstrated that proposals are not able to incorporate new provision or enhance existing provision to serve the new community, then an appropriate financial contribution may be requested, where such contributions will provide alternative or enhanced and conveniently accessible off-site open space provision.

Development proposals on open space will only be permitted where it:

- iv. improves the quality of the open space and promotes inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests
- v. is demonstrably ancillary to the use of open space and its primary function, e.g., play/sports fields
- vi. contributes to both the character and amenity of the area and are appropriate and proportionate to the function and nature of the open space, and
- vii. do not have a detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space.

Maintenance plans should be submitted at planning application stage for all new facilities to ensure their long-term quality and management.

## **Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density**

12.56. The NPPF requires that planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses and include minimum density standards. Managing the use of previously developed land is important in maintaining the appearance of our towns and villages and to the well-being of our communities. It can also provide opportunities for enhancing biodiversity. This means ensuring that land and buildings are not underused and that we make the most of vacant and derelict land and buildings.

12.57. As part of the strategy in this Plan to deliver new homes the Council has identified previously developed sites with potential for redevelopment at Banbury including land at: Calthorpe Street & Marlborough Road; George Street, Cherwell Street & Bridge Street; Bridge Street / Concorde Avenue; at Bicester including land at: Graven Hill, Bure Place/Sheep Street, Claremont Car Park/ Deans Court and Bicester Council Depot; and at Kidlington: including land at: the Skoda Garage – Oxford Road/ Lyne Road, Walts Way Piazza and Exeter Close.

12.58. Although the Plan allocates some areas of greenfield land to meet the district's development needs overall, the Plan also supports specific Town and Village Centre regeneration and the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development within the built areas of our Main Towns, Local Services Centres and Larger Villages. This is important to provide flexibility and to support a sustainable pattern of development. On this basis, the Council will strive to ensure that any identified 'brownfield' regeneration sites are brought forward. In addition, the Council produces a Brownfield Land Register that identifies sites the Council considers to be suitable, available and achievable for residential development. It contains previously developed sites across the district with planning permission as well as sites without. The Council will continue to update and take into account its Brownfield Land Register in considering whether to identify land for new homes on previously developed land.

12.59. Housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. In order to help achieve this, in general, new housing should be provided at a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. However, the density of housing development will be expected to reflect the character and appearance of individual localities and development principles that are appropriate to the individual circumstances of sites.

#### **Core Policy 75: Housing Density**

On all new housing developments the following minimum densities (hectares – net) will be required unless specific local circumstances indicate that this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area, highway safety or the amenity of neighbours. Higher densities will be encouraged in locations where it will result in the optimum use of land, where there is good access to services and public transport routes, and where it would contribute to enhancing the character and legibility of a place.

- 45 ha: within existing settlements of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, and Heyford Park
- 40 ha: urban extensions (less than 50 ha)
- 30 ha: urban extensions (more than 50 ha)
- 30 ha: rural and other areas.

## Affordable Housing

- 12.60. Cherwell has a high level of need for affordable housing that is defined in the NPPF as comprising housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market, including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers.
- 12.61. The Council's Housing Strategy (2019-2024) has identified three strategic priorities, which includes the need to increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing.
- 12.62. There are a number of ways that affordable homes can be delivered. 'First Homes' are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing, specifically designed for first time buyers, which meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. First Homes are the government's preferred discounted housing types of ownership and the government planning practice guidance explains that they should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. They must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value and the discount, as a percentage of current market value, is passed on for each new occupier. Local authorities can apply a higher minimum discount of either 40% or 50% if a need can be demonstrated. The HENA analyses how first homes could be provided for. The evidence suggests that a 30% discount is reasonable, with the expectation that most First Homes will be 2-bedrooms.
- 12.63. The HENA analyses the need for affordable housing in terms of social/affordable rented housing and affordable home ownership. It identifies a significant need for affordable housing with a need of 426 social rented/affordable rented homes. The HENA identifies 193 homes to meet affordable home ownership needs per year in Cherwell. The Council's interim Viability Assessment tested a range of requirements for affordable housing from 0 to 50% and for First Homes provided at 25%. The interim Viability Assessment recommends a 30% affordable housing requirement on sites.
- 12.64. **Core Policy 76: Affordable Housing**, requires that at the main settlements and elsewhere in the district, all proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings, or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings, will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site. This approach is consistent with the emerging Local Plan Viability evidence published alongside the consultation.
- 12.65. The Council's 2021 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) identifies that there were 295 net affordable housing completions during 2020/21 and the level of affordable housing completion has continued to exceed the Council's affordable housing target of 190 dwellings per year. From the 295 affordable housing completions there were 192 in affordable rented and 103 in shared ownership, however there continues to be limited delivery of social rented homes. The Council's Housing Strategy explains housing for social rent is the only truly affordable housing option for many people in

Cherwell and that there continues to be a lack of supply of this housing type. The HENA does not recommend that there is a rigid policy for the split between social and affordable rented housing, although the analysis shows that both tenures of homes are likely to be required. The interim viability assessment tested a 70/30 split (affordable/social rent and affordable home ownership). The Affordable Housing Policy specifies that 70% of affordable homes coming forward should be affordable/ social rented.

- 12.66. Housing proposals (for residential, use type C3) will need to provide affordable housing where they meet the qualifying thresholds. Where the number of dwellings proposed falls below the relevant threshold, or the number of dwellings is not specified, the Council will consider whether or not sites reasonably have capacity to provide the number of dwellings that would trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing. The purpose of this is to ensure that the policy requirement is not being avoided through inappropriate planning such as ineffective or inefficient use of land or a mix of dwellings that does not reflect other housing policies or local needs.
- 12.67. Affordable housing is expected to be met on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 12.68. Financial contributions made under **Core Policy 76** will be secured by legal agreement for the provision of affordable housing. The Council will support proposals for community self-build or custom-build affordable housing particularly where it will result in suitable empty properties being brought into residential use. **Core Policy 80** sets out the Councils requirements for self-build housing.
- 12.69. The requirements set out in the Partial Review policies relating to saved allocations providing housing for Oxford City (PR2, PR6 to PR9) for housing mix, house type and size; and provide a requirement for 50% of the homes provided on these sites to be affordable. There is a separate mechanism (part of the Councils Housing Strategy) in place for ensuring that any affordable homes being provided as part of the Cherwell contribution to unmet need for Oxford. At least 50 % of any additional unmet housing being provided within this plan will be identified and apportioned in the same way.

### **Core Policy 76: Affordable Housing**

At the main settlements and elsewhere, all proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

First homes should make up 25% of all homes on sites and should have a discount of 30%. The majority of first homes should be 2 bedroom.

Affordable housing is expected to be met on site unless there are exceptional circumstances and where off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified

Where this policy would result in a requirement that part of an affordable home should be provided, a financial contribution of equivalent value will be required for that part only. Otherwise, financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances. All qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of affordable homes. It is expected that these requirements will be met without the use of social housing grant or other grants.

### **Housing Mix**

- 12.70. Another of the Council's Housing Strategy priorities is to improve the quality and sustainability of our homes, building thriving, healthy and inclusive communities and enhancing opportunities for people to access suitable homes and to have housing choices.
- 12.71. This Local Plan therefore aims, not only to increase the supply of housing, but to encourage an appropriate mix that can help to improve the functioning of the housing market system, make it more fluid, and enable households to more easily find and move to housing they can afford and that better suits their circumstances. The housing mix needs to enable movement through the market from one house type to another as the needs of households change. This movement frees up housing that might otherwise be unavailable. There is need to provide a mix of housing in Cherwell that reflects the needs of an ageing population, a growth in smaller households, and that meets the requirements for families.
- 12.72. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) examines the mix of homes that are needed by tenure and identifies the following mix:

**Table 12.3 Mix of housing by size and type**

Type	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Social/Affordable Rented	35-40%	25-30%	20-25%	10-15%
Affordable Home Ownership	20-25%	40-45%	25-30%	5-10%
Market Housing	5-10%	35-40%	35-40%	15-20%

12.73. The Council’s approach to housing mix is set out in **Core Policy 77**. This policy applies to the size and type of housing and should be considered alongside the other housing policies relating to affordable housing, specialist housing and adaptable and accessible homes.

12.74. The evidence shows that more people are working from home than has historically been the case and this trend is expected to continue, even after the impact of Covid 19 pandemic is fully resolved. On this basis, it is important we enable people to work from home and to set up businesses in their homes, as this will help to reduce costs and reduce the need for travelling. The Council will therefore encourage live/work units to be provided in new developments and forming part of the dwelling mix, live/work units can help to create vibrant communities. The employment uses provided in these units will need to be ancillary to the residential use and have regard to residential amenity (see **Core Policy 70** on well-designed places).

12.75. Providing for a mix of homes and helping to increase affordability could also include building modular homes, which are homes where sections are constructed at a factory and transported to the development site rather than being constructed on site. These will need to comply with building regulations and comply with other policies in this Plan including **Core Policy 70** on well-designed places.

#### **Core Policy 77: Housing Mix**

New residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed, vibrant and inclusive communities. This should be in accordance with the Council's current evidence\* unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate through the Housing Register or where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints\*\*

Information provided by developers on local market conditions and the characteristics of development sites will also be considered.

The Council will encourage live/work units in new developments to help create vibrant communities.

Where appropriate, the provision of alternative building techniques including modular homes will be encouraged.

\* the current evidence is (HENA 2022). In so far as this document is updated or superseded, the updated version or any document which supersedes it will be used instead.

\*\*Viability should be set out in an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach.

#### **Specialist Housing**

12.76. Government guidance states that the need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. The evidence in the HENA shows a significant increase in people in older age groups and a significant need for all types of specialist housing for older people. On this basis, planning for specialist housing for an older population is very important in Cherwell.

12.77. 'Extra care' housing, in particular, will be important in meeting the housing needs of an older population across all tenures. Extra care housing comprises self-contained accommodation for older and disabled people, which facilitates healthy, independent living for longer, by providing a range of support facilities on the

premises and 24-hour care services. It can help people live longer in their own homes either securely alone or with partners or friends. It meets a need between traditional sheltered housing and residential care and can be purpose-built or adapted accommodation. People have their own front doors but also have the opportunity to benefit from communal facilities. Extra care can also contribute to achieving more social cohesion by providing an opportunity for community living and a better mix of housing within residential areas.

12.78. The Council's Housing Strategy identifies that 14.1% of Cherwell residents have a long term limiting health issue or disability and 22% of households in Cherwell include someone with a long term health issue or disability. There is a need for a diverse range of supported housing including learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities and vulnerable young people including young parents. There is also scope for technology to be provided in new homes to enable individuals of varying ability and older people to live more independently.

12.79. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment identifies that in Cherwell, there is a broad balance of need across housing with support housing with care and care bedspaces. However, any delivery should be focused on market accommodation.

#### **Core Policy 78: Specialist Housing**

Housing sites will be expected to provide extra care dwellings (C3 use class) as part of the overall mix. The proportion of extra care housing units is to be agreed with the Council based on the nature of the site and proposals in question and having full regard to the evidence of need for these units. Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing (use class C3) for older people will be required. Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older and/or disabled people and those with mental health needs and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities. All proposals will be expected to provide affordable housing in accordance with **Core Policy 76: Affordable Housing**.

We will support residential care homes (C2 uses classes) and developments which provide for a mix of use classes C3 and C2 where the appropriate infrastructure is provided.

## Accessible and Adaptable Housing

- 12.80. Government policy is focused on supporting older people and those with a disability to live more independently at home. Supporting healthy independent living for longer can help to reduce preventable burdens of poor health, and the costs to health and social services. Providing more housing options for older people can free up homes which are under occupied. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) specifies that Local Plans should consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed within the area to allow older people to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible.
- 12.81. Given the ageing population and the identified levels of disabilities amongst the population it will be essential for new housing to be built to accessibility standards to help people to maintain independence for longer. The Housing and Economic Needs assessment indicates that there will be an increasing demand in the future for specialist housing to meet the needs of the elderly and those with physical or learning disabilities and recommends that 10% of homes could meet M4(3) standards.
- 12.82. **Core Policy 79** sets out the requirements for standards relating to accessible and adaptable homes. These standards are governed by the Building Regulations and are set out in the 2015 edition of Approved Document M: Volume 1 (Access to and use of dwellings) (2016 amendments)<sup>104</sup>.
- 12.83. Category 1 requirements are mandatory within the Building Regulations and are classed as a visitable dwelling. Reasonable provision should be made for people to gain access to and use the dwelling and its facilities. A Category 2 dwelling is classed as accessible and adaptable and is optional in the Building Regulations. Provision must be sufficient to meet the needs of occupants with differing needs including some older and disabled people and to allow adaptation of the dwelling to meet the changing needs of the occupant over time. A Category 3 dwelling is classed as wheelchair user and is optional in the Building Regulations.
- 12.84. Planning Practice Guidance explains that the location of dwellings for older people should be considered to allow them to live independently in their own home. The Council is keen to support people to do this and development should be located in places where there is an opportunity to access services and facilities so that people feel less isolated and part of a community.

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<sup>104</sup> Approved Document M: Volume 1 Access to and use of dwellings, HM Government, 2016 amendments [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/540330/BR\\_PDF\\_AD\\_M1\\_2015\\_with\\_2016\\_amendments\\_V3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/540330/BR_PDF_AD_M1_2015_with_2016_amendments_V3.pdf)

12.85. The most suitable locations are those closest to the centres of our Main Towns and Local Service Centres, although there may be other locations that are appropriate, such as within some of the Larger Villages. Development should in all cases comply with other policies in the plan and should therefore be located within towns and villages, re-use existing buildings whenever possible and be accessible by public transport. Housing schemes for older people and for people with disabilities should be located on sites within convenient reach of shops, community facilities and frequent public transport services. The Council will have regard to the overall need for this type of development and the use class that is proposed when considering planning applications.

## **Space Standard for new housing**

### *Internal residential space*

12.86. The quality of buildings and places, and how they integrate with the natural environment, have been shown to affect how people interact with them, promoting and supporting healthier behaviours, building greater reliance and more inclusive communities. It is very much the case that the environments, communities and homes that we shape, shape us in return. Good quality development can create environments that promote wellbeing and happiness, as well as provide functional, well-built places.

12.87. Internal space within new dwellings is an important factor in creating homes that support a high quality of life and allow households to meet their current needs whilst also being flexible enough to accommodate changes in their circumstances.

12.88. Chapter 12 of the NPPF, “Achieving well-designed places”, supports good design and the creation of high-quality places. It encourages plans to set out a clear vision and expectations on design quality in the local area.

12.89. The government has set out appropriate nationally described space standards<sup>105</sup> for new developments. These space standards are predicated on the number of bedrooms and the number of people each new dwelling is intended to accommodate.

12.90. These standards are mandatory for all new dwellings developed under permitted development rights<sup>106</sup>. This is in recognition of the fact that many have fallen below these standards in the past and created inappropriately sized homes. To be consistent with this approach we will expect all new dwellings, including newly

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<sup>105</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1012976/160519\\_Nationally\\_Described\\_Space\\_Standard.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1012976/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1243/made>

formed dwellings through conversion, to conform with nationally described space standards. The requirement to meet these space standards will ensure that all new housing provides good room sizes and levels of storage to provide a decent standard of living, enable people to live in their homes for longer and to maximise the occupancy of affordable homes.

12.91. Separate Regulations apply to sleeping accommodation floor areas in licenced Homes in Multiple Ownership (HMOs)<sup>107</sup>.

### *External residential space*

12.92. Outdoor amenity space can make an important contribution to: improving the quality of life and wellbeing of residents, supporting and enhancing local biodiversity, moderating temperature, and assisting with flood prevention. Connecting with the natural environment has been further shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, whilst improving psychological wellbeing and inclusivity and encouraging physical activity with lifelong benefits.

12.93. Gardens provide a semi-natural habitat supporting a range of species and corridors for movement of wildlife through the local environment. Garden plants and trees help cool the air, combating high temperatures in summer and providing shelter and insulation in winter, thus helping to reduce heat stress and energy consumption. Vegetation and trees intercept intense rain, slowing runoff and so reducing the pressure on urban drains. Unlike hard surfaces, the soil in gardens naturally absorbs rainwater, helping to mitigate fluvial and surface water flooding, and builds community resilience to climate change.

12.94. External amenity space should be sufficient to accommodate:

- a table and chairs suitable for the size of dwelling
- where relevant, provision of a garden shed for general storage (including bicycles if cycle storage is not provided elsewhere)
- space for refuse and recycling bins
- an area to dry washing
- circulation space, and
- an area for children to play in.

12.95. External residential space does not include car parking or turning areas. Suitable arrangements for access to refuse and recycling bins should be made to prevent bins being transported through dwellings and for scooter storage and charging facilities

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<sup>107</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/616/made?view=plain>

12.96. One-bedroom dwellings would not be expected to provide space for children to play due to the lower likelihood of children occupying these units. Dwellings with more than one bedroom would need to take space for children to play into account.

12.97. Where it is appropriate and viable to do so, flatted developments will need to provide high-quality shared amenity areas on site to meet the needs of residents, including play space for children, in addition to private amenity space and cycle storage.

#### **Core Policy 79: Residential Space Standards**

##### **A. Internal Residential Space**

All new dwellings will achieve compliance with the nationally described space standards (or any successor standards/policy) as a minimum.

##### **B. External Residential Space**

New residential dwellings will be expected to have direct access to an area of private and/or communal amenity space. The form of amenity space will be dependent on the form of housing and could be provided as a private garden, roof garden, communal garden, courtyard balcony, or ground-level patio with defensible space from public access. The amount of outdoor amenity space should be appropriate to the size of the property and designed to allow effective and practical use of and level access to the space by residents.

#### **Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing**

12.98. Self and custom-build is the process by which an individual or association builds housing for their own use, either by undertaking the whole process themselves or commissioning architects or builders to assist.

12.99. The PPG states that authorities should consider how local planning policies may address identified requirements for self and custom housebuilding to ensure enough serviced plots with suitable permission come forward and can focus on playing a key role in facilitating relationships to bring land forward.

12.100. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local councils in England to keep a register of people who are interested in self-build or custom-build projects in their area. This register helps the Council understand the level of demand for self-build and custom-build plots in the district. The Council's 2021 Annual Monitoring Report identified that during 2020/21, there were 35 self-build affordable housing completions in the district that took place at the Graven Hill site.

12.101. The Council is keen to encourage further provision of self and custom build housing in appropriate locations to aid in housing delivery, assist with affordability and to

allow for innovative design solutions particularly where they support equality opportunity. The Council will monitor the demand for this type of housing and where possible will assist in the delivery of sites. Development proposals that involve the creation of low-cost or affordable housing, for instance via Registered Social Landlords or community groups, would be particularly supported as these would provide additional opportunities to meet the demands for affordable homes in the district.

#### **Core Policy 80: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing**

Proposals for custom and self-build housing will be approved in suitable, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant policies of this plan.

The Council will require all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings to include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for self-build which can include the partial completion for self-finish. This will be reviewed through the Council's Monitoring Report considering the need shown on the register.

Plots must be made available and marketed for an appropriate time (to be agreed with the local planning authority through the granting of planning permission for the site). If, following this marketing these plots have not sold, and sufficient evidence is provided that there is not likely to be market interest in the plot(s), the applicant will be able to develop the land for further market housing.

#### **Subdivision of Existing Dwellings**

12.102. With high house prices and the significant need for affordable homes in the district, the conversion of existing housing to flats or maisonettes makes a relatively small but important contribution to the housing stock and meeting housing needs. However, sub-division can have negative impacts on amenity due to the increased occupancy that normally results from sub-division. The design and/or location of some residential areas within our urban areas has meant that houses in these areas have attracted higher levels of sub-division leading to concerns about parking and traffic congestion and loss of local character. It is also important the living conditions of residents of Home in Multiple Ownership (HMO) is satisfactory.

12.103. The Use classes order specifies that:

- a family home or a home used by a single person is classed as C3 (Dwelling House/Flat)
- a small-shared house of up to six unrelated individuals is classed as a C4 Homes in Multiple Ownership (HMO)

- a house for more than six unrelated individuals is known as a Large HMO (which falls within the Sui Generis Use Class)

12.104. Subdivision of a building, including any part it, used as a dwellinghouse for use as two or more separate dwelling houses constitutes development and planning permission is required. However, planning permission is not required when converting from a dwelling house or flat to an HMO property, which is a small-shared house of up to six unrelated individuals. Where this is not the case, planning applications will be considered against **Core Policy 81: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership**.

#### **Core Policy 81: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Ownership**

Proposals for the conversion of existing dwellings to provide two or more self-contained units of accommodation or to a large HMO will be permitted provided that they would be unlikely to cause demonstrable harm to the amenities and privacy of neighbouring properties.

The Council will expect proposals to comply with parking standards. When considering proposals, the Council will have regard to the sites location in relation to the town centre and public transport provision, and the existing street parking conditions in the locality.

#### **Residential Caravans**

12.105. A caravan may be required for a temporary period to house a key worker, an elderly relative or a family while they construct or renovate their own house. In such cases, provided there are no overriding planning objections on highway, amenity or servicing grounds, a planning consent may be granted on a temporary basis. Normally, such consents will be of short duration and will only be granted on the clear understanding that alternative permanent accommodation is sought. Thus, planning permissions will not automatically be renewed at the end of the specified time-period.

#### **Development Policy 8: Residential Caravans**

Planning permission will be granted for residential caravans to be located for a temporary period within the curtilage of a house or in close association with an existing land use provided that:

- i. the proposal does not cause demonstrable harm to the amenities of adjacent residents, or the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- ii. the proposal can provide a safe and convenient access, and
- iii. it is the intention of the applicant to seek alternative permanent accommodation prior to the expiration of the temporary consent.

## Travelling Communities

- 12.106. The NPPF requires Local Authorities to plan for different groups in the community including for travellers. In August 2015, the Government published its amended Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) with its overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers (gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople, boat dwellers). It emphasised the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development for these groups. Gypsies, Travellers and travelling show people are entitled to specific types of accommodation that allow them to continue with their traditional and nomadic way of life.
- 12.107. The 2015 National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires Local Planning Authorities, in producing their Local Plan, to identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets. In 2016, the Government also published draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for boat dwellers and caravans.
- 12.108. The Cherwell previous Local Plan (2015) Policy BSC 6: Travelling Communities provided a sequential and criteria-based approach for considering planning applications and sets out targets for the provision of pitches and plots. The targets in the policy are to provide 19 (net) additional pitches to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers from 2012 to 2031 and 24 (net) additional plots for Travelling Showpeople from 2012 to 2031. The Council's 2021 AMR shows that as at 31 March 2021, the total supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches was 65, which is a net gain of 8 pitches since 1 April 2017, however there are no pending planning applications.
- 12.109. The most up to date assessment of need is the 2017 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). A new study is being completed and will be published along-side our proposed Submission Plan, in Summer 2023, which will set out the Council's confirmed Policy approach, including the updated identified need for the plan period up to 2040. This will also include information about the needs of boat dwellers. **Core Policy 82: Travelling Communities**, sets out the Councils approach to planning for this group, although as explained above, will be updated in the next version of the plan published in 2023.

12.110. These policies seek to secure sites that will provide suitable living environments in locations that are as sustainable as is reasonably possible. It is important that sites have access to services, facilities and potential sources of employment, which will promote inclusive communities but that will not be out of scale with, or dominate, nearby settled communities. The distances set are considered a reasonable walking/cycling distance and limit the distance needed to travel by private car if this is necessary.

### **Core Policy 82: Travelling Communities**

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers should be within 3km road distance of the built-up limits of our Main Towns, Local Service Centres or Larger Villages as set out by **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy**. Other locations will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Locations within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Oxfordshire Green Belt are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

The following criteria will be considered in assessing the suitability of sites:

- i. access to GP and other health services
- ii. access to schools
- iii. avoiding areas at risk of flooding
- iv. access to the highway network
- v. the potential for significant noise and other disturbance
- vi. the potential for harm to the historic and natural environment
- vii. the ability to provide a satisfactory living environment
- viii. the need to make efficient and effective use of land
- ix. deliverability, including whether utilities can be provided cost effectively and without significant impact
- x. the existing level of local provision, and
- xi. the availability of alternatives to applicants

### **Historic Environment**

12.111. The conservation of Cherwell's historic environment is key to protecting and enhancing the character of the district and ensuring that it continues to be an attractive place to live and work.

12.112. The district enjoys an extremely rich and varied historic environment, which contributes significantly to its culture, economy and tourism. This historic environment is not just limited to our built environment and archaeological sites, but also includes landscapes identified because of their history, archaeological, architectural, cultural or artistic interest.

12.113. The 1995 Cherwell District Landscape Assessment identified four distinct landscape character areas in the district with each displaying distinct settlement patterns,

building materials and vernacular architecture to create a strong, locally distinctive urban and rural environment.

- 12.114. Throughout Cherwell, there are numerous designated heritage assets that enjoy statutory protection. These include approximately 2,300 Listed Buildings, 60 Conservation Areas, 38 Scheduled Monuments and 11 nationally recognised registered parks and gardens that fall fully or partially within the district, and one historic civil war battlefield. The district also contains over 200 recorded archaeological sites. In some areas the MOD's presence has influenced the built environment with Bicester Airfield and the former RAF Upper Heyford recognised as being of national historic importance. The Oxford Canal Conservation Area runs north-south through the district.
- 12.115. In addition, there are many non-designated heritage assets, which although not having statutory protection, represent an important aspect of the district's heritage and play a significant role in defining the local character of our towns, villages and countryside. Not all significant heritage assets are formally designated, and nationally important non-designated heritage assets are of equal importance to designated heritage assets such as schedule monuments and listed buildings. Non-designated heritage assets of particular local importance are known as Local Heritage Assets (LHA's), these include built structures formerly known as 'locally listed' buildings and significant landscape features such as village ponds. Many Local Heritage Assets have been identified as important within Conservation Area Appraisals. We anticipate that more examples will be identified as we undertake further appraisals and local communities, and other stakeholders will continue to have a role in identifying heritage assets.
- 12.116. Details of non-designated heritage assets, Local Heritage Assets, locally important historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites and find spots, are held on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

### **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

- 12.117. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a critically important part of sustainable development and a key element of this Local Plan. At the national level there is a presumption that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced in a manner that is appropriate to their significance and also enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to current and future generations.
- 12.118. The Council has a rolling programme of reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals and may use Article 4 Directions to maintain the character of our historic environment, where appropriate.
- 12.119. When considering development proposals there will be a strong presumption in favour of protecting, sustaining and enhancing the significance of our heritage assets and their settings. The weight to be attached to that presumption, when

assessed against meeting other needs, will be dependent on a variety of factors, including:

- the significance of the heritage asset: whether it is a designated heritage asset or a non-designated heritage asset, and
- the contribution of that part of the asset to be affected by the proposed development to the significance of the heritage interest, appearance and setting of the asset as a whole,
- non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which have equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered against policies for designated heritage assets.

12.120. In order to enable the Council to positively manage change by determining the appropriate balance between the need for any proposed development and the need to safeguard the heritage asset and its setting, applicants will be required to submit a Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment which assesses the significance of the asset, and of that part to be affected. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum, and relevant Conservation Area Appraisals or design guidance notes where applicable. The Statement should provide detailed evidence to demonstrate that:

- the proposals have been formulated and any works designed with a full and proper understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and the effect of the proposals on that significance
- the heritage asset is being put to the optimum viable use consistent with its physical conservation, and the conservation of its character and setting
- opportunities to sustain, enhance, to better reveal, or avoid or minimise harm to the significance of the asset have been taken, and
- the need to be met by the development could not be met in a more beneficial or less harmful way.

12.121. Where a development site has archaeological interest then an archaeological desk-based assessment will need to be submitted along with any planning application for a site. Not all heritage assets have currently been identified, the assessment will need to consider the likelihood of previously unidentified heritage assets being present on the site.

12.122. Where permission is granted for development that would affect a heritage asset, there will be a presumption in favour of the preservation. Where the loss of a heritage asset is considered acceptable, conditions may be imposed to require a record to be made of the part of the asset to be affected, and of any archaeology or historic fabric revealed in the course of development. The record and any recovered archaeological artefacts will need to be maintained to contribute to knowledge and understanding of the asset.

- 12.123. The Council will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk and, as a last resort, use its statutory powers. The Council will also work with relevant stakeholders to encourage better understanding of the heritage assets on the Historic England “Heritage at Risk” Register. Where appropriate, the Council will encourage Heritage Partnership Agreements, particularly for Listed Buildings on any ‘at risk’ register. We will also maintain a local register of Heritage at Risk.
- 12.124. Proposals that would improve the condition of heritage assets that are identified as being at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development, will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that there would be no resultant harm to their setting or significance.
- 12.125. The Council will support Neighbourhood Development Plans where they seek to assess their heritage assets and add to the evidence base.
- 12.126. The Council’s approach to planning for the historic environment will be informed by the following **Core Policies, 83: Historic Environment and Archaeology, 84: Conservation Areas, and 85: Listed Buildings.**

### **Core Policy 83: Historic Environment and Archaeology**

All development proposals should conserve and/ or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of Cherwell District's historic environment, including the significance of its designated and non-designated heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation, in accordance with legislation, national policy and guidance for the historic environment.

In determining applications, great weight and importance will be given to conserving and/or enhancing the significance of designated heritage and non-designated assets, including:

- i. the special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings, with regard to their character, fabric and their settings
- ii. the special architectural and historic interest, character and/or appearance of the District's Conservation Areas and their settings, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historic significance
- iii. the special archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether Scheduled or not), both with regard to their fabric and their settings, and
- iv. the special cultural, architectural and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.

All applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets will be expected to use appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and historic landscape context of the application site, at a level of detail proportionate to the historic significance of the asset or area, using recognised methodologies and, if necessary, a field survey. The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum. The level of assessment should be proportionate to the proposal and shall be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic, architectural and archaeological features, significance and character.

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**Core Policy 83: Historic Environment and Archaeology (Continued from Previous Page)**

Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation.

Development will not be permitted that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or if appropriate to their significance, a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals.

Where the loss of a heritage asset is considered acceptable, the developer will be responsible for making appropriate provision for a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication that will ensure the site is preserved by record prior to destruction. Such measures will be secured either by a planning agreement or by a suitable planning condition.

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated or undesignated asset will not be approved, unless there is a clear and convincing justification in the form of substantive tangible public benefits that clearly and convincingly outweigh the harm, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

#### **Core Policy 84: Conservation Areas**

Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, appearance and setting. In particular special attention will be paid to:

- i. the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development
- ii. views within, into or out of the Area
- iii. the pattern of development and the effects to important green spaces, and other gaps or spaces between buildings and the historic street pattern which make a positive contribution to the character in the Conservation Area
- iv. the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development, and
- v. any loss or harm to features that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the development would make an equal or greater contribution.

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- v. the building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area; or
- vi. the building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and
- vii. any proposed replacement building makes an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

### **Core Policy 85: Listed Buildings**

Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, should:

- i. conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting
- ii. respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context, and
- iii. retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design, details and form.

### **Oxford Canal**

12.127. The Oxford Canal is an iconic structure running the length of the district through the attractive valley of the River Cherwell, and is of historic, ecological and recreational significance. Following an appraisal, the length of the canal through Cherwell District was designated as a Conservation Area in October 2012. The Conservation Area boundary has been drawn to include the towpath and towpath hedge, canal related earthworks and features including historic wharfs and locks, and woodland

12.128. The biodiversity value of the canal is reflected in a number of statutory and non-statutory designations along the length of the canal. In terms of recreation, the canal is popular for boaters and anglers. A public footpath runs the length of the canal, and a section of the route is a public bridleway. The canal and towpath are owned and maintained by the Canal and River Trust, but the responsibility for any planning matters lies with the District Council.

12.129. A series of policies in this Plan relating to Water Resources, Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement and Green Infrastructure, will be used to protect and enhance water quality, and the contribution that the canal makes to the district's landscape, ecological and recreational resource, for its entire length through the district.

12.130. The Historic Environment Policy will also be used to ensure that works to existing structures are sympathetic to the historic context and that any new development is

sensitively sited and designed to ensure that the special character is preserved or enhanced.

- 12.131. The southern section of the Oxford Canal lies within the Green Belt and **Core Policy 6** will therefore also be relevant to proposals in that area. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will only be permitted if very special circumstances can be demonstrated, as set out in the NPPF.

#### **Core Policy 86: The Oxford Canal**

The Council will protect and enhance the Oxford Canal corridor which passes south to north through the district as a green transport route, significant industrial heritage, tourism attraction and major leisure facility through the control of development. The length of the Oxford Canal through Cherwell District is a designated Conservation Area and proposals that would be detrimental to its character or appearance will not be permitted. The biodiversity value of the canal corridor will also be protected.

The Council will support proposals to promote transport, recreation, leisure and tourism related uses of the Canal where appropriate, as well as supporting enhancement of the canal's active role in mixed used development in urban settings. The Council will ensure that the towpath alongside the canal becomes an accessible long-distance trail for all users.

Other than appropriately located small scale car parks and picnic facilities, new facilities for canal users should be located within or immediately adjacent to settlements. The Council encourages pre-application discussions to help identify significant issues and opportunities associated with a site and to consider appropriate design solutions to these and we will seek to ensure that all new development meets the highest design standards, and is supportive of health, wellbeing and equality.

Such schemes should not compromise the use or operation of existing navigable waterway features such as junctions or locks.

All new buildings, extensions and alterations to existing buildings adjacent to the Oxford Canal should be designed to a high standard that complements the traditional characteristics of a canalside setting in terms of design, materials and landscaping.

### **Core Policy 87: Residential Canal Moorings**

Proposals for the siting of permanent residential moorings on the Oxford Canal will only be supported when:

- i. the site is within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up limits of a settlement
- ii. adequate car parking is provided
- iii. moorings are compatible with adjacent land uses
- iv. the number and density of boats at any one point is not so great that it would act as a barrier separating people from the waterway or be detrimental to the character of the canal. Moorings will not be permitted immediately adjacent to the tow path
- v. they do not have negative impacts on navigation and navigational safety or operational requirements of the waterway
- vi. the biodiversity of the water, its margins and nearby nature conservation sites will be maintained or enhanced
- vii. there is adequate access for emergency services to ensure safety
- viii. sites have adequate accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment and
- ix. there is adequate access to or provision of facilities and servicing, including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste
- x. use of any adjacent paths will not be impeded, and
- xi. the proposed development will not cause any significant adverse visual impacts or restrict the ambition for increased access to and opportunities to enjoy enhanced water related infrastructure facilities for all residents.

## 13. Chapter 13 - Implementing the Plan

### Introduction

- 13.1. This section provides an overview of the ways in which the Council will deliver and monitor the delivery of this Local Plan 2040, including its vision, strategic objectives and policies.
- 13.2. The Local Plan sets out how the district will develop over the Plan period to 2040, identifying where homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of distinctive and characterful places that the Plan would like to create.
- 13.3. Monitoring allows us to understand whether policies have worked as intended. It enables decisions to be taken that are well-informed and based on an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of policy based on evidence.
- 13.4. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan is critical in ensuring the successful delivery of the current Plan and to shape the development of any future development plan for the district.
- 13.5. Statutorily, under Section 113 of the Localism Act 2011 and Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, each year the Council must produce reports which assess the implementation of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040 and the extent to which its strategic objectives and policies are being achieved. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will be published at least annually to show progress with Local Plan implementation.
- 13.6. The Sustainability Appraisal also plays an integral role in monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of Local Plan policies.

### Delivery and Contingency

- 13.7. The Council will continue to work jointly with stakeholders to deliver the Local Plan 2040 vision and objectives. Joint working with both public and private partners will be essential to ensure that development within the district is consistent with the spatial strategy and complies with relevant Local Plan policies.
- 13.8. Collaborative working with the following agencies will be sought to ensure that the objectives of the Local Plan 2040 are met: Local Enterprise Partnerships, neighbouring authorities, developers, infrastructure providers, statutory agencies,

local community groups and other interested parties. These parties will be consulted upon through the 'duty to cooperate' process.

13.9. The Council has included a Monitoring Framework at **Appendix 10**, which sets out how the Council will measure the effectiveness of the Local Plan 2040 policies. The Council outlines appropriate actions required if Local Plan policies are not being achieved. It will also be important to monitor the wider policy context, to ensure the Local Plan 2040 remains consistent and in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Oxfordshire Plan and other key plans and strategies which influence growth and development in the district.

13.10. The Council understands that there may be times where changing circumstances may result in the objectives and policies of the Local Plan 2040 not being delivered. As such, the Council recognises the need for flexible contingency measures. **Core Policy 88: Delivery and Contingency** sets out the Council's intended approach and contingency measures.

#### **Core Policy 88: Delivery and Contingency**

The Council will monitor progress towards the achievement of indicators and targets set out within the Monitoring Framework (as set out in **Appendix 11**). The Annual Monitoring Report will be produced on at least an annual basis and will be used to establish whether the implementation of the Plan, either in part or as a whole, is being effectively actioned. Where there is evidence to suggest that policy-specific targets listed in the Monitoring Framework have not been met, contingency measures and actions listed in the Monitoring Framework will apply.

Contingency measures may include one or more of the following:

- i. Seeking to accelerate delivery on other permitted or allocated sites,
- ii. Seeking alternative sources of funding if a lack of infrastructure is delaying development or causing significant problems as a result of new development;
- iii. Identifying alternative deliverable sites that are in general accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the Plan;
- iv. Undertaking a full or partial review of the Local Plan, if investigation indicates that its strategy, either in whole or in part, is no longer appropriate.

