

Executive

Banbury Masterplan Progress Report

1 October 2012

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and Economy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive a report and associated presentation on the development of the Banbury Masterplan.

The presentation will be given by representatives of WYG, the consultants appointed to prepare the Banbury Masterplan.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To consider the issues that have informed the preparation of the Masterplan for Banbury and to note the progress being made.
- (2) To receive a presentation by WYG.
- (3) To consider proceeding to public consultation and completion of the Masterplan.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 A Masterplan to guide the future development of Banbury is in preparation. It is considering future employment needs and how the town centre might be further strengthened; the potential for major transport improvements and how the integration of new communities with the existing town to form 'one' town might best be secured.
- 1.2 The Banbury Masterplan will be used to provide the detailed underpinning for the Banbury chapter of the Local Plan for the District currently out for consultation and due for Examination in 2013.

Proposals

- 1.3 The Masterplan contains a set of strategic proposals for the future development of the town to ensure the development of the town proceeds in a holistic, planned, coordinated way.
- 1.4 The development of the Masterplan for Banbury follows a similar process as the Bicester Masterplan.

Background Information

- 2.1 The growth in Banbury shown in the proposed submission draft of the Local Plan for Cherwell takes the form of key sites within the existing town, town centre regeneration and a series of urban extensions. The Masterplan for Banbury seeks to harness these into a more detailed consideration of how the town might grow and what actions might be required.
- 2.2 Banbury plays an important role as a market town that serves a growing rural catchment. As a result of the planned growth, the role and functions of Banbury will need to be expanded, enhanced and regenerated to both maintain and strengthen the role of the town within its catchment. The challenge will be to shape the growth so that the town uses its key opportunity sites in a coordinated, integrated and planned way, to enable appropriate redevelopment opportunities in the town centre which expand the retail, employment, leisure, education and social portfolio of the town to cater for the existing and a growing population.
- 2.3 Banbury has a range of current strengths, from a strong commercial and retail partnership in Banbury Town Centre Partnership, the Castle Quay retail centre with canal side location, an attractive historic core, a dynamic local College, access to the M40 and good rail links to Birmingham and London. The town is a significant attraction as a destination for the surrounding area.
- 2.4 Alongside the expansion of the range of business, commercial and social facilities, Banbury faces a challenge of how to improve capacity on key routes, specifically the north-south route through the central area which suffers congestion.
- 2.5 There is also a need to secure an improved sustainable transport network for cycling and walking together with improved public transport connectivity. This will encourage 'modal shift' and promote the 'well-being' of residents, employees and shoppers of the town.
- 2.6 Banbury also has pockets of higher unemployment, low levels of achievement and higher deprivation levels and how some of these issues could be tackled through providing for economic growth supported by quality housing and infrastructure.

Purpose

- 2.7 The main aims of the Banbury Masterplan are to:
 - Guide the growth of the town to 2031, having regard to the potential for additional development that secures the sustainable future for the town in

the period beyond.

- Identify further opportunity sites in the town and potential land uses.
- Identify the key physical and social infrastructure to meet the requirements of the current and future population and relating to and informing the emerging Local Plan assessment.
- Identify how best to present the town as a destination.
- Examine how the town's considerable heritage might be used to develop new cultural activities and a new tourism offer.
- Highlight to potential landowners, developers and investors the opportunities that Banbury has to offer.
- Secure the future role of the town centre, ensure its vitality and viability, widen and secure the retail offer, reduce the number of vacancies and to prevent against unsuitable out of town development that would undermine the role of the town centre.
- Provide a movement strategy for the car and sustainable methods of transport.
- Secure a stronger employment base for the town.
- Provide a robust document with a sound evidence base that the Local Planning Authority can use in pre-application discussions, to assess future planning applications and assist in the determination of proposals.
- Highlight where on site provision and potential planning obligations may be required.

2.8 The preparation of a Masterplan for Banbury will provide a clear spatial vision for the town and set a framework for the development of key opportunity sites, many of which have been identified through current work on the Proposed Submission Local Plan. It will also enable Cherwell Council to take a proactive role in guiding future development within a clear town boundary that prevents unplanned urban sprawl. The Masterplan will examine ways of best integrating all new developments with the rest of the town.

2.9 The Masterplan will not just examine how to accommodate growth at Banbury, but also help address a number of other challenges including:

- How to reposition the town in the face of competition from neighbouring towns with consequential retail leakage, leading to it becoming more of a dormitory town than a dynamic, attractive retail centre.
- How to assist in reducing the number of vacant shop premises within the town centre.
- How to restore local residents' perceptions of a positive future for the town.
- Identifying potential new employment sites within and around the town to attract new businesses and provide for the expansion and relocation of existing businesses and

- How to build more effectively on the success of the Castle Quay shopping centre as a foundation for a more dynamic and diverse town economy.
 - How best to strengthen the role of the existing higher education provision in the town.
 - How the town might be further developed as a high quality attractive place that meets wider business needs as well as providing an attractive mix of national and independent retailers and businesses.
 - How to provide good access between residential areas to key destinations within Banbury and enabling the town to make the most of its excellent links to the strategic road network.
- 2.10 The Banbury Masterplan will include an assessment of the likely volume of new housing, its type and design and the integration of all urban expansions with the existing town to ensure that the town benefits from this growth, with new community facilities and the impact on existing services assessed.
- 2.11 The Masterplan process will include consideration of the need for enhanced Green Infrastructure, such as an expanded network of footpaths, link trails and new cycle paths, together with other investment in the public realm and ensuring that Banbury becomes a greener more attractive town. They form an important part of the transport network to link up key parts of the town.
- 2.12 The Masterplan will take into account the need for improved highway capacity enhancements focusing on congested sections of the network, specifically the north/south corridor and investigation of the transport benefits of a relief road/s to serve Banbury. Central to the Masterplan project will be the aim of improving public transport services; both bus connections to and around the town, to the rail station in the town and improved links with the villages in its hinterland.
- 2.13 The Banbury Masterplan will also consider current retail trends and needs of the town and surrounding District. This will inform consideration of how best the town should strengthen the retail sector of its economy and promote the town as a shopping, tourism and cultural destination and secure a closer relationship between the potential for future development of the successful Castle Quay shopping centre, the Mill/Spiceball Centre and the Town Centre.
- 2.14 The Terms of Reference for the Masterplan include:
- I. To clarify Banbury's future role and how best to strengthen the viability and vitality of its town centre at the heart of the local community.
 - II. To prepare a strategic framework for managing the future development of Banbury over the next 20 years.
 - III. To develop proposals for the development of the key opportunity sites in Banbury including identifying appropriate uses and establishing high quality design principles.
 - IV. To outline how the proposed urban extensions can best be integrated with the rest of the town and how the structure of the town may be altered and improved to maximise the integration and the benefits of the development.

- V. To address movement patterns for people moving by foot, cycle, car or public transport, commercial, service and refuse vehicles.
- VI. To develop broad design proposals for improvements to streets, squares and public spaces in the town centre and other areas of change.
- VII. To identify key infrastructure needs for the town.
- VIII. To identify possible criteria and planning policies for guiding the future development of key sites including the identification of site constraints and uses, for both Development Management and the Local Plan.
- IX. To outline a strategic implementation plan for the Masterplan

Links to the Cherwell Local Plan

- 2.15 The Banbury Masterplan will assist with the completion of the Local Plan for the District having considered the issues facing the development of the town as a whole in depth.
- 2.16 The Banbury Masterplan will show potential phasing of development to illustrate how key development areas might best be delivered – especially for Bolton Road, Spiceball and Canalside.
- 2.17 As part of the preparation of the Masterplan additional work is being undertaken inform its consideration and to act as evidence for the Local plan including a) a movement assessment, b) Landscape analysis.
- 2.18 The Local Plan will incorporate the conclusions of the Masterplan onto a statutory footing, placing the future of Banbury into the context of Cherwell District as a whole.
- 2.19 Completion of the Proposed Submission Local Plan is due in December 2012, following the 6 weeks consultation and submission planned for December 2012. This will lead to an Examination in Public in Spring 2013.
- 2.20 It is the intention that the Banbury Masterplan will be adopted as an SPD on adoption of the Local Plan.

The process of Masterplan preparation

- 2.21 WYG have prepared a conceptual version of the Banbury Masterplan and have been gathering information and liaising with key stakeholders to inform its production. This will ensure that the plan has taken account of all those with an interest in Banbury, in shaping the future of the town.
- 2.7 Key stakeholders include elected members and officers from the 3 tiers of local government - District, Town and County Councils; Oxford and Cherwell Developers, the College, local businesses through Banbury Town Centre Partnership and Banbury Chamber of Commerce and neighbouring Parish Councils.
- 2.22 Engagement has so far included a series of workshops and one to one interviews.

Consultation on the conceptual plan

- 2.23 Following consideration by the Executive of the conceptual Masterplan there will be a deeper examination of infrastructure needs of the town including future education, health, green infrastructure and leisure requirements.
- 2.24 Cherwell District Council will consult on the final draft Masterplan for Banbury in the Autumn 2012.
- 2.25 The final report will include an executive summary of the key findings and be a high quality document that is readable and well presented. The report will contain an appropriate mix of photographs, maps and drawings to illustrate the concepts that underpin the strategy for the town, as well as site options in a well designed, accessible format.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 To consider whether the proposals that are emerging within the Banbury Masterplan merit support.

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

Option One	To take no action
Option Two	To accept the recommendation.
Option Three	To continue with a piecemeal approach to development that fails to ensure integration with the existing town or to ensure that opportunities are realised for the benefit of residents and businesses in Banbury.

Consultations

The Concept Masterplan for Bnabury has been informed by a series of workshops.

Oxfordshire County Council	Are directly involved in steering the development of the Masterplan project.
Banbury Town Council	Have been a consultee on the development of the plan proposals.

Implications

Financial:	The cost of the project is being met from existing resources, co-funded by Oxfordshire County Council. Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement, 03000030106.
Legal:	The plan will form 'non statutory policy guidance', therefore it is critical that its proposals are reflected in the final Core Strategy to ensure they have sufficient weight to be a determining matter on planning applications. Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance 0300 0030107.
Risk Management:	The completion of this project will minimise risk of

important opportunities being lost through the continuation of a piecemeal approach to planning.

Wards Affected

All Wards in Banbury

Corporate Plan Themes

A District of Opportunity

Lead Member

**Councillor Gibbard
Lead Member for Planning**

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	None
Background Papers	
Banbury Tender Notice - EXEMPT	
Report Author	Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy
Contact Information	03000030110 adrian.colwell@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk