

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**11 January 2023**

### **Draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18) Consultation**

#### **Report of Assistant Director for Planning and Development**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To present the draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 for scrutiny ahead of its consideration by Executive on 19 January 2023.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To review the draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 and identify any comments for consideration by the Executive at its meeting on 19 January 2023.
- 1.2 To note that the Assistant Director for Planning and Development, will retain delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to make minor amendments to the draft document, including correcting any typos or formatting errors, up to the start of the consultation.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The Council is reviewing its Local Plan. This is required under the Planning Regulations which require local plans to be reviewed at least every five years from their adoption date. Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that:

‘Most plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part, at least every five years’<sup>1</sup>.

- 2.2 Cherwell’s existing Local Plan consists of three documents:

- i. Saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996,
- ii. Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) (Adopted 2015)
- iii. Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need (Adopted 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> PPG: Paragraph: 062 Reference ID: 61-062-20190315. Revision date: 15 03 2019

- 2.3 A review of the saved policies of the 1996 Plan and those of the 2015 Plan was undertaken in 2020. This generally concluded the plans' policies remained up-to-date at that time. However, the current review of the Local Plan provides the opportunity to establish new policies for addressing development needs, for climate action, for healthy place shaping, for biodiversity net gain, for our urban centres and rural areas and in response to new Government policy and guidance.
- 2.4 The timetable for preparing the Cherwell Local Plan 2040 has been affected by the timetable for the previously proposed Oxfordshire Plan. Until August 2022, it had been anticipated that a strategic framework for planning in Oxfordshire would have been provided by the Oxfordshire Plan, that was being prepared as a Joint Local Plan by the Oxfordshire Planning Authorities working in partnership. However, in August 2022, it was decided that work on the Oxfordshire Plan would cease.
- 2.5 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), containing a broad programme for Plan preparation, therefore requires updating. An updated LDS will be presented to the Executive in February 2023.
- 2.6 An overview of the new timetable is:
- Draft Plan (Regulation 18) Consultation: Early 2023
  - Publication Version (Regulation 19) Publication: Summer/ Autumn 2023
  - Submission (Regulation 22): Winter 2023/24
- 2.7 Local Authorities have a legal duty to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan and there is a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.8 This report relates to the Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2020 to 2040 (LP40) that is being proposed for consultation. This is intended as a complete draft plan to maximise the opportunity for respondents to understand what is being proposed and to make full and meaningful responses to the consultation.
- 2.9 It is important to note that at the Regulation 18 consultation stage, Councils are able to amend and update the draft plan, in part based on any consultation responses received. However, the Council cannot make any significant changes to the plan at the Publication (Regulation 19) stage. At the Publication stage, any responses are forwarded to an Independent Planning Inspector (or Inspectors) who will preside over an Examination into whether the plan is Sound and so capable of adoption.

## **3.0 Report Details**

### **Previous Stages of Consultation**

- 3.1 There have already been two consultations undertaken to help inform the emerging LP40. These were:
- Community Involvement Paper Consultation (July 2020), and
  - Community Involvement Paper Consultation 2 (September 2021).

- 3.2 These were relatively early stages of consultation to help inform the preparation of the plan and reports into the findings of these consultation stages will be published alongside the consultation.
- 3.3 It is important to stress that the proposed consultation on the Draft Plan is a very important stage in plan preparation. This is the first time anyone will have an opportunity to see any firm proposals, and where any consultation responses can help to shape the final version of the plan, that will be submitted to the Secretary of State in late 2023/ early 2024.

### **Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040**

- 3.4 LP40 provides an ambitious, yet achievable vision and policy framework, to inform planning for the district over a twenty-year period up to 2040. Three thematic topic areas have been identified that run throughout the document as a whole, these are:
- 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.
- 3.5 The plan structure is intended to provide a clear and accessible format as follows:
- Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: Context for the Cherwell Local Plan 2040
  - Chapter 3: Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives
  - Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy
  - Chapter 5: Area Strategies
  - Chapter 6: Development Policies
  - Chapter 7: Monitoring Framework
  - Appendices
- 3.6 This section of this Report will provide some additional context for the main four plan sections.

### ***Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives***

- 3.7 Our Spatial Vision 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.
- 3.8 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
- 3.9 To achieve our Spatial Vision, we have established a series of Strategic Objectives grouped under our three overarching themes that run throughout the Plan (as described above). These central themes are consistent with the Government's

social, economic and environmental objectives for the planning system to achieve sustainable development.

### ***Spatial Strategy***

- 3.10 Implementing the Spatial Vision for Cherwell District up to 2040, will be through our Spatial Strategy (**Figure 1**) 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 level of job growth needed 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.
- 3.11 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 and identifies two limited releases of land from the Green Belt.

### ***Area Strategies***

- 3.12 We have also developed five area strategies, which ensures we plan appropriately for different parts of Cherwell, taking account of what makes them locally distinctive and focused on their individual needs. The five area strategies are for:
- **Banbury**
  - **Bicester**
  - **Kidlington**
  - **Heyford Park**, and
  - **The Rural Areas** (i.e., the rest of the district).

## ***Development Policies***

3.13 Finally, we have developed some district-wide policies that apply to Cherwell as a whole. 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 build on, rather than duplicate, national guidance and policy and are important to enable the determination of development proposals in a consistent manner. They are based around our three thematic topic areas that run throughout the plan:

- 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

**Figure 1: Cherwell Local Plan 2040 Spatial Strategy**

<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>

<p><b>Heyford Park</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Rural Areas</b></p>	<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>

### **Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)**

3.14 As explained above, the plan sets out a comprehensive suite of policies to help ensure Cherwell maximises the contribution the planning system can make to addressing the challenge of climate change, supporting a sustainable local economy and delivering healthy places. However, there is a legal requirement for plans to set out a strategy, which

“As a minimum seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.”<sup>2</sup>

3.15 There are a number of important and relevant references to how housing need is planned for within a combination of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).

3.16 It is clear that the government’s objective is to ‘significantly boost the supply of homes’<sup>3</sup> and that the ‘minimum number of homes needed’<sup>4</sup> should be informed by an assessment using the ‘standard method’. Para. 61 of the NPPF states,

<sup>2</sup> NPPF Paragraph 35

<sup>3</sup> NPPF Paragraph 60

<sup>4</sup> NPPF Paragraph 61

“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for”.

3.17 The methodology for calculating housing need is set out in the PPG. The PPG emphasises that the standard method produces a minimum level of housing need:

“The Standard Method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area”, and

“There will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates”<sup>5</sup>

3.18 PPG provides examples where it may be appropriate to plan for more than the Standard Method identifies, which include, but are not limited to:

- “growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g., Housing Deals);
- strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or
- an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground”<sup>6</sup>.

3.19 The NPPF also states that planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy that positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth:

“Having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration”<sup>7</sup>

3.20 For these reasons, it is necessary for us to consider a range of factors, to inform and determine an appropriate level of housing need for the future of Cherwell.

3.21 Until August 2022, it had been anticipated that the assessment of housing and economic needs for the county would be prepared to inform the Oxfordshire Plan. Following the cessation of the Oxfordshire Plan, Oxford City and Cherwell District Council’s commissioned a new study (a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment or HENA) to inform their respective Local Plans as the timing for these was reasonably closely aligned. The new evidence necessarily considers the housing and economic need for Oxfordshire as a whole because Oxfordshire functions as a single Housing Market Area (HMA) and the needs for Oxford City and Cherwell cannot be considered in isolation. The HENA is agreed between officers of Cherwell and Oxford Councils but it is a matter for the other Oxfordshire authorities to

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<sup>5</sup> PPG. Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20201216

<sup>6</sup> PPG. Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20201216

<sup>7</sup> NPPF Paragraph 82.

determine what evidence they consider to be necessary and appropriate to support their Local Plan processes.

### ***Housing Scenarios***

- 3.22 The 2022 HENA is a technical and detailed document that provides a comprehensive assessment of housing and economic need. This Scrutiny Report simply provides a high-level summary of its main findings.
- 3.23 The 2022 HENA considers four housing scenarios. These are:
- Scenario 1: Standard Method
  - Scenario 2: 2021 Census Adjusted
  - Scenario 3: Economic Baseline, and
  - Scenario 4: Economic Development Led
- 3.24 In simple terms, these four scenarios are intended to provide a comprehensive consideration of a wide range of factors, to ensure that any identified housing need is appropriately robust.
- 3.25 At one end of the spectrum, the Standard Method Scenario, simply relies on the methodology set out in the PPG, that as described above, should be considered to provide the minimum starting point to inform need.
- 3.26 At the other end of the spectrum, the Economic Led Scenario is informed by the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan (LIP; 2020), which is considered to represent realistic growth led scenarios.
- 3.27 The 2021 Census Adjusted Scenario is informed by the recently published 2021 Census data and so removes any uncertainties associated with using 2014 household projections, i.e., that inform the Standard Method (unadjusted) Scenario, and, by utilising more up-to-date data, provides a more robust basis for considering Oxford's population.
- 3.28 The Economic Baseline Scenario uses the Cambridge Econometrics modelled projection of growth for Oxfordshire. This takes account of the Covid-19 pandemic and also the economic uncertainties surrounding Brexit, which taken together, are considered to provide a realistic trend-based scenario.
- 3.29 For Oxfordshire as a whole, and on an annual basis, the four scenarios generate the need for the following levels of housing:



**Table 1: Annual Housing Need for Oxfordshire and Cherwell distributed by employment at 2040 (HENA 2022).**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Annual Housing Need for Oxfordshire</b>	<b>Annual Housing Need for Cherwell*</b>
Standard Method	3,388	776
Census Adjusted Method	4,721	1,081
Economic Baseline	4,406	1,009
Economic Led	5,830	1,335
2014 SHMA Housing Need for comparison	5,003	1,580

\*the annual Cherwell figures in this table do not take any account of unmet housing need for Oxford.

- 3.30 It is interesting that two of the scenarios, based on entirely separate methodologies, are leading to annual housing figures that fall within the same range of around 4,400 to 4,700 homes. These two scenarios make use of either the updated 2021 Census data, or the latest economic projection available to us, where the latter does take account of recent economic factors, such as Covid and Brexit.
- 3.31 Whilst the Economic Development Led Scenario is a realistic scenario, this does not take account of more recent economic factors, such as the international situation relating to Ukraine, energy prices or inflation. This considerable level of economic uncertainty at the current time, which are explained in more detail in the HENA report, do not provide a sufficiently robust basis for identifying housing need at the current time.
- 3.32 The HENA Report gives consideration to a wide range of factors, including for example, the level of commuting associated with the different housing scenarios into and out of Oxfordshire. This is an important consideration given our commitments to help address the challenges associated with climate change and the County Council's ambitions to reduce emissions associated with travel.
- 3.33 Delivering the minimum level of housing, under the Standard Method Scenario, is calculated by HENA to create a large labour supply deficit of around 35,000 people that would have to be met by labour imported into Oxfordshire. This is because less housing will mean there are less people available to support the Oxfordshire economy and the HENA already takes account of increases in home-working. This is estimated to generate an inflow of around 23,000 people into Oxfordshire per working day.
- 3.34 This makes sense, as providing for less housing will mean that those wishing to take up employment opportunities in Oxfordshire would increasingly find it difficult to find housing in the County and would be forced to commute longer distances, whereas, providing for more housing in Oxfordshire will help to create a more sustainable balance between housing and employment.
- 3.35 Another factor considered by the HENA relates to affordable housing. The HENA makes clear that this matter, and in particular, the relationship between affordable housing need and overall housing need, is complex. The report identifies the 'net need' for affordable housing of 426 homes per annum for Cherwell (8,520 for the

plan period). On this basis, the different scenarios essentially mean that for the Standard Method approach, there would be a significant shortfall for affordable housing; for the Economic Led Scenario, there may be an over-supply of affordable housing, but that the two middle scenarios get closer to meeting the need in full. Providing some contingency in our housing supply would assist in meeting affordable housing needs further (discussed below).

- 3.36 Overall, the HENA makes clear that the Standard Method does not provide an appropriate level of housing in Oxfordshire. This scenario does not capture population growth that has occurred in Oxfordshire since 2014 and will not provide sufficient housing to match the level of job creation expected up to 2040. Nor will it meet the identified need for affordable housing.
- 3.37 The HENA concludes that the 2021 Census Adjusted and Economic Baseline Scenarios are justified assessments of need. For the purposes of LP40, it is recommended that the Economic Baseline Scenario is identified as representing housing need for Cherwell for the plan period up to 2040. This means a need for Cherwell of 1,009 homes per annum or 20,180 homes in total (2020-2040).

### ***Un-met Housing Need***

- 3.38 The NPPF makes clear that housing need, should be informed:
- “By agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development”<sup>8</sup>.
- 3.39 We know that housing delivery in Oxford City is constrained by the physical size of their administrative area and the availability of land to support housing growth. The concept of unmet housing need for Oxford City was established in the previous round of Oxfordshire Local Plans and there is no reason to consider this has changed. The recent Oxford City Local Plan consultation establishes a constraint based approach to planning for housing and identifies a capacity constraint of 393 homes per annum (7,860 for the plan period).
- 3.40 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011- 2031 (Part 1) Partial Review - Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need (Adopted 2020), addressed the quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford that was agreed to be provided in Cherwell from the previous round of Local Plans. This was for 4,400 homes and was accommodated in the Kidlington/Gosford and Water Eaton and Begbroke/Yarnton area on sites allocated in the Partial Review Plan. These sites are ‘saved’ by LP40.
- 3.41 Based on the identified housing need for Oxford City identified in the 2022 HENA and an understanding of the capacity of what level of housing Oxford City can accommodate on an annual basis (set out above); we can calculate what level of unmet housing need should be planned for across Oxfordshire up to 2040. This is for 17,360 homes.
- 3.42 As explained above, the previous round of Oxfordshire Local Plans made provision for meeting Oxford’s identified unmet need. The 4,400 homes in Cherwell contributes to the newly identified unmet need figures for 2020-2040.

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<sup>8</sup> NPPF Paragraph 35.

- 3.43 In the previous round of Local Plans, where the apportionment of unmet need was agreed through a Duty-to-Cooperate process, Cherwell effectively agreed to accommodate 31% of the total. The appropriate proportion of unmet need for Cherwell to accommodate, based on the HENA (2022) is 32.8% (i.e., based on the balance of homes and employment across Oxfordshire at 2040). This would equate to 6,087 homes, of which 4,400 homes are already planned for.
- 3.44 On this basis, Cherwell would need to contribute an additional **1,687** homes for Oxford within the emerging LP40.
- 3.45 This is the proposed basis on which to advance work positively on the Local Plan and on which to consult. It will be kept under review as plan preparation and engagement continues.

### ***Total Housing Need***

- 3.46 Having regard to Cherwell's housing need and an appropriate contribution to Oxford's unmet housing need, the total housing need that the Local Plan is seeking to address is for 26,267 homes (approximately 1,313 homes per annum) i.e., 20,180 plus 6,087.

### ***Housing Requirement***

- 3.47 The NPPF and PPG make clear the distinction between the objectively assessed housing need and the housing requirement. As explained above, the housing need can vary from the Standard Method, but the 'requirement' may also vary from the 'need'. The PPG states that need will need to:
- "Be assessed prior to, and separate from, considering how much of the overall need can be accommodated, and then translated into a housing requirement figure for the strategic policies in the plan"<sup>9</sup>.
- 3.48 There may, for example, be instances where an environmental constraint prevents housing above a certain level being delivered or relating to critical infrastructure.
- 3.49 Whether or not the identified housing need can be met is a matter that is tested through the plan preparation process informed by its supporting evidence. A significant consideration is the level of housing supply that can already be expected. This produces a 'residual need'. Whether that need can be met is tested having regard to issues such as land availability, environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity.
- 3.50 Excluding sites of less than 10 homes, Cherwell's existing supply 'pipeline' presently comprises some 20,654 homes. This means that new housing land supply is needed to accommodate 5,613 homes if need is to be met.
- 3.51 The plan preparation process has demonstrated that this level of additional supply can be accommodated and therefore a housing requirement of 26,267 is proposed.

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<sup>9</sup> PPG: Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20201216

### ***Over-Supply Buffer***

- 3.52 It is not uncommon that Local Plans will make some provision for housing supply above the identified level of need. This may be referred to as an over-supply buffer. This buffer helps to provide flexibility and resilience and make it more likely the plan will be resilient in maintaining a five-year housing land supply, which presently remains a requirement of national policy. The over-supply buffer would not contribute to the five-year land supply calculation (i.e., it does not form part of the identified need).
- 3.53 Typical examples of over-supply buffers that have been accepted by Planning Inspectors presiding over other Local Plan Examinations, include Vale of White Horse Part 1 Plan (11%), Central Bedfordshire (13%) and Milton Keynes (13%).
- 3.54 To meet housing need and provide contingency with a housing supply buffer, the Plan proposes new strategic site allocations of 5,605 homes, a non-strategic allowance of 500 homes for the rural areas and a 'windfall' allowance for small sites of 2,800 homes.
- 3.55 Taking all sources of housing into account, it is proposed that planned supply would be for 29,559 homes, and thus provide an over-supply buffer of between 11 and 12 %. The sources of supply are shown by the following table:

**Table 2: Total Cherwell Housing Requirement and Supply (2020 to 2040)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>
<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

\* the five year housing land supply requirement will be informed by the Total Planned Requirement

### ***Proposed Allocations***

- 3.56 LP40 includes 9 proposed strategic allocations (**Table 3**). These were identified following a comprehensive process, that involved consideration of a long-list of several hundred sites, which were filtered and where a shorter list of sites was subject to more detailed testing. This was informed by a suite of technical evidence studies, including for transport, landscape, flood risk and sustainability.
- 3.57 The full suite of technical evidence will be published alongside the draft plan for consultation. These studies will include the Housing and Economic Land, Availability Assessment (HELAA), which shows all the sites that have been considered and the Site Selection Topic Paper, that provides a more detailed overview of the methodology used and the sites considered.
- 3.58 The proposed allocations all fall within the four most sustainable locations in the district that are consistent with the Spatial Strategy. The quantum of development proposed is significantly less than in the preceding 2015 and 2020 plans and are designed to consolidate our Spatial Strategy, to support the most sustainable pattern of development and maximise use of sustainable modes of travel, and to contribute towards infrastructure delivery in the places where it will have greatest value for existing and new communities.
- 3.59 One of the proposed allocations is Canalside, at Banbury, which is an allocation in the existing plan. This is being reallocated, with a new policy that adjusts the balance of homes and jobs, with a reduction in the proposed level of housing (now 500 instead of 700). There are also new policies supporting town centre regeneration in Banbury (and Bicester and Kidlington) and commitments to support the preparation of new Town, or Village Centre Master Plans for these places.
- 3.60 Another of the nine proposed allocations is North-West Bicester, which is also an existing 2015 plan allocation. This site is being extended and the total quantum of development increased by 1,000 homes. However, it is important to stress the additional housing will not all be located in the extension. This allows for some adjustments to be made to the sites master plan, supporting a more efficient use of land, along with providing for extensive areas of green infrastructure, biodiversity gain and on-site renewable energy. The importance of protecting the unique identity of Bucknell is fully recognised and supported by the Plan.
- 3.61 Another of the proposed allocations is the site North of the Moors at Kidlington for 300 homes. This site is located within the Oxford Green Belt, although it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist to justify this allocation. The site is well contained and makes limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, it is highly sustainable being well connected to a range of services and facilities and sustainable modes of travel. The site will provide some affordable housing for the settlement of Kidlington and also provides for additional sports provision (new cricket ground), where the eastern third of the site remains undeveloped, thus also protecting the historic setting of the nearby church.
- 3.62 The plan proposes to allocate a second site in the Kidlington Area, South-East of Woodstock Road for 450 dwellings. This site is located on a sustainable transport corridor in close proximity to a range of employment but is located outside of the Green Belt. It is considered the two sites in this area, taken together, provide a balanced approach to minimising Green Belt impact, with also maximising sustainability.

3.63 The remaining housing sites are located on the best performing transport corridors, where there is the greatest opportunity for supporting walking, cycling and public transport and at our most sustainable locations overall, in line with the Spatial Strategy.

**Table 3: Strategic Housing Allocations identified in the Cherwell 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 Road	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	750
Shipton on Cherwell	South-East of Woodstock Road/ Upper Campfield Road	450	
Kidlington	North of the Moors	300	
Upper Heyford	Land at Heyford Park	1,235	1,235
<b>Overall Total</b>			<b>5,605</b>

\* 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.

### ***Employment***

3.64 The HENA (2022) identifies a need for around 225 ha of employment land. This is higher than the Cherwell's Employment Evidence prepared in 2021 that identified a need for around 187 ha, but the HENA is more up-to-date, and it is considered prudent to plan for this level of need.

3.65 Six strategic employment sites are proposed within LP40 (**Table 4**), although two are existing sites that are being re-allocated in the new Plan and one is an extension to Begbroke Science Park, that was identified in the previous plan, where it was indicated the site would be allocated in the future.

3.66 On this basis, there are only three other new strategic allocations included in LP40, all at Bicester, as this represents the location most able to support the most sustainable pattern of development, with housing and jobs being balanced.

3.67 The Plan also identifies the need for some additional smaller (non-strategic) sites. These are important to support start-up and local businesses throughout Cherwell. This matter will be considered in more detail, including by inviting submissions through the consultation, so that around 15 ha of smaller employment sites can be added to the final version of the Plan.

**Table 4: Strategic Employment Allocations identified in the Cherwell Local Plan 2040**

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Type of Site (Uses Class)</b>	<b>Available Development Land (Hectares)</b>
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>

### ***Rural Areas***

- 3.68 **Table 2** identifies the need for 500 homes on non-strategic allocations (less than 100 homes). These will be located at the ‘Larger Villages’, which are the largest and most sustainable of our rural settlements. Some development at the most sustainable rural areas is important to support the viability and vitality of these settlements. LP40 will identify housing requirement figures for these settlements who will have an opportunity to take responsibility for any non-strategic allocations, if they wish to, through a Neighbourhood Planning process.
- 3.69 Where communities wish to take responsibility for any non-strategic allocations, LP40 will make no further comment on these settlements. Where communities do not wish to take this responsibility, the next version of LP40 (publication version Autumn 2023) will include any non-strategic allocations as necessary.
- 3.70 The housing requirement figures for the Larger Villages have been informed by a range of factors, including the relative size of the population, population growth trends since 2021, development that has been completed since the beginning of the plan period and development that is already committed through the granting of planning permission.
- 3.71 The Settlement Hierarchy, has also been updated, also informed by detailed methodology, which has resulted in the ‘Larger Villages’ (previously referred to as Category A) being reduced from 15 to 12 settlements. Details of both of these processes will be set out in supporting evidence that form part of the consultation.

**Table 5: Housing Requirement Figures for Larger Villages**

<b>Settlement Hierarchy Tier</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>2020-40 Housing Requirement Figure</b>	<b>Residual requirement to be allocated through non-strategic allocations (at 1 April 2022)</b>
Larger Villages	Adderbury	110	<b>63</b>
Larger Villages	Ambrosden	204	<b>87</b>
Larger Villages	Bletchingdon	50	<b>23</b>
Larger Villages	Bloxham	129	<b>106</b>
Larger Villages	Bodicote*	0	<b>0</b>
Larger Villages	Deddington	96	<b>43</b>
Larger Villages	Hook Norton	122	<b>42</b>
Larger Villages	Islip*	0	<b>0</b>
Larger Villages	Kirtlington	46	<b>46</b>
Larger Villages	Launton	112	<b>43</b>
Larger Villages	Steeple Aston	59	<b>47</b>
Larger Villages	Yarnton*	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>928</b>	<b>500</b>

\*Larger Villages located within the Green Belt have their housing requirement set as zero.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 LP40 provides an ambitious, yet achievable vision and policy framework, to inform planning for the district over a twenty-year period up to 2040. Officers consider that the Plan identifies the appropriate level of housing to plan for, the level of job growth needed 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.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 Preparation of the plan is informed by a wide range of stakeholders, though formal stages of consultation and via the Council's formal responsibilities under the Duty-to-Cooperate.

5.2 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Colin Clarke

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.



Option1: Do not progress a Local Plan update.

The Council has a legal requirement to review its Local Plan every five years and to update it where appropriate. There is an expectation that most plans will need updating every five years. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year land supply and progressing the review of the Local Plan quickly is considered to be important to ensure a plan-led approach to planning for Cherwell is followed.

Option 2: Delay the Local Plan process.

The Cherwell Local Plan has effectively been delayed due to the slow progression of the Oxfordshire Plan that was originally expected to be adopted before 2022. The decision to cease preparation on the Oxfordshire Plan provides an opportunity for Cherwell to progress its Local Plan review more quickly and ensure a plan led approach to planning is followed in Cherwell as quickly as possible

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 The Local Plan programme is funded from the Planning Policy budget and Local Plan Reserve. There are no wider budgetary implications.

Comments checked by:

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[Michael.furnace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.furnace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 The Local Plan needs to be prepared and consulted in line with the legislation, NPPF and NPPG.

Comments checked by:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance,  
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### **Risk Implications**

- 7.3 There are a large number of risks associated with producing a Local Plan, including the potential for Legal Challenge. Local Plan preparation is governed by legislation where the plan must be demonstrably found 'sound' through an Examination process that is presided over by an Independent Planning Inspectors (or Inspectors). The plan must be demonstrably consistent with national policy, guidance and legislation.
- 7.4 The Council's approach to preparing the Local Plan is sought to meet the requirements set out above and elsewhere in this report. The current stage of the process is still a relatively early stage, where the draft plan is subject to public consultation and where the Council retains the flexibility of amending the plan, if it wishes to do so, and this may, in part, be informed by any consultation responses received.

Existing and arising risks, depending on their nature, are managed through the service operational risk and the Leadership Risk register (view L03 – CDC Local Plan)

Comments checked by:

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### **Equalities and Inclusion Implications**

- 7.5 An Equality and Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been prepared to accompany the plan that will be available for consultation. The plan has also been informed by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that will also be available for the consultation. On this basis, the plan has taken account of a wide range of equality and related matters

Comments checked by:

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### **Sustainability Implications**

- 7.6 The Draft Local Plan 2040 has significant consequences for supporting the achievement of sustainable development. This underpins the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, for which the plan is required to be consistent with. The plan supports sustainable development through its Spatial Strategy, ensuring development is located in the most sustainable locations that maximise opportunities for supporting sustainable transport modes. The plan contains a suite of policies to support sustainable development, including those relating to the standards any new development should confirm to, including to achieve high climate change standards
- 7.7 The plan is informed by a wide range of technical evidence, including a Transport Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, and evidence informing the plans Climate Change policies. These will all be available as part of the consultation

Comments checked by:

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## **8.0 Decision Information**

**Key Decision:**

**Financial Threshold Met:** N/A

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** N/A

## **Wards Affected**

All

## **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

The Local Plan relates directly to a wide range of Corporate Plan policies

## **Document Information**

### **Appendix number and title**

- Appendix 1 - Emerging Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040
- Appendix 2 - Emerging Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 Appendices
- Appendix 3 - Housing and Economic Needs Assessment – Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council – Final Report (December 2022).

### **Background papers**

None

### **Report Author and Contact Details**

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