

# **Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042**

**PROPOSED SUBMISSION PLAN  
(REGULATION 19)**

**DECEMBER 2024**

**VERSION FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

Overview & Scrutiny

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# Overview & Scrutiny

## OVERVIEW

### What are we doing?

**We have prepared a new Local Plan for Cherwell District and would like your views before we submit it to the Secretary of State for independent examination.**

### What is the role of a Local Plan?

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A Local Plan is the statutory starting point for making planning decisions. It provides a vision and a policy framework for the future development of an area. It provides for new development to meet the needs of the district and establishes planning policies to guide that development such that it delivers the vision and meets national and local objectives.

### How is the Local Plan Prepared?

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A Local Plan is prepared by considering the economic, environmental and social context of the district and its development needs. We have national planning policy to comply with and national guidance to consider. We engage early in the process on the issues and options we need to examine and do this with the benefit of technical evidence.

We must consider strategic priorities that extend beyond the district's boundaries and consider the wider context for the Plan. We cooperate with neighbouring authorities and partners and consult with infrastructure providers. We seek the input of our local communities and all those with an interest in the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the district.

### What consultation has there been so far?

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In preparing this local plan we have undertaken three public consultations:

- Planning for Cherwell to 2040 – A community involvement paper (July 2020);
- Planning for Cherwell – Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options (September 2021).
- A Consultation Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) (September 2023)

Your comments submitted during each of these consultations has been taken into consideration as we prepared the next stage.

### What stage of preparation are we at now?

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This is the opportunity to make comments on the proposed Plan before we submit it to the Government for independent examination.

In making your comments we would like you to consider whether the Plan is 'sound' and whether it complies with the necessary legal requirements for plan making.

The Planning Inspectorate has produced a useful guide to making representations at this stage of the plan making process. The guide is available to view on our Cherwell Local Plan Review consultation webpages.

All representations received will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration as part of the Local Plan examination. We do not make significant changes to the Plan after we have received your comments. Instead they are considered by the appointed Planning Inspector.

**For more information on how to respond to this current consultation please visit [www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)**



## Summary (TO BE UPDATED)

**We are producing a new Local Plan to meet Cherwell's needs, protect its environment and secure sustainable development.**

This publication draft of the Cherwell Local Plan 2042 has been prepared to set out planning policies to guide the delivery of sustainable development across the district.

We are inviting your views as to whether the Plan is sound and whether it complies with legal requirements.

The draft Plan is supported by technical evidence made available alongside this consultation.

We have had regard to national policy and guidance and feedback we received from three earlier consultations in 2020, 2021 and 2023. 'Statements of Consultation' summarising the comments and suggestions made are also available to support the current consultation.

We have sought to consider the needs of the district and the issues it faces. Our planning policies must respond by facilitating and guiding development to help support our communities, create opportunities for all, improve our places to live and work, respond to challenges such as climate change, and protect our environment, landscape and built heritage.

The Plan sets out a vision and proposes homes, employment land, infrastructure and other essential services required to support the local community over the Plan period.

### **The Plan has three overarching themes:**

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

The Plan then proposes a series of objectives for meeting the vision and addressing these themes.

It presents a strategy, policies, and proposals for meeting these objectives and delivering the vision.

In summary the strategy is to:

- Ensure that our committed growth is delivered;
- Focus new development at Bicester and Banbury and to a lesser extent at Kidlington;
- Revitalise our urban centres and encourage investment;
- Raise the design quality of our built and 'green' environments and protect the historic environment;
- Minimise carbon emissions and achieve set net gains in biodiversity; in delivering new development.

The strategy is supported by area strategies for Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Heyford Park, and our Rural Areas.

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

- 1.1. **The Cherwell Local Plan is a land use or spatial plan which sets out a vision and strategy to meet Cherwell’s needs, protect its environment and secure sustainable development.**
  - 1.2. We have considered the needs of the district and the issues it faces. Our planning policies in response to these needs, facilitate and guide development to help support our communities, create opportunities for all, improve our places to live and work, respond to challenges such as climate change and the need to protect nature, agricultural land for food production, our environment, landscape and built heritage.
  - 1.3. The draft Plan sets out a vision and proposes homes, employment land, infrastructure and other essential services required to support our local communities over the Plan period.
  - 1.4. **The three overarching themes are:**
    1. **Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development**
    2. **Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy**
    3. **Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities**
- INSERT THEMES DIAGRAM HERE
- 1.5. The Plan presents a series of objectives for meeting the vision and addressing these themes.
  - 1.6. Finally, it presents a strategy, policies, and proposals for meeting these objectives and delivering the vision. The Plan contains both strategic and non-strategic policies.
  - 1.7. In summary the draft strategy is to:
    - Ensure that our committed growth is delivered.
    - Focus new development at Bicester and Banbury and to a lesser extent in the Kidlington area.
    - Revitalise our urban centres and encourage investment.
    - Raise the design quality of our built and ‘green’ environments.
    - Minimise carbon emissions and achieve set net gains in biodiversity, in delivering new development.
  - 1.8. The strategy is supported by area strategies for Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Heyford Park, and our Rural Areas.

## CHAPTER 2: Plan Vision and Objectives

### Our Vision for Cherwell 2042

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The Cherwell Local Plan will ensure that by 2042:

- We achieve our climate action targets and new developments are built to the highest possible energy efficient standards.
- 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.
- Our district will build on its economic success, take full advantage of new technologies and the green economy. By sharing knowledge and common resources take an important role in the regional and national economy, whilst fostering and retaining young talent, attracting business and investment and reducing poverty, inequality, and social isolation.
- There is a choice of well-designed market and truly affordable homes to meet our needs and neighbourhoods are sustainable, safe, healthy, vibrant and cohesive communities, that promote good health, wellbeing and equality and seek to address the challenges of our growing and ageing communities.
- 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, social care, education, green open spaces, sport and recreational activities. The Plan has helped to reduce inequalities in health, address poverty and social inclusion and supported well-being.
- Our distinctive natural and built environment and our rich 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.
- 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 are further enhanced with improved access.
- Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington have been re-shaped and adapted with an improved public realm and a greater mix of uses to maintain their roles as attractive, vibrant, inclusive retail,

cultural and social centres for our communities and visitors.

- 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.
- 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.
- The important role of agriculture and food production to our rural economy is recognised and enhanced through farm diversification, modernisation and the protection of productive agricultural land.
- We have delivered a positive and enduring health legacy that Improves healthy life expectancy, reinforces health and social care, and builds features that prevent, reduces and delays the need for preventable clinical Intervention and social care.

## Strategic Objectives

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### Theme One

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

- SO 1:** Promote net-zero carbon new developments, with the highest possible sustainable construction standards, nature based solutions 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:** Deliver developments that make a positive contribution to Cherwell's nature recovery through protection, restoration and expansion of protected sites, habitats and species.
- SO 4:** Improve air quality. Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the

enhancement of Cherwell's natural capital assets, such as soils, watercourses, woodlands, hedges and ponds in order to capture and store carbon.

- SO 5:** Maintain and improve the natural and built and historic environment including biodiversity, landscape, and green and blue infrastructure networks by ensuring new development achieves high-quality design standards, and conserves and enhances the natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets of Cherwell.
- SO 6:** 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 Two

### **Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy**

- SO 7:** Support a strong and sustainable economy within the district and wider Oxfordshire landscape, including the visitor economy, agriculture and food production, and ensure sufficient land is allocated to meet our identified needs.
- SO 8:** 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 9:** Strengthen the role of Cherwell's urban centres, including where beneficial, redevelopment and renewal, to maintain and enhance their vitality, viability, distinctiveness and safety.
- SO 10:** 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.

## Theme 3

### **Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities**

- SO 11:** 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.
- SO 12:** Create sustainable, well-designed, safe, 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.
- SO 13:** 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.

- SO 14:** Protect and enhance the historic environment, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets, archaeological remains, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and promoting inclusive access to local assets where appropriate.
- SO 15:** Provide sufficient accessible, well maintained good quality services, facilities and infrastructure, to meet healthcare, education, transport, open space, sport, recreation, cultural, social and other community needs.

Overview & Scrutiny

## CHAPTER 3: **Our Strategy for Development in Cherwell**

### Spatial Strategy

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**3.1.** Our spatial strategy delivers our vision and objectives for Cherwell. It is implemented through the area strategies and policies that follow.

#### **District**

- Ensure that our committed growth is delivered.
- Focus new development at Bicester, Banbury and to a lesser extent in the Kidlington area.
- Revitalise our urban centres and encourage investment.
- Minimise carbon emissions and achieve set net gains in biodiversity in delivering new development;
- Raise design standards and improvements to the built environment to elevate the attractiveness of our towns and villages, while conserving our historic environment;
- Ensure that new development improves well-being through design, accessibility, social interaction, the provision of amenities and facilities and opportunities for active travel and recreation;
- Encourage new development that improves opportunity for all and in particular provides access to housing to meet all needs.

#### **Banbury**

- Deliver committed development and provide for some limited additional growth reflecting the topographical, landscape and rural character constraints of the town's edge;
- Revitalise, appropriately repurpose and seek further investment in the town centre, continue to improve its built and 'green' environment and public realm and further develop the nighttime economy;
- Continue to support and strengthen the town's economy and diversify its skill base;
- Encourage development proposals that will support education and help reduce deprivation;
- Seek strategic transport improvements to encourage active travel, reduce congestion and pollution, and reduce cross town traffic by motorised vehicles.

#### **Bicester**

- Deliver committed development and be the focus for additional development reflecting the town's on-going growth and transformation as a sustainable Garden Town and its regional and sub-regional location on the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor and East-West Rail route;
- Deliver a high quality employment corridor into the town along the A41
- Continue to maximise the benefits of having key international and national destinations and economic activity to support further business investment;
- Support the continued improvement of the town's centre, its facilities, its public realm and 'green' environment;
- Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and encourage active travel.

#### **Kidlington**

- Strengthen Kidlington's role as a Local Centre for the wider area;

- Improve the built and 'green' environment of the High Street, Parades and wider Kidlington area;
- Continue to support investment in key economic assets including the High Street, Parades, Oxford Technology Park, London-Oxford Airport, Begbroke Science Park and at Langford Lane technology corridor;
- Continue to maximise the benefits of localised connectivity to key national and international destinations to support inward investment;
- Deliver the committed 4,400 homes to help Oxford's housing needs;
- Ensure the planned benefits for the communities of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton are delivered.
- Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and encourage active travel.

#### Heyford Park

- Ensure the implementation of the committed growth at Heyford Park to fully establish the new settlement already planned whilst preserving and enhancing the area's heritage significance.

#### Rural Areas

- Protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas and avoid unplanned development in the open countryside;
- Provide for limited development to meet local community and business needs and help support the vitality of these more rural settlements and the viability of existing businesses and agriculture/farms;
- Direct the development of new housing to the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services, and to a lesser extent to villages that are well-connected to our urban areas and sustainable villages;
- Maintain the designated Green Belt;
- Conserve and enhance the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- Protect the character of locally designated landscapes, and preserve and enhance conservation areas and registered parks and gardens and their settings.

#### Policy SP 1: Settlement Hierarchy

**3.2.** Our Settlement Hierarchy is based on an assessment of a number of factors including population size, number and range of facilities and services, settlement characteristics, accessibility, local employment opportunities and the functional relationship with other settlements. Each defined settlement tier has a different role. The hierarchy has five main tiers as follows:

- Main Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Larger (Category A) Villages
- Smaller, well connected (Category B) Villages
- Smaller (Category C) Villages

**3.3.** Our strategy seeks to protect and enhance the services and facilities provided by our Main Towns, Local



Service Centres and Larger Villages. It focuses new homes, jobs and community facilities at these settlements.

**3.4.** Infilling is defined as the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage. However, not all infill gaps or other larger undeveloped areas within our settlements will be suitable for development. Many spaces in village streets are important and cannot be filled without detriment to their character. For example, such gaps may afford views out to the landscape or help to impart a spacious rural atmosphere to the village. This is particularly important in a loose knit village pattern where the spaces maybe as important as the buildings.

**Policy SP 1: Settlement Hierarchy**

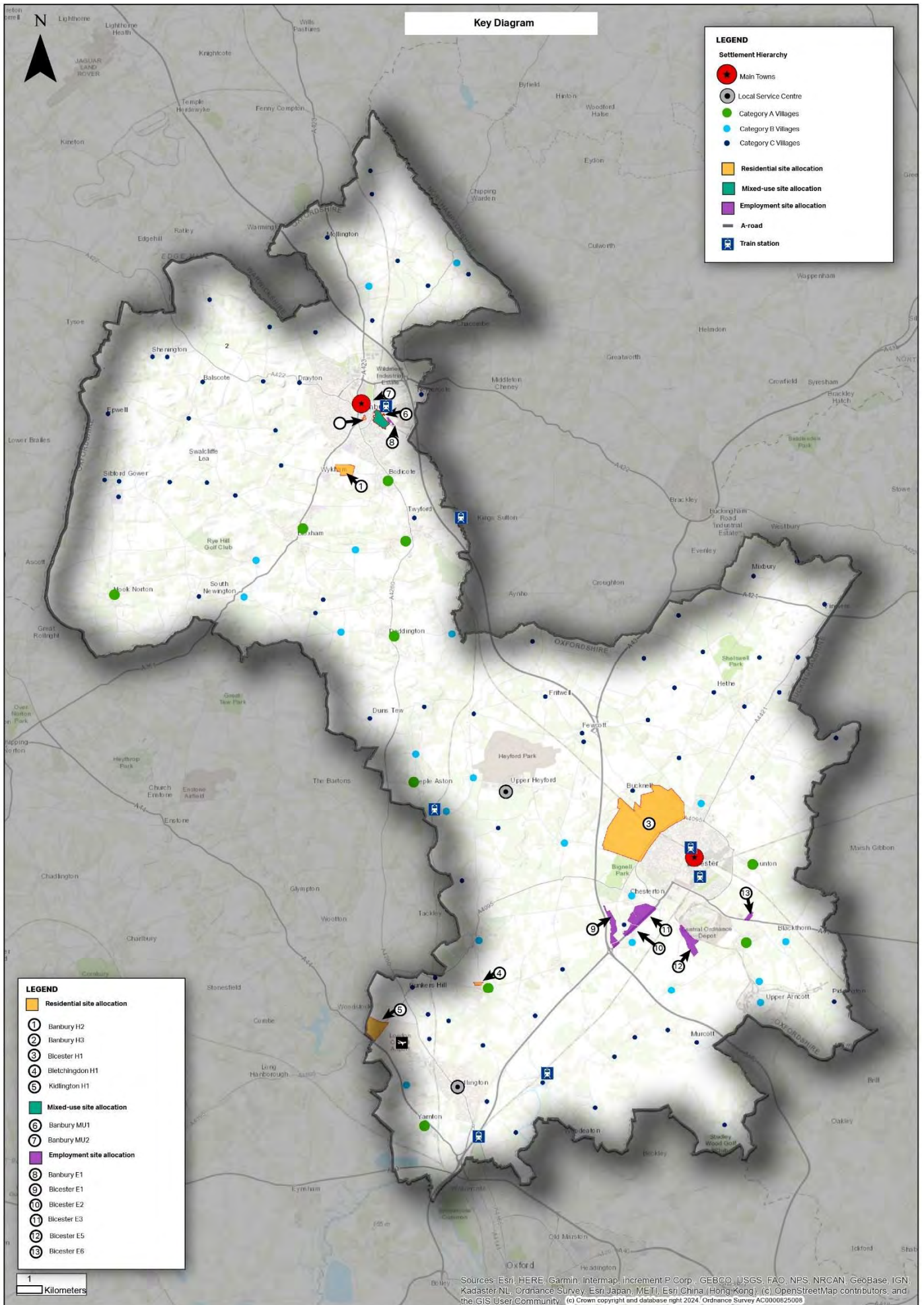
Residential development will be approved in accordance with the following Settlement Hierarchy and Classification:

| Settlement Category  | Settlement                       | Type of Development  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Main Towns</b><br/>Main Towns have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities. They 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.</p> | <p>Banbury, Bicester</p>         | <p>Presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>Development beyond the built-up limits of the settlement will only be permitted on allocated sites within the development plan or in accordance with Policies RUR 2 - 5.</p> |
| <p><b>Local Service Centres</b><br/>Local Service Centres are large villages with, or are planned to have, a level of services and facilities, and local employment opportunities to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable</p>   | <p>Kidlington*, Heyford Park</p> | <p>Presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>Development beyond the built-up limits of the settlement will only be permitted on allocated sites within the development plan or in accordance with Policies RUR 2 - 5.</p> |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>development outside the Main Towns.</b></p>   |   | <p><b>Development within the Green Belt will be considered against National Policy.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Category A Villages</b><br/>Larger villages outside the Green Belt that have essential local services and facilities and often serve nearby smaller villages.</p> <p>Regular public transport to main towns or local service centres.</p> | <p><b>Adderbury<br/>Ambrosden<br/>Bletchington (outside Green Belt only)<br/>Bloxham<br/>Bodicote<br/>Deddington<br/>Hook Norton<br/>Launton<br/>Steeple Aston<br/>Yarnton*</b></p>   | <p><b>Infill development</b></p> <p><b>Minor development within the built-up limits of the settlement</b></p> <p><b>Conversions</b></p> <p><b>Development beyond built up limits of the settlement only permitted on sites allocated within the development plan or in accordance with Policies RUR 2 - 5.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Category B Villages</b><br/>Settlements that are geographically close to, or with good transport links to, villages and towns with a good range of services and facilities</p>  | <p><b>Kirtlington<br/>Milton,<br/>Milcombe<br/>Hempton<br/>Clifton<br/>Blackthorn<br/>Arcott<br/>Begbroke * (outside Green Belt only)<br/>Great Bourton<br/>Caversfield<br/>Upper Heyford<br/>Middleton Stoney<br/>Wardington<br/>South Newington<br/>Merton<br/>Wendlebury<br/>Chesterton<br/>Middle Aston<br/>Lower Heyford</b></p> | <p><b>Infill development</b></p> <p><b>Minor development within the built-up limits of the settlement.</b></p> <p><b>Conversions.</b></p> <p><b>Development beyond the built up limits of the settlement will only be permitted on small sites (less than 1 hectare) allocated within the development plan. Such sites should only meet local housing needs and be proportionate in scale and be sympathetic to the form and character of the settlement.</b></p> <p><b>Development in accordance with Policies RUR 2 – 5.</b></p> |
| <p><b>Category C Villages</b></p> <p>Generally smaller villages containing only a limited number of services and facilities. Poor/irregular access to public transport.</p>   | <p><b>All other villages</b></p>  | <p><b>Infill development</b></p> <p><b>Minor development within the built-up limits of the settlement.</b></p> <p><b>Conversions.</b></p> <p><b>Development in accordance with Policies RUR 2 – 5.</b></p>   |

\* Settlements Inset within the Green Belt

# Overview & Scrutiny



# Overview & Scrutiny

# District Wide Policies

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## Theme 1:

### Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Ensuring Sustainable Development

#### Policy CSD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

- 3.5.** Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing society. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030. Climate change impacts how we live now and in the future, and presents disproportional risks to the most vulnerable members of our society. 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 2003, and six of the ten wettest years have occurred since 1998.
- 3.6.** 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, increasing flood risk to communities across the district, including in Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and some of our villages.
- 3.7.** Cherwell's Climate Action Framework confirms the Council's commitment to become a carbon neutral organisation via a range of actions including reduced/cleaner travel, reduced electricity use, the addition of solar panels and retrofit of council buildings with clean heat such as heat pumps or networks.
- 3.8.** The Climate Action Framework also reiterates the Council's commitment to enable the district to be net zero carbon by 2030. Recognising that the Council cannot achieve this alone, it commits to work with businesses, other Oxfordshire District Councils and the 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;
  - 40% of heating to be renewable;
  - New housing to meet very high standards for energy performance;
  - Retrofitting 4,000 existing homes each year to achieve Energy Performance Certification of grade C or better;
  - Electric and active travel to become the new normal.
- 3.9.** The above suite of actions was 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 will need to focus on broader renewable energy sources, sustainable activities and emissions cutting technology.

- 3.10. In December 2022, the Council also resolved to support the One Planet Oxfordshire shared vision and committed to review its operations and activities using the One Planet Living Framework.
- 3.11. In recognition of the importance of mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change this Local Plan is focused on achieving sustainable development..
- 3.12. We recognise that the Local Plan will not be able to address all climate issues alone. We will need to work alongside other stakeholders to help meet the obligations of the *Climate Change Act 2008*, including the legally binding targets to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and interim carbon budgets before then.
- 3.13. Across Oxfordshire, there are various existing and emerging strategies to help meet these targets including the *Oxfordshire Energy Strategy (2019)* prepared by OxLEP and, more recently, the *2021 Pathways to a Zero-Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO)*.
- 3.14. 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. 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. Encouraging individual behavioural changes such as active travel, dietary changes and reducing our energy demand can help too.
- 3.15. Similarly, it is important to ensure that we adapt our buildings and the environment. and build resilience in our communities and critical services to the inevitable changes to our future climate.
- 3.16. With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 17% of annual greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, before even accounting for electricity use (or over 30% if including buildings' electricity use), it is vital to drive forward improvements in their energy performance. These figures also do not include the embodied carbon (from extracting, manufacturing, transporting and assembling the buildings before use). The industry's recent estimates indicate that embodied carbon can in fact represent 40-70% of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by a new building across its whole lifespan. In light of this there is also an increasing recognition that constructing new buildings using sustainable construction techniques is essential in addressing climate change.

## **Policy CSD 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 in accordance with the criteria set out in Policies CSD 2 and 3, 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 or river/canal water for heating and cooling wherever possible;
- 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 low embodied carbon 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.

### **Policies CSD 2 and CSD 3: Zero or Low Carbon Energy Sources**

**3.17.** In 2021, the Government tightened building regulations on energy and carbon as a first step towards the implementation of the Future Homes Standard (FHS) planned to be introduced in 2025. Homes built under the FHS should emit 75-80% less regulated carbon than the standard set by pre-2021 building regulations, and eventually become net zero assuming the electricity grid continues to decarbonise. The FHS may include a higher standard of fabric thermal performance than today's building regulations (Part L 2021). The Government's stated intention is that FHS homes should not need to be retrofitted with any further measures to reach the energy and carbon performance standards that are needed within the UK's overall transition to net zero in 2050.

**3.18.** However, 2023 analysis by the Future Homes Hub revealed that, even when calculated with SAP (which underestimates energy use), the FHS options released to date would (in almost all home types) fail to achieve the level of energy efficiency needed in new homes for compatibility with the UK's carbon budgets to 2050. These FHS homes will not be zero carbon until the electricity grid is entirely decarbonised.

**3.19.** Furthermore, a national consultation in 2024 on potential FHS specifications indicated that the FHS might not improve building fabric at all, potentially relying on heat pumps alone to deliver the ~75% reduction in regulated carbon. This failure to improve fabric would not only further undermine UK



carbon budgets, but also result in heating bills twice that of today's new-build standard (Part L 2021). This may unacceptably impact fuel poverty. By contrast, the original indicated FHS option (2019-20 consultation) had improved fabric as well as a heat pump, reducing energy demand, albeit not far enough to truly align with national carbon budgets.

- 3.20.** Due to the likelihood that the FHS will not align with the UK's carbon budgets and may risk fuel poverty, our policy builds on the FHS by applying the energy efficiency level of the best FHS option to date, and then reaches net zero carbon via the addition of renewable energy, with an offsetting option if the renewable target is unfeasible. This sequential approach (1. efficiency, 2. renewables, 3. offsetting) follows the industry's well-established best practice 'energy hierarchy'.

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS AND THE ENERGY HIERARCHY**

- 3.21.** We will use the Energy Hierarchy to assess proposals against our climate change objectives. It should inform the design, construction and operation of all new buildings. The priority is to firstly pursue all reasonable options to minimise energy demand, and then address how energy will be supplied and renewable technologies incorporated. The energy hierarchy consists of the following steps:
1. Be lean: use less energy and manage demand during operation;
  2. Be clean: exploit local energy resources (such as secondary heat) and supply energy efficiently and cleanly;
  3. Be green: maximise opportunities for renewable energy by producing, storing and using renewable energy on-site, and
  4. Be seen: monitor, verify and report on energy performance.
- 3.22.** Our Net Zero Carbon policies follow this hierarchy in that the 'energy efficiency' requirements incorporate steps 1 and 2 above, and the 'renewable electricity' requirements fall within step 3.
- 3.23.** Where it is not feasible or viable to comply with all of the policy requirements, the Council will require applicants to first demonstrate compliance with the earlier parts of the hierarchy before investing in the later parts.
- 3.24.** Where policy requirements are expressed in terms of Building Regulations metrics, 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*.
- 3.25.** On all new dwellings and commercial development over 1,000m<sup>2</sup> we will expect the development to be tested through the most up-to-date SAP calculations to reveal the energy performance gap between design and construction. For sites of over 10 dwellings where standard house types are used, a representative sample of at least 20% of all dwellings (and including all house types) shall be tested. The Council may select which 20% of the dwellings shall be tested.
- 3.26.** The optional enhanced energy efficiency targets (space heat demand and EUI), these calculations must be performed using PHPP, CIBSE TM54 or an equally accurate predictive energy modelling

methodology. SAP and SBEM are not considered suitably accurate for those optional enhanced targets.

**3.27.** 'Energy efficiency features' includes any features in the building that reduce energy demand, compared to the notional building established in Part L 2021. This includes heating system choices, as well as fabric/lighting/fans and pumps. For example in dwellings, a switch from the Part L 2021 notional dwelling's specified gas boiler to a heat pump would be considered an energy efficiency feature, not a renewable energy feature. In non-residential buildings, Part L 2021 does not define a notional *type* of heating system, but any choice of a heating system product with greater efficiency than the Part L notional efficiency for that heating system type would contribute towards Cherwell's 'energy efficiency' targets.

## THE ENERGY STATEMENT

- 3.28.** As a minimum, energy statements for detailed proposals 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 (energy demand reduction, clean/efficient energy supply, renewable energy generation).
  - b. Confirmation of offsetting arrangements, if required.
  - c. Proposals to reduce carbon emissions and energy use beyond the standards set by the *Building Regulations* Part L 2021, through the energy-efficient design of the site, buildings and services,
  - d. (In major development) 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 microgrids where feasible.
  - e. (In development of  $\geq 50$  homes or  $5,000\text{m}^2$  floor space) A plan for monitoring and annual reporting of energy demand, renewable energy generation and carbon emissions in occupation for at least five years.
  - f. Proposals explaining how the site has been future-proofed to achieve zero carbon on-site emissions by 2050, where this is not already expected to be achieved on completion of the development.
  - g. Where necessary, an embodied carbon emissions assessment, and actions to reduce these.
  - h. Analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy.
  - i. Proposals that connect to or create new heat networks should include details of the design and specification criteria and standards for their systems.
  - j. Proposals to address air quality risks, where a separate air quality assessment has not been undertaken.
- 3.29.** For outline applications, with limited confirmed detail the energy statement should:
- Give as much of the confirmed detail as possible, for example by identifying a sample of typologies that are reasonably representative of the anticipated development, and an assessment of the most suitable renewable energy technologies at this site for the proposed development mix taking into account the available and necessary utilities infrastructure to

support these.

- Demonstrate that the applicant has identified ways that the development could credibly comply with the policies and has anticipated the associated costs of this, for example by identifying a combination of fabric, services and utilities provision that would meet the policies in the sample typologies as above

**3.30.** Developers will be required to perform and submit SAP or SBEM calculations at the pre-planning stage, within the energy statement; and at post-construction, but pre-occupation, using figures from the building constructed. In very large schemes it may be acceptable to do the post-construction calculations using values from a representative sample of buildings that the Council may select.

**3.31.** Calculations for all carbon reductions should be performed using the latest available version of the SAP methodology (currently SAP 10.2) or SBEM in the case of non-residential developments. If the developer proposes to pursue the optional enhanced energy efficiency targets (space heat demand and EUI) these calculations must be performed using PHPP, CIBSE TM54 or an equally accurate predictive energy modelling methodology (SAP and SBEM are not suitable for those optional targets). Where the completed building fails to meet the required standard, reasonable remediation measures will be required. Any residual operational carbon emissions (regulated and unregulated) will be required to be offset whether identified at application stage or pre-occupation stage, unless this is demonstrated to be unviable.

**3.32.** 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, the Assured Performance Process (NEF/GHA), and (in non-residential) NABERS(UK) Design for Performance.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY REQUIREMENTS

**3.33.** The 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.

**3.34.** The Council may consider other methodologies if appropriate.

**3.35.** Where full compliance with the renewable energy targets 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.

**3.36.** 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.

**3.37.** We will expect developers to consider all available zero or low-carbon energy sources so that the energy used in development causes the minimum possible carbon emissions.

**3.38.** Within the definition of 'zero carbon technologies' we will not accept 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, funded and time-bound plan to imminently transition the system to an electrical or fossil-free energy source;
- Fossil-fuel powered heat system that relies on future carbon capture technology, unless at the time of the application it is proven that this technology is available, viable and suitable within the near future at the system supplying the development, with a concrete credible, funded and time-bound plan for the future application of that carbon capture technology to that system.

**3.39.** By contrast, any highly efficient electrically powered technology would count as 'zero carbon ready' as there is a credible timeline for the national electricity grid's transition to net zero carbon. However, this should be counted as an 'energy efficiency' measure rather than a 'renewable energy' measure.

#### THE OFFSETTING ROUTE TO COMPLIANCE

**3.40.** The carbon offsetting function within the policy is designed to enable otherwise desirable development to come forward in a sustainable manner even in the limited situations where it may not be feasible or viable to be net zero carbon on site. The offsetting mechanism does this by financially enabling the Council to fully mitigate the carbon emissions of that development's anticipated energy use, through other interventions within the local area.

**3.41.** Carbon offsetting as a route to 'net zero' compliance will only be acceptable where the applicant demonstrates that achieving net zero operational carbon development via on-site measures (and near-site renewables) is demonstrably unfeasible or unviable, such that offsetting is the only feasible option available to enable necessary development to be brought forward. As such we consider offsetting to be an option of final resort.

**3.42.** The scope of energy to be offset is the same as the scope of the renewable energy provision: *total*

energy in residential development, or *regulated energy only* in non-residential development. Offsetting is required only to make up any shortfall in the renewable energy provision, where it is unfeasible to meet the renewable energy target fully on site.

- 3.43.** Using the most up to date Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) or SBEM (and other appropriate methodologies to assess the unregulated portion of energy use as applicable to the development type, as stated in the supporting text on renewable energy calculations), planning applications will be required to set out in full the anticipated annual energy use of the proposed development after deducting the annual renewable energy generation. This is the amount of energy to be offset.
- 3.44.** 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.
- 3.45.** The offsetting charge will be set per kWh, rather than per tonne of carbon emissions. This price may be updated annually, but initially will start at £1.52/kWh, which is derived from national estimations of the cost per kWp of solar panel installations in combination with the kWh output per kWp of solar panels taking into account Cherwell's annual sunlight.
- 3.46.** It is anticipated that the offsetting fund will be ring-fenced for delivery of renewable energy within the district or within a wider Oxfordshire energy offsetting scheme. Further details of how this policy will be implemented will be set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD.

## **Policy CSD 2: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development - Residential**

**All new dwellings should achieve net zero operational carbon from total energy use (regulated and unregulated) by implementing the energy hierarchy as follows:**

- i. Achieve a  $\geq 63\%$  reduction in regulated emissions on site, compared to the Target Emissions Rate (TER) set by Building Regulations Part L 2021, to be achieved via energy efficiency improvements (i.e. before the addition of renewable electricity)**
- ii. As a step towards achievement of the TER improvement specified in point i above, achieve the following improvement (reduction) on the Building Regulations Part L 2021 Target Fabric Energy Efficiency (TFEE), as applicable to each of the following dwelling typology:**
  - **End terrace:  $\geq 12\%$**
  - **Mid terrace:  $\geq 16\%$**
  - **Semi-detached with room in roof:  $\geq 15\%$**
  - **Detached:  $\geq 17\%$**
  - **Bungalow:  $\geq 9\%$**
  - **Flats / apartments:  $\geq 24\%$  (weighted average, whole block).**

**All of the above should be calculated using SAP10.2 or later version.**

- iii. Positive weight will be given where the following optional energy efficiency benchmarks are**

achieved, demonstrated via an accurate predictive energy modelling methodology\*:

- a. Space heat demand  $\leq 20\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{year}$
  - b. Total energy use intensity  $\leq 35\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{year}$ .
- iv. Subsequent to points (i) and (ii) above, deliver sufficient renewable electricity generation capacity on-site (or near-site with a private supply to site) to at least equal the development's estimated total annual energy demand (regulated and unregulated energy), or  $120\text{kWh/m}^2$  footprint/year.
  - v. Where it is demonstrated that it is not feasible to fully meet the renewable electricity provision sought in point (iv) above, the shortfall should be calculated and offset to zero. Offsetting shall be via a set price per annual kWh, paid to the Council's offsetting fund or Council-approved equivalent local scheme.

Developments of 50 or more new dwellings will be required to monitor and report energy performance for the first 5 years of occupation.

The use of fossil fuels or connection to the gas grid will not be acceptable.

All 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.

Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate via the Energy Statement that carbon reductions to the greatest extent feasible and viable have been implemented in accordance with the energy hierarchy, quantifying the improvements achieved at each of the energy hierarchy stages.

\*SAP is not an accurate predictive energy modelling methodology and will not be suitable to demonstrate the achievement of these benchmarks. One suitable methodology is PHPP. Other methodologies may be considered by the Council, based on evidence from the applicant to demonstrate the predictive accuracy of the methodology and input from the Council's internal expertise and/or independent advisors

### **Policy CSD 3: Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development, Non-residential**

All new non-residential development of  $500\text{m}^2$  or more should achieve net zero operational carbon emissions from *regulated* energy uses by implementing the energy hierarchy as follows:

- i. Achieve the following minimum reductions in regulated carbon emissions on site, compared to the carbon Target Emissions Rate (TER) set by Building Regulations Part L 2021, with demonstration that as much of the reduction is through energy efficiency improvements as feasible:
  - Offices:  $\geq 25\%$  reduction
  - Schools:  $\geq 35\%$  reduction

- **Industrial buildings:  $\geq 45\%$**
  - **Hotels and residential institutions (class C2, C2a and C5):  $\geq 10\%$**
  - **Other non-residential buildings:  $\geq 35\%$**
- ii. **Positive weight will be given where the following optional energy efficiency benchmarks are achieved, demonstrated via an accurate predictive energy modelling methodology :**
- **Space heat demand  $\leq 20\text{kWh}/\text{m}^2/\text{year}$**
  - **Total energy use intensity  $\leq 65\text{kWh}/\text{m}^2/\text{year}$ .**
- iii. **Subsequent to points (i) and (ii) above, deliver sufficient renewable energy generation capacity on-site (or near-site with a private supply to site) to at least equal the development's estimated annual regulated energy demand, or  $120\text{kWh}/\text{m}^2$  footprint/year wherever feasible.**
- iv. **Where it is demonstrated not feasible to fully meet the renewable electricity provision sought in point (iv) above, the shortfall should be calculated and offset to zero. Offsetting shall be via a set price per annual kWh of shortfall, paid to the Council's offsetting fund or council-approved equivalent local scheme.**

**Developments of  $5000\text{m}^2$  or more will be required to monitor and report energy performance for the first 5 years of occupation.**

**The use of fossil fuels or connection to the gas grid will not generally be considered acceptable.**

**All 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.**

**Where full compliance is not feasible or viable, proposals must demonstrate via the Energy Statement that carbon reductions to the greatest extent feasible and viable have been implemented in accordance with the energy hierarchy, quantifying the improvements achieved at each of the energy hierarchy stages.**

### **Policy CSD 4: Improving energy and carbon performance in existing buildings**

**3.47.** As existing buildings vary so much in type and condition it is difficult to set targets that are universally feasible and viable for all qualifying applications. However, we want to encourage improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings wherever possible to assist in meeting our climate change ambitions. Reuse of existing buildings is also desirable to save embodied carbon, so we do not want to set targets that would encourage demolition and replacement rather than refurbishment and adaptation.

### **Policy CSD 4: Improving energy and carbon performance in existing buildings**

**Applications relating to an existing building which propose to include works that will significantly improve the energy and carbon performance of that building will be encouraged. This could include, in**

order of the energy hierarchy:

- Energy efficiency improvements
- Switching to lower-carbon energy supply (a direct supply, not simply a renewable tariff)
- Adding renewable energy generation capacity
- Adding 'smart' energy features that reduce total or peak grid energy demand, such as demand-side response, smart local grids, or energy storage capacity where there is already renewable energy generation at the site.

Major applications relating to existing buildings (10+ homes or 1000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace), should include an energy statement showing how opportunities for energy and carbon performance improvements have been explored, and implemented where suitable, feasible and viable, with their improvement effect quantified.

### Policy CSD 5: Embodied carbon

**3.48.** Embodied carbon is the greenhouse gas emitted to create and maintain buildings, as opposed to the energy used to run the building. This can cover two different 'scopes':

- 'Up-front' embodied carbon is emitted from all stages of material extraction to completion of the building.
- 'Whole life' embodied carbon includes 'up-front' embodied carbon plus the maintenance, demolition and disposal of the building.

**3.49.** Embodied carbon is a significant proportion of new buildings' total carbon impact (34-75%) and is becoming an even bigger proportion as new builds get more energy-efficient and run on cleaner energy.

**3.50.** Embodied carbon is not addressed by Building Regulations or other national incentives on building design or construction.

**3.51.** There is a single industry-accepted methodology to account for embodied carbon, set by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

**3.52.** Architect industry body RIBA and energy experts network LETI have established benchmarks for up-front embodied carbon ranging from A++ (best) to G (worst):

| Rating | Office | Residential | Education | Retail |
|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------|
| A++    | <100   | <100        | <100      | <100   |
| A+     | <225   | <200        | <200      | <200   |
| A      | <350   | <300        | <300      | <300   |
| B      | <475   | <400        | <400      | <425   |
| C      | <600   | <500        | <500      | <550   |



|          |       |       |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>D</b> | <775  | <675  | <625  | <700  |
| <b>E</b> | <950  | <850  | <750  | <850  |
| <b>F</b> | <1100 | <1000 | <875  | <1000 |
| <b>G</b> | <1300 | <1200 | <1100 | <1200 |

**3.53.** Policy CSD 5 requirements reflect the upper limit of 'band D' in this benchmarking system. While not representing an improvement on the standard practice in Oxfordshire, this seeks to reduce embodied carbon by supporting best practice in design and construction.

### **Policy CSD 5: Embodied carbon**

**Proposals for new development of  $\geq 1$  homes or  $\geq 100\text{m}^2$  floor space should include a general narrative on options considered (and where possible, implemented) to minimise embodied carbon.**

**Major development ( $\geq 10$  homes or  $\geq 1000\text{ m}^2$  floorspace) that contains existing buildings/structures should carry out a pre-redevelopment or pre-demolition audit following an established industry best practice method (e.g. BRE), with the aim of maximising retention and/or reuse of existing materials.**

**All major new developments ( $\geq 10$  dwellings or  $\geq 1000\text{ m}^2$  floorspace) should also complete a whole-life carbon assessment in accordance with RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment method, unless this would demonstrably be nonviable.**

**All large-scale major development ( $\geq 50$  dwellings or  $\geq 5000\text{m}^2$  floor space) should limit up-front embodied carbon to  $675\text{kgCO}_2\text{e}/\text{m}^2$  GIA. 'Up-front' means modules A1 – A5 in the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment methodology, which should be used to demonstrate compliance with the target limit.**

### **Policy CSD 6: Renewable Energy**

**3.54.** 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.

**3.55.** 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. We therefore need to consider the land use implications of meeting future renewable energy generation requirements necessary for local and national carbon reduction targets.

**3.56.** We recognise the need to provide a positive framework for renewable and low carbon energy generation and also acknowledge that national policy makes clear that such schemes are no longer required to justify the need for them. Additionally, we recognise the proposed changes to national policy introduce an expectation that local planning authorities should "give significant weight to any renewable

and low carbon proposals that contribute to a net zero future.

- 3.57.** However, development, including wind and solar energy developments, within the district needs to be managed carefully to maximise their potential contribution towards energy needs, whilst at the same time ensuring that the important characteristics of our environment and landscape are not unacceptably harmed. Agriculture and food production are also very important to the local and national economy and we will seek to ensure that productive agricultural land is not blighted by such proposals. New and emerging technologies such as agrivoltaics will be encouraged.
- 3.58.** In 2019 we commissioned a study 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.
- 3.59.** 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.
- 3.60.** 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, landscape character, agricultural production, heritage and public rights of way. Applicants will need to demonstrate that cumulative effects do not become a significant or defining characteristic of the wider landscape.
- 3.61.** 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 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 such community energy schemes.

## **Policy CSD 6: Renewable Energy**

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

**Planning applications involving renewable energy development will therefore be supported provided that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, can be addressed satisfactorily. Issues, considered to be of particular local significance in Cherwell include:**

- i. Landscape and biodiversity including national and local designations, protected habitats and species, Nature Recovery Networks and Conservation Target Areas;**

- ii. **Visual impacts on local landscapes;**
- iii. **Best and most versatile agricultural land and food production;**
- iv. **The historic environment including designated and non-designated heritage 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.**
- x **Mineral safeguarding areas.**

### **Policy CSD 7: Sustainable Flood Risk Management**

- 3.62.** The probability of flooding can be reduced through the management of land, river systems and flood defences, and the impact reduced by controlling the type of development allowed to be located in flood-risk areas. National planning policy sets out Flood Zone definitions and Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility.
- 3.63.** Our Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (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).
- 3.64.** We have also prepared Level 2 SFRA's to assess the level of Flood Risk for some proposed site allocations in more detail. These assessments provide site-specific guidance for flood risk assessments, policy recommendations and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance.

### **Policy CSD 7: Sustainable Flood Risk Management**

**The Council will manage and reduce current and future flood risk in the district using a sequential approach to development, applying the Sequential Test 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.**

**In addition to safeguarding floodplains from development, opportunities will be sought to restore natural river flows and floodplains to help reduce flood risk to local communities as well as increasing their amenity and biodiversity value. Building over or culverting of watercourses should be avoided**

and the removal of existing culverts will be encouraged.

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 for the lifetime of their development and be designed to be resilient to flooding.

Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals in the following situations:

- All development proposals located in flood zones 2 and 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;
- Development sites located within 9m of any watercourse.

Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood risk over the lifetime of the development, taking into account the latest climate change guidance, and demonstrate that:

- Flood water will be managed effectively on site and the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding;
- There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 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 year storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.

Development should be safe and, where necessary, remain operational. Development should provide an appropriate freeboard above the design flood level taking account of climate change and set floor levels above this level. Where flood risk is significant and access may be compromised in extreme events, a comprehensive Emergency Flood Plan shall be provided to help manage any residual risk. Where possible, opportunities to reduce flood risk at sites and downstream will be identified and provided.

#### **Policy CSD 8: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

- 3.65.** 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.
- 3.66.** 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 investigate how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

**3.67.** 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.

**3.68.** Advice on SuDS and their various techniques is provided in our Level 1 SFRA.

### **Policy CSD 8: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

**All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in line with the SuDS sustainable hierarchy for the management of surface water run-off. SuDS are required to be considered from the earliest stage of site design to ensure they are fully integrated into the development and that the greatest multifunctional benefits are realised.**

**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, with specific additional protection of areas of principal aquifers and within Source Protection Zones, and biodiversity must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Infiltration SuDS will not normally be acceptable in areas of former or current land contamination. SuDS are required 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 are required to maximise biodiversity and amenity value, taking full advantage of opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement and improvement to water quality in line with the Water Framework Directive.**

### **Policy CSD 9: Water Resources & Wastewater infrastructure**

**3.69.** In considering development proposals, we will seek to reduce the impact of development on the water environment, maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use. Some development can also remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on controlled water and human health.

**3.70.** Cherwell District lies within an area of serious water stress and the Upper Cherwell area, including Banbury, has been over abstracted.. We will also ensure that new development incorporates water efficiency measures, thereby reducing overall demand.

**3.71.** We will seek to protect and enhance water quality including surface water and groundwater; ensure adequate water resources, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity; and, promote sustainable water use. Water quality will be protected and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

### **Policy CSD 9: Water Resources and wastewater infrastructure**

Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes, groundwater and reservoirs, or habitats which are water dependent, 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, groundwater 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 homes are required to be designed to a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/head/day (l/h/d) .

Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

The development or expansion of water supply or waste water facilities will be supported, either where needed to serve existing or proposed development, or in the interests of long term water supply and waste water management, provided that the need for such facilities outweighs any adverse land use or environmental impact and that any such adverse impact is minimised.

### **Policy CSD 10: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC**

**3.72.** Part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located in the southwest corner

of the district. The SAC receives statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Oxford Meadows SAC has a set of Conservation Objectives and a Site Improvement Plan.

- 3.73.** It 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.
- 3.74.** 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.
- 3.75.** 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 quality flowing through the SAC during the construction and the operation of the development. This could potentially alter or prevent the nutrient enrichment of the habitats and species that the SAC supports, leading to degradation or loss.
- 3.76.** Our aim is to prevent any obstruction of groundwater flows and to improve the water quality, to maintain and improve the stability of the hydrological regime within the SAC and therefore its integrity as a site of international importance.

### **Policy CSD 10: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC**

**All new development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:**

- i. They have undertaken comprehensive pre application engagement with the relevant statutory organisations in relation to their development proposals relationship with the Oxford Meadows SAC;**
- ii During construction of the development there will be no adverse effects on the water quality or quantity of any adjacent or nearby watercourses;**
- iii. 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);**
- iv. New developments should seek to improve the water quality and the hydrological regime of the Oxford Meadows SAC and they must not significantly alter groundwater flows.**
- v. Run-off rates of surface water from the development will be maintained at greenfield rates.**

## **Policy CSD 11: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity**

- 3.77.** 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 32 Conservation Target Areas, the interim Nature Recovery Network and the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy across Oxfordshire. Wild Oxfordshire's 'State of Nature in Oxfordshire 2017' report highlighted the need for investment in nature and wildlife and conservation action to help recover species and habitats in the County.
- 3.78.** 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.
- 3.79.** Sites of regional/local importance include Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Local Wildlife Sites, 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 and community benefit), 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 to 27 DWS's and 37 proposed DWS's (as of October 2022). A live list of Local Wildlife Sites and associated maps are available on the TVERC website.
- 3.80.** 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/riverbanks, ponds and floodplains can be of importance both in urban and rural areas, and often form wildlife corridors and stepping stones. Similarly, it is not just greenfield sites that can be of value; previously developed land can also make an important contribution to biodiversity. Previously developed land can form important habitats in their own right and some development can remediate contaminated land that may be having an adverse impact on ecology.
- 3.81.** 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 retain, 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.
- 3.82.** This Plan seeks to create a biodiversity 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,



and using landscaping to link up existing areas supporting biodiversity. Provision of integrated bat, bird and invertebrate bricks will be sought at a ratio of one per new dwelling or equivalent (albeit these may be best clustered), with swift bricks particularly encouraged. Where possible, boundaries and fencing should be made permeable to wildlife or designed to encourage connectivity for species such as hedgehogs. 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.

- 3.83.** 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 impacting hedgerows 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.
- 3.84.** The emerging Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies areas for biodiversity enhancements and provides a spatial strategy for nature, establishing priorities and opportunities to recover and enhance the local natural environment. In addition, the draft Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire identifies the following:
- **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, 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 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.

## **Policy CSD 11: 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. Their adaptation to climate change and improving connections between wildlife corridors and**

protected sites at a landscape scale should be facilitated in line with the hierarchy of designations set out in legislation and the draft 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 would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless there are exceptional reasons where public benefit clearly outweighs the loss or deterioration and a suitable compensation strategy is agreed**
- iii. **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, and**
- iv. **Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance, or impacts Priority/Section 41 habitats and species will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and can be fully mitigated to achieve a biodiversity gain for both species and habitats.**

**Any development with the potential to impact on a SAC, SPA and/or Ramsar site 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.**

**All development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to enhance biodiversity such as biodiverse green and brown roofs, green walls, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) open water features and, soft landscaping , in addition to retaining and enhancing existing features of nature conservation value within the site.**

**New dwellings will be expected to provide integrated bird or bat provision at a minimum equivalent ratio of one per new dwelling.**

**Development proposals are expected to be designed to create areas of new habitat and provide appropriate links and corridors between new and existing ecological networks, including those identified in the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, avoiding and reversing fragmentation and species Isolation.**

**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 those within the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy where appropriate.

Any new development will be required to secure the management and monitoring of biodiversity features created on-site and those created off-site for at least 30 years, to compensate for development impacts, through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

Major development proposals are expected, and minor development proposals are encouraged, to deliver measures that promote a sense of community ownership of green spaces and habitats.

\*Unless it meets the relevant subsequent legal tests (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and No Alternatives) and provides adequate compensation.

#### **Policy CSD 12: Biodiversity Net Gain**

- 3.85.** Under the *Environment Act 2021*, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) must deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). BNG is measured using Defra's statutory biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.
- 3.86.** In line with the requirements of the *Environment Act*, the Council will expect all development proposals, except those which are exempt, to demonstrate a minimum 10% increase in BNG and will encourage applications to consider achieving higher net gains.
- 3.87.** Development proposals will need to be supported by a statement outlining how BNG has been addressed.
- 3.88.** In assessing BNG the Council will firstly consider proposals against the 'mitigation hierarchy' as illustrated by Figure 1.

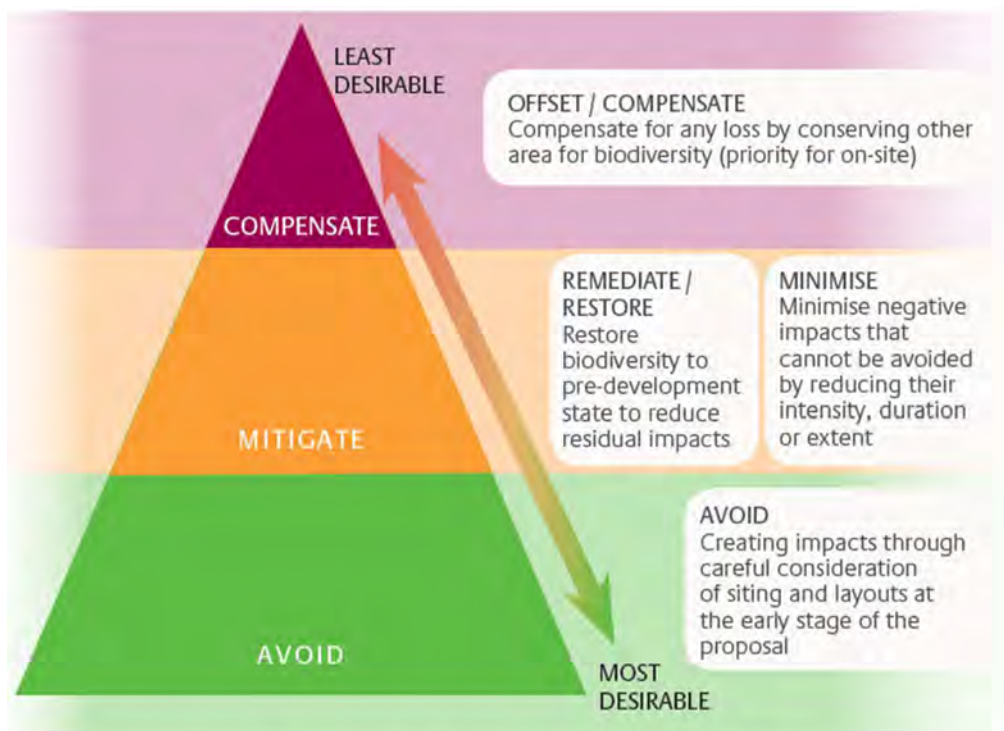


Figure 1: Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy

- 3.89. 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.
- 3.90. The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy takes the following approach:
- Avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout;
  - Enhance and create habitats to achieve biodiversity gains 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).
- 3.91. Where off-site delivery of BNG is required, this should take place at opportunities identified in the Council's 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.

## Policy CSD 12: Biodiversity Net Gain

Unless exemptions apply, development will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity (measured using the DEFRA Statutory biodiversity metric) by protecting enhancing and creating habitats of biodiversity value, 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 the strategic allocations in this Plan.

**Exempted development must achieve no net loss of biodiversity and should demonstrate biodiversity enhancement to achieve clear overall gains.**

**All 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 at least a thirty-year period.**

**Delivery of biodiversity net gain should follow the Biodiversity gain 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 guided by the priorities within the NRN and LNRS, projects identified in the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, or where they can secure the greatest benefits to Oxfordshire's wildlife and ecosystems.**

**Biodiversity Net Gain proposals should seek to avoid harm to the historic environment.**

### **Policy CSD 13: Conservation Target Areas**

- 3.92.** Conservation Target Areas form a key part of the Nature Recovery Network core and recovery zones and the emerging LNRS. The Target Areas were identified to focus biodiversity restoration work 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). 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 targets and aims for habitats and species of the CTA through avoiding habitat damage/ fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.
- 3.93.** Sixteen Conservation Target Areas lie wholly or partly within Cherwell District. 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.
- 3.94.** 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 being developed as part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### **Policy CSD 13: 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 or prevent its aims being achieved will not be permitted. Where there is potential for development, planning conditions or obligations will be used to secure biodiversity enhancement of the target habitats and species of the Conservation Target Area.**

#### **Policy CSD 14: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services**

- 3.95.** 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. We recognise 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.
- 3.96.** The Natural Capital Map of Oxfordshire (2021) presents the natural capital assets present in Cherwell, whilst Cherwell’s Natural Capital Assets report (2021) provides a preliminary register of natural capital assets present in the district. 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.

#### **Policy CSD 14: 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.**

#### **Policy CSD 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure**

- 3.97.** 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 spaces, green and blue corridors (including cycleways, rights of way, canals and rivers), outdoor sports facilities, amenity green spaces, allotments, cemeteries/ 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.
- 3.98.** 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.

- 3.99.** A draft Oxfordshire-wide Nature Recovery Network has been produced with a Local Nature Recovery Strategy emerging. This will identify key locations for biodiversity gain building on the principles of Conservation Target Areas to focus efforts on habitat restoration and enable wildlife species to move over wider areas.
- 3.100.** Our Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022) provides guidance to developers and other stakeholders on how to integrate green and blue infrastructure enhancements into proposals. It also spatially represents the current Cherwell green and blue infrastructure network and provides recommendations to address challenges and opportunities to improve existing green and blue infrastructure provision.

### **Policy CSD 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure**

**The Council will require the protection and enhancement of sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network and the improvement of sustainable connections between sites. The inclusion of meaningful and integrated GBI in development proposals will be required.**

**For major developments (see glossary), 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.**

**All development 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.**

**Off-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.**

## **Policy CSD 16: Air Quality**

- 3.101.** Air pollution is caused by a variety of domestic, industrial and vehicular related sources and it is associated with directly causing adverse health impacts on physical and mental health some of which are a contributing factor in the onset of lung, heart and cancer conditions.
- 3.102.** The Council is committed to working with partners to reducing the exposure of people in Cherwell to poor air quality in order to improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of the local communities within the District. As part of the Council's statutory duty, it produces an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which details the actions that the Council will take in order to improve the air quality within the District.
- 3.103.** 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) , or within relative proximity to the Oxford SAC will need to assess any impact and demonstrate mitigation measures that are incorporated into the design specifically to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.
- 3.104.** Where construction and sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and/or where it is deemed the proposals will have an impact on air quality, the applicant will be required to undertake and submit an air quality assessment and a Sustainable Construction Management Plan which details the impact and the proposed mitigation. It is recommended that the applicant undertakes pre application engagement with the relevant statutory consultees Including the Council's Environmental Protection Team before submitting their planning application.
- 3.105.** Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction period and throughout the lifetime of the completed development.
- 3.106.** Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's latest *Air Quality Action Plan* and the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.107.** Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition/s and/or planning obligation/s depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.



## **Policy CSD 16: Air Quality**

All development proposals should be designed to be air quality neutral. The design and layout of a development should seek to improve air quality to protect the health and wellbeing of all end users.

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) and those in, or within relative proximity to the Oxford Meadows SAC will be required to provide appropriate design and related infrastructure mitigation measures to minimise any adverse impacts.

Where development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality, or where development may impact the Oxford Meadows SAC, and/or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment and a Sustainable Construction Management Plan will normally be required. The Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during construction and throughout the lifetime of the completed development.

Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal/s would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's *Air Quality Action Plan* and the *County Council's Local Transport Plan*. Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition/s and/or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

## **Policy CSD 17: Pollution and Noise**

- 3.108.** Pollution can be both visible and invisible and 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. Prolonged exposure to noise can cause permanent damage to health.
- 3.109.** Any potentially adverse effects must be carefully considered in the assessment of any planning application and can be the basis for the refusal of a planning application if not adequately addressed. Developers are encouraged to have pre-application discussions with the Council to be advised on the specific requirements.
- 3.110.** Assessments should:
- Identify the sensitive receptor(s) which may be affected by the proposed development, including residents, businesses, educational, health, leisure, community uses, land users and sensitive environmental and heritage assets;
  - Consider the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or approved development including those that are under construction, 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.

- 3.111.** Developers are expected to proactively monitor impacts and emissions to enable pollution related issues to be addressed swiftly. Close liaison with communities and those directly impacted can support this approach, enabling feedback and dialogue on the need for and effectiveness of any proposed or existing mitigation measures.

### **Policy CSD 17: Pollution and Noise**

**Development will not be permitted if it results 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 wellbeing, quality of life and amenity including residential amenity;**
- 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, and some types of leisure and recreational uses) 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 design solutions including the use of appropriate materials, and**
- v. Promoting new technologies and improved practices to minimise noise at source, and on the transmission path from source to receiver.**

**Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') will be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed. Development proposals that have not clearly demonstrated how noise and other nuisances will be minimised, mitigated and managed will not be permitted**

### **Policy CSD 18: Light Pollution**

- 3.112.** 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.

- 3.113.** Artificial lighting is necessary in many circumstances including for public safety, enabling

nighttime activities including for leisure and recreation facilities and for activities related to airport operations. 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 tranquillity and dark skies.

- 3.114.** Careful location, positioning and design of lighting can minimise the above impacts. Lighting schemes should therefore use and follow best practice for the reduction of light pollution.

### **Policy CSD 18: Light Pollution**

**Development will be expected to avoid harmful light pollution to people and wildlife. Unnecessary light pollution which causes carbon emissions or detracts from the visual amenity of an area should also be avoided.**

**Proposals for any external lighting will need to demonstrate that:**

- i. The lighting is the minimum required for its intended use;**
- ii. Light pollution is minimised, and**
- iii. There is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity, adjacent land uses, the character and appearance of the landscape, nature conservation, or highway safety.**

### **Policy CSD 19: Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability**

- 3.115.** Contaminated land is land that has been polluted with harmful substances that are causing or could cause:
- a) significant harm to people, property or protected species
  - b) significant pollution of surface waters including lakes, rivers or groundwater
  - c) harm to people as a result of radioactivity
- 3.116.** Cherwell District has a history of industrial and defence related land uses and we want to ensure that the impacts of these past and current land uses do not affect or harm the health of people, animals or the environment.
- 3.117.** 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.
- 3.118.** 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.
- 3.119.** The term 'poor ground conditions' referred to in *Policy CSD 19* may include, but is not limited to the following:
- Poorly consolidated made ground and fill material;
  - Soft, weak and wet natural soils;
  - Areas of shallow mine-workings and mineshafts.

**3.120.** 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.

### **Policy CSD 19: Soils, Contaminated Land and Stability**

**Development 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 specialist person) to demonstrate that land contamination issues have been fully addressed or can be satisfactorily addressed through the development.**

**Development will not be permitted in locations where there are risks from land instability. Development 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 specialist person) to demonstrate that land instability issues will be fully addressed.**

### **Policy CSD 20: Hazardous Substances**

**3.121.** In considering proposals for development which, may involve hazardous substances, we will need to be completely satisfied that the proposal will not constitute a hazard to our existing and future planned communities and/ or the local environment. Similarly, existing consents will be an important consideration in the determination of sensitive uses such as housing.

**3.122.** 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.

### **Policy CSD 20: Hazardous Substances**

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 existing hazardous substances , will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that development will not constitute an unacceptable risk to human health, safety, animal health including livestock and the environment. Where necessary, appropriate measures to protect the public and the environment will be required.

**Policy CSD 21: Waste Collection and Recycling**

**3.123.** To minimise waste and pollution, and to reduce the impact of waste on climate change, we expect future developments to support the application of the waste hierarchy (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Waste Hierarchy**



**3.124.** Given the pressing urgency of climate change and the need to embed the principles of the circular 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 sharing , refill stations, and space for local food growing etc.

**3.125.** 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.

**3.126.** 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). All applications will be assessed against this guidance. Residential development should be designed in accordance with Cherwell District Council's Planning and Waste Management Design Advice. 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.

### **Policy CSD 21: Waste Collection and Recycling**

*Development will be expected to incorporate suitable facilities 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 suitable internal storage space within their premises to enable the occupiers to separate, store and recycle their waste;*
- ii. Provide suitable, secure, external or communal storage facilities on site that 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. Demonstrate that bin storage, whilst being designed to meet practical needs, is integrated into the built form and does not detract from the overall design of the scheme or the surrounding area.*
- vii. Demonstrate that external bin storage is designed as an integral part of the overall design or are positioned to minimise the adverse visual impact;*
- viii. Enable waste from mixed-use schemes to be segregated in separate secured areas;*
- ix. Provide innovative solutions to reduce waste at source, and*
- x. All major development must be accompanied by a Waste Management Plan which demonstrates how the criteria set out above will be achieved.*

### **Policy CSD 22: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements**

**3.127.** One of our key objectives for meeting the challenge of climate change is to ensure that housing and employment are located within sustainable locations. Encouraging sustainable transport modes, low-carbon technologies, and living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities can lead to reduced travel, reduced carbon emissions and generally more sustainable communities.

- 3.128.** We have described earlier the benefits of Oxfordshire's and more specifically, Cherwell's good strategic, local and public transport connections. However, Oxfordshire also experiences severe congestion in many places. Transport is the largest contributor to carbon emissions in the County, with 46% originating from road transport tailpipe emissions. The presence of the M40 and A34 is a key determinant in Cherwell and likely to be worse due to the high numbers of people who live in rural areas who rely more heavily on car usage.
- 3.129.** Traffic congestion is a major cost to the local economy and has the potential to constrain future growth. If traffic growth continues due to an overreliance on the private car, many more of the district's urban and interurban routes will become increasingly congested.
- 3.130.** Since our last Local Plan there has been investment and improvements to our local rail infrastructure in Cherwell. This has included:
- A direct link from Oxford to Bicester via a new railway station at Oxford Parkway which includes a Park and Ride;
  - A new railway station at Islip;
  - Improvements to Bicester Village Railway Station;
  - Faster services from Banbury and Bicester to Oxford and London Marylebone.
- 3.131.** Over the period to 2042, further 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) could help support a shift of freight movements to rail.
- 3.132.** The County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 (LTCP) 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. It proposes to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.
- 3.133.** Substantial investment and funding will be required to support net-zero carbon growth in Cherwell and across Oxfordshire. Our updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out how we intend to secure investment from the government, transport operators, the development industry and other sources.

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

- 3.134.** Making a difference to current travel patterns will require quality infrastructure for sustainable travel modes to make them our first choice. Proposals will therefore be required to plan for improved walking, cycling and public transport and provide these at an early stage of the development.

- 3.135.** We will seek better connectivity, quality, accessibility and capacity of public transport and active travel. Our main transport corridors and facilities will need upgrading to enable efficient use of public transport and safe walking and cycling routes. We will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways, Network Rail, and other providers to bring forward improvements to infrastructure, services and freight movements. Development should support and enable these projects, where appropriate.
- 3.136.** The County Council's Mobility Hub Strategy and Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (July 2023) set out strategies to address challenges related to improving multi-modal travel and better integrating different transport modes.
- 3.137.** We will apply 20-minute neighbourhood principles as well as a 'Healthy Streets Approach' to development and infrastructure provision to facilitate trips by walking and cycling alongside reducing health inequalities.

## **Policy CSD 22: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity Improvements**

The Council will support measures identified in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the area travel plans that support delivery of the Local Plan. We will 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 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 and wheeling (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 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 and storage, 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's Places and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

**Policy CSD 23: Assessing Transport Impact/Decide and Provide**

- 3.138.** This Plan seeks to increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport. It has a strong focus on reducing the need to travel by private car and encouraging use of other modes of transport (travel choices), especially for shorter trips. 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. We will expect large-scale sites to provide access for public transport vehicles.
- 3.139.** Proposals will need to quantify the likely transport impacts that they will have and describe any mitigation measures to reduce them. Proposals that will generate significant amounts of transport movements will need to be accompanied by a transport assessment, and a travel plan.
- 3.140.** Further details can be found in Oxfordshire County Council's 'Decide and Provide': Requirements for Transport Assessments (September 2022). To enable National Highways to establish the effectiveness of the decide and provide approach, transport assessments for large scale development also be supported by a 'worst case' impact scenario'.
- 3.141.** Measures in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan such as Controlled Parking Zones will be considered in the proximity of Oxford and transport/mobility hubs.
- 3.142.** The requirement for 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.
- 3.143.** We will seek infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles where appropriate and viable, with reference to the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy.

**Policy CSD 23: 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 improves safety as well as 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 and frequency can accommodate the proposed increase in the number of trips, or where capacity and frequency can be increased to an appropriate level through developer 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 and be supported by a 'worst case' traffic impact scenario.

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 make a proportionate contribution to the provision of, new and/or improved public transport infrastructure and services 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, cycle and car parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure.

Development which improves or provides 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 safe and suitable access on foot and by bicycle, including consideration of pedestrian and cycle desire lines.

#### **Policy CSD 24: Freight**

- 3.144.** There is a need to better manage the movement of goods, both in rural and more urban areas. For example, there is a huge rise in online shopping, requiring goods to be transported quickly and in tight timescales. This presents a challenge for delivery services and can require running more vehicles to meet demand, especially Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) and Light Goods Vehicles (LGV). It is forecasted that freight miles will increase, which could lead to carbon dioxide emissions from freight transport increasing by around 20% by 2050 (Oxfordshire LTCP Baseline 2022).
- 3.145.** Oxfordshire County Council has published Freight and Logistics Strategy (July 2022), in support of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which sets out a strategy relating to the movement of goods on the road network.
- 3.146.** The Council will work with partners to minimise freight trips on the road network and promote safe, clean and efficient freight movements where they are consistent with the delivery of the Local

Plan.

### **Policy CSD 24: Freight**

**Local delivery hubs that reduce traffic will be supported particularly where it would lead to a reduction in noise and emissions from local freight trips and enable sustainable last-mile movements.**

### **Policy CSD 25: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density**

- 3.147.** 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 minimising the use of greenfield land, maintaining the appearance of our towns and villages and in assisting the well-being of our communities. It can also provide opportunities for enhancing biodiversity. This means ensuring that land is not underused and that we make the most of vacant and derelict land and buildings.
- 3.148.** We will support the redevelopment of previously developed land within the built areas of our towns and villages wherever possible. We will strive to ensure that any identified 'brownfield' regeneration sites are brought forward. 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. We 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.
- 3.149.** All housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. All new housing development should therefore be provided at a net density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare. Within our existing towns and Heyford park higher densities will normally be required. 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.

### **Policy CSD 25: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density**

**All development will be required to make effective and efficient use of land which is to be utilised for buildings. Development should not utilise greenfield land unnecessarily. Good design will be required to ensure this. Where there are significant concerns about the unnecessary use of land, a design review panel paid for by the applicant may be sought.**

**The Council will encourage the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations.**

For residential development the following minimum densities (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.

- 45 dwellings/hectare within existing settlements of Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, and Heyford Park;
- 40 dwellings /hectare urban extensions (less than 50 hectares);
- 35 dwellings /hectare urban extensions (more than 50 hectares), and
- 35 dwellings /hectare rural and other areas

Higher densities will be sought in locations where it will result in the optimum use of land, where there is good access to services and public transport, and where it would contribute to enhancing the character and legibility of a place. A contextual design-led approach is encouraged.

## Theme 2:

### Maintaining and Developing a Sustainable Local Economy

#### **Employment**

#### **Policy LEC 1: Meeting Business and Employment Needs**

- 3.150.** Cherwell has a diverse economy with strengths in manufacturing, retail, health, and science and technology. The district is at the northern point of the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine'. Cherwell also sits at the intersection between the Knowledge Spine and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which is recognised as hosting one of the fastest growing economies in England.
- 3.151.** Our key commercial centres are Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. The rural commercial market is relatively small with only limited availability of industrial or storage units. We recognise that agriculture continues to be a key economic activity within our rural areas.
- 3.152.** Our employment needs evidence indicates a need for around 250 hectares of employment land in Cherwell over the period 2021 to 2040. This assessment considered the delivery of employment land, but whilst recognising the potential contribution that existing allocated sites would make, did not factor this potential supply into an adjusted need figure. We have extrapolated this calculation of need to cover the additional two years that the Local Plan now covers so that the total employment need for the district is around 280 hectares to 2042.
- 3.153.** Our last local plan identified a significant amount of employment land and whilst much of this has been developed there still remains substantial areas of land available for development. Allocations from the 2015 Local Plan, referred at the time of the 2021 Economic Needs Assessment, which had yet to deliver at that point would make a contribution of 160.4 hectares against the need total,. The table below shows the updated information relating to delivery of those sites. In addition, we will need to take account of other permissions in place and development that has been completed on unallocated sites since the start of the plan - approximately 5 hectares and over 8 hectares of unallocated employment land with planning permission We have completed an Employment Land Review (October 2022) and we have identified a number of additional potential employment sites across the District to inform the allocation of sites referred below We have proposed the allocation of 97.5 hectares of land on new sites.

#### **Policy LEC 1 Meeting Business and Employment Needs**

**Retained allocations from the 2015 Local Plan will provide 37.38 hectares of land as shown below.**

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Allocation</b>                          | <b>Total allocation size</b> | <b>Allocation without planning permission</b> |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Banbury</b>  | <b>Banbury 6:<br/>Employment Land West</b> | <b>35 ha</b>                 | <b>5.9 ha</b>                                 |

|                    |  |                |                       |
|--------------------|--|----------------|-----------------------|
|                    | <b>of the M40</b>                                  |                |                       |
| <b>Bicester</b>    | <b>Bicester 4: Bicester Business Park</b>          | <b>29.5 ha</b> | <b>8.76 ha</b>        |
| <b>Bicester</b>    | <b>Bicester 11: Employment land at NE Bicester</b> | <b>15 ha</b>   | <b>2.5 ha</b>         |
| <b>Bicester</b>    | <b>Bicester 12: South East Bicester</b>            | <b>40 ha</b>   | <b>16.52 ha</b>       |
| <b>Rural Areas</b> | <b>Villages 5: Former RAF Upper Heyford</b>        | <b>12 ha</b>   | <b>3.7 ha</b>         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       |  |                | <b>37.38 hectares</b> |

The following parcels of land are identified for future development on the following strategic and retained Local Plan 2015 allocations:

| <b>Site name</b>  | <b>Use Classes</b>                | <b>Available Development Land (hectares)</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Banbury M/U1: Canalside</b>                                  | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>7.5</b>                                   |
| <b>Banbury E1: Higham Way</b>                                   | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8 and E (g)</b> | <b>3</b>                                     |
| <b>Bicester E1: Land east of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane</b> | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>30</b>                                    |
| <b>Bicester E2: Land south of Chesterton</b>                    | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>9</b>                                     |
| <b>Bicester E3: Land at Lodge Farm</b>                          | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>25</b>                                    |
| <b>Bicester 4: Land south west of Graven Hill</b>               | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>17</b>                                    |
| <b>Bicester 5: Land adjacent Symmetry Park</b>                  | <b>Mixed Use B2, B8, and E(g)</b> | <b>6</b>                                     |
| <b>Total</b>  |                                   | <b>97.5 hectares</b>                         |

Employment and business development will be supported on allocated sites where it meets the requirements set out within the Area Strategies. New employment sites will be expected to provide a range of sized units to reflect the need for smaller and medium sized businesses to grow and expand.

Proposals for employment-related development on unallocated sites and all proposals for job generating uses in the rural areas will be determined in accordance with Policy LEC 3.

## **Policy LEC 2: Development at Existing Employment Sites**

- 3.154.** It is important we protect our existing employment sites to help ensure that an appropriate level of employment provision is provided.
- 3.155.** Where a site no longer has a reasonable prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present use, 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 submitted. 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.
- 3.156.** 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.

## **Policy LEC 2: Development at Existing or Allocated Employment Sites**

Employment development on new sites allocated or saved in this Plan will be the type of employment development specified. Proposals for use classes other than B2, B8 and E(g) on allocated/saved or existing employment sites must demonstrate that the site has been marketed for the planned or existing permitted employment use for a minimum period of 12 months and has remained unsold or unlet or that premises have been vacant in the long term.

Where there is no demonstrable 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.

Regard will be had to whether the location and nature of the present employment activity has an unacceptable adverse impact upon adjacent uses and whether the premises are causing significant nuisance or environmental problems that cannot be mitigated.

New dwellings will not be permitted within employment sites except where this is in accordance with site specific proposals set out in this Local Plan.

## **Policy LEC 3: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**

- 3.157.** This Plan proposes a number of employment allocations with a strong focus on Banbury and

Bicester. In addition, we want to support appropriate employment development on unallocated sites across the district, where there is a demonstrable need.

- 3.158.** More widely, we are proposing that 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 subject to certain criteria being met.

### **Policy LEC 3            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 (Category A) Villages, 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,**
- iv. The scale, nature and appearance of the employment development on, and its relationship with, the settlement, its character and its historic and natural landscape setting**
- v. They are not located within the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated,**
- vi. Whether they make efficient use of previously developed land.**

**Other proposals within Small (Category B and C) Villages and the open countryside will only be considered favourably if the following criteria are met in addition to criteria (iii)-(v) above:**

- vii. The development is to meet local business and community needs,**
- viii. The development does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads, and**
- ix. It can be demonstrated that the proposal will benefit the local economy and will not undermine the delivery of the strategic employment allocations.**

### **Policy LEC 4:            Ancillary Uses on allocated Employment Sites**

- 3.159.** Providing facilities ancillary to the main business uses on large employment sites can help 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.

- 3.160.** It is important that any ancillary uses are necessary to support the main employment uses. The provision of larger scale retailing, such as food superstores and non-food retail warehouses, will not be supported.



## **Policy LEC 4      Ancillary Uses on existing or allocated Employment Sites**

**Proposals for uses other than E(g) B2 and B8 business uses on allocated employment sites will only be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:**

- i.    The development serves the occupiers 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.**

**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.**

## **Policy LEC 5      Community Employment Plans**

- 3.161.**    Development should deliver the greatest benefit for local communities by maximising opportunities for local employment and education. Providing jobs and training for the local community offers the opportunity to generate and share increased economic prosperity.
- 3.162.**    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.
- 3.163.**    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 support green skills training within construction and development by identifying opportunities on site for greener apprenticeships and work placements.
- 3.164.**    We will seek the preparation of CEPs for major developments. 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.

## **Policy LEC 5:      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).

### Policies LEC 6 & 7: Agriculture

- 3.165.** We need to support our farming industry; not just for food and other agricultural produce but for the well-being of our rural communities, to help protect and improve the character and appearance of our rural areas, to encourage environmental stewardship and to improve biodiversity. We want a thriving and resilient agriculture sector in Cherwell.
- 3.166.** Cherwell has a predominantly rural character. Approximately 42% of the intensive farmland in Cherwell is arable - growing wheat and barley is more common rather than farming animals or growing fruit and vegetables. We have large swathes of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land (Grades 1-3), with very good agricultural land value around Banbury and extending to the south. We have good agricultural land distributed across the rest of the district.
- 3.167.** Nationally, the scope for undertaking development on farms without the need for an application for planning permission has been widened. This includes the potential to change the use of land from agriculture to dwellings or commercial development.
- 3.168.** However, the National Farmer's Union (NFU) is seeking more national emphasis on agriculture and food production to support British food security, a sustainably managed countryside and a farming sector that can adapt to climate change. It wishes to achieve net zero carbon agriculture by 2040 by boosting productive efficiency, storing carbon on farmland, by displacing fossil fuel and fostering greenhouse gas removal through photosynthesis and carbon capture.
- 3.169.** The Council has approved the Cherwell Food Action Plan produced by Good Food Oxfordshire and Cherwell-based organisations. It commits the Council and its partners to growing the local food economy, shortening supply chains, and making catering healthier at organisations such as schools, nurseries and care homes. It also supports environmentally friendly farming and community-led efforts to grow and share food.

### Ambitions to achieve this vision



**3.170.** Our policies seek to support these ambitions.

#### **Policy LEC 6: Supporting a Thriving and Resilient Farming Sector**

We will support development proposals that assist in retaining land and buildings in productive farming, or environmental stewardship where a 20% net gain in biodiversity can be demonstrated.

Productive farming or environmental stewardship must remain the main functions of the farm. Development must be ancillary to the farming or stewardship enterprise. Development will be required to demonstrate how it can measurably support a significant reduction in net carbon emission relative to the likely emissions from existing buildings and operations.

Development will be particularly supported which:

- helps farms remain or become economically viable, and/or
- adapts to climate change and/or
- significantly reduces pollution and/or
- leads to a significant improvement in the appearance or rural character of the area.

A viability appraisal may be sought. Developments that need to be supported by a viability appraisal will also require independent verification on behalf of the Council which must be paid for by the applicant.

#### **Policy LEC 7: Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land**

Best and most versatile agricultural land will be protected from unplanned development to maximise opportunities for food and other agricultural production.

Development resulting in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land will only be supported if:

- a) the development meets a demonstrable essential need in the public interest
- b) there is insufficient lower grade land available in other suitable locations
- c) the contribution to the achievement of sustainable development outweighs the need to protect the land
- c) the likely impact on existing agricultural operations has been minimised

**An agricultural land classification report will be required and will require independent verification on behalf of the Council which must be paid for by the applicant.**

**Policy LEC 8: Rural Diversification**

- 3.171.** The agricultural sector has changed considerably in the past few decades, and farm/agricultural land owners and owners of other land-based rural businesses are increasingly seeking to diversify their economic activities to make more profitable use of their land and buildings. The result of this can have a significant impact on the natural environment, on land, wildlife, and on our rivers. It is therefore important that new developments actively demonstrate how they will minimise their impacts on wildlife and biodiversity and set out ways to mitigate these.
- 3.172.** Diversification provides opportunities to generate additional income for rural businesses, reduces reliance on a single income stream, as well as reduce risk. It can contribute to a prosperous and viable rural economy in the rural areas. Our aim is to ensure 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.

**Policy LEC 8: 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 demonstrably contributes to the viability of the holding;**
- ii. The proposed use does not detract from or prejudice the existing agricultural undertaking or its future operation;**
- iii. It is not detrimental to the character and appearance of existing buildings and their setting within the landscape;**
- iv. Existing buildings are used in preference to new buildings or extensions;**
- v. Utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided, and**
- vi. 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**

**Policy LEC 9: Tourism**

- 3.173.** Tourism is a major contributor to Cherwell's economy with approximately 7,700 local jobs provided in the sector. In 2022, there were approximately 7 million visitors to the district contributing £434 million to the local economy.
- 3.174.** The district's attractive countryside, historic villages and market towns, and the Oxford Canal contribute to its distinctive tourism offer. It also benefits from its location between London and

Birmingham and its proximity to national attractions such as the Cotswolds, 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.

- 3.175.** 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.
- 3.176.** 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 proposed at Chesterton.
- 3.177.** 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.
- 3.178.** 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.
- 3.179.** Whilst supporting proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, larger new attractions, which generate significant visitor numbers, would be 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 maybe acceptable taking into account specific locational and functional requirements.
- 3.180.** 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.
- 3.181.** 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.

**3.182.** 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.

### **Policy LEC 9: Tourism**

**New tourist and visitor facilities, including hotels, will be supported in accordance with ‘town centre first’ principles and should be located within or adjacent to town or service centres as defined in Policy SP 1, and reuse appropriate existing buildings wherever possible.**

**Elsewhere, new tourism and visitor facilities in villages and the open countryside will be expected to:**

- **Have a functional linkage with the proposed location;**
- **Secure the diversification of an agricultural enterprise where development would be on a farm;**
- **Complement the rural character of the area and deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community, heritage or nature conservation benefits;**
- **Be shown to be not deliverable within or adjacent to a town or service centre**
- **Be accessed conveniently by alternative means of transport to the private car, and provide any necessary highway mitigation works.**

### ***Town Centres and Retail***

#### **Policy LEC 10 Town Centre Hierarchy and Retail Uses**

**3.183.** 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 (89,000m<sup>2</sup>), performing strongly when compared to retail growth in Oxfordshire, and England.

**3.184.** 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.

**3.185.** 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.

**3.186.** 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.

**3.187.** 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.

- 3.188.** Cherwell is home to Bicester Village. Bicester Village is a designer shopping outlet and the district's most visited tourist destination. The Council recognises the contribution Bicester Village makes to 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.
- 3.189.** 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.
- 3.190.** In order to fully understand the retail and leisure development needs of the district, we commissioned a Town Centre and Retail Study in 2021. A further Supplementary Study was conducted in 2023. These studies 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. The studies 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.
- 3.191.** We are proposing that new retail development continues to be focused on our urban 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.
- 3.192.** Based on the conclusions of the 2021 Town Centre and Retail Study and 2023 Supplementary Study we will resist further major out of centre retail development, including changes of use, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of our urban centres, particularly Banbury and Bicester.
- 3.193.** 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 Studies include the need for improvements to the public realm, accessibility, signage, publicity and design. We also recognise the increasing importance of housing.
- 3.194.** Outside the main shopping centres of Banbury, Bicester, and Kidlington, 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.

### **Policy LEC 10: 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 boundaries of the Town Centres and their respective Primary Shopping Areas are defined on the Policies Map.

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 2000m<sup>2</sup> (gross), 1500m<sup>2</sup> (gross) in Bicester and 350m<sup>2</sup> (gross) elsewhere.

The Council will support the provision of new local centres containing a small number of shops or multi-functional community facilities offering a hub for the local community of limited size within the allocated strategic housing sites set out in this Local Plan.

The Council will support proposals for new small shops ( less than 350 sq m gross) or extensions to existing shops within or adjacent to existing settlements that are required to serve local needs.

#### **Policy LEC 11: Primary Shopping Areas**

- 3.195.** 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 Areas.

#### **Policy LEC 11 Primary Shopping Areas**

Development resulting in the loss of an E Class Use at ground floor level within a primary shopping area will not be supported unless :

- 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 it being used for E Class uses in the foreseeable future;
- ii. The development demonstrably meets the needs of residents within the local neighbourhood, and
- iii. The development will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.



## **Policy LEC 12 Outdoor Markets**

- 3.196.** 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 public safety, congestion of local roads and pavements, generate rubbish storage and noise issues, and impact on access and accessibility.
- 3.197.** 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.

### ***Policy LEC 12: 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.***
- v. There would be sufficient public protection measures in place.***

***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.***

## **Policy LEC 13: Shopfronts and signage**

- 3.198.** 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.
- 3.199.** 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.

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.

### ***Policy LEC 13: Shopfronts and Signage***

***Proposals for new or altered shopfronts and advertisements, where consent is required, will only be permitted where the design, positioning, materials, colour, proportion and illumination are not detrimental to heritage significance, or visual or residential amenity. In particular:***

- i. The design should respond to, and positively contribute to, the character and design of existing buildings and surroundings;***
- ii. Public accessibility and safety should not be prejudiced;***
- iii. Visual pollution and clutter should be avoided, and***
- iv. Historic shop fronts should be retained.***

## Theme 3:

### Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

#### Housing

##### Policy COM 1: District Wide Housing Distribution

#### Housing Need

**3.200.** There is a national ‘standard method’ for calculating housing need. This tells us that the need for Cherwell is presently for some 706 homes per annum. For the 18 years from 2024 to 2042 this would mean providing an additional 12,708 homes to meet that level of need. Our plan period runs from 2020 to 2042. The standard method for 2020-2024 produced a total need of 2,921 homes for those four years. We have also previously committed to providing 4,400 homes to assist Oxford with its unmet housing need. Oxford has capacity to accommodate 493 homes per annum to 2040. Our commitment to 4,400 homes would ensure we are assisting Oxford with its unmet need for the whole of our Plan period.

**Table: Housing Need with Oxford Unmet Need Commitment 2020 to 2042**

| Calculation of Need                                     | Total  |
|---|--------|
| Previous Standard Method 2020 to 2024 (756+713+742+710) | 2,921  |
| Current Standard Method (706dpa x18 years)              | 12,708 |
| Cherwell Need   | 15,629 |
| Oxford Unmet Need Carried Forward                       | 4,400  |
| Total Need (15,629 + 4400)                              | 20,029 |
| Annual Need (20,029/22) years                           | *910   |

\*Rounded to 911

This means we have a total housing need to plan for of 20,029 homes.

#### Existing Housing Supply

**3.201.** We already have a good pipeline of housing supply. Cherwell provided 4,477 new homes from 2020-2024, has land supply for another 12,525 homes and has planned sites for the 4,400 homes to help Oxford. A total of 21,402 homes. This is set out in Appendix 1 We are in a position where we could meet identified needs from the supply identified.

#### Ensuring Sufficient Deliverable Housing Supply for the First Five Years

**3.202.** We also need to ensure we have deliverable sites for the first five years after the Plan is adopted. At that point, such sites must be shown to be available, suitable and achievable with a realistic prospect

that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

**3.203.** This is difficult to predict with certainty and the housing we expect to be delivered can be affected by market conditions and the circumstances of individual developers. Some contingency is sensible. Not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply can make it easier for developers to obtain planning permission for unplanned development.

**3.204.** We consider that some additional supply is needed to ensure we have a steady supply of homes including for social/affordable housing.

### **Government Policy**

**3.205.** We must also be mindful of Government policy:

*Planning is principally a local activity, and it is right that decisions about what to build and where should reflect local views. But we are also clear that these decisions should be about how to deliver the housing an area needs, not whether to do so at all, and these needs cannot be met without identifying enough land through local plans*

- Statement by Deputy Prime Minister & Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, 30 July 2024

**3.206.** The Government is reviewing the standard method for assessing housing need. This suggests that Cherwell's need could rise to 1,095 homes per annum (24,090 homes over the period 2020-2042) (NPPF Consultation July 2024).

**3.207.** Recognising the need to transition from one policy context to another, the Government has advised that our planned housing requirement needs to be within 200 homes per annum of that level of need to proceed with this Local Plan.

### **Housing Requirement and Additional Supply**

**3.208.** Our objectives are to meet current housing need, including through the provision of social/affordable housing. We wish to ensure that development is accommodated sustainably and supports good place making including through the provision of supporting infrastructure.

**3.209.** Our housing requirement that must be met is therefore 20,042 homes from 2020 to 2042, an average of 911 homes per annum.

**Table: Housing Requirement**

|                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Plan Period</b>      | <b>2020 to 2042</b> |
| <b>Plan Requirement</b> | <b>20,042</b>       |

**3.210.** We are also planning for additional homes to ensure delivery, provide contingency, meet our plan objectives and accord with Government policy.

### **Policy COM 1: District Wide Housing Distribution**

This local plan requires 20,042 homes to be delivered to meet housing need between 2020 and 2042. This requirement will be used to inform our assessments of the district's five year housing land supply.

Additional housing is provided to help deliver further social/affordable housing, support place making and provide contingency.

Our overall housing supply will be as follows:

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Housing Supply</b>                          |               |
| <b>*Existing Supply</b>                        | <b>21402</b>  |
| <b>Additional Supply</b>                       |               |
| <b>Windfalls (2027-2042) 100pa</b>             | <b>1400</b>   |
| <b>East of Bloxham Road, Banbury (Phase 2)</b> | <b>600</b>    |
| <b>Southeast of Woodstock</b>                  | <b>450</b>    |
| <b>Calthorpe Street, Banbury</b>               | <b>170</b>    |
| <b>Rural Allocation</b>                        | <b>565</b>    |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>3,185</b>  |
| <b>Total Supply</b>                            | <b>24,587</b> |

\*Appendix XX

A further 4,300 homes will be delivered at North West Bicester beyond 2042.

Cherwell will provide 24,587 homes from 2020 to 2042 as follows:

|                             | <b>Completions<br/>20/24</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Banbury</b>              | <b>1632</b>                  | <b>6477</b>   |
| <b>Bicester</b>             | <b>1476</b>                  | <b>7749</b>   |
| <b>Heyford Park</b>         | <b>553</b>                   | <b>1601</b>   |
| <b>Kidlington/Woodstock</b> | <b>172</b>                   | <b>622</b>    |
| <b>Rural Areas</b>          | <b>644</b>                   | <b>2338</b>   |
| <b>Partial Review Sites</b> | <b>0</b>                     | <b>4400</b>   |
| <b>Windfall Projection</b>  | <b>0</b>                     | <b>1400</b>   |
| <b>Totals</b>               | <b>4477</b>                  | <b>24587</b>  |

## Policy COM 2: Affordable Housing

- 3.211.** Providing truly affordable housing is one of our highest priorities. Affordable housing 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.
- 3.212.** Our Housing Strategy (2025-2030) has identified three strategic priorities, which includes prioritising the delivery of homes that people can afford and that are suitable for the needs of the community. It highlights that home ownership is out of reach for households on low and average incomes, with social rent being the only truly affordable housing option for many local residents.
- 3.213.** There are a number of ways that affordable homes can be delivered. We have analysed the need for affordable housing in terms of social/affordable rented housing and affordable home ownership and have identified a significant need for affordable housing in Cherwell. We therefore have to provide as many affordable homes as possible to meet this need. The Council's Viability Assessment tested a range of requirements for affordable housing from 0 to 50%. It recommends an overall 30% affordable housing requirement in Banbury and Bicester, and 35% on all sites that meet Cherwell's housing needs.
- 3.214.** All future developments that include 10 or more dwellings, or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings, will therefore be expected to provide affordable homes on site in accordance with this requirement.
- 3.215.** The Council's Housing Strategy explains how housing for social rent is the only truly affordable housing option for many people in Cherwell. We have tested a number of different tenure splits concluding in a requirement for 70% of all affordable homes coming forward to be social/affordable rented. However, we will expect demonstrable consideration to have been given to whether or not social rented housing can be viably provided across the site before we consider affordable rented accommodation. The minimum expectation is that 35% of all affordable rented accommodation will be social rented housing.
- 3.216.** Housing proposals (for residential use type C3) will need to provide affordable housing where they meet the relevant policy 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 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.
- 3.217.** We will require all affordable housing 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.

- 3.218.** We 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.
- 3.219.** There are requirements set out in the saved Partial Review policies (PR2, PR6 to PR9) which provide for Oxford's unmet housing need, for affordable housing, mix, house type and size. There is a separate mechanism (part of the Council's Housing Strategy) in place for ensuring that any affordable homes will be provided as part of the Cherwell contribution to unmet need for Oxford. At least 50 % of any additional unmet housing for Oxford being provided within this plan will be affordable homes.

## **Policy COM 2 Affordable Housing**

All proposed residential developments to meet Cherwell's needs 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 the following percentage of new housing as affordable homes on site. Housing to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs will be considered against the saved policies in the Local Plan Partial Review (2020).

- Banbury - 30%
- Bicester - 30%
- Kidlington - 35%
- Elsewhere - 35%

In determining whether developments qualify to provide affordable housing, consideration will be given to Policy CSD 25.

All qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as social or affordable rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of affordable homes. The provision of social rented housing must be considered before affordable rent, and should be a minimum of 35% of the total affordable rented housing. It is expected that these requirements will be met without the use of financial grant/subsidy.

Planning permission will not be granted unless:

- i. these requirements are met, or
- ii. it is likely that any shortfall or financial equivalent can be met in the future by way of an agreed upward review mechanism included in a legal agreement or undertaking, or
- iii. the Council agrees that there are site specific circumstances that provide sufficient benefit to depart from the requisite level /type/mix of affordable housing.

Any application proposing less affordable housing than required or a different mix/tenure of affordable housing than required will be expected to provide an open book viability appraisal which will need to be independently verified by the Council at the cost to the applicant.

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.

Sites of at least 400 dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 60 units of affordable rental Extra Care Housing. Where it's agreed with Council that affordable Extra Care Housing would not be desirable, an equivalent amount of alternative affordable specialist supported housing should be provided. Where demand for affordable specialist housing is already met in the vicinity, a financial contribution in lieu may be agreed as an exception.

**Policy COM 3: Housing Mix**

- 3.220. Another of our 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.
- 3.221. This Local Plan aims, not only to increase the supply of housing, but to encourage an appropriate mix to 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 also a need to provide a mix of housing that reflects the needs of an ageing population, a growth in smaller households, and that meets the requirements of families.
- 3.222. We have identified the following mix of homes that are needed by tenure:

| Type                      | One Bedroom | Two Bedrooms | Three Bedrooms | Four + Bedrooms |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Social/Affordable Rented  | 25-30%      | 25-30%       | 30-35%         | 15-20%          |
| Affordable Home Ownership | 20-25%      | 40-45%       | 25-30%         | 5-10%           |
| Market Housing            | 5-10%       | 35-40%       | 35-40%         | 15-20%          |

**Table 9: Mix of housing by size and type**

- 3.223. The evidence shows that more people are working from home than has historically been the case and this trend is expected to continue. 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 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.



**3.224.** 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.

### **Policy COM 3: Housing Size / Type**

**New residential development will be expected to provide the size / type of market homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed, vibrant and inclusive communities. Applications will be expected to provide evidence on the appropriate housing mix to meet needs and to respond to local market conditions and locational / site characteristics. The Council will consider this against the mix at Table 9 or its latest available evidence.**

**The size/type of affordable housing must meet the latest available evidence from the Council having regard to its Housing Register and in accordance with Policy COM 2.**

**Where appropriate, the provision of alternative building techniques including modular homes will be encouraged.**

### **Policy COM 4: Specialist Housing**

**3.225.** The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. Our evidence shows a significant increase in Cherwell's population of older people with consequentially a significant need for all types of specialist housing for older people.

**3.226.** '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. Oxfordshire County Council's Specialist and Supported Housing Needs Assessment September 2024 estimates that by 2044 there is a need for an additional 1,535 sheltered/retirement housing to meet Cherwell's needs (1,317 to 2039). In addition there is a need for 477 additional extra care units by 2044 (416 by 2039).

**3.227.** 14.1% of Cherwell residents have a long-term limiting health issue or disability and over 2% of households in Cherwell include someone with a long term health issue or disability. Whilst the housing needs of these groups will vary depending on the severity of their disability, we know that they are more likely to be homeowners. Our priority is therefore to ensure that future development provides a continued

supply of accessible and adapted properties within all tenures that respond to identified needs. There is also a need for a diverse range of supported housing including for people with learning disabilities, with physical disabilities and for 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.

#### **Policy COM 4: Specialist Housing**

**Housing sites of 400 dwellings and above 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 will be required. Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older and/or disabled people, those with mental health needs, looked after children, and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities.**

#### **Policy COM 5: Residential Space Standards**

##### *Accessible and Adaptable Housing*

- 3.228.** There is a focus 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 that are under occupied.
- 3.229.** 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. Our evidence 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 it may be justified for us to require all dwellings in all tenures to meet the M4(2) standards, and recommends that 10% of homes could meet M4(3) standards.
- 3.230.** 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 for a wheelchair user and is optional in the *Building Regulations*.

**3.231.** We are very keen to support people to live independently therefore such developments 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.

**3.232.** The most suitable locations are those closest to the centres of our main urban areas, although there may be other locations that are appropriate, such as within some of our larger villages. 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. We will have regard to the overall need for this type of development and the use class that is proposed when considering planning applications.

#### *Internal residential space*

**3.233.** The quality of buildings and places, and how they integrate with the natural environment, have been shown to affect how people interact with them. Good quality development can create environments that promote wellbeing and happiness, as well as provide functional, well-built places.

**3.234.** 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.

**3.235.** The government has set out appropriate nationally described space standards 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.

**3.236.** They are mandatory for all new homes developed under permitted development rights. 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 require that all new dwellings, including newly formed dwellings through conversion, 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.

**3.237.** Separate Regulations apply to sleeping accommodation floor areas in licenced Homes in Multiple Ownership (HMOs).

#### *External residential space*

**3.238.** Outdoor amenity space can make an important contribution to improving the quality of life and well-being 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.

**3.239.** 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.

**3.240.** 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.

**3.241.** 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.

**3.242.** 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.

**3.243.** 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.

## **Policy COM 5: Residential Space Standards**

### **Internal Residential Space**

**All new dwellings will achieve compliance with the nationally described space standards (or any successor standards/policy) as a minimum and the provision of home that meet the M4(2) Building Regulations standards is encouraged**

**On residential sites of 100 dwelling or more, at least 10% of the dwellings should be built to M4(3) Building Regulations standards or subsequent equivalent.**

### **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.

In providing appropriate outdoor amenity space both private and communal, development proposals are required to:

- take into account the orientation of the amenity space in relation to the sun at different times of the year;
- address issues of overlooking and enclosure, which may otherwise impact unacceptably on the proposed property and any neighbouring properties;
- design the amenity space to be of a shape, size and location to allow effective and practical use of the space by residents.

### **Policy COM 6 : Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing**

**3.244.** 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 by commissioning architects or builders to assist.

**3.245.** 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. During 2020/21 there were 35 self-build affordable housing completions in the district that took place at the Graven Hill site.

**3.246.** We are 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. We 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.

### **Policy COM 6: 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.**

#### **Policy COM 7: Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Occupation**

- 3.247.** 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.
- 3.248.** 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.

#### **Policy COM 7 : Sub-Division of Dwellings and Homes in Multiple Occupation**

**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.**

#### **Policy COM 8 : Residential Caravans**

- 3.249.** A caravan may be required for a temporary period for example to house a key worker or a family member 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 and will only be granted on the understanding that alternative permanent accommodation is sought. Planning permissions may not automatically be renewed at the end of the specified time-period.

#### **Policy COM 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.**

### **Policy COM 9: Travelling Communities**

- 3.250.** The Council commitment to address housing need applies to our settled and travelling communities. Providing enough suitable accommodation secures their access to:
- employment opportunities for families to remain together;
  - a nomadic life, in line with culture and traditions; and
  - other primary needs, especially education and health.
- 3.251.** A gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment is an essential requirement of the Local Plan, and the need must be met as part of the Local Plan process. National guidance on this is provided in the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015). In December 2023, the Government announced a reversal to the pre 2015 gypsy and traveller planning definition. It now applies to all those of travelling background, not just those who are currently travelling. Any other aspect of the 2015 guidance remains unchanged.
- 3.252.** The 2015 National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires Local Planning Authorities, in producing their Local Plan, to identify a 5-year supply of deliverable sites. In 2016 the Government also published draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for boat dwellers and caravans.
- 3.253.** The Cherwell Local Plan (2015) Policy BSC 6: Travelling Communities, provides 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.
- 3.254.** Since the adoption of the 2015 Local Plan, no land has been allocated for travellers needs in the district. The closure of Newlands Caravan Park at Bloxham in 2017 and planning permission at Station Approach in Banbury for 63 residential apartments resulted in the loss of 46 traveller pitches. During the same period, permissions have been gained for 35 pitches dotted in several sites at Mollington, Piddington, Chesterton, Launton and Hampton Poyle.
- 3.255.** Our latest Annual Monitoring Report (2023 AMR) indicates that as at 31 March 2023, the total supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches was 71, which is a net gain of 14 pitches since 1 April 2017.

- 3.256.** The most up to date assessment of need is a county-wide joint study commissioned in 2023 and cover the period 2042. The study addresses the need for gypsy and traveller, travelling showpeople and boat dwellers.
- 3.257.** Policy COM 31 provides a criteria-based approach to guide the provision of residential canal moorings should the need for boat dwellers accommodation arise.
- 3.258.** The 2024 study indicates a need of 30 gypsy and traveller pitches in Cherwell for the Plan period, 10 of which need to be provided in the first 5 years of the Plan (2023/24-2027/28). Findings for travelling showpeople indicate a need for 4 plots over the Plan period of which none is required within the first five years of the Plan.

**Table x. Draft gypsy and traveller**

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Pitch need</b>                   |    |
| <b>Short term 2023/24-2027/28</b>   | 10 |
| <b>Longer term 2028/29 -2041/42</b> | 20 |
| <b>Total need 2023-2042</b>         | 30 |

**Table x. Draft travelling showpeople**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Plot need</b>                    |   |
| <b>Short term 2023/24-2027/28</b>   | 0 |
| <b>Longer term 2028/29 -2041/42</b> | 4 |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 4 |

- 3.259.** The study provides evidence on the potential supply of pitches identified through interviews and site information analysis. It indicates a potential supply of up to 33 additional pitches in Cherwell through the regularisation and expansion or intensification of existing sites.

**Table x. Draft gypsy and traveller pitch supply and residual need**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Shortfall 2023/24 to 2027/28                  | 10        |
| Longer-term 2028/29 to 2041/420               | 20        |
| <b>TOTAL NET SHORTFALL 2023/24 to 2041/42</b> | <b>30</b> |
| Potential supply of pitches                   | 33        |
| Residual need                                 | -3        |

- 3.260.** We will prevent the loss of existing pitches/plots and propose to provide the need of new pitches through:
- extant permissions,
  - intensification of existing sites and/or
  - extension of existing sites.
- 3.261.** All gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople sites in Cherwell are privately owned. It is important that we work with the travelling community, site owners and operators to keep an



up to date understanding of their needs for wider services and facilities. There are no set parameters for site or pitch/plot sizes but the Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment 2024 provides a general guide to sizes and amenity requirements and further resource references.

- 3.262.** Traveller sites should have access to local services, facilities and potential sources of employment, promoting inclusive communities while not being out of scale with nearby settled communities. The distances set in Policy COM 9 are considered a reasonable walking/cycling distance and limit the distance needed to travel by private car if this is necessary.
- 3.263.** The study indicates a potential need for transit/stopping places in Oxfordshire. The recommendation is to arrange a mechanism for negotiated stopping place. This will be discussed between all authorities with input from the County Council to manage positively unauthorised encampment activity across the County.

### **Policy COM 9: Travelling Communities**

**The Council will make provision for additional gypsy and travellers pitches and travelling show people plots in Cherwell to 2042 in accordance with the most recent accommodation assessment of need.**

**Need will be met through the implementation of extant planning permissions and the expansion and/or intensification of existing sites, subject to other policies being satisfied.**

**Development for the accommodation of gypsy and travellers and travelling show people will be considered favourably provided that a need is appropriately demonstrated.**

**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.**

**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. 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 loss of sites, pitches or plots to non-traveller use will not be supported unless it can be suitably demonstrated that:

- i. there is no current need nor likely need within the Plan period for permanent nor transit accommodation; or
- ii. the site, pitches/plots are no longer suitable for use by the travelling community on a permanent nor a transit basis; and
- iii. appropriate alternative provision of equal or better quality and location regarding services is made available before the existing accommodation is lost.

## *Landscape*

### **Policy COM 10: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape**

- 3.264.** Cherwell enjoys a varied and distinctive local landscape character that is greatly valued by the community. A small part of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) is within the north-west of the district. We will use the policies in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan to assess any development proposals within the designated area.
- 3.265.** 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.
- 3.266.** 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
- 3.267.** There are however smaller areas within NCA 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands in the east and NCA 109 Midvale Ridge in the southern edge of the district.
- 3.268.** The western fringe of the district lies within the north-eastern part of the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Natural Beauty, or AONB). Most of the National Landscape within Cherwell is centred on the village of Epwell, within the Whichford Hills and Valleys Character Area.
- 3.269.** The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) 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. Further landscape character assessments will also be prepared to inform our final plan.
- 3.270.** Local landscape features are also important elements of our local landscape character and identity.

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 our local communities.

**3.271.** A distinct landform and landscape features particularly around Banbury and Bicester have shaped the distribution and pattern of the towns and the surround rural settlements. Although Banbury and Bicester have expanded significantly in recent decades and further development is planned around Bicester in particular, many parts of the district retain a strong rural character and tranquillity. This is most noticeable in areas such as:

- the ironstone villages in the north of the district
- the Upper Cherwell Basin and Cherwell Valley
- the lowlands of Otmoor.
- the well-treed arable farmland and parklands north of Bicester.

**3.272.** Our landscapes today are likely to face new pressures, the need to transition to renewable energy sources to meet Net Zero climate change targets is likely to increase development pressure on our landscapes from renewable energy development. A National Infrastructure Project for an 840 MW solar farm across Oxford, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Districts, Botley West is currently under consideration.

**3.273.** It is important we have a suite of up-to-date landscape evidence providing clear guidance for development so that 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. We recognise 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.

**3.274.** Many of our settlements are located within or adjacent to landscapes valued by their local communities. There is therefore particular significance placed on the fringe areas of these settlements 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.

**3.275.** 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.

**3.276.** A key element of this Plan's vision and objective SO5 is to protect and enhance our natural and built environment. The different natural, cultural and perceptual attributes of our landscape define its distinctiveness.

(ADD LANDSCAPE WHEEL DIAGRAM)

- 3.277.** To deliver this vision, landscape policies will be applied in combination with other policies in this Plan including policies on water resources and nature and biodiversity protection and conservation, and policies for the protection of the historic environment.
- 3.278.** We have undertaken a district wide landscape assessment (LCA). It replaces the 1995 landscape assessment and has been prepared considering Cherwell's context, including the National Character Area, Cotswolds National Landscape, Oxfordshire wildlife, landscape and historic assessments (OWLS and HLC) and neighbouring authorities character assessments.
- 3.279.** The LCA identifies eight distinct landscape character areas, their key characteristics and landscape value.
- Cherwell Valley
  - Incised Ironstone Plateau
  - Ironstone Hills and Valleys
  - Lower Cherwell Floodplain
  - Otmoor Lowlands
  - Oxfordshire Estate Farmland
  - Upper Cherwell Basin
  - Upper Heyford Plateau
- 3.280.** Development will be expected to have regard to the landscape strategy and recommendations in the Cherwell LCA and respond sympathetically to local character and the qualities/values of the landscape it relates to.

ADD LCA DIAGRAM

- 3.281.** We will 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.
- 3.282.** 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. We 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.

## **Policy COM 10: 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, built and historic landmark features, or
- vi. Reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

Development proposals must have regard to the key landscape qualities of the districts' landscape character areas and the strategy and guidelines in the council's landscape character assessment.

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.

#### **Policy COM 11: Local Landscape Designations**

**3.283.** Revisions to the NPPF since the adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan 2015 changed the context in which planning policies and decisions are made in relation to the enhancement of the local environment and the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes.

**3.284.** This prompted the council to commission a review of land previously designated as areas of high landscape value in Cherwell in the 1996 Local Plan. These were: Ironstone Downs, Cherwell Valley, Thame Valley, North Ploughley, Muswell Hill, and Otmoor.

**3.285.** The review is set out in the Cherwell Local Landscape Designations Study 2024. The study follows from, and draws upon the districtwide Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment

2024 and considers whether land in the district demonstrates valued landscape characteristics and whether it can be considered to be of 'above ordinary' value.

**3.286.** It concludes that the areas previously designated have 'above ordinary' landscape value. That is, the landscapes are considered to have particular qualities/characteristics that elevate them above that of 'ordinary' countryside.

**3.287.** The study proposes changes to previous boundaries mainly responding to additional development which has taken place, urbanising influences on the edges of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and a logical division of the original Cherwell Valley Area. The Local Landscape Designations (LLDs) proposed in Policy COM 11 are:

- Cherwell Valley;
- Ironstone Downs;
- Muswell Hill;
- North Ploughley;
- Otmoor
- Thames Valley; and
- Upper Cherwell Valley

**3.288.** The Cherwell Local Landscape Designations Study 2024 identifies these seven areas as special landscapes within Cherwell and:

- Defines the attributes and identify the qualities that make them worthy of local designation.
- Ensures a robust and consistent criteria-based approach to defining locally designated landscapes; and
- Identifies guidelines for protecting the qualities that make an area worthy of designation.

**3.289.** Local Landscape Designations aim to protect areas with locally appreciated scenic value. They are non-statutory designations and thus afford a lower level of protection than national landscape designations.

We will use Policy COM 11 and the Local Landscape Designations Study to ensure development responds to the valued features and qualities of our local landscape and contribute to a distinctive sense of place.

### **POLICY COM 11: Cherwell Local Landscape Designations**

**Cherwell local landscape designations (as shown in the Policies Map) are:**

- **Cherwell Valley;**
- **Ironstone Downs;**
- **Muswell Hill;**
- **North Ploughley;**
- **Otmoor**
- **Thames Valley; and**

- **Upper Cherwell Valley**

Development proposals within or affecting a designated local landscape will be assessed based on its specific landscape and visual impact on the valued characteristics of the designated landscape.

Development must have regard to the Cherwell Local Landscape Designations Study and avoid loss or harm to the aspects of landscape value and qualities of the designated landscape.

Development will be required to respond appropriately to the recommendations for managing the designated local landscape.

### **Green Belt**

#### **Policy COM 12 : The Oxford Green Belt**

**3.290.** Part of the district falls within the Oxford Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; with the most important attribute of Green Belts being their openness.

#### **Policy COM 12: 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 current government policy and other relevant *Development Plan* policies.

#### **Policy COM 13 : Settlement Gaps**

**3.291.** Each of our towns and villages has its own separate identity. 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.

**3.292.** In addition, there are villages that are separated by small stretches of open land that should be preserved to maintain the villages' identity. There are a number of settlement pairings in Cherwell where this is particularly significant such as the Sibfords (Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris), the Barfords (Barford St Michael and Barford St John), the Astons (Steeple, Middle and North Aston)

and Little and Great Bourton.

- 3.293.** In some instances, the importance of a gap lies in its role preserving the character of a loose-knit settlement structure or in maintaining the proper setting for a listed building or in preserving a view or feature of recognised amenity or historical value. Policies COM 10, COM 12 and COM 13 address the protection and enhancement of the role such gaps play.
- 3.294.** Local open land gaps identified in neighbourhood plans such as the Twyford and Bodicote/Banbury and West Adderbury and Milton gaps help prevent coalescence and protect the character of rural settlements.
- 3.295.** This Plan 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. The Local Plan strategy and policies have been informed by an assessment of the role land associated Banbury and Bicester, Heyford Park and their surrounding villages plays in preserving and enhancing their setting and identity.
- 3.296.** In supporting this approach, the Council commissioned a Green Gaps Study. The primary function of the gaps identified in this study is to:
- Avoid coalescence and retain the separate identity of settlements; and
  - Protect high quality landscapes on the urban fringe and provide access to the countryside.
- 3.297.** The study focused on land areas associated with Banbury, Bicester and Heyford Park. Cherwell areas within the Oxford Green Belt were excluded from the study as that designation performs the function of preventing settlement coalescence. The study identifies broad areas within which maintenance of settlement separation is a key consideration.
- 3.298.** The Council proposes to take forward the following areas as strategic green gaps considered to perform an important role on settlement separation. These are included in Policy COM 13 for designation as strategic gaps associated with our main urban areas.

| <b>Strategic gaps associated with Banbury</b>   | <b>Strategic gaps associated with Bicester</b>  | <b>Strategic gaps associated with Heyford Park</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Bourton and Great Bourton</li> <li>• Williamscot and Chacombe</li> <li>• Middleton Cheney, Overthorpe, Nethercote and Warkworth</li> <li>• Kings Sutton</li> <li>• Bodicote</li> <li>• Adderbury and Twyford</li> <li>• Milton</li> <li>• Bloxham</li> <li>• Broughton</li> <li>• North Newington</li> <li>• Drayton and Wroxton</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caversfield</li> <li>• Stratton Audley</li> <li>• Launton</li> <li>• Ambrosden, Blackthorn and Arcott</li> <li>• Merton</li> <li>• Wendlebury</li> <li>• Chesterton</li> <li>• Middleton Stoney</li> <li>• Bucknell</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fritwell</li> <li>• Ardley</li> <li>• Middleton Stoney</li> <li>• Caulcott</li> <li>• Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford</li> <li>• Somerton</li> </ul> |



|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horley</li> <li>• Hanwell</li> </ul> |  |  |
|---|--|--|

- 3.299.** We have identified these strategic gaps in the context of the NPPF and taking into account the housing and employment needs to support the Local Plan requirements.
- 3.300.** Strategic gaps are not landscape designations, their purpose is to identify areas within which maintenance of settlement separation is a key consideration.
- 3.301.** Each identified strategic gap is supported by the key characteristics/features important to the maintenance of the gap and guidance is provided for preserving and enhancing the degree of settlement distinction provided by the gap. Development proposals within a strategic gap will be assessed against the gap’s key characteristics to help determine the likely harm to a settlement separation and identity.
- 3.302.** Small scale development that is in keeping with the rural nature of the gaps will not be prevented, provided that it is appropriately sited and designed to minimise impact on the key characteristics of each gap and subject to other policies of this plan.
- 3.303.** We acknowledge that some proposed allocation sites may put pressure on existing gaps or settlements, and we have considered the suitability of defining strategic gaps alongside site allocations. Where allocations contain large areas which are likely to remain as green space and play an important role in preserving distinction between settlements, these have been included in the strategic gap designation. This approach is proposed for the strategic gap between North-West Bicester and Bucknell. Development within the strategic gap will be assessed against the criteria in Policy COM 13.
- 3.304.** The precise boundaries of the strategic gaps are set out in Appendix X. It contains a map with each strategic gap and the key characteristics and recommendations for their enhancement and preservation.

## **Policy COM 13 Settlement Gaps**

**The Council will seek to maintain the separate identity of settlements and prevent coalescence of built-up areas.**

**Development proposals will only be considered favourably where:**

- i. The physical and visual separation between the 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 local identity.**
- iv. It is proposed through a Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order.**

Strategic gaps associated with Banbury, Bicester and Heyford Park (as shown in Appendix X) are:

| Banbury  | Bicester  | Heyford Park  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Bourton and Great Bourton</li> <li>• Williamscot and Chacombe</li> <li>• Middleton Cheney, Overthorpe, Nethercote and Warkworth</li> <li>• Kings Sutton</li> <li>• Bodicote</li> <li>• Adderbury and Twyford</li> <li>• Milton</li> <li>• Bloxham</li> <li>• Broughton</li> <li>• North Newington</li> <li>• Drayton and Wroxton</li> <li>• Horley</li> <li>• Hanwell</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caversfield</li> <li>• Stratton Audley</li> <li>• Launton</li> <li>• Ambrosden, Blackthorn and Arcott</li> <li>• Merton</li> <li>• Wendlebury</li> <li>• Chesterton</li> <li>• Middleton Stoney</li> <li>• Bucknell</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fritwell</li> <li>• Ardley</li> <li>• Middleton Stoney</li> <li>• Caulcott</li> <li>• Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford</li> <li>• Somerton</li> </ul> |

Development proposals within a strategic gap must have regard to the characteristic of the gap it is likely to affect (as shown in Appendix X) and will be required to:

- vi. Respond appropriately to the strategic gap characteristics and significance,
- vii. Respond appropriately to the recommendations for the preservation and enhancement of the strategic gap, and
- viii. Avoid loss of key characteristics and significance of the strategic gap.

## Design

### Policy COM 14: Achieving Well-Designed Places

**3.305.** 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, 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.

**3.306.** The National Design Guide, 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 3.

**3.307.** 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.

- 3.308.** 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.
- 3.309.** 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 supports social, commercial, and leisure activities.
- 3.310.** 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.
- 3.311.** Where appropriate, proposals should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the district. The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD, 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.



**Figure 3: The ten characteristics of well-designed places**  
(National Design Guide)

**3.312.** 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. 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.

#### *Residential Extensions*

**3.313.** 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.

#### *Public Realm*

**3.314.** 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.

**3.315.** Good quality landscaping is a fundamental part of successful outdoor spaces. It is essential that landscape schemes/designs evolve alongside the architectural designs 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*

**3.316.** 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.

**3.317.** 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 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

**3.318.** The 20-minute neighbourhood 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, by wheelchairs, 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 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 4: 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

**3.319.** 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, minimising 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.

### **Policy COM 14: Achieving Well Designed Places**

All new development will be required to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character (including landscape character) of the area in which it is set through sensitive siting, layout and detailed design.

Development proposals are expected to demonstrate how they will achieve the ten characteristics of well-designed places as set out in the National Design Guide; and take account of local design guidance and codes including: the residential design guide, conservation area appraisals, landscape character assessments, neighbourhood plans and other relevant supplementary planning documents. Poorly designed developments will not be permitted.

New development proposals shall:

- Be designed to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and healthy places for living and working;**
- Be designed to improve the quality, function, and appearance of its locality;**
- 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;**
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and densities;**
- Adopt the principles of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods where appropriate;**
- Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness, conserving or enhancing the setting of heritage assets and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views**
- 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;**
- 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. and Streets for a Healthy Life 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 designed from the outset to reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour. All development is expected to have regard to and perform positively against the recommendations set out in, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation.
- 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 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 wherever possible, with consideration of the embodied carbon of those materials.
- 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; and
- xix. Be designed to consider and not to hinder the potential future delivery of adjoining development sites.

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, masterplans and Design Codes will need to be prepared in collaboration with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.

**The Council will expect strategic sites and other large schemes to be subject to assessment by an Independent Design Review Panel.**

### **Active Travel**

#### **Policy COM 15: Active Travel – Walking and Cycling**

**3.320.** Prioritising active travel infrastructure, including connections between town centres, villages and to mobility hubs is vital to reducing emissions from transport, especially the private car. Reducing dependence on the private car will help the creation of a net-zero carbon transport network and help tackle traffic congestion.

**3.321.** To increase uptake in active travel modes, specifically walking and cycling, we will give greater priority to walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs, and public transport within our street space. We will also seek improvements to our public realm making our places more attractive for walking and cycling. Our objective of creating public spaces and green routes that are open and accessible to all help will also play a role in encouraging active travel.

**3.322.** The IDP (2022) outlines the planned improvement works to the district's transport network, including walking and cycling routes. 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.

**3.323.** Additional guidance on encouraging walking and cycling is provided in Cherwell's Residential Design Guide SPD. The design criteria for accommodating pedestrians and cyclists are detailed in Oxfordshire's Walking and Cycling Design and Street Design guides.

#### **Policy COM 15 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 shall:**

- i. Be designed to ensure that it connects with existing street patterns and creates safe and accessible places**
- ii. Maximise opportunities for walking and cycling by ensuring proposals give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of street space and provide for filtered permeability;**
- iii. Deliver high quality public realm for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs;**
- iv. Ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and public rights of way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate;**
- v. 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;

- vi. Reduce road danger from other transport modes;
- vii. 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
- viii. Ensure provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Oxfordshire County Council latest guidance.

#### **Policy COM 16: Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

**3.324.** Cherwell benefits from many hundreds of miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW). They 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. PROW are protected in law. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for managing and maintaining this extensive network alongside local councils and land-managers. It prepares an Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Plan, and a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

**3.325.** We will expect new development to contribute towards mitigation measures for any part of the PROW network negatively impacted by development proposals.

#### **Policy COM 16: 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.**

#### **Health**

#### **Policy COM 17: Health Facilities**

**3.326.** The provision of health services in the district is overseen by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS), which was 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.

- 3.327.** 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 2024-2030 is to:
- Prevent ill health;
  - Tackling health inequalities, and
  - Closer collaboration.
- 3.328.** 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 (2023) 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.
- 3.329.** 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 *Policy COM 17* HIAs should be prepared following the methodology set out in the Oxfordshire HIA toolkit.
- 3.330.** 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, and
  - Meet the healthcare requirements of local communities.
- 3.331.** Our last local plan identified a need for more GP provision in Bicester and some limited progress has been made in securing expanded facilities for the growing town. We do, however, recognise that significant further additional provision is required.
- 3.332.** 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.

## **Policy COM 17: Health Facilities**

**The Council will support the provision, extension and co-location of health facilities in sustainable locations.**

**Facilities should:**

- Be designed to accommodate a range of health-related services through multifunctional and adaptable facilities;**
- 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.**

### **Policy COM 18: Creating Healthy Communities**

- 3.333. 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.
- 3.334. 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.
- 3.335. 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.
- 3.336. 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.

### **Policy COM 18: 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 and heritage 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.**

### **Policy COM 19: Hot Food Takeaways**

- 3.337.** We are committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for our 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.
- 3.338.** 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.
- 3.339.** 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.
- 3.340.** 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.

### **Policy COM 19 Hot Food Takeaways**

**Proposals for hot food takeaways will only 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.**

### *Services and Facilities*

#### **Policy COM 20: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**

- 3.341.** Our proposed Spatial Strategy aims to focus development in the most accessible parts of the district thus helping to ensure that development is well served by public transport links and the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure.
- 3.342.** Our approach to infrastructure planning will seek to identify the infrastructure required to meet growth, and support site allocations. We will 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 infrastructure delivery, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery;
  - Updating our Developer Contributions SPD, and
  - Ensuring that development proposals demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.
- 3.343.** The Area Strategies provide details of key infrastructure requirements.

#### **Policy COM 20: 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 development proposals. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by developers and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.**

**Where infrastructure will serve more than one site, developers will be expected to collaborate to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the shared supporting infrastructure. 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 a development unviable, proposals 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 having regard to the detailed requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan 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 a CIL Charging Schedule and a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document that will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions and how it will balance infrastructure funding through CIL and Section 106 agreements. Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be pooled towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure related to new development.

Where not funded by CIL, infrastructure and services, including maintenance of the infrastructure, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

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

“In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the investment priorities set out in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, Cherwell Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and all other relevant policies of this plan, including the future phasing of infrastructure within the proposed site allocations.”

#### **Policy COM 21: Meeting Education Needs**

- 3.344. 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.
- 3.345. We recognise the important role that viable schools have to play in maintaining and contributing to community cohesion.
- 3.346. 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.
- 3.347. 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, and other educational facilities. This will include appropriate provision for the strategic site allocations set out in this plan.
- 3.348. 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.

- 3.349.** We will seek to ensure that new and extended schools are built to the highest sustainable construction standards. 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.
- 3.350.** 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.
- 3.351.** 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.
- 3.352.** The Council's Developer Contributions SPD provides further details on how developer contributions for education facilities will be sought.

## **Policy COM 21 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. Wherever possible, schools should be located within close proximity to other services and facilities to create community hubs and to help establish walkable 20 minute neighbourhoods.

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.

Where appropriate, the Council will support the use of school streets in the immediate vicinity of schools.

## **Policy COM 22: Public Services and Utilities**

- 3.353.** Securing investment in strategic infrastructure such as water, waste, sewerage, electricity and digital connections helps address both current and future needs.
- 3.354.** 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.

- 3.355.** 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.
- 3.356.** 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.
- 3.357.** Improving Mobile communications infrastructure is key to enabling efficiencies in the local economy as well as enriching the lives of residents. The mobile industry is currently deploying new 5G mobile infrastructure as they decommission the older 2G and 3G networks. This requires new mobile mast locations to be secured, typically for monopoles which are needed in residential areas. Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) are encouraged to utilise the Pre-App process with the LPA to assist with deployments such that costs are reduced for the MNOs by avoiding rejected Planning Notices or Applications, whilst assisting residents by ensuring as far as possible that new masts are located in a sensitive manner.
- 3.358.** 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.
- 3.359.** Oxfordshire currently has good levels of superfast broadband connectivity. Between 2014 and 2024 the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme has increased superfast broadband availability from 69% to 99% of premises across the county. In June 2024, approximately 57% of premises in the county had full fibre connectivity.
- 3.360.** We will 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. 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.

## **Policy COM 22: 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.**

## **Policy COM 23: Local Services and Community Facilities**

**3.361.** 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.

**3.362.** The sustainability and social cohesion of our communities can be harmed when these facilities are lost, particularly in the rural areas.

**3.363.** 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. We will have regard to these designations when considering planning proposals for a change of use.

**3.364.** We 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.

**3.365.** 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.

**3.366.** 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.

- 3.367.** 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.
- 3.368.** In 2016/2017 the Council commissioned a 'Cherwell Community Spaces and Development Study (CCSDS) 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. We will therefore seek financial contributions towards the provision of a community activation fund and community development worker for its strategic allocations.
- 3.369.** We 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.

### **Policy COM 23: 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.**

#### **Policy COM 24    Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

- 3.370.** The responsibility for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the district is shared between ourselves, Oxfordshire County Council, local 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.
- 3.371.** Well designed, accessible, 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.
- 3.372.** Our evidence, for open space and play provision recommends that the standards for play space set out in our 2015 Plan should be retained.
- 3.373.** Our 2023 Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 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 states that there is likely to be a need for some new provision in specific areas to completely alleviate existing and future deficits given the considerable shortfalls identified, particularly for rugby union (i.e., in Banbury and Bicester). Specifically in relation to football and hockey, a shortfall of 3G and sand-based artificial pitches respectively that can only be met through increased provision is identified.
- 3.374.** Our 2024 Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy states that there is a requirement to continue to invest in indoor and built facilities in Cherwell. In particular, there is a need for a long-term investment plan for the upgrade/replacement and potential expansion of Bicester, and Kidlington and Gosford leisure centres, to support expected population growth.
- 3.375.** 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.
- 3.376.** 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 XX or any subsequent updates.
- 3.377.** 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 may be preferable to the provision of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in some cases.

**3.378.** 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. It may also be appropriate to seek green space provision or a contribution towards such provision in association with non-residential development.

**3.379.** In addition, we encourage 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 we will take measures to ensure that well maintained, attractive, safe and inclusive environments for children’s play.

**TABLE XXX: Local Cherwell Standards for Leisure Provision**

| Type of Provision  | Quantitative Standard    | Accessibility Standard   | Minimum Size of Provision   | Threshold for On-site Provision |
|--|--------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Play space</b> (combining provision for younger and older provision, including MUGAs) | 0.78 ha per 1000 people. | 5 minute walk (400m) except for NEAPs<br>15minute walk (1200m) | LAP – 100m <sup>2</sup> activity zone;<br>400m <sup>2</sup> including buffer zone   | 10 dwellings                    |
|  |                          |  | LEAP – 400m <sup>2</sup> activity zone;<br>3600m <sup>2</sup> including buffer  | 50 dwellings                    |
|  |                          |  | NEAP – 1000m <sup>2</sup> activity zone;<br>8500m <sup>2</sup> 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. |                    |
| <b>General green space</b><br>(parks and gardens, natural and semi natural/amenity green space) | 2.4ha per 1000 urban dwellers              | 5 minute walk (amenity open space) (400m) | 200m <sup>2</sup>  | 10 urban dwellings |
|   | 2.74 ha per 1000 rural/urban edge dwellers | 15 minute walk other (1200m)              |  | 6 rural dwellings  |
| <b>Allotments/Community Gardens</b>   | 0.37 ha per 1000 people.                   | 10 minute walk (800m)                     | 0.2 ha   | 275 dwellings      |

**3.380.** The requirements from developments for new sports and recreation provision will be based on the Council's up to date evidence (Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facility Strategy) in conjunction with the Sport England's Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities 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.

**3.381.** Similarly, the requirements for built sports facilities will be assessed using Sport England's Built Facilities calculator and local evidence.

**3.382.** Sport England will be consulted on proposals which would result in the loss of sports and recreation facilities.

## **Policy COM 24      Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

**All open spaces, allotments, sport and recreation facilities will be protected and where necessary enhanced to ensure access to a network of high-quality, accessible, 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 residential 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 Table 10. The design, layout and range of equipment should be inclusive and fully accessible to children and young adults with disabilities, including wheelchair users.

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 the 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. Does 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.

Non-residential development proposals are encouraged to provide areas of amenity open space of a proportionate size, scale and character within or adjacent to the development.

## **Policy COM 25      Local Green Space**

**3.383.** 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.

**3.384.** 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.

- 3.385.** There are a number of existing designated Local Green Spaces in the district that have been created by Neighbourhood Plans. We will continue to encourage future Neighbourhood Plans to consider whether it is appropriate to designate further local green spaces.
- 3.386.** 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.
- 3.387.** A 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.

## **Policy COM 25      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 designated as Local Green Space as shown on the Policies Map:**

- **Derwent Green -Bicester**
- **Gavray Drive – Bicester**
- **Langford Community Orchard- Bicester**
- **Stratfield Brake Nature Reserve- Kidlington**
- **Field between Park Farm and the Castle Grounds- Hanwell**
- **Bowmont Square- Bicester**
- **Dangerfield- Bicester**
- **Hamilton Close- Bicester**
- **Kings Meadow Recreational Ground- Bicester**
- **Meredith Close- Bicester**
- **Keta Field- Bicester**
- **Leach Road Allotments- Bicester**
- **Evenlode Allotments- Bicester**
- **Colne Close Allotments- Bicester**
- **George Street- Bicester**
- **Hudson Street- Bicester**

**The community value of a designated Local Green Space should be maintained and where 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.**

## ***Historic Environment***

### **Policies COM 26 - 29: Historic Environment**

- 3.388.** The conservation of our 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. It is essential that heritage assets are protected and enhanced whilst contributing towards the objectives in this Plan.
- 3.389.** 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.
- 3.390.** Our 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.
- 3.391.** The NPPF uses the term 'heritage asset' which can be designated or non-designated. Examples of these are Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Historic Farmsteads, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and archaeological remains. 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 Registered 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.
- 3.392.** 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. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered of equal importance to designated heritage assets. Government Guidance (NPPF) requires the Council to consider any impacts arising from a development proposal on non-designated heritage assets.
- 3.393.** Non-designated heritage assets of local importance are known as Local Heritage Assets (LHA's), these include built structures formerly known as 'locally listed' buildings and other 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 local heritage assets.

- 3.394.** 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).
- 3.395.** The built heritage of the plan area is rich and varied - containing a valuable resource of surviving high quality vernacular architecture. North Oxfordshire is rich in history, having pre-Roman routes and settlements, and with medieval wealth predominantly derived from sheep farming.
- 3.396.** The great majority of listed buildings, structures and monuments in the district are in good condition. However, there are a number of buildings that have fallen into disuse, dereliction and disrepair for a variety of reasons. The Council maintains a register of Buildings at Risk. The aim of this register is to raise awareness of the problems relating to historic buildings at risk to the wider public. It also aims to prompt the owner or members of the public to take action to get these buildings repaired and secure their long-term future. Historic England also publish a national 'Heritage at Risk' register which contains Grade I and II\* listed buildings or structures known to be 'at risk' through neglect and delay.
- 3.397.** 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 in a manner that is appropriate to their significance and it is also acknowledged that they can contribute to the quality of life they bring to current and future generations.
- 3.398.** We have a rolling programme of reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals and may use Article 4 Directions to maintain the character of our historic environment, where appropriate.
- 3.399.** 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 and the type, level and Grade of designation ;
  - The contribution that the affected part of the asset makes to the significance of the heritage asset as a whole;
  - Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which have equivalent significant to schedule monuments, should be considered against policies for designated heritage assets.
- 3.400.** In order to enable us to positively manage change, applicants will be required to submit a Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment which assesses the significance of the asset, and the impact of development on that significance. 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 with a fully informed 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 conservation, and the conservation of its character and setting;
- Opportunities to sustain, enhance, to better reveal, avoid or minimise harm to the significance of the asset have been taken;
- The development could not be achieved in a less harmful way.

**3.401.** Where a development site has archaeological interest, an archaeological desk-based assessment will need to be submitted along with any planning application for a site. In some cases field evaluation may also be required. Not all heritage assets have currently been identified, so the assessment will need to consider the likelihood of previously unidentified heritage assets being present on the site.

### **Policy COM 26: Historic Environment**

**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.**

#### **Designated Heritage Assets**

**When considering development affecting a designated heritage asset or its setting, great weight will be given to the significance of the asset and its conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.**

**Development proposals related to designated heritage assets must conserve or enhance the heritage assets and have special regard to;**

- I. The special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings and structures and the conservation of 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 setting, 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 and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.**

**Proposals that would lead to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted, unless there is a clear public benefit to outweigh that harm. Any such assessment will**

take into account, in the balance of material considerations;

- the significance of the asset;
- the level of the harm
- the nature and level of the public benefit of the proposal.

#### **Non designated Heritage Assets**

1. Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset will be permitted where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its fabric, character and setting.
2. Where possible, development will seek to enhance the character of the non-designated heritage asset.

Proposals for demolition or total loss of a non-designated heritage asset will be subject to a balanced assessment taking into account the significance of the asset and the scale of harm or loss.

#### **All Heritage Assets**

All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.

Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk-based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.

Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place at a level appropriate to its significance and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with national guidance.

The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances heritage assets which contribute to the historic character of an area through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Master planning.

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated or undesignated asset will not be approved, unless there are substantive tangible public benefits that clearly and convincingly outweigh the harm, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

#### **Policy COM 27: 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, detailing

- 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. Loss or harm to features that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the development that makes an equal or greater contribution.
- vi Internally illuminated advertisement signage unless the signage does not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area or its setting.

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- i. The building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area; or
- ii. The building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and
- iii. 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.

### **Policy COM 28: 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;
- ii. Respect the building's historic curtilage, 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.

### **Policy COM 29- Registered Parks and Gardens and historic Battlefields**

Proposals should conserve or enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a battlefield, or park or garden on the Historic England Registers of Historic Battlefields or Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

New development in or within the setting of a registered park, garden or historic battlefield should take opportunities to:

- a) Reinststate landscape or built features which contribute positively to the historic interest of the park or garden.
- b) Remove landscape or built features that harm the historic interest of the asset.
- c) Preserve the views into, from, and across the park, garden or battlefield, including any impacts from artificial lighting.

Developments within or affecting a Registered Park, garden or battlefield should preserve the significance of the heritage asset and be informed by appropriate research, guidance and expertise.

### **Policies COM 230 & 31 The Oxford Canal**

**3.402.** 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. The Oxford Canal, with its locks, bridges and wharves, contributes a very great deal to the character of the District. 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. The Conservation Area Appraisal provides a clear context for future development and should be read alongside this policy.

**3.403.** 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.

### **Policy COM 30: The Oxford Canal**

The Council will protect and enhance the Oxford Canal corridor which passes north to south 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 and enhanced.

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. Development proposals are expected to establish a positive relationship with the canal's waterfront character, taking full advantage of its location and addressing the waterway as a frontage.

The Council will ensure that the towpath alongside the canal becomes an accessible long-distance trail for all users which links with existing networks of pedestrian and cycle routes. Development on the route of, or adjacent to the Oxford Canal must not prevent the improvement, reconstruction, restoration or continued use of the canals or towpaths.

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 canal side setting in terms of design, materials and landscaping.

### **Policy COM 31: 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;
- 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.

## CHAPTER 4: **Banbury Area Strategy**

### Banbury Vision 2042

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4.1. In 2042 Banbury will continue to be a thriving, historic market town and an important economic and social focus for its residents, visitors, for business and for a large rural hinterland.

- The town will have a diverse economic base;
- Nearly 6,500 homes will have been built by 2042 of which a significant proportion will be affordable homes;
- New services, facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been provided;
- The town will be safer and healthier, with levels of deprivation reduced;
- The town centre will be vibrant and at the heart of the town, a place to live, shop and access cultural and community facilities;
- The quality of the public realm and built environment will have been improved and new developments will be designed to a high standard;
- Air quality will have been improved and traffic congestion reduced;
- There will be more opportunities for safe, convenient active travel routes. Public transport will have been improved;
- There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public, including new wooded areas and new linear parks/green corridors.

### Banbury Policies

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#### **Policy BAN 1: Banbury Area Strategy**

4.2. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Banbury is as follows:

##### *Overall Spatial Strategy*

- Deliver committed development and provide for some limited additional growth reflecting the topographical, landscape and rural character constraints of the town's edge;
- Revitalise, appropriately repurpose and seek further investment in the town centre, continue to improve its built and 'green' environment and public realm and further develop the nighttime economy;
- Continue to support and strengthen the town's economy and diversify its skill base;
- Encourage development proposals that will support education and help reduce deprivation;
- Seek strategic transport improvements to encourage active travel, reduce congestion and pollution, and reduce cross town traffic by motorised vehicles.

## *Banbury Area Strategy*

- Focus new development on previously developed land within the existing urban area, particularly in the vicinity of the town centre;
- Bring about Canalside regeneration, 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 securing benefits achieved through specific development proposals and by economic growth and diversification;
- Secure a site that will provide a permanent home for Banbury United Football Club;
- Deliver a new secondary school for the town;
- Ensure new developments deliver 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;
- Ensure new developments strengthen the connection between the town centre and railway station, a key gateway to the town, and
- Ensure new developments deliver improved active travel routes in and around the town, radiating to surrounding villages.

## **Housing**

- 4.3. Since 2011, there has been an additional 4,801 homes delivered at Banbury (at 31 March 2024), which represents over a third (37%) of the total completions for the district. Most of the new housing has been delivered on several large 'strategic' allocations on the edge of the town.
- 4.4. In addition to the houses already built, as of 31 March 2024, there were permissions (either outline or full) for a total of 1,560 additional homes at Banbury. These are primarily on sites allocated for housing in our last Local Plan. Many of which are currently under construction.
- 4.5. In our last Local Plan, less development was identified at Banbury than at Bicester. However, Banbury has delivered more of its allocated sites as it has not had the same strategic infrastructure challenges as Bicester.
- 4.6. Recent residential developments in the town centre have provided high quality accessible and affordable housing for those wishing to live in the town centre. It is important that residential development in the town centre continues to support the growth of the town centre economy and complements surrounding areas. It should do this through a mix of housing and good design.



## ***The Economy***

- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. The economy of the town benefits from its location on the M40, and its railway links, with excellent transport links to Oxford, the South-East, and the Midlands. It also benefits from currently having the most employment floorspace in Cherwell.
- 4.9. Our last Local Plan 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.
- 4.10. The subsequent 2016 Banbury Masterplan embraced these aims and highlighted how, by driving the engineering economy and investing in infrastructure and skills, economic growth could be achieved.
- 4.11. 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 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.
- 4.12. There are also a number of existing employment sites at Banbury where there is considerable potential for redevelopment, for example at the JDE site on Ruscote Avenue following the recent closure of the factory.

### **Policy BAN 1: 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 and support town centre regeneration.**

**Development in the Banbury Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Policy SP 1:**

**Housing Delivery: 6,477 homes will be delivered at Banbury between 2020 and 2042 including the following strategic site allocations:**

| Site  | Housing Numbers 2020 - 2042 |                         |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| East of Bloxham Road (South of Salt Way East - Phase 2) | 600                         | New Site Allocation     |
| Calthorpe Street  | 170                         | New Site Allocation     |
| Canalside   | 700                         | Amended Site Allocation |
| Bolton Road   | 200                         | Amended Site Allocation |

The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced.

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

A further allowance will be made for ‘windfalls’ of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area.

**Employment: 10.5 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with Policy LEC 1 in the following locations:**

| Site       | Employment Hectares |
|------------|---------------------|
| Higham Way | 3.0                 |
| Canalside  | 7.5                 |

#### **Policy BAN 2: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area**

4.13. We need to focus on supporting sustainable connectivity and ensuring new development is located where opportunities for sustainable development and transport can be maximised. Traffic congestion is an issue in Banbury, and so it is important that this Plan minimises and mitigates against additional traffic and supports development where sustainable transportation and active travel can be utilised to the maximum extent.

4.14. The town’s environmental and physical constraints, 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. New and innovative solutions will be needed, and this work is being led by the County Council through the preparation of a Movement and Place Strategy to support the adopted Local Connectivity Transport Plan Update (2022).

- 4.15. 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 where necessary on the road network. The County Council has prepared a Banbury Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (July 2023) to support this strategy.
- 4.16. 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, which is primarily due to a high level of walking.
- 4.17. However, there are still significant transport related issues that we need to address. These include:
- Transport congestion and poor air quality along Hennef Way exacerbated in part by only one connection with the strategic road network and in areas around the town centre;
  - Inadequate provision of high quality and safe walking and cycling infrastructure throughout the town, including between the residential areas and the employment sites
  - Congestion in areas around the town centre exacerbated by the A361 as a freight route with no other alternatives;
  - Inadequate bus priority which impacts on reliability, viability and provision of bus services into and across the town centre
  - Unsuitable provision at Banbury bus station for passengers using longer distance bus and coach services;
  - Poor walking and cycling connectivity between the town centre and railway station;
  - Limited options for a new strategic route including sustainable connectivity between the south of the town and the employment areas in the north east;
  - The lack of cycling connectivity between Banbury and its satellite settlements.

In order to deliver growth in the Banbury Area, improvements to the transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate impact and to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Banbury and the wider Banbury Area. The package may be further refined through the Movement and Place Strategy being developed by Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that measures work for the local community, provide a strong sense of place and help to deliver Oxfordshire's transport policies and targets-

## **Policy BAN 2: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Banbury Area**

**Transport infrastructure at Banbury will be required as follows:**

- **Delivery of the walking, wheeling and cycling routes identified within the LCWIP;**
- **Delivery of bus service improvement schemes including Tramway Road and Cherwell Street corridors;**
- **Rejuvenating or relocating Banbury Bus Station;**
- **Re-designing Banbury Railway Station forecourt to improve multi-modal interchange;**
- **Improving accessibility of north - south routes with a particular emphasis on sustainable modes including:**
  - **Ruscote Avenue/Queensway;**

- North Bar/South Bar and the
- Cherwell Street/Windsor Street corridor;
- Delivering improvements to the east-west strategic routes to support sustainable travel including:
  - Hennef Way A422 corridor;
  - Warwick Road Corridor;
- Review of Banbury Town Centre traffic circulation to reduce through movements and improve the safety of active travel modes;
- Measures within the Market Place and immediate area to provide an improved community place;
- Provision of more direct transport links between the south of the town and the north east area of employment, including bus and active travel connectivity, and new spine road and increased level of bus service between the A361 and A4260.

### **Policy BAN 3: Development in the Vicinity of Banbury Railway Station**

- 4.18. 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.
- 4.19. 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.
- 4.20. We want to encourage the use of public transport and improve access to public transport by active travel routes by improving walking, cycling and bus connections to the railway station and its facilities. Over the Plan period we therefore intend to 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.
- 4.21. The Tramway Road scheme improvements will improve access to Banbury Rail Station for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and taxis, whilst also increasing the reliability of buses into the town centre from southern areas of the town, with a reduction in trips taken using the A4260/Bridge Street junction.
- 4.22. Further projects looking to improve sustainable access to the railway station include improved access from the canal towpath, improved connections across to the Bridge Street junction and town centre including wayfinding, and improved connections through Bridge Street Gardens to the cultural area of the town.
- 4.23. 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.

### Policy BAN 3: 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 Banbury Tramway Road Improvements map 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. Improve sustainable access to the station and its facilities and improve connections with the town centre;
- ii. Facilitate and encourage non-car modes of transportation;
- iii. Improve the design and quality of the station, forecourt and its facilities, and
- iv. Achieve an increase to the capacity of the station as a result of the development.



**Banbury Tramway Road Improvements**

### Policy BAN 4: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area

4.24. 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 these spaces are maintained and managed by Banbury Town Council.

4.25. 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. This would 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.

4.26. The existing Spiceball Country Park forms the central section of the linear 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. The whole corridor is included within the North Cherwell Conservation Target Area.

- 4.27. In reviewing the development proposals for Canalside for this Plan, we now recognise that the canal/river corridor provides an even greater opportunity for an enhanced linear park, which could open up the canal frontage to the town centre, thereby creating a new, attractive public space at a key gateway to the town. There are also potentially significant opportunities to improve biodiversity and habitats.
- 4.28. The corridor also 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.
- 4.29. In terms of sports provision, the town has two indoor leisure centres at Spiceball and Woodgreen, together with some private leisure facilities. Local schools, including the North Oxfordshire Academy, also 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, and we continue to support this objective. The 2015 adopted Policy Banbury 12 is therefore saved in this Local Plan.

#### **Policy BAN 4: Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Banbury Area**

**All new development proposals will be required to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Banbury area.**

**The Council will seek contributions towards the strategic projects identified in the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Banbury 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 Banbury 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.**

**Policy BAN 5: Horton Hospital Site**

- 4.30. 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 an Emergency Department. It is a major employer in the town, employing approximately 1,000 people.
- 4.31. 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.
- 4.32. The original Victorian hospital building that fronts the Oxford Road is Grade II listed and lies within the Banbury Conservation Area, and so any redevelopment proposals would need to preserve and enhance these buildings and their setting.
- 4.33. We will encourage and support improved hospital related facilities on the site to serve our existing and future communities.

**Policy BAN 5: 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, which lie within the Banbury conservation area, will be conserved and enhanced.**

***Primary Health Care***

- 4.34. 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's Built Heritage***

4.35. 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 legal duty to protect these important heritage assets.

### ***Banbury Town Centre and Opportunity Areas***

4.36. 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.

4.37. 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.

4.38. We recognise that in recent years, due to changing retail habits and the impacts of the Covid pandemic, the town centre has suffered. As with many towns, the closure of some large high street chain stores has left several vacant units both in Castle Quay and in the wider town centre. Some smaller units have also closed. This has made some areas of the centre feel less vibrant and attractive to visitors.

4.39. 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 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 master-planning 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;
- Open up the Oxford Canal to the town centre;



- Undertake a review of car parking provisions. 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 be a focus on managing the existing leisure-offer, and how the non-leisure-based night-time economy could be supported. Improvements to accessibility (particularly late-night transport), the public realm and the sense of safety are recommended.

4.40. 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. Three of these sites are being brought forward as formal allocations in this Plan. However, for two of the areas there is less certainty about the type and timings of development, therefore we are highlighting these as future opportunity areas.

#### *Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue*

4.41. 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.

#### *George Street, Cherwell Street & Bridge Street*

4.42. 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.

### **Policy BAN 6: Banbury Opportunity Areas**

**Redevelopment proposals at the following general locations;**

- **Bridge Street/Concorde Avenue, and**
- **George Street/Cherwell Street/ Bridge Street**

**will be supported provided that:**

- They are of a high quality, with well-designed edges securing significant townscape improvements to Banbury;**
- Proposals for the individual sites are prepared through a comprehensive masterplan process providing an integrated solution to site access, traffic management, pedestrian movements and linkages, air quality management, whilst prioritising the pedestrian/ customer environment;**
- Proposals are 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. **Proposals 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. **They are 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. **They improve the public realm and remove unnecessary signage and street furniture and use a simple and durable palette of materials.**

**Residential development will be supported on the identified sites, particularly above ground floors.**

### **Policy BAN M/U 1 Banbury Canalside**

- 4.43. 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 small businesses, railway carparking, some limited residential development, and Banbury United Football Club. The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal run through the area.
- 4.44. Canalside is a highly sustainable location for housing development adjacent to the town centre. Its redevelopment will make effective use of brownfield land, contribute towards the remediation of contaminated land, significantly reduce the need for the release of greenfield land on the edge of the town and support the viability of shops and services within the town centre.
- 4.45. 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.
- 4.46. Our previous Local 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.
- 4.47. Many businesses remain and there continues to be a turnover of commercial uses within existing premises. Unfortunately, no significant re-development has taken place, and the general character of the area remains largely unchanged, although Oxfordshire County Council is progressing plans for improvements to Tramway Road which will provide a bus-only link through the site to the railway station.
- 4.48. This Plan continues to identify this area for a mixed-use redevelopment, although following the

recommendations of our Town Centre and Retail Studies it is no longer appropriate to support retail uses within the site. We now expect the development area to the east of the River Cherwell to be employment-led, with residential development focused in the northern section of the site and along the Cherwell Street frontage.

4.49. It is envisaged that the employment-led allocation would support a range of businesses including small workshops/industrial units and premises for start-up and growth companies within an attractive riverside setting. The residential areas should blend the site's canalside heritage with sustainable homes, public realm and amenities to form an exemplar residential neighbourhood.

### **Policy BAN M/U 1: Banbury Canalside**

**Site area: 26 hectares**

**Land at Canalside, Banbury is allocated to accommodate approximately 700 dwellings and 7 hectares of employment land. Planning permission will only be granted for development at Canalside in accordance with a masterplan for the whole area to be approved by the Council.**

**1) Within Sub Area A, as defined in the Policies Map, a residential led mixed use development.**

**Number of Homes - Approximately 700 with a range of dwelling types and densities that reflect character and context, which should be determined as part of the design process.**

**The provision of extra-care and specialist housing, and the opportunity for community self-build affordable housing.**

**Other complimentary uses including community facilities and business uses**

**2) Within Sub Area B, as defined in the Policies Map, an employment led mixed use development.**

**Approximately 7 hectares focused on Use Classes - E(g) B2, B8**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

#### **Site Specific Requirements**

##### **Green and Blue Infrastructure**

- **The provision of a public linear park along the length of the River Cherwell corridor within the site, providing easily accessible walking and wheeling routes to Spiceball Park in the north and Longford Park to the south;**
- **The River Cherwell should be maintained in a semi-natural state and mature trees should remain.**

## Other Infrastructure

- **Education - Contributions will be required to primary and secondary education provision;**
- **Primary Care - Opportunity to provide new primary care facilities within sub area A or provide off-site financial contributions;**
- **Access and Movement - Use of existing junctions at Station Approach (from Bridge Street), Canal Street (from Windsor Street), Lower Cherwell Street (from Windsor Street) and Tramway Road with a new junction off Swan Close Road provided west of Tramway Road. Provision of a bus only link from Station Approach to an extended Tramway Road. Improvements to Windsor Street, Upper Windsor Street and Cherwell Street corridor;**
- **Improvements to the Oxford Canal towpath and access to it to include accessibility for people with disabilities.**

## Design and Place-Shaping Principles

- **A distinctive residential neighbourhood for Banbury that integrates well and helps make connections with the adjoining town centre and Railway Station;**
- **Higher density housing dwellings to include a mixture of dwelling styles and types;**
- **Innovative, sustainable architecture, including the use of robust and locally distinctive materials, which reflect the character and appearance of Banbury, respect the setting of the retained historic buildings and in particular reference the canal side location;**
- **An age friendly neighbourhood with extra care housing and housing for wheel chair users and those with specialist supported housing needs;**
- **Commercial and leisure uses focused in the north of the site adjacent to the town centre and station;**
- **A layout that maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods and enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link to existing networks, with provision of a designated pedestrian and cycle route from the station to the town centre over the canal and river and a new pedestrian / cycle bridge over the railway;**
- **New pedestrian and cycle bridges erected over the Oxford Canal and the River Cherwell to enable and encourage walking and cycling through the site. Exact locations and requirements to be determined through a strategic masterplan;**
- **High quality open/urban spaces provided in various locations within the site and new trees planted;**
- **Improved junction arrangements on Bridge Street and Cherwell Street to improve traffic capacity but also to facilitate pedestrian movement between the town centre and Canalside Buildings fronting Windsor Street enabling pedestrian permeability of the site to correspond with the proposed highway improvements which include frequent informal crossing points along Windsor Street;**
- **Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the provision of a bus route through the site with buses stopping at the railway Station and at new bus stops on the site;**
- **Development fronting on to the canal and public access to and from the canal;**
- **The continued use of canal boats for leisure purposes with the opportunity to provide new and enhanced facilities and moorings in this area;**

- Retention and integration of the most valuable historic buildings/structures including the Grade II Listed Old Town Hall and the bridge over the river;
- The integration of existing historic buildings, which will enrich the environment and maintain the long term character of the area;
- Public art should be provided and there is the opportunity for this to be creatively engaged through the creative refurbishment of existing buildings and new bridges to the canal.

## **Flood Risk**

The Canalside area falls primarily within Flood Zones 2 and 3 at present. It has been subject to flooding in recent years and the Environment Agency (EA) has completed a scheme to provide flood alleviation to the town centre. To assess the potential flood risk in the Canalside area, a level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to assess both the fluvial flood risk to the development proposals from the River Cherwell and the flood risk associated with the Oxford Canal. This confirms that with the implementation of the Flood Alleviation Scheme and the implementation of other measures on the site the site can be redeveloped safely. Applications will be required to follow the requirements set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for the site will be required with any planning application.

**Additional requirements for this large complex site include:**

The Council believes that the most effective and equitable means of promoting development at Canalside will be based on an outline planning application being made by consortia of key landowners and/or their developer partners, supported by a masterplan. It is expected that key landowners will have agreed a means of capturing and mutually benefiting from the uplift in land values as a result of a successful development scheme.

However, if supported by a strategic masterplan, proposals within sub areas A or B may be permitted provided that they clearly demonstrate that they will contribute towards the delivery of the Council's wider vision for the whole Canalside area.

Proposals for smaller parcels may exceptionally be supported where it is clearly demonstrated that the development will positively contribute towards the comprehensive and integrated regeneration of the site as a whole.

## **Policy BAN H2: East of Bloxham Road, Banbury (South of Salt Way East - Phase 2)**

4.50. The development area to the East of Bloxham Road, Banbury (Phase 2) is a sustainable location for housing on the southern periphery of Banbury.

4.51. Immediately to the north of the site is a strategic housing allocation from our 2015 Local Plan (Policy Banbury 17). The construction is well advanced, and this new allocation provides a logical extension to this new neighbourhood building upon the infrastructure being provided.

- 4.52. The southern boundary of the site is defined by Wykham Lane; a road with a rural character setting which is important to retain. To the east lies the Grade II listed Wykham Farmhouse. A public right of way runs north south along the length of the western boundary of the site. The western most parcel of the site slopes steeply westward towards a small dry valley extending north from the broader Sor valley. It also lies relatively close to Tudor Hall/Wykham Park to the south-west and makes a positive contribution to the quality of the view experienced from the right of way. This area should therefore be kept free from development.
- 4.53. To maintain the rural character of Wykham Lane, a substantial landscaped buffer will be required on the southern boundary of the site. Furthermore, no vehicular access into the site will be permitted from Wykham Lane. The site must be accessed from, and integrated with, the residential development site to the north. Active travel routes to Bodicote and Banbury should also be routed via the development to the north rather than Wykham Lane.
- 4.54. A landscape buffer is also required on the eastern boundary of the site to protect the setting of the listed Wykham Farmhouse.
- 4.55. The Council will require any development to broadly conform with the indicative layout in Fig XX below.



## POLICY BAN H2: East of Bloxham Road, Banbury (South of Salt Way East - Phase 2)

Site Area: 32 hectares

Land at east of Bloxham Road, Banbury is allocated as an extension to on-going development to the south

of Salt Way. It will accommodate approximately 600 dwellings at appropriate densities to reflect the site context and the wider development. Planning permission will only be granted for development at this site in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code for the site to be approved by the Council.

All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.

#### Key design requirements

1. The development should be consistent with the design principles shown in Figure XX.
2. The maintenance of the rural character of Wykham Lane
3. The provision of a substantial landscape buffer between the developable area and Wykham Lane to maintain its rural character.
4. No vehicular access to the site from Wykham Lane.
5. Appropriate landscape buffer to protect the setting of the Grade II listed Wykham Farmhouse.
6. Developable area to be pulled back from areas of archaeological interest, to ensure no adverse impacts:

#### Site Specific Infrastructure Requirements

1. Two vehicular access points required linking with the development to the north.
2. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to Banbury town centre.
3. Improved active travel routes to Bodicote and Banbury town centre through the site to the north.
4. Primary and secondary financial contributions including towards the expansion of Bishop Loveday School.
5. Financial contribution towards primary healthcare in the local area.
6. Financial contributions towards off-site sport and recreation facilities.

#### Policy BAN H3: Calthorpe Street

- 4.56. Former building clearances in this part of the town centre have resulted in the disintegration of the traditional Calthorpe Street frontage and the public realm being dominated by surface car parking.
- 4.57. The site is prominent within the designated Banbury Conservation Area and the Council's objective is to facilitate the reinstatement of the Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road frontages.
- 4.58. 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.

4.59. Pedestrian and cycle links between Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road will be required. The setting of Calthorpe Manor, a listed building, must be respected.

## **Policy BAN H3: Calthorpe Street**

**Planning permission will be granted for development for the following uses:**

**Development Area: 1.76 hectares**

**Development Description:** This Calthorpe Street site is located in a prominent location on the edge of Banbury Town Centre. The Council will seek the comprehensive redevelopment of the area to include a high quality residential led development.

**Proposals should respect and enhance the historical setting and include the creation of a high quality public realm, which ensures successful integration and connectivity with the town centre.**

**Housing: 170 dwellings**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development at this site in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code.**

### **Site specific Requirements**

- **Public realm and built frontages that address and integrate with Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road;**
- **New public realm and pedestrian permeability including the provision of a pedestrian and cycling link between Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road through the site;**
- **The setting of the Grade II listed Calthorpe Manor is protected and enhanced;**
- **Development proposals will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Banbury Conservation Area; and**
- **Contributions towards primary and secondary school provision.**

## **Policy BAN M/U 2: Bolton Road**

4.60. 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, and a number of historic buildings. A former bingo hall and offices within the site is currently being redeveloped for housing for older people.



4.61. 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.

### **Policy BAN M/U2: Bolton Road**

**Planning permission will be granted for development for the following uses:**

**Development Area: 2 hectares**

**Housing: 200 dwellings**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development at this site in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code.**

**Development Description: Bolton Road is located in a prominent location on the northern edge of Banbury Town Centre. The Council will seek the redevelopment of the area to include a high quality residential led development.**

**Proposals should respect and enhance the historical setting and include the creation of a high quality public realm, which ensures successful integration and connectivity with the town centre.**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

#### **Key site specific design and place shaping principles**

- **A high quality landmark development in Banbury Town Centre that will support the regeneration of this area;**
- **Pedestrian and cycle linkages that enable a high degree of integration and connectivity with existing networks, particularly between Parsons Street, North Bar Street and Castle Street integrating these areas through well considered connections, building configuration and public realm;**
- **Residential development that is designed to a very high standard considering the impact on the conservation area;**
- **A design which respects and enhances the conservation area and the historical grain of the adjoining areas especially the Grade II listed building to the west of the site;**
- **The creation of an attractive public realm with careful consideration of street frontages and elevation treatment to ensure safe and active and vibrant environment;**
- **Height and massing sensitive to the surroundings, ensuring there is no adverse effect on important views/vistas;**
- **There is an opportunity for low key, high end development, formed along new lanes that connect the area to Parsons Street;**
- **Provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity; and**
- **An archaeological field evaluation to assess the impact of the development on archaeological features.**

## **Policy BAN E1: Land at Higham Way**

This site is a former waste management facility and concrete batching plant and is located to the south east of Banbury town centre. The site is bounded by residential and sports pitches to the north, railway lines to the south and employment land to the east. It was allocated for residential development in our last local plan but given its physical constraints it is now consider more appropriate for employment uses.

The site is within Flood Zone 2 and 3. A Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) for the north of Banbury was completed in 2012 and a large part of the site falls within the defended area.

The site offers the opportunity to provide a number of employment units to meet the demand for small and medium size premises within Banbury. It would also be suitable for office development.

## **Policy BAN E1: Land at Higham Way**

**Planning permission will be granted for the following uses:**

**Developable Area: 3 hectares**

**Land at Higham Way, Banbury is allocated to accommodate 3 hectares of employment land.**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

**Key site specific requirements**

- **The safeguarding of the route of a vehicular connection between Chalker Way and Higham Way;**
- **Walking and cycling improvements to Causeway and Bridge Street to improve access to / from east of town to the town centre;**
- **Satisfactory access arrangements including a detailed transport assessment and Travel Plan given the location of the site close to Banbury Town Centre;**
- **Proportionate financial contributions to new or improved walking and cycling routes from the railway station to the town centre;**
- **Appropriate treatment and remediation of contaminated land;**
- **The completion of a flood risk assessment for the site;**
- **Take account of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the site;**
- **Provide noise and other necessary mitigation measures to protect the amenities of adjacent residential areas.**

## CHAPTER 5: **Bicester Area Strategy**

### Bicester Vision 2042

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5.1. In 2042, Bicester will continue to be a thriving historic market town and an important economic and social focus for its residents, visitors, and for business

- The town will have a diverse and strengthened economic base with 200 hectares of land developed for new employment;
- Over 7,500 homes will have been built by 2042 of which 30% will be affordable homes;
- New services, facilities and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been provided;
- The town will be healthier, with levels of deprivation reduced;
- The town will continue to maximise the benefits of having key international and national destinations and will provide additional land to support further business investment;
- The town centre will be vibrant and at the heart of the town, a place to live, shop and access cultural and community facilities;
- The quality of the public realm and built environment will have been improved and new developments will be designed to a high standard;
- Air quality will have been improved and traffic congestion reduced;
- There will be more opportunity for safe, convenient active travel routes;
- There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public.

### Bicester Policies

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#### **Policy BIC 1: Bicester Area Strategy**

5.2. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Bicester is as follows:

#### *Overall Spatial Strategy*

- Deliver committed development and be the focus for additional development reflecting the town's on-going growth and transformation as a sustainable Garden Town and its regional and sub-regional location on the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor including and East-West Rail route;
- Deliver a high quality employment corridor into the town along the A41;
- Continue to maximise the benefits of having key international and national destinations and economic activity to support further business investment;
- Support the continued improvement of the town's centre, its facilities, its public realm and 'green' environment as a community and cultural centre of activity;
- Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and prioritise active travel.

#### *Bicester Area Strategy*

- Deliver new high quality development helping to achieve climate change objectives;

- Provide new jobs and services reducing the need for out-commuting and travel to other locations;
- Provide new infrastructure alongside new homes and employment;
- Maximise opportunities for new development on previously developed land within the existing urban area, particularly in the vicinity of the town centre;
- Bring about coordinated town centre improvements and regeneration including the redevelopment of Market Square;
- Support the role of the town centre by resisting further major out of centre retail developments;
- Ensure new developments deliver improved community and health facilities;
- Deliver an improved and enhanced green infrastructure network across the town, including access to green spaces, children’s play space, allotments, community gardens and a new cemetery;
- Protect and enhance areas of ecological importance and heritage significance;
- Deliver schemes that reduce transport congestion, including a potential new south east link road;
- Strengthen the connections and legibility between the town centre and Bicester Village;
- Ensure new developments deliver improved active travel routes in and around the town and to surrounding villages.

## *Housing*

- 5.3. Bicester has been a key location for housing growth for the District for a number of years. Since 2011, there has been an additional 3,869 homes delivered at Bicester (at 31 March 2024), with 30% of the total houses built in the district at Bicester. Most of the new housing has been delivered on several large ‘strategic’ allocations on the edge of the town, including at Bure Park and South West Bicester.
- 5.4. In addition to the houses already built, as of 31 March 2024, there were permissions in place for a total of 5,054 additional homes at Bicester. These are primarily on sites allocated for housing in our last Local Plan.
- 5.5. In our last Local Plan, Bicester was identified as the location to receive the most amount of new development with over 10,000 homes allocated across five strategic housing sites. There has been some progress made on these sites, however Banbury has shown stronger delivery with more of the allocated sites delivering in accordance with the Local Plan targets.
- 5.6. Few new homes have been built in the town centre and we are exploring opportunities for this. We will aim to do this through good design and catering for all those wishing to live in the town centre such as those who would prefer to live in the town centre in order to have easy access to services.
- 5.7. This Plan proposes to build upon the site at North West Bicester, providing for an additional 1,500 homes over that already identified in our last plan.
- 5.8. It is proposed to retain other existing strategic housing site policies from our last local plan except for

### *The Economy*

- 5.9. Bicester supports a range of employment sectors, including service industries, distribution, defence, motorsports and manufacturing. The largest employment areas are located in the eastern and southern parts of the town. It has the second largest amount of employment floorspace in Cherwell after Banbury.
- 5.10. Bicester is identified in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) as a Living Labs Testbed. This 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.
- 5.11. The Oxfordshire LEP Investment Plan (2020) identifies potential for wider regeneration 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.
- 5.12. 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; and
  - Improving its utilities infrastructure to improve its sustainability and self-sufficiency.
- 5.13. 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. Our updated employment evidence identifies that Bicester is the most suitable location for accommodating identified employment needs to 2042 and we propose to continue to focus new sites here, including providing a high quality employment corridor into the town along the A41.
- 5.14. This Local Plan proposes a number of strategic sites for employment, at Junction 9 of the M40 and further land fronting on to the A41 to provide a high quality employment corridor into the town. It also proposes land south west of Graven Hill, and land to the south east of Bicester, north of the A41. The policies for the existing sites identified in the 2015 Plan will be saved.
- 5.15. The site located adjacent to the M40 junction adjoins land which has recently gained planning consent for employment uses. The additional land proposed along the A41 will strengthen the corridor into Bicester with high quality employment uses. The site north of the A41 is adjacent to Symmetry Park

business park. The land to the south west of Graven Hill provides further employment opportunities.

5.16. We will also need to consider the need for smaller employment opportunities to support local businesses and business start-ups and propose to provide space for smaller units within our strategic sites.

### Bicester Area Strategy Map

#### Policy BIC 1: Bicester 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 the enhancement of the town centre.

Development in the Bicester Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Policy SP 1.

**Housing Delivery:** 7,750 homes will be delivered at Bicester between 2020 and 2042 including the following strategic site allocations:

| Site                | Housing Numbers |           |   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|---|
|                     | 2020 - 2042     | Post 2042 |   |
| North West Bicester | 3,200           | 4,300     | Extended Site Allocation replacing Policy Bicester 1 to provide an additional 1,500 homes |

The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced:

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

A further allowance will be made for 'windfalls' of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area.

**Employment:** 87 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with *Core Policy 25* on the following strategic employment sites:

| Site  | Employment Hectares |
|---|---------------------|
| Land East of M40 J9 and South of Green Lane                       | 30                  |
| Land Adjacent to Symmetry Park, North of A41, South East Bicester | 6                   |
| **Bicester 4 (Bicester Business Park)                             | 3.3                 |
| Land South of Chesterton  | 9                   |

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Land at Lodge Farm, Chesterton | 25        |
| Land SW of Graven Hill         | 17        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>87</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 1st April 2024 that is being saved through this Local Plan.**

**Policy BIC 2: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Bicester Area**

5.17. Bicester is located near to two motorway junctions on the M40 and has two railway stations, and therefore 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.

5.18. The new Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2022 - 2050) sets out transport objectives, policies and targets, and currently contains the previous LTP4 Bicester Area Transport Strategy as follows:

- 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;
- A41 Study exploring options for the provision of a South-East Peripheral Road;
- Working with the rail industry and the Department for Transport to develop a solution 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 on key routes;
- Implementing Bicester town centre highway modifications 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;
- Developing a coordinated parking strategy, including for electric vehicles, in partnership with Cherwell District Council.

5.19. Oxfordshire County Council has also produced the Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP; 2020) which includes a programme of measures to increase cycling and walking, and the Public Rights of Way Management Plan to 2025 which sets a strategy for the improvement and management of public rights of way in Oxfordshire.

5.20. The County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP; 2021) 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.

5.21. The key challenges for Bicester's transport network include:

- The lack of a comprehensive, high quality network for walking and cycling in Bicester;
- The poor quality of sustainable access to the town centre including at Market Square;
- Ensuring the peripheral road network provides both a functional highway space and brings benefits for supporting placemaking between the older parts of the town and the new residential areas;
- The lack of infrastructure to support reliable, frequent and commercially viable bus services
- The increasing congestion along the A41 and lack of sustainable facilities along and across the corridor;
- The need to ensure sufficient rail capacity to continue sustainable, longer distance travel;
- The need to identify a solution for the London Road Level crossing that enables access to and from the town centre;
- Increasing pressure on M40 Junctions 9 and 10;
- The need to improve access to Bicester's hinterland by active travel and public transport.

In order to deliver 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 Movement and Place Strategy being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

## **Policy BIC 2: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Bicester Area**

**All development within the Bicester area will be required to contribute in accordance with Policy COM 20: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services. Within the Bicester Area this will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**

- **The realignment of Howes Lane including facilities for active travel and bus services;**
- **A south-east peripheral link road north of Wendlebury including facilities for sustainable modes;**
- **Improvements associated with London Road level crossing changes;**
- **A high quality walking, wheeling and cycling network throughout the town, including:**
  - **Along the A41 from J9/M40 to Bicester town centre;**
    - **Middleton Stoney Road**
    - **Along the corridor of the B4100**
    - **Banbury Road**
    - **Buckingham Road**
    - **Launton Road**
    - **London Road**
    - **A41 between the county boundary and the A4421 roundabout**
- **Bus priority measures along key corridors including:**
  - **The A41 southbound towards junction 9**
  - **The A41 northbound towards Vende Drive roundabout**



- The A41 westbound towards the A4421 roundabout
- The B4100 southbound towards the A4095 junction
- The B4100 northbound towards Baynards Green roundabout
- Corridor improvements on the eastern peripheral roads, Skimmingdish Lane and Charbridge Lane to manage traffic and support placemaking, and
- Improvements to Junctions 9 and 10 of the M40 to ensure safe operation.

### **Policy BIC 3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area**

5.22. We are proposing that Bicester accommodate a significant number of new homes and jobs to 2042. It is therefore important to secure highways and sustainable travel improvements to accommodate this growth.

5.23. A south-east link road is identified in Oxfordshire County Council's Bicester Area Strategy. The road will connect the two sections of the A41 north of the village of Wendlebury.

5.24. 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. The link road will be designed to support sustainable travel and include separate walking and cycling routes and will provide the opportunity for a transformation in the town's transport facilities to significantly improve sustainable transport.

### **Policy BIC 3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the Bicester Area**

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

- Land for a south-east link road north of Wendlebury;
- The realignment of Howes Lane; and
- Land adjacent to the southbound off-slip from the M40 at Junction 9.

**Development will not be permitted should it prevent the use of land for the delivery and implementation of the identified schemes (*Appendix 5*).**

### **Policy BIC 4: Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Bicester Area**

5.25. Bicester's Garden Town status emphasises the importance of protecting, expanding, and enhancing its green infrastructure networks.

5.26. Our last Local Plan sought to secure an urban edge park around the town. Other key open spaces 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. The new Burnehyll Community

Woodland is being created to the south-west of the town.

5.27. We have published a Green Infrastructure Strategy alongside this plan that identifies a number of opportunities for Bicester to develop a successful green infrastructure network.

#### *Open Space and Recreation Facilities*

5.28. Our 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.

5.29. The 2024 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 improvements to existing and 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.

5.30. We 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.

#### **Policy BIC 4: Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Bicester Area**

**All development will be required to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets in the Bicester area.**

**Contributions will be sought 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;**
- **Establishing a green corridor containing a community woodland between Vendee Drive and Chesterton;**
- **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;**
- **Extending and enhancing 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;**
- **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

- 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 Opportunity Areas*

- 5.31. 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. We recognise that a successful and vibrant town centre is important to the local economy and engenders local pride in the town.
- 5.32. Bicester Village is a premium designer shopping and tourist destination of regional, national, and international significance comprising over 170 units. It is a key economic driver within Cherwell and employs around 3,500 people directly and many others indirectly.
- 5.33. Our 2022 Retail Study identified a number of challenges and opportunities for Bicester town centre. It recommended further investment into its public realm and the quality of the environment, to create a more attractive and distinctive space.
- 5.34. It flagged the opportunity for increased leisure and eating-out venues, which could go some way to repurposing vacant shopping units and also noted that although Bicester Market is popular it does not perform to its full potential.
- 5.35. The Retail Study also noted the lack of connections between the town centre and Bicester Village which should be improved. There are also opportunities for the town centre to capitalise on the visitors brought to Bicester Village by offering an alternative and complementary experience.
- 5.36. 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.
- 5.37. To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of Bicester town centre, we will apply a 'town centre first' approach to retail, services, and other main town centre uses. 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. We will resist further major out of centre retail development, due to the impact on the vitality and viability of Bicester town centre.

## Policy BIC5: Bicester Opportunity Areas

5.38. We have identified a number of opportunity areas within and close to Bicester Town Centre.

### *Site 1: Bure Place/ Wesley Lane/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 2: 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. Potential changes to 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.

### *Site 3: 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 there is an opportunity to provide positive change to the area which could include new parking and cycling and pedestrian links across the railway line. There are further opportunities at this location, subject to landowners working together to deliver mixed use development which does not detract from the existing retail offer at Bicester town centre or the retail village. Opportunities will be sought 'for a sustainable, funded solution that continues to provide a suitable rail crossing for cars, cycles and pedestrians at or near London Road'.

### *Site 4: 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 could be suitable for redevelopment for residential development.

## **Bicester Town Centre Opportunity Areas**

## **Policy BIC 5: Bicester Opportunity Areas**

**Four areas for development opportunities have been identified within or close to the centre of Bicester as listed below and shown on the Policies Map:**

**Site 1: Bure Place/ Wesley Lane/Sheep Street**

**Site 2: Market Place (Square)**

**Site 3: London Road Area**

**Site 4: 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, active travel, traffic management, air quality management, whilst prioritising the public realm;
- iii. Be sensitive to any surrounding residential areas and the character and setting of the historic core and heritage assets and prioritise attractive 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 mobility hubs, which co-locate public and shared modes, aiding convenience and with no increase in car parking above current levels;
- vi. Improve the public realm, particularly in areas of heritage significance, such as Sheep Street and Market square, including 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 apart from London Road, particularly on above ground floors.

**Master planning of Bicester town centre will be supported.**

### ***Bicester's Historic Environment***

5.39. 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. 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, also a Scheduled Monument, is in the south-east of the town. The historically important former RAF Bicester is now the home of Bicester Motion.

5.40. We have a duty to protect these important heritage assets. A key challenge for us is therefore to manage growth in a way that will not unacceptably harm the town's important heritage assets and local distinctiveness. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to consider potential harm arising from the proposed strategic allocations.

### **Policy BIC 6: Former RAF Bicester**

5.41. 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 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.

- 5.42. We worked with the MOD and English Heritage (now Historic England) 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.
- 5.43. Since then, significant development has taken place at Bicester airfield 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. We are keen to support the continued development, particularly as a tourist and leisure destination.
- 5.44. We wish to secure appropriate uses for a long-lasting 'conservation-led' approach to the technical site and flying field. Our aim is 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. We will 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.

## **Policy BIC 6: 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 and the 2009 Planning Brief. 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.**

## **Site policies**

### **Policy BIC H1: Land at North West Bicester**

- 5.45. North West Bicester was allocated for a residential led development of 6,000 homes in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 (which was re-adopted in December 2016). This review of the Local

Plan has provided the opportunity to revisit that allocation and provide an increase in the development potential of the allocation with a more appropriate boundary edge.

- 5.46. The inclusion of additional land at this allocation will mean that a further 1,500 homes can be delivered at North West Bicester above the original 6,000 homes envisaged. Delivery rates for the site have been reviewed as part of the housing trajectory and it is expected that 3,200 homes will be delivered by 2042 with, 4,300 homes to be delivered beyond the end of the plan period. The total site comprises approximately 549 hectares of relatively flat arable land with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features and covers a number of fields with extensions to the allocation proposed both north and south of the railway line.
- 5.47. . The proposed extension to the allocation boundary is approximately 2 kilometres from the centre of Bicester and lies approximately 380 metres south east from the village of Bucknell at its closest point. The land is generally greenfield, though there are scattered industrial, agricultural and residential buildings within the area. The whole site is bisected by the rail line running north west/south east. The site slopes downwards to the southeast and is an irregular shape following field boundaries. The extension is approximately 164 hectares of the 549 hectare total site size. The land is gently undulating and contains small unnamed streams.
- 5.48. A landscape sensitivity assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements. There are several areas of deciduous woodland and one small area of ancient woodland - Grunthill Copse. Currently the land provides part of the rural setting to Bucknell and plays a part in the separation between settlements. A landscape assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.
- 5.49. The extension to the site contains no known designated heritage assets, though there are a number of Listed Buildings beyond the site area. Development design should seek to minimise urbanising effects on the Grade II listed Manor House to the north of the site. This could be through stepping back development, management of building height and massing, and use of landscaping on the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.50. Management of this boundary will also avoid urbanising effects on the approaches to the other Listed Buildings in Bucknell. The site is in an area of archaeological interest and has been subject to a geophysical survey. Parts of the site have subsequently been investigated via trial trenching and an archaeological excavation. The remainder of the site will need to similarly be investigated to verify the results of the geophysical survey. A heritage impact assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements. The Policies map and the inset map for Bicester 1: North West Bicester identify the location and the area of the proposals.
- 5.51. At least 3,500 jobs (approximately 1,000 jobs on B use class land) are to be provided within the allocation, although it is acknowledged that the majority of these have already been committed through planning applications. An economic strategy will be required and there should be local sourcing of labour, including providing apprenticeships during construction.
- 5.52. At least 50% of trips originating from the development are to be made by means other than the car

promotion of healthy lifestyles provision of local services and facilities green infrastructure and Biodiversity - 40% of the total gross site area will be provided as green space of which at least half will be public open space. Proposals should ensure net zero operational from total energy use by implementing the energy hierarchy.

- 5.53. An updated masterplan for the North West Bicester site will be required to ensure that development takes place in an integrated, coordinated and planned way, whilst recognising that phasing of development within the overall masterplan strategy will be required. It will need to take account of areas already developed and planning permissions already in place. It will integrate with and complement the function and urban form of Bicester and reinforce the role of Bicester town centre as the primary retail and service centre.
- 5.54. Biodiversity projects will be incorporated as part of the master planning process. The proposed Garden Town at North West Bicester provides the potential to test a wide range of innovative and emerging technologies due to its scale. The Council will continue to work with the promoters of North West Bicester, the local community and other partners to ensure the delivery of an exemplary Garden Town that achieves the highest environmental standards.
- 5.55. The North West Bicester Garden Town is central to both our District-wide strategy and our strategy for Bicester. Delivering an eco-town is considered to be one of the most sustainable means of accommodating strategic growth at Bicester to 2042 and beyond. The development will provide a new community to the highest environmental standards and with its own local services and facilities. The masterplan will include employment areas, schools, services and facilities and extensive green and public open space to maximise the opportunity for town wide economic, community and environmental gains. At the same time North West Bicester will integrate with and complement the function and urban form of Bicester.
- 5.56. The land at North West Bicester is the least constrained direction of growth on the urban fringe for delivering growth on this scale. The proposals for North West Bicester will however need to consider the impact on the surrounding area including the villages of Bucknell and Caversfield.
- 5.57. An economic strategy will be produced to support the proposals for proposals at North West Bicester, though it is recognized that a large number of jobs have already been provided by employment development already delivered/underway. It should demonstrate how access to employment will be achieved and deliver a minimum of one employment opportunity per new dwelling.
- 5.58. The Local Plan estimates that over 3,500 homes will be provided by 2042 and therefore sets a target of approximately 3,000 job opportunities associated with the project to be provided by the end of the plan period. The precise nature and location of these jobs will be set by an updated masterplan for the North West Bicester allocation. The current masterplan proposed about 10 hectares of employment land at North West Bicester in total and much of this has already been permitted. It is estimated that approximately 1,000 B use class jobs will be located at the North West Bicester site. The remainder would be provided through other uses including home working. Some jobs are likely to be located away from the site, for example in the town centre or on other employment sites.



## **Policy BIC H1: North West Bicester Eco-Town**

**Site area: 549 hectares**

Land at north west Bicester is allocated to accommodate approximately 7,500 dwellings and 10 hectares of employment land as shown on the Policies Map. Planning permission will only be granted for development at this site in accordance with a revised comprehensive masterplan and design code to be approved by the Council. This will need to be in accordance with the Cherwell Design Guide or any superseding design guidance, district or local design codes.

All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.

### **Housing**

- 1. 7,500 dwellings on 549 hectares of land (the residential areas as shown on inset map X). Of this total 4,300 are expected to be delivered beyond 2042;**
- 2. The dwellings shall have a range of densities to reflect local context and the character of new development in accordance with the comprehensive masterplan. They should be appropriate to support sustainable and active modes of transport including walkable neighbourhoods and bus services.**

### **Employment**

- 3. A minimum of 10 ha of employment land with the focus of this comprising business premises at Howes Lane and Middleton Stoney Road, employment space in the local centre hubs and as part of mixed used development;**
- 4. Jobs created –At least 3,500 jobs (approximately 1,000 jobs on B use class land on the site) within the plan period;**
- 5. Use classes – E, with limited B2 and B8 uses;**
- 6. Mixed use local centre hubs to include employment (E, F2, sui generis, C1 and F1).**

### **Access and movement**

- 7. Appropriate crossings of the railway line to provide access and integration across the North West Bicester site. Changes and improvements to Howes Lane and Lords Lane to facilitate integration of new development with the town. The realignment of the A4095 is critical to unlocking the wider site and provides a key part of the walking and cycling network and further mitigation is likely to be required. Impacts on the A4095 and Bucknell Road will need to be mitigated;**
- 8.**
- 1. A new access from Middleton Stoney Road and connections through the site to include bus routing. Contributions to improvements to the existing bridleway link towards Heyford Park, and a new bridleway link to Bucknell via Crowmarsh Farm will be required;**
- 9. Consideration and mitigation of any noise impacts of the railway line and M40 motorway;**

10. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided, including the provision of a bus route with bus stops through the site linking to Bicester railway stations. The main access roads through this site need to be sufficiently wide to accommodate bus routes;
11. Measures along the B4030 for active travel and bus improvements. Other cycle connections into the town, including along the Banbury Road and along the northern side of the railway embankment. Measures along Shakespeare Drive to control speed, enable safe access to the school and provide safe connections. Connectivity and placemaking with the town centre will be essential to deliver the aspirations of the LTCP/transport strategy. Bus stopping facilities in the town centre need consideration;
12. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network, to reduce reliance on the private car, to achieve the modal shift targets, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and the provision and implementation of a Travel Plan to maximise connectivity with existing development.

#### Other Requirements

13. Green infrastructure – 40% of the total gross site area will comprise green space of which at least half will be publicly accessible and consist of a network of well-managed, high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the open countryside. This should include sports pitches, parks and recreation areas, play spaces, allotments, the required burial ground (possibly a woodland cemetery) and SUDS. This should also include new footpaths and cycleways, enhancing green modal accessibility beyond the site to the town centre and Bicester Village Railway Station, and adjoining developments. Public open space to form a well-connected network of green areas suitable for formal and informal recreation;
14. Provision of community facilities in accordance with adopted standards within the developable area unless otherwise agreed with the Council;
15. Provision of formal sports facilities, play areas and allotments to adopted standards within the areas identified for Green Infrastructure area unless otherwise agreed with the Council;
16. Sufficient secondary, primary and nursery school provision on site to meet projected needs to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council. There should be a maximum walking distance of 800 metres from homes to the nearest primary school;
1. To provide for a GP surgery to the south of the site and a dental surgery at a location to be agreed with the Council in discussion with BOB ICB;
1. Burial Ground – to provide a site of a minimum of 4 ha for a burial ground which does not pose risks to water quality (this may contribute to the Green Infrastructure requirements);
17. Community facilities – to include facilities for leisure, health, social care, education, retail, arts, culture, library services, indoor and outdoor sport, play and voluntary services. The local centre hubs shall provide for a mix of uses that will include retail, employment, community and residential provision. Education, health care, community and indoor sports facilities will be encouraged to locate in local centres and opportunities for co-location will be welcomed. Provision will be proportionate to the size of the community they serve. Each neighbourhood of approximately 1,000 houses to include provision for community meeting space suitable for a range of community activities including provision for older people and young people;
18. Confirmation of the proposals to support the setting up and operation of a financially viable

Community Management Organisation by the new community to allow locally based long term ownership and management of facilities in perpetuity;

19. Utilities – Utilities and infrastructure which allow for zero carbon and reduced water usage on the site and the consideration of sourcing waste heat from the Ardley Energy recovery facility. The approach shall be set out in an Energy Strategy and a Water Cycle Study. The Water Cycle Study shall cover water efficiency and demand management, water quality and how it will be protected and improved, WFD compliance, surface water management to avoid increasing flood risk and water services infrastructure improvement requirements and their delivery, having regard to the Environment Agency’s guidance on Water Cycle Studies. Development proposals will demonstrate how these requirements will be met;
20. Waste Infrastructure – The provision of facilities to reduce waste to include at least 1 bring site per 1,000 dwellings positioned in accessible locations. Provision for sustainable management of waste both during construction and in occupation shall be provided. A waste strategy with targets above national standards and which facilitates waste reduction shall accompany planning applications.

#### Key design requirements

21. Development in the northern parts of the site should maintain separation between Bucknell and the built edge of the proposal subject to consideration of impact on the strategic gap as per Policy COM13;
22. Proposals must respond appropriately to the preservation and enhancement of the Bucknell and Middleton Stoney strategic gaps as shown in Appendix X and avoid the loss of their key characteristics and significance;
23. Retain and protect Grunthill Copse and utilise new planting to enhance connectivity with nearby copses and tree belts;
24. Enhance and strengthen the hedgerow network, including the introduction of hedgerow trees and the provision of appropriate buffers;
25. Development should be set back from bridleway 148/4/20 and footpath 148/7/20 and should seek to minimise urbanising impact on views from Bicester Road and Middleton Stoney Road;
26. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between Bicester and the wider surrounding countryside providing links with public rights of way;
27. Layout of development that enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities;
28. Careful design of employment units on site to limit adverse visual impact and ensure compatibility with surrounding development;
29. The retention and respect for important existing buildings and heritage assets with a layout to incorporate these and consideration of Grade II listed buildings outside the site;
30. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel;
31. A layout which makes provision for and prioritises non-car modes and encourages a modal shift from car use to other forms of travel and maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods;
32. A well designed approach to the urban edge, which relates development at the periphery to its rural setting and affords good access to the countryside, minimising the impact of development when viewed from the surrounding countryside;

33. Development that respects the landscape setting and that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
34. Connections with the wider landscape should be reinforced and opportunities for recreational use of the open countryside identified. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment;
35. Careful consideration of open space and structural planting around the site to achieve an overall improvement in the landscape and visual impact of the site and to contribute towards maintaining the required separation with outlying settlements;
36. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses and hedgerows which would provide opportunity for green buffers;
37. Development design should seek to minimise urbanising effects on the Grade II listed Manor House to the north of the site and consider the cumulative impacts of developing this site particularly on the rural setting of buildings in Bucknell and their sense of separation from Bicester.

#### **Planning application requirements**

38. An economic strategy to be produced to support the planning applications for proposals demonstrating how access to work will be achieved and to deliver a minimum of one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport;
39. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;
40. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.

#### ***SW Bicester/A41 Corridor***

- 5.59. Bicester is recognised as a key focus for employment opportunities and alongside the residential development already allocated, there is an opportunity to create a high quality distinctive and energy efficient employment development that integrates well with the local area and provides a positive gateway into the town.
- 5.60. Three sites are proposed to be allocated for employment uses along the A41, creating a strong gateway into the town. These sites will provide a range of employment uses and mix of sized units. Proposals to develop these sites will need to contribute towards improvements to the Junction 9/M40 and also to the delivery of the south east peripheral road. A new, safe cycle and pedestrian route will be created along the A41 set back from the road.
- 5.61. There is one existing access created through the permitted development close to the Junction 9/M40 which lies between the two land parcels proposed for allocation through Policy Bicester E1. One further access along the A41 is proposed to be created to serve the strategic allocations to line up with the proposed south east peripheral road. This will be taken through Bicester E2 and will serve the adjacent Bicester E3 site.

5.62. Given the relationship and connections required between all three proposed allocations, planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code to be approved by the Council. This will need to be in accordance with the Cherwell Design Guide or any superseding design guidance, district or local design codes. This masterplan will be expected to cover the additional access from the A41, the pedestrian and cycleway along the A41 linking up to the Park and Ride/mobility hub. This masterplan will also need to respond to the cumulative impact of the three proposed allocations and the already committed development to determine the required transport mitigation, including any land required for future M40 junction upgrades. It will also need to respond to the cumulative impact to heritage assets. The masterplan will also need to provide a design code for the three sites to establish a strong, high quality edge to Bicester. Larger scale employment units are expected to be located towards the road frontage with smaller scale employment units behind. these smaller units are expected to incorporate natural materials and development will need to consider the relationship to and setting of Chesterton.

### **Policy BIC E1 - Land East of J9, M40**

5.63. Land east of Junction 9, M40 is a greenfield site which lies at the motorway junction and A41 and has a key frontage at this location. The site itself is comprised of two distinct parcels either side of an already permitted employment development. Planning permission has been granted for a large scale employment unit on land between the two parcels which make up this proposed allocation. This permitted development provides an access from the A41 which will need to be used to access the two parcels of land.

5.64. The site is located approximately 1 kilometre south west of the centre of Chesterton and is relatively flat. it is surrounded to the west and south by agricultural fields across the M40 J9 and A41 and to the north and east.

5.65. This site has a number of constraints which will influence the form of development, including the presence of ancient woodland, heritage assets and the course of Wendlebury Brook. there are no areas of priority habitat within the site, but there is an area to the north of this site. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.

5.66. The site does not strongly contribute towards the setting and significance of designated heritage assets within the surrounding area, though there is high potential for archaeological remains to be identified.

5.67. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.

### **Policy BIC E1 - Land east of J9, M40, Bicester**

**Site area - 45.80 hectares**

**Developable area 30 hectares**

Land east of J9, M40 is allocated to accommodate 30 hectares of employment land.

Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code covering E1, E2 and E3 to be approved by the Council.

All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.

1. At least 30 hectares of land (the employment areas as shown on inset map X). A mix of B2 and B8 and E(g) i/ii/iii uses;
2. Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire Strategic Allocations for E1, E2 and E3. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement its surroundings in an appropriate manner. The Council will be flexible in considering different approaches to achieving a comprehensive masterplan providing that proposals still take fully into account the development and infrastructure needs of the adjacent allocations and demonstrate that it would not prejudice the sustainable delivery of the adjacent allocations;
3. There will be a requirement for capacity improvements at M40 J9. Sufficient land within the allocated area will be safeguarded for potential future expansion/alteration to Junction 9 of the M40;
4. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to the wider town;
5. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Provision for safe, convenient cycle and pedestrian facility along the A41 corridor to Bicester town centre and the Park and Ride including the dedication of land within the site for this purpose where it is not feasible to construct the route within highway boundary;
6. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel. A cycle route through the site to the north to the unnamed lane and Green Lane should be provided;
7. New non-residential buildings of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more should achieve net zero carbon operational carbon emissions from regulated energy uses in accordance with Policy CSD 3;
8. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;
9. Provision of Biodiversity Net Gain on site in accordance with Policy CSD 12;
10. Parking and EV parking provision in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council standards;
11. Traffic calming measures as agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;
12. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;
13. Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in

biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing Priority habitats. Opportunities for wetland habitats along the existing waterways on the edges of the site.

#### Key design requirements

14. A distinctive development that provides a gateway into the town that complements the design and finish of proposed adjacent employment uses. A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration to layout, materials, colourings and building heights to reduce overall visual impact;
15. Retain and protect ancient woodland. Development should be set back from the ancient woodland (with a buffer of at least 15m to avoid root damage) and use new planting to enhance connectivity with nearby copses and tree belts;
16. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets close to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back in the east and northern extents of the site, to ensure no adverse impacts;
17. Existing boundary and internal hedgerow trees should be enhanced and strengthened including the introduction of hedgerow trees;
18. Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to provide for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wildlife corridors and to limit visual Impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings;
19. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers and should form the basis for green and blue infrastructure;
20. Development should be set back from existing footpaths and should seek to minimise urbanising impact on views from the unnamed rural lane that runs between the A41 and Green Lane;
21. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the south and the wider surrounding countryside;
22. Main access to use the existing access from the A41 which serves the permitted employment development;
23. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats;
24. All public footpaths and cycle routes to be active with passive surveillance and appropriate landscaping.

#### Planning application requirements

25. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
26. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals which set out measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities, particularly Chesterton and which maximise sustainable transport connectivity;
27. Consideration and mitigation of any noise impacts from the M40 motorway;

- 28. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment;**
- 29. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;**
- 30. A Flood Risk Assessment informed by a suitable ground investigation. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD 8;**
- 31. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;**
- 32. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.**

## **Policy BIC E2 - Land South of Chesterton**

- 5.68. Land south of Chesterton is a greenfield site which lies approximately 500 metres south of Chesterton. The allocation has been drawn to exclude land within the same ownership which lies closer to the village drawing on landscape and heritage evidence, alongside the desire to maintain the separation between employment uses and the built village.
- 5.69. The site is relatively flat and covers a series of agricultural fields northwest of the A41. It lies adjacent to the proposed allocation of Bicester E1 and Bicester E3. It is surrounded by agricultural fields.
- 5.70. There are no areas of Priority Habitat, though there is an area of priority habitat 'deciduous woodland' along the southern boundary of this site. Footpaths 161/4/10, 161/4/20, 161/3/10 pass through the site and provide connections between Chesterton and Wendlebury. This site provides a rural setting to the north east of Little Chesterton and provides separation between this settlement and Chesterton.
- 5.71. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 5.72. There are no designated heritage assets within the site, though the site lies to the southwest of the Chesterton Conservation Area and forms part of its wider rural setting, though this is, in part, protected from future development owing to distance and the dense tree screen. Consideration of the cumulative impact of this and the adjacent Bicester E3 allocation on the Chesterton Conservation Area will need to form part of any planning application, including any potential mitigation. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.



## **Policy BIC E2 - Land South of Chesterton**

**Site area: 16 hectares Developable area - 9 hectares**

**Land south of Chesterton is allocated to accommodate at least 9 hectares of employment land.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code covering E1, E2 and E3 to be approved by the Council.**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

- 1. At least 9 hectares of land (the employment areas as shown on inset map X). A mix of B2 and B8 and E(g) i/ii/iii uses;**
- 2. Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire Strategic Allocation for E1, E2 and E3. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement its surroundings in an appropriate manner. The Council will be flexible in considering different approaches to achieving a comprehensive masterplan providing that proposals still take fully into account the development and infrastructure needs of the adjacent allocations and demonstrate that it would not prejudice the sustainable delivery of the adjacent allocations;**
- 3. Main access to be taken from the A41 to serve the development and the adjacent strategic allocation Bicester E3. This access should be located so as to form a junction with the south east peripheral road to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;**
- 4. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to the wider town;**
- 5. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Provision for safe, convenient cycle and pedestrian along the A41 corridor to Bicester town centre and the Park and Ride including the dedication of land within the site for this purpose where it is not feasible to construct the route within highway boundary;**
- 6. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel. A cycle route through the site to the north to the unnamed lane and Green Lane should be provided. Cycle and pedestrian connections should provide links to the employment allocations to the north east and south west;**
- 7. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;**
- 8. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;**
- 9. Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in**

biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing BAP habitats. Opportunities for wetland habitats along the existing waterways on the edges of the site;

10. All public footpaths and cycle routes to be active with passive surveillance and appropriate landscaping.

#### Key design requirements

11. A distinctive development that provides a gateway into the town that complements the design and finish of proposed adjacent employment uses. A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration to layout, materials, colourings and building heights to reduce overall visual impact;
12. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets close to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back in the northern extent of the site, to ensure no adverse impacts;
13. Existing boundary and internal hedgerow trees should be enhanced and strengthened including the introduction of hedgerow trees;
14. Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to provide for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wildlife corridors and to limit visual impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings;
15. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers and should form the basis for green and blue infrastructure;
16. Development should be set back from existing footpaths and should seek to minimise urbanising impact on views from the unnamed rural lane that runs between the A41 and Green Lane;
17. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the south and the wider surrounding countryside;
18. Main access to use the existing access from the A41 which serves the permitted employment development;
19. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats.

#### Planning application requirements

20. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
21. Development that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
22. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals which set out measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities, particularly Chesterton and which maximise sustainable transport connectivity;
23. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment;
24. Consideration of the cumulative impact of this and the adjacent Bicester E3 allocation on the

**Chesterton Conservation Area will need to form part of any planning application, including any potential mitigation;**

- 25. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;**
- 26. A Flood Risk Assessment informed by a suitable ground investigation. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD 8;**
- 27. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;**
- 28. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.**

### **Policy BIC E3 - Land at Lodge Farm, Chesterton**

- 5.73. Land at Lodge Farm is a greenfield site, and relatively flat. It lies to the southeast of the village of Chesterton and southwest of Bicester. It comprises a number of agricultural fields with Lodge Farm at its centre. The site will need to be accessed through the adjacent employment allocation. This will minimise the total number of access points being created directly onto the A41. The access will be provided into the adjacent site so that the alignment of the road is in a better location for linking to the proposed south east peripheral road.
- 5.74. Whilst there are no areas of priority habitat within the site, there are some older trees to the north of the site which should be retained. Footpaths 161/4/10, 161/4/20, 161/3/10 pass through the site and provide connections between Chesterton and Wendlebury. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 5.75. There is a Grade II Listed bridge within the site which crosses Gagle Brook. Further investigation may be required to determine the history of Lodge Farm. This site forms part of the rural setting to the south of the Chesterton Conservation Area which includes a cluster of Listed Buildings. Development of this site will likely affect the Chesterton Conservation Area and consideration of the potential cumulative impact of development is required. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.

### **Policy BIC E3 - Land at Lodge Farm, Chesterton**

**Site area: 40 hectares**

**Developable area 25 hectares**

**Land at Lodge Farm, Chesterton is allocated to accommodate 25 hectares of employment land.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code covering E1, E2 and E3 to be approved by the Council.**

All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.

1. At least 25 hectares of land (the employment areas as shown on inset map X). A mix of B2 and B8 and E(g) i/ii/iii uses;
2. Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire Strategic Allocation for E1, E2 and E3. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement its surroundings in an appropriate manner. The Council will be flexible in considering different approaches to achieving a comprehensive masterplan providing that proposals still take fully into account the development and infrastructure needs of the adjacent allocations and demonstrate that it would not prejudice the sustainable delivery of the adjacent allocations;
3. Main access to be provided through the adjacent Bicester E2 employment allocation;
4. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to the wider town;
5. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Provision for safe, convenient cycle and pedestrian along the A41 corridor to Bicester town centre and the Park and Ride including the dedication of land within the site for this purpose where it is not feasible to construct the route within highway boundary;
6. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel. A cycle route through the site to the north to the unnamed lane and Green Lane should be provided. Cycle and pedestrian connections should provide links to the employment allocations to the south west and also to the Burnehyll Community woodland;
7. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;
8. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;
9. Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing BAP habitats. Opportunities for wetland habitats along the existing waterways on the edges of the site;
10. All public footpaths and cycle routes to be active with passive surveillance and appropriate landscaping.

**Key design requirements**

11. A distinctive development that provides a gateway into the town that complements the design and finish of proposed adjacent employment uses. A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration to layout, materials, colourings and building heights to reduce overall visual impact;
12. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets close to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back in the northern and eastern extent of the site, management of building height and massing and use of landscaping to strengthen the separation between this site and Chesterton Lodge;
13. Existing boundary and internal hedgerow trees should be enhanced and strengthened including the introduction of hedgerow trees;
14. Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to provide for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wildlife corridors and to limit visual Impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings;
15. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers and should form the basis for green and blue infrastructure;
16. Development should be set back from existing footpaths and should seek to minimise urbanising impact on views from the unnamed rural lane that runs between the A41 and Green Lane.
17. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the south and the wider surrounding countryside;
18. Main access to use the existing access from the A41 which serves the permitted employment development;
19. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats.

#### **Planning application requirements**

20. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
21. Views testing from Chesterton Lodge and the Chesterton Lodge character area of the Conservation Area should be undertaken. Where views into the site are possible, the existing tree screening should be supplemented to reduce these views;
22. . Development that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
23. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals which set out measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities, particularly Chesterton and which maximise sustainable transport connectivity;
24. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment;
25. Consideration of the cumulative impact of this and the adjacent Bicester E3 allocation on the Chesterton Conservation Area will need to form part of any planning application, including any potential mitigation;
26. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;

- 27. A Flood Risk Assessment informed by a suitable ground investigation. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD 8;**
- 28. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;**
- 29. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.**

### **Policy BIC E4 - Land South West of Graven Hill**

- 5.76. This site is a greenfield site to the south west of the development at Graven Hill. Its delivery is reliant on the provision of the south east peripheral road to provide an appropriate access. The site is approximately 3 kilometres south of the centre of Bicester and is relatively flat. The site comprises three agricultural fields and green space along the railway line. It is surrounded by agricultural fields to the north, west and south and by the railway line and industrial land to the east. The Gaggle Brook provides a landform feature along the eastern boundary.
- 5.77. The existing permitted development of Graven Hill lies to the northeast of the site and provides the existing edge to Bicester. The site has a high sensitivity to development, though it is considered that larger scale employment development would relate well to the adjacent consented development and solar farm. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 5.78. Whilst the site contains no designated heritage assets, the site contributes to the setting and significance of designated heritage assets within its surrounds and it is considered that the potential for archaeological remains are high. The setting and archaeological context of the Parade Ground and Alchester Roman site Scheduled Monuments should be considered through any planning application. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.

### **Policy BIC E4 - Land South West of Graven Hill**

**Site area: 36 hectares**

**Developable area - 17 hectares**

**Land south west of Graven Hill is allocated to accommodate at least 17 hectares of employment land.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code to be approved by the Council.**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

- 1. At least 17 hectares of land (the employment areas as shown on inset map X). A mix of B2 and B8 and E(g) i/ii/iii uses;**

2. Main access to be provided through the south east peripheral road from the A41. This access needs to be located so as to line up with the access to serve Bicester E2 and to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;
3. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to Bicester town centre;
4. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Provision for safe, convenient cycle and pedestrian access to Bicester town centre, Graven Hill and Kingsmere and Wendlebury;
5. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel;
6. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;
7. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;
8. Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing BAP habitats. Opportunities for wetland habitats along the existing waterways on the edges of the site.

#### Key design requirements

9. A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration to layout, materials, colourings and building heights to reduce overall visual impact;
10. Design development should consider the rural setting of the Parade Ground Scheduled Monument, through stepping back of development, management of building height and massing, and use of landscaping on the western boundary to minimise urbanising effects on the monument;
11. The Roman road should remain legible within the site;
12. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets close to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back to avoid more sensitive areas, to ensure no adverse impacts;
13. Existing boundary and internal hedgerow trees should be enhanced and strengthened including the introduction of hedgerow trees. The existing woodland belt to the northern corner of the site should be extended to provide a sense of separation with the adjacent bungalow and saddlery.
14. 50m native woodland belt to filter views from adjacent public bridleway;
15. Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to provide for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wildlife corridors and to limit visual Impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings;
16. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers and should form the basis for green and blue

infrastructure;

17. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the north and the wider surrounding countryside;
18. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats.

#### Planning application requirements

19. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
20. Development that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
21. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals which set out measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities, particularly Graven Hill and Wendlebury and which maximise sustainable transport connectivity;
22. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment. LVIA to consider scale and massing – in particular to ensure skyline views of Oxford Heights from the wider landscape to the west are respected;
23. Archaeological assessment, starting with a desk-based assessment will be required; Geophysical survey and intrusive archaeological fieldwork will likely be required in consultation with County archaeologist;
24. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;
25. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.

#### Policy BIC E5 - Land adjacent to Symmetry Park

- 5.79. This site is generally flat and lies adjacent to a permitted waste facility – A metal recycling facility. Whilst the land is currently agricultural, the rural character is influenced by adjacent development at Symmetry Park. Development on this proposed strategic employment allocation should not prejudice the use of the adjacent safeguarded waste management site. The policy permits a mix of B2/B8 and E(g) uses but sui generis compatible waste sites would also be permitted on this site.
- 5.80. This employment site provides opportunities for wider connections to the existing employment land at Symmetry Park and beyond to the adopted residential allocation at Wretchwick Green. Blackthorn Hill Local Wildlife Site and the River Ray Conservation Target Area are located immediately to the north. Development will need to be sensitive to the sloping landform of Blackthorn Hill and the open and rural setting of the landscape. Larger scale employment development would relate well to the existing development. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 5.81. Development design will need to consider building heights and massing, site layout and general



landscaping to preserve setting of the Grade II Listed Windmill to the east. Additionally, archaeological investigation (starting with desk-based assessment) will be required to identify the presence and significance of, as yet unknown, archaeological remains across the site, given the presence of the Roman road to the south of the site, and general Romano-British activity in the wider area. Due to the significance of the Roman archaeology in the wider area, it is likely that archaeological works will be required at application stage.

## **Policy BIC E5 - Land adjacent to Symmetry Park**

**Site area: 6.32 hectares**

**Developable area - 6 hectares**

**Land adjacent to Symmetry Park is allocated to accommodate at least 6 hectares of employment land**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

- 1. At least 6 hectares of land (the employment areas as shown on inset map X). A mix of B2 and B8 and E(g) i/ii/iii uses;**
- 2. Main access to be provided from the A41;**
- 3. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to the wider town;**
- 4. Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Provision for safe, convenient cycle and pedestrian access to Bicester town centre, through Symmetry Park and Wretchwick Green. A41 segregated cycleway will be required for active travel access to meet latest standards;**
- 5. New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel;**
- 6. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;**
- 7. Measures to mitigate the impact of development on nearby villages as agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;**
- 8. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council;**
- 9. Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing BAP habitats. Opportunities for wetland habitats along the existing waterways on the edges of the site.**

**Key design requirements**

10. The site will be at a key gateway to Bicester therefore a high quality design and finish, with careful consideration to layout, materials, colourings and building heights to reduce overall visual impact is required;
11. Existing boundary and internal hedgerow trees should be enhanced and strengthened including the introduction of hedgerow trees;
12. Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to provide for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wildlife corridors and to limit visual impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings;
13. No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers and should form the basis for green and blue infrastructure;
14. Enhance public access through the site, along its frontage; and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the north and the wider surrounding countryside;
15. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats.

#### Planning application requirements

16. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
17. Development that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
18. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals which set out measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities which maximise sustainable transport connectivity;
19. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment;
20. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;
21. A Flood Risk Assessment informed by a suitable ground investigation. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD 8;
22. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network;
23. An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary. A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.

## CHAPTER 6: **Kidlington Area Strategy**

### **Kidlington and Parishes Vision 2042**

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- 6.1. In 2042 the Kidlington area will continue to be an attractive place to live, visit and invest:
- We will have delivered the 4,400 homes already planned to help Oxford's unmet housing needs;
  - Kidlington will be a local hub for employment and investment opportunities with attractive services and community facilities;
  - Our residents and visitors will enjoy a high quality of life with improved access to natural green spaces and affordable housing;
  - The area will be one of the best connected in Oxfordshire where people can and want to walk, cycle and use public transport;
  - The economic centres will be vibrant, a place to live, work, shop and access cultural and community facilities;
  - The quality of the public realm and built environment, will have been improved and new developments will be designed to a high environmental and sustainable standard.
  - Air quality will have been improved and traffic congestion reduced;
  - There will be more opportunities for safe, convenient active travel routes;
  - Public transport will have been improved including inter-connectivity across the four parishes, the rail station and the Langford Lane/Begbroke technology corridor; and
  - There will be more natural and semi-natural open space accessible to the public, including new wooded areas and new linear parks/green corridors.

### **Kidlington and Parishes Policies**

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#### **Policy KID 1: Kidlington Area Strategy**

- 6.2. The Kidlington Area Strategy covers the parishes of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Yarnton and Begbroke and land within the adjacent Parish of Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp. To achieve this vision, our strategy for the area is to:

#### *Overall Spatial Strategy*

- Strengthen Kidlington's role as a Local Centre for the wider area;
- Improve the built and 'green' environment of the High Street, Parades and wider Kidlington area;
- Continue to support investment in key economic assets including the High Street, Parades, Oxford Technology Park, London-Oxford Airport, Begbroke Science Park and at Langford Lane technology corridor;
- Continue to maximise the benefits of localised connectivity to key national and international destinations to support inward investment;
- Deliver the committed 4.400 homes to help Oxford's housing needs;
- Ensure the planned benefits for the communities of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Begbroke and Yarnton are delivered.

Resolve transport connectivity and infrastructure challenges and encourage active travel.

#### *Kidlington Area Strategy*

- Deliver new planned neighbourhoods at Yarnton, Begbroke and Gosford and Water Eaton with community facilities and infrastructure supporting greener sustainable living;
- Deliver a modest, heritage and landscape led residential extension to Woodstock of a scale, layout and design commensurate with the character and significance of this historic market town and the significance of Blenheim World Heritage Site and Blenheim Roman Villa;
- Support a strong local economy with a focus on high value employment uses at Langford Lane and Begbroke centred on the Oxford Technology Park, London Oxford Airport and Begbroke Science Park;
- Secure infrastructure investment for the North Oxford Corridor given its importance as one of the most important transport corridors in the County connecting Cherwell and West Oxfordshire communities with employment and services by public transport along the A44 and Langford Lane;
- Secure high-quality well-designed and accessible buildings and public spaces;
- Promote an enhanced role for Kidlington as a local service centre with new business and homes in/near the village's centre and further develop the cultural and leisure/night time economy;
- Support proposals that enhance the attractiveness and visibility of Kidlington's centre;
- Improve access for all to high quality community facilities, sports and recreation spaces, and support improved health care facilities with the expansion of existing GP surgeries or a new facility;
- Deliver a new secondary school for the wider area;
- Bring about Canalside regeneration, including enhancing the gateways to the parishes and improve access to the railway station, and the Technology corridor for the benefit of the wider Kidlington area;
- Protect and enhance the character and significance of the natural, historical and cultural environment locally and beyond having regard to local and nationally significant heritage and landscape assets within and bordering Cherwell;
- Protect and enhance the townscape and landscape that form the setting of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp, Begbroke and Yarnton and maintain their local distinctiveness;
- Secure within Cherwell's boundary a permanent, publicly accessible and well-defined high-quality landscape and heritage appropriate edge of town for Woodstock;
- Protect and enhance areas of high natural capital value in the Cherwell Valley and the wider region including Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the proposed Otmoor, Bernwood and Ray Nature Park;
- Support increased access to nature, open spaces and the Green Belt with specific opportunities to 'green' Kidlington's centre and secure improvements to the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors;
- Build on the area's excellent links to Oxford, Bicester and London by public transport and work with County and Parish councils to deliver safe and inclusive routes that facilitate car free movements as the first choice for residents and visitors;

- Support the delivery of Kidlington’s Local Cycling and Walking Plan with new and enhanced walking and cycling routes linking Kidlington to the surrounding villages of Hampton Poyle, Islip, Yarnton, Begbroke, Thrupp, Shipton-on- Cherwell;
- 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.

## **Housing**

- 6.3. Over the next ten years some parts of the Kidlington area will see significant change, following the allocation of sites for 4,400 new homes in the 2020 Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan. This is planned in six housing allocations located in the north of Oxford (PR6a and PR6b), Kidlington and southeast of Kidlington (PR7a and PR7b) and east and west of the A44 at Yarnton and Begbroke (PR8 and PR9).
- 6.4. We have prepared development briefs to help the delivery of these new neighbourhoods, guide their integration with the existing local communities and secure new schools and community facilities in the area.
- 6.5. Any additional proposals to meet Oxford’s unmet needs will be considered against saved Policy PR1: Achieving Sustainable Development for Oxford’s Needs.
- 6.6. In this Plan we have considered the number and types of homes required to support the needs of the Kidlington area.
- 6.7. The 2015 Local Plan stated that housing requirements and the development strategy for Kidlington could be achieved “without the need for a strategic review of the Green Belt in the District”, and that “small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specifically identified local housing need may be met through the release of rural exception sites.
- 6.8. The area’s prosperity, good transport connections and proximity to Oxford are likely to explain higher property prices in this area. The recent increase on the subdivision of larger dwellings may be partly in response to this demand.
- 6.9. The availability of land outside Kidlington’s urban area is constrained by the Oxford Green Belt. However, Kidlington is one of our most sustainable areas and we have weighed the importance of protecting the Green Belt with wider sustainability factors.
- 6.10. Policy COM 1 sets out Cherwell's proposed housing distribution. For Kidlington it proposes the delivery of an additional 622 homes to 2042. This approach is taken along with our aim to support efficient use of land within Kidlington's built-up area, avoid further release of green belt and protect green infrastructure.
- 6.11. We are required to make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield and underutilised land before looking at countryside or Green Belt land. Following examination of housing need and land

availability and suitability we consider that a landscape and heritage led allocation at land South-East of Woodstock:

- avoids unnecessary release of the Oxford Green Belt land following its very recent review in 2020;
- provides for Cherwell's housing and affordable housing needs in one of the most important transport corridors in the County connecting Cherwell and West Oxfordshire communities;
- can deliver development without harm to the outstanding universal qualities of Blenheim Palace WHS and its Grade I Park;
- can mitigate any potential impact and address positively the setting of Blenheim WHS and its Park;
- can help secure the future of Blenheim Roman Villa Scheduled Monument;
- can deliver development without detriment to the setting of the historic market town of Woodstock and Woodstock and Bladon's Conservation areas;
- can secure a permanent, publicly accessible and well-defined high-quality landscape and heritage appropriate edge of town for Woodstock;
- enables effective cross boundary joint working and cooperation to plan for Cherwell's identified housing need, support the delivery of local infrastructure priorities in Woodstock and help secure strategic transport improvements in the North Oxfordshire Corridor including a new public transport hub at London Oxford Airport in the vicinity of the Site and future improvements to Hanborough Train Station (within c. 2 miles of the site and edge of Woodstock);
- can address positively the cumulative effect of development by delivering strategic housing growth where there is existing and planned infrastructure and support its funding and delivery on site and the locality;
- facilitate easier public and active travel access to employment opportunities and facilities in the Langford Lane/Begbroke area and Kidlington village centre.

6.12. The Kidlington Area Strategy will support the delivery of new communities, facilities and accessible open space already committed either side of the A44 and will focus on providing for Cherwell's needs to 2042 in the southern part of the district including pending aspirations in the adopted Local Plan 2015 and the Kidlington Masterplan SPD to:

- accommodate high value employment (Policy Kidlington 1), creating a new gateway in the Langford Lane/Airport/ Begbroke area; and
- deliver housing and affordable housing to balance homes and jobs creation in Kidlington and north Kidlington area in particular.

6.13. North Oxford Corridor improvements along the A44, Peartree Interchange and Kidlington are being completed with walking and cycling routes and extended bus lanes to improve access to Oxford City centre, and more reliable public transport and safer active travel for the town and villages along this corridor.

6.14. Many Cherwell and West Oxfordshire residents commute into Oxford and there is also a considerable level of commuting flows between both districts. Recently completed and further planned transport improvements including an A44 transport hub are part of the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan proposal to reduce car journeys and make the North Oxford Corridor more reliable and

safer for all users.

- 6.15. The historic town of Woodstock is a rural service centre just outside the Oxford Green Belt, bordering Cherwell to the north-west of London Oxford Airport. It is one of the most sustainable settlements in West Oxfordshire and well connected to Begbroke, Yarnton and Oxford and Kidlington via the North Oxford Corridor.
- 6.16. The edge of Woodstock is approximately 3 km from north Kidlington and major employment growth areas at Langford Lane and Begbroke.
- 6.17. The World Heritage Site (WHS) of Blenheim Place, with its Grade I Registered Park and Garden, is located to the southwest of Woodstock and is of international and national significance. There is an important physical and historical inter-relationship between Woodstock and the Blenheim estate.
- 6.18. West Oxfordshire's adopted Local Plan (date) acknowledges that despite sensitivities presented by Blenheim Palace WHS there are development opportunities on the edge Woodstock. That Plan allocates Land East of Woodstock (Policy EW3), Land North of Hill Rise (Policy EW4) and Land north of Banbury Road (Policy EW5) at Woodstock to deliver 600 homes to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs to 2031 reflecting Woodstock's historic market town and tourism role and being well served by public transport. Development at Land East of Woodstock immediately north of Cherwell's boundary is now complete.
- 6.19. West Oxfordshire's adopted Local Plan Policy OS2 notes: 'Woodstock is suitable for a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre.'
- 6.20. Woodstock's Neighbourhood Plan (NP) 2020-2031 was made in 2023. This NP has a specific focus on the designation of Local Green Space in Woodstock. It sets the scene for the strategic sites allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and provides objectives and policies which guide development.
- 6.21. Woodstock NP is supported by a Community Infrastructure Delivery Plan, commissioned in 2019 by the Town Council and Blenheim Estate to evidence the infrastructure requirements to deliver site specific infrastructure linked to West Oxfordshire Local Plan sites. The study also presents non-site-specific local infrastructure priorities including a new doctor surgery, a new library, improvements to Marlborough School sports facilities and the relocation of Woodstock Football Club.

### ***The Economy***

- 6.22. Kidlington plays an important role in the wider economy of Cherwell. Its diverse economic base ranges from research and development to light industrial and commercial businesses and it has strong links with Oxford.
- 6.23. London Oxford Airport (Thames Valley area's primary regional and business aviation airport), the University of Oxford's Begbroke Science Park and the wider Langford Lane commercial area sit

strategically in the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' halfway between Oxford and Bicester. Begbroke Science Park is an area identified in the *Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy* for further growth opportunities in advanced engineering and medical technology.

- 6.24. 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 those commuting to work (44%) travelled to Oxford.
- 6.25. As 'small area data' from the 2021 Census is released and sense checked we will gain a better understanding of how employment and travel to work patterns have changed in the area in the past decade. Nonetheless, we think there is an opportunity to improve the alignment of housing and employment in this area with its good connectivity to Oxford, Bicester and Oxford Parkway. This is likely to support further changes in commuting patterns aligned to sustainable transportation, especially to parts of Oxford and the towns of Woodstock, Bicester and Banbury.
- 6.26. Our last Local Plan (2015) identified the need for a small-scale Green Belt Review around the employment clusters formed by the London Oxford Airport and Langford Lane industrial area, and Begbroke Science Park to support high value employment needs.
- 6.27. A review undertaken in 2016 concluded Green Belt exceptional circumstances existed and land for area A was removed from the Green Belt in the 2020 Local Plan Partial Review following the Plan's examination. At the time, it was noted that a new Technology Park had been granted permission in the Langford Lane area (area B) but that it would be for this emerging Plan to address the employment needs.
- 6.28. Commercial development is already being delivered in the Technology Park at Langford Lane in recognition of the identified need in the 2015 Local Plan and recent planning permissions support commercial development at London Oxford Airport (LOA).
- 6.29. LOA is a key transport and economic asset of strategic regional significance and plays an important role in supporting Cherwell and Oxfordshire's economy and many of our major employers. We continue to support LOA's economic role and granted permission in March 2024 for further commercial development comprising the redevelopment of existing buildings and provision of approx. 18,700 sqm of high value employment uses.
- 6.30. The airport benefits from permitted development rights for airport related development on its operational land. Policy KID 2 supports the continued use of LOA for commercial aviation and ancillary uses and guides proposals affecting the airport's operations.
- 6.31. Policy LEC 1 details how we are planning to meet business and employment needs. In Kidlington, this entails the delivery of the Oxford Technology Park at Langford Lane (currently under construction) and 14.7 hectares of land for the expansion of Begbroke Science Park on the land in saved Policy PR8 for which there was a resolution to grant outline planning permission in September 2024, as well as delivery of high value employment uses at LOA, also recently permitted



- 6.32. 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 expansion will support Oxford University in transforming the science park into an Innovation District and deliver the *Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy's* aspirations for the development of a major innovation quarter for UK and international collaboration and commercial research and development.
- 6.33. Saved Policy PR8 together with the recently permitted extension of Begbroke Science Park will establish a highly sustainable and innovative urban neighbourhood with strong links to Kidlington Village Centre, to Oxford, and nearby communities of Yarnton and Begbroke and beyond.
- 6.34. The airport is a regional centre for commercial aviation and training. There may be opportunities for further research and technology business to be established at or near the airport, but we would like to ensure the airport has sufficient land for operational purposes now and in the future without placing undue pressure on the larger site area where the potential harm to Green Belt purposes may be greater.
- 6.35. There is a clear opportunity to support an innovation district centred around Begbroke/Langford Lane/Oxford Airport. The Kidlington area will see significant change with committed and planned housing and infrastructure investment alongside recent commercial commitments and Policy LEC 1. The role of this Plan and the Council will be to support, guide and secure the delivery of those commitments with public sector partners, employers, investors and the local community.

### ***Kidlington Area Heritage***

- 6.36. 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 19th century developments of the Oxford Canal and railway. Kidlington and the Parishes of Gosford and Water Eaton, Yarnton, Begbroke and Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp fall within the Lower Cherwell Flood Plain Landscape Character Area. It is important that we retain the role of the area's rivers, smaller watercourses and the Oxford Canal as distinctive landscape features contributing to a sense of place in the strategy area and preserve a separation between settlements, to avoid perceived coalescence of Oxford, Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke.
- 6.37. The villages are predominantly inset within the Oxford Green Belt, which amongst other purposes, intends restraining development pressure which could affect the character of Oxford City and its heritage setting.
- 6.38. The Oxford Canal is a designated Conservation Area along its whole length, including through Kidlington. Many of the Canal bridges and locks are listed. Langford Lane Wharf Conservation Area remains in use and retains part of its late 18<sup>th</sup> century early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial character.
- 6.39. 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.

- 6.40. Crown Road Conservation Area, west of the Oxford Road is the site of a former Manor which retains historic and architecturally important 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century housing. Begbroke's Conservation Area, west of the A44 includes nine buildings and their grounds. 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. 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.
- 6.41. In the wider setting, 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.
- 6.42. 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 Monument.
- 6.43. North of Campsfield Road, existing woodland belts contain views of the approach to Woodstock and other wooded areas such as Campsfield Wood, in contrast with the openness of the landscape to the south.

### Kidlington Area Strategy Map

#### Policy KID 1 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 Policy SP 1.**

**Housing Delivery: 5,022 homes will be delivered in the Kidlington area between 2020 and 2042 including the following strategic site allocations:**

| Site                    | Housing numbers 2020-2042 |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| South-East of Woodstock | 450                       | New Site Allocation |

**The following existing strategic site policies are retained and will not be replaced:**

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- Policy PR6a – Land East of Oxford Road
- Policy PR6b – Land West of Oxford Road
- Policy PR6c – Land at Frieze Farm
- Policy PR7a – Land South East of Kidlington
- Policy PR7b – Land at Stratfield Farm 1
- Policy PR8 – Land East of the A44
- Policy PR9 – Land West of Yarnton

A further allowance will be made for ‘windfalls’ of less than 10 dwellings on previously developed sites within the built-up area of Kidlington

**Employment:** 14.7 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth within Policy PR8 – Land East of the A44 for the expansion of Begbroke Science Park.

**Policy KID 2: London-Oxford Airport**

- 6.44. 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 supports the growing knowledge base and innovation sector in the area.
- 6.45. 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.
- 6.46. Construction of a new c. 7,000m<sup>2</sup> hangar with two bays including rear offices, stores and workshops commenced in 2021.
- 6.47. LOA intends to set a programme 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.
- 6.48. LOA benefits from permitted development rights which in consultation with the Council could allow airport related development on the airport’s operational land.
- 6.49. 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.
- 6.50. 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;
- vi. Aircraft are not impacted by potential 'glint & glare' from development (e.g. solar panels).

- 6.51. LOA's safeguarded airspace measures two nautical miles (3.704km) in radius, centred around the Airfield Reference Point, the mid-point of the main instrument runway.
- 6.52. 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*

- 6.53. 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 are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise.
- 6.54. 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;
  - v. The time of day at which aircraft activities or movements take place.

### **Policy KID 2: 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 xx*. 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.

### **Policy KID 3: Delivery of Transport within the Kidlington Area**

- 6.55. The North Oxford Corridors are very well connected with the Oxford Road/Banbury Road (A4260) and Woodstock Road (A44) linking Kidlington and surrounding villages with Oxford City centre, Woodstock and the north of Cherwell. The A34, A40 and Oxford Parkway railway station provides easy access to Bicester, Oxford, London and the wider region. Hanborough Rail Station c 2 miles from the A44 provides services to Oxford, London and Worcester.
- 6.56. Langford Lane and Upper Campsfield Road (A4095) to the north, and Frieze Way (A4260) to the south are important east-west connecting routes between the A44 and A4260 corridors.
- 6.57. 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.
- 6.58. The local road network suffers from congestion on its main routes, particularly on the accesses to Oxford.
- 6.59. However, Cherwell's 2020 Local Plan Partial Review and the recently adopted *Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (November 2022)* set out a clear strategy and infrastructure programme for investing in public transport and active travel in the Kidlington area. Given its proximity to Oxford the Local Plan will make the most of the locational advantage and good public transport links in the area to ensure development meets the ambitious shift to car-free travel in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.
- 6.60. Oxfordshire County Council and other transport partners have delivered bus routes providing easy and frequent access to Oxford and Bicester and main employment areas, the opening of the Oxford Parkway railway station in 2015 a southbound bus lane and shared walking / cycling facilities on the A44 between Cassington Road roundabout and through the Pear Tree Interchange;
  - the full signalisation of Pear Tree Interchange;
  - sustainable transport improvements through North Oxford, and
  - bus and cycle improvements at Kidlington roundabout.

- 6.61. We know there is already a high level of cycling commuting in Kidlington and the walking and cycling proposals in the adopted Kidlington LCWIP will extend safer active travel opportunities within the village and to neighbouring rural areas by linking Kidlington to the villages of Hampton Poyle, Islip, Yarnton, Begbroke, Thrupp and Shipton-on-Cherwell. A Woodstock LCWIP is under preparation and will consider routes and improvements between the town and the wider area including Begbroke.
- 6.62. It is important that transport schemes do not simply focus on improving road corridors for their highway function but that good design supports place shaping and movement within communities. We will support the delivery of 20 minute neighbourhood concept through our design and active travel policies COM14 and COM 15.
- 6.63. Most transport corridors feel removed from communities and services, this is not our case. Our main arterial routes serve directly existing and planned communities at Begbroke, Yarnton and Kidlington and neighbouring communities beyond.
- 6.64. Policy KID 3 seeks to secure the infrastructure needed to promote healthy alternatives to travel and improve the efficiency of the local road network.
- 6.65. Policy KID 4 focuses on aligning transport and green infrastructure including east-west active travel improvements across the Oxford Canal and the greening of Kidlington's centre.
- 6.66. We will work with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that they are designed and delivered to serve community needs, contribute positively to a sense of place and support both social and economic wellbeing in consultation with the local community. The following local area strategies focusing on place shaping and delivery are currently under preparation:
- A44/Woodstock Road Area Travel Plan
  - Kidlington Area Travel Plan
  - Kidlington Infrastructure Strategy
- 6.67. The Water Eaton and Peartree Park and Ride sites on the boundary with Oxford provide approximately 1,800 car parking spaces between them. Their main function is the removal of private vehicles from the main corridors into Oxford to help reduce congestion.
- 6.68. In the 2020 Local Plan we indicated the location of a potential Park & Ride/Mobility hub on the A44 within London Oxford Airport land to help reduce congestion on the A44 and the A4260 into Oxford and Kidlington.
- 6.69. Transport infrastructure is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, the type of facility and its design would need to preserve openness and not be in conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt.
- 6.70. Oxfordshire County Council is further exploring the future of Park & Rides and their potential to function as transport/ mobility hubs and electric vehicle charging facilities. In 2023 a Mobility Hub

Strategy was produced setting out principles and typologies. We will continue to work with the County Council to deliver an A44 mobility hub and any other opportunities to improve the public transport efficiency of these corridors within a safe, attractive environment for our communities.

### **Policy KID 3: Delivery of Transport Schemes within the Kidlington Area**

We will work with Oxfordshire County Council to secure community environments that make active travel convenient, safe and attractive. Transport infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth and improve the efficiency of the road system to help secure a viable and sustainable future for Kidlington, surrounding villages and beyond. The package of measures may be further refined through development of strategies being developed by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan suite of documents.

Transport infrastructure in the Kidlington area will be required as follows:

- 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, and
  - d. A44 P&R/ Mobility Hub.
- ii. Segregated cycleways where possible and shared-paths where there is a lack of room or usage levels are expected to be lower along the A44, including sufficient pedestrian and cycle crossings to improve placemaking along these corridors;
- 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;
- vi. The provision of new and enhanced walking, cycling and wheeling routes into and out of Oxford, and
- vii. The provision of the proposed active travel network in Kidlington's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

All development within the Kidlington area will be required to contribute in accordance with *Policy COM 19: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services*. This will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

### **Community facilities and infrastructure**

- 6.71. Our communities have a good range of community facilities. Recreational spaces and sports grounds, including Orchard and Park Hill recreation grounds, Rutten Lane, Ron Groves, Exeter Close and Stratfield Brake, provide green space, sports and play facilities serving the wider area alongside smaller green spaces and play parks.
- 6.72. 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.

- 6.73. 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. Exeter Hall has been the preferred location for a health hub for some time but with the local GP practices already at capacity, other opportunities including increasing capacity at Yarnton may need to be secured if feasibility work undertaken by the Parish Council shows Exeter Hall cannot accommodate a health centre expansion.
- 6.74. 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.
- 6.75. Our 2020 Local Plan addressed this shortage with new natural and seminatural open spaces, recreational areas and formal sports provision including c. 4 hectares of land for strategic sports provision south-east of Kidlington complementing key sports facilities at neighbouring Stratfield Brake.
- 6.76. We will deliver this commitment and set up new policies in the emerging Plan seeking the protection of existing and planned facilities and setting standards for new provision through new development.
- 6.77. The leisure centre at Gosford and health & fitness offer at Langford Lane provide for indoor sports facilities but further facilities will be required to 2042. 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.
- 6.78. 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 two new primary schools, an extension to William Fletcher Primary School and a new secondary school.
- 6.79. There is now some certainty on the proposed developments at Begbroke and Yarnton further to saved Policies PR8 and PR9 means that we can start working on the delivery of these and other important community facilities.
- 6.80. The catchment for Woodstock CE Primary School includes Begbroke and that of Marlborough CE Secondary School also in Woodstock extends to Begbroke and Yarnton. Committed new school provision in the Yarnton and Begbroke area will improve access to education in the Kidlington area and Woodstock.
- 6.81. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that accompanies this Plan assessed the need for open space, community facilities and infrastructure needed to support the Kidlington Area Strategy including those to secure a sustainable heritage led extension to Woodstock (Policy KID H1). The provision and requirements in the IDP will be secured in accordance with Policy COM 19.



- 6.82. 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.
- 6.83. The Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2022 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.
- 6.84. This place 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.
- 6.85. Priorities to 2042 include:
1. Protecting the function of the river Cherwell floodplain;
  2. Protecting areas of green space of high natural capital and nature recovery value in the Lower Cherwell Valley, Oxford Meadows and Farmoor and Blenheim and Ditchley Parks Conservation Target Areas (CTAs);
  3. Improving blue corridor connectivity along the canal and river corridors;
  4. Supporting active travel through integrated green infrastructure to help reduce daily commutes to Oxford;
  5. Supporting improvements to the River Cherwell's water quality.
- 6.86. Further priorities may be Identified following consultation on the emerging Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

#### **Policy KID 4: Kidlington Area Strategy - Green and Blue Infrastructure**

**All development proposals will be required to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure and assets as shown by maps in *Appendix X* and the Adopted Policies Map.**

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

- i. **Expanding and enhancing the 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.**

### **Development within and adjoining Kidlington Village Centre**

- 6.87. In the past ten years, recent retail/town centre developments, with office and residential uses above and public realm improvements, have helped consolidate the village centre. Today, the centre has a strong service offer and very low vacancy rates.
- 6.88. Looking to 2042, investing in village centre spaces and improving their accessibility and visibility will be key to support Kidlington's role as a local service centre.
- 6.89. The recent completion of a 100-room hotel at Langford Lane has helped increase the accommodation offer in the area. Enhancements to the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridors and a focus on strengthening the village centre and public realm will increase opportunities for leisure activities and improve the attractiveness of the area as a destination.
- 6.90. Our Retail and Town Centre Study made specific recommendations for the village centre and its spaces including:
  - 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;
    - Provide a gateway to the village centre;
    - Increase the visibility Kidlington Centre as a whole and Kidlington Centre arcade including further signage, and
    - 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 and 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.
- 6.91. Our evidence indicates we should be directing retail development to the Primary Shopping Area only and leisure uses to the village centre as a whole. This is to avoid overprovision of retail floorspace and support stronger relationships and connections between retail uses.
- 6.92. The village centre boundary and a primary shopping area is shown on the Policies Map.

- 6.93. Saved Policy PR6a will enable the provision of a small-scale neighbourhood centre at Gosford and Water Eaton in proximity to the Oxford Parkway.
- 6.94. The development proposed within saved Policy PR8 will support further facilities and complimentary uses commensurate with the emerging innovation centre at Begbroke centred on Begbroke Science Park. Work on the emerging Kidlington and A44/Woodstock Road Local Travel Plans and the Kidlington Infrastructure Strategy will take forward policies and proposals in this Plan and help us deliver place base initiatives in consultation with the local community.
- 6.95. The Town Centre and Retail 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.
- 6.96. 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. They also provide the opportunity to encourage smaller independent businesses into the village centre. Any future proposals should not preclude the delivery of these village centre improvement opportunities.
- 6.97. The 2016 Kidlington Framework Master Plan identified a number of other sites with regeneration potential, the Co-op car park has now been completed but Exeter Close has property constraints which affect the consideration of development proposals.
- 6.98. 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. We are committed to continue working with partners to deliver this site if an appropriate development proposal comes forward. Proposals should respond positively to the features and special interest of Crown Road Conservation Area and its setting immediately to the west of Exeter Close.
- 6.99. We are proposing a criteria-based policy to guide the development of these sites and any other opportunity area arising through the Plan period. We are committed to continue working with partners to deliver Exeter Hall if an appropriate development proposal comes forward.

### **Kidlington Town Centre Opportunity Areas**

#### **Policy KID 5: Development within and adjoining Kidlington Village Centre**

**Development within or close to the centre of Kidlington will be 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, conservation areas and heritage assets and promote linkages to the village centre;**
- iv **Have regard and respond sensitively to amenity matters including noise, daylight/sun light and privacy to prevent adverse impact on the amenity and use of North Kidlington Primary School and its playing areas;**
- v. **Make a positive contribution to improving sustainable transport connectivity in Kidlington, including an increase in capacity and the provision of improved facilities;**
- vi. **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**
- vii. **Improve the public realm and by removing unnecessary signage and street furniture, and using a simple and durable palette of materials.**

**Residential development will be supported within proposals, particularly above ground floors.**

### **Land South-East of Woodstock**

- 6.100. South East of Woodstock is a green field site located north of Kidlington in the Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp Parish and immediately adjoining the historic town of Woodstock (1.3km of the town's historic urban core). Located in the A44 corridor, the site has been previously proposed for development but deemed by the Local Plan Inspector too distanced from Oxford to deliver Cherwell's apportionment of Oxford's unmet needs.
- 6.101. The site comprises a c. 48.7ha arable field, modern in character and cultivation, bounded:
- northwest by a 20th century housing development, one of a series of urban extensions to the historic town of Woodstock, and recently completed housing development at Park View.
  - southwest by a small wooded site, Campsfield Wood, and the walled and treed edge of the enclosed parkland of Blenheim Palace. The site is separated from these by the A44.
  - southeast by the A4095 (Upper Campsfield Road) and on the other side of that stands London Oxford Airport.
  - northeast by Shipton Road, on the other side of which is a 19th century house surrounded by 19th rectilinear fields, also in arable use.
- 6.102. The site comprises a large, open agricultural field with limited identified semi-natural habitats or valued natural features. It is bounded to the south and west by hedgerows containing some mature trees. The eastern and northern boundaries are defined by linear tree belts which are identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'.
- 6.103. It is located close to the north-eastern boundary of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS) and Registered Park and Garden (RPG), separated from it by the A44. Blenheim Palace is a historically significant area for both its palace and landscape. Figure XX illustrates the WHS

Management Plan areas of potential intervisibility, areas vulnerable to permanent development and woodlands and plantations contributing to the setting of the WHS.

- 6.104. Mature tree belts enclose the majority of the northern and eastern boundaries of the proposed allocation site, limiting views into and out of the site. The southern boundary is defined by relatively low hedgerow and a few hedgerow trees and is thus more open. The opposite side of the A44 features a dense woodland of mature deciduous trees which form an effective screen to views from the WHS and RPG at Blenheim Palace and Shakespeare Way long distance path.
- 6.105. The western edge of the site borders recent residential development on the edge of Woodstock. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 6.106. The proposed allocation is in an area of high archaeological sensitivity. It contains a scheduled monument and associated nationally significant Roman remains, and is located in an area with a well preserved record of Roman activity. Iron age remains of regional significance have also been found within the Site and the vicinity. There is also some potential to encounter locally important palaeolithic to bronze age, medieval and post medieval archaeological remains.
- 6.107. The Site has been extensively investigated providing a high level of certainty as to the extent and significance of these remains, and the chance of encountering unknown remains is likely to be low. The whole extent of the site and beyond was investigated in 2014 by Thames Valley Environmental Records including the excavation of 265 trenches. Two major areas of occupation were identified. One to the north of the Blenheim villa scheduled monument (HER ref: 28570) and one located at the north-east of the Site (HER ref: 28571).
- 6.108. There is a Scheduled Monument inside the site (west area), protecting the buried remains of Blenheim Roman villa. The villa was recently removed from the national Heritage Risk Register following agreement with the landowner not to plough the site in the period 2021 - 2025. Although underground, the villa remains are considered of high evidential value to substantiate the use and development of the villa and its relationship to the surrounding area. The villa is likely to have had an east, south-east orientation or outlook which is significant to the villa's setting.
- 6.109. The site has limited physical and visual relationship with Conservation Areas, Bladon c. 800m to the south and Woodstock c. 950m to the west.
- 6.110. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.
- 6.111. The site has previous Local Plan examination and planning applications history, and we engaged extensively including with Historic England and West Oxfordshire District Council as part of those processes and the preparation of this Local Plan including through the preparation of Statements of Common Ground.
- 6.112. Previous conclusions from Local Plan Inspector recommended the removal of this site in the context of meeting Oxford's unmet needs and the availability of sites proposed closer to Oxford

which could through re-design accommodate an increased number of homes. Additional reference to setting and layout of the proposal did not fully recognise the influence of Blenheim Villa on site and the landscape and heritage led approach to the policy requirements and siting of development as the reason for removal lay primarily with the separation from Oxford.

6.113. At Regulation 18 consultation, we asked whether potential sites at Kidlington should be explored further for allocation. Historic England recommended the preparation of a proportionate Heritage Impact Assessment and encouraged the Council to draw from the heritage and mitigation evidence prepared in support of the Cherwell Local Part 1 Partial Review in relation to Land South-East of Woodstock.

6.114. We have drawn from current and recent Historic England advice on Local Plan preparation and planning applications. Advice indicates that:

On Blenheim WHS and setting of Woodstock

- there is no intervisibility between the proposed site and the WHS, only tree-screened glimpsed views across the A44 on the northwestern corner of the site;
- the site makes a very minor contribution to the communal value of the WHS which could potentially be mitigated with good design;
- the experience of those approaching along the A44 from the Oxford direction view the WHS set in the countryside on the edge of the market town of Woodstock;
- the proposed allocation site is experienced as an agricultural field glimpsed through a hedge in the approach to Woodstock;
- Shipton Road, bordering the north of the proposed site is not considered to be part of the WHS setting.

On Blenheim Roman Villa

- The villa remains have high evidential value as shown by geophysical survey and evaluation trenching. The setting of the villa makes a modest contribution to the significance of the site, illustrating its original outlook and surroundings. It also illustrates the agricultural estate of the original villa on which its economy would have depended, at least in part;
- Aesthetic value is negligible and communal value is currently limited mainly to the interest of specialist groups;
- Need detailed policy to clarify that residential development on the SM or in a location which may harm its significance through the impact of its setting would be inappropriate.

6.115. In preparing the Local Plan Review 2042 we have reassessed the landscape impact of this site and prepared new evidence in consultation with Historic England.

6.116. These documents and their recommendations inform Policy Kidlington H1 to ensure that development proposals do not harm the WHS and its setting and that the layout of the proposal and management plan secure the future of the Schedule Monument on site.

6.117. West Oxfordshire District Council expressed concerns related primarily to potential adverse

impact on the setting of important heritage assets and the local landscape and setting of Woodstock. They also raised concerns with the cumulative impact of the proposed development in combination with existing housing allocations and lack of capacity in the of local infrastructure.

- 6.118. We have investigated those concerns through landscape, heritage and infrastructure specific evidence to inform the site's suitability for allocation and the drafting of policy requirements.
- 6.119. We have had regard to relevant environmental and heritage policies and objectives in West Oxfordshire's Local Plan to ensure the requirements in Policy Kidlington H1 support the continued role of Woodstock's as a historic market town and major tourism destination.
- 6.120. We have taken care of understanding the cumulative effect of developing this site alongside committed development in West Oxfordshire, examined evidence from recent planning application (Ref. 22/01715/OUT) and the proposed mitigation and improvements subject to comment and scrutiny as part of that process. We explored the infrastructure needs in the area having regard to Woodstock Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2019 and our own Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## **Policy KID H1: South-East of Woodstock**

**Site area – 48.7 hectares**

**Developable area – 16 hectares**

**Land south-east of Woodstock is allocated to accommodate 450 dwellings as a landscape and heritage led extension of the existing built form of Woodstock as shown on the Policies Map.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code to be approved by the Council.**

**A sensitively laid out and designed development of limited scale set back from the southern boundary of the site and the A44/Oxford Road. A positive gateway to Woodstock and Blenheim World Heritage Site and Grade I Park providing a publicly accessible and high-quality edge of town.**

**All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.**

**Proposals must follow a landscape and heritage led approach to design which secures the long-term future of Blenheim Roman Villa on site and a landscape and planting strategy which is commensurate to the WHS/Brownian landscape on the western side of the Oxford Road.**

- 1. The dwellings to be constructed to an approximate average density of 30 dwellings per hectare;**
- 2. Provision of formal sports facilities, play areas and allotments adopted standards within the developable area unless in otherwise agreed with the Council and West Oxfordshire**

District Council;

3. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development in perpetuity;
4. Contributions towards creation/protection/enhancement/restoration of important habitat (wetland, hedgerow, woodland and species specific) in the Blenheim and Ditchley Parks Conservation Target Area;
5. Financial contributions towards primary and secondary school provision in a location to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;
6. Financial contributions towards primary care health provision at a location to be agreed with the Council in discussion with BOB ICB;
7. Financial contributions towards community facilities in a location to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;
8. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and West Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Councils.

#### Key design requirements

9. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets both on and adjacent to the site. Developable area to be pulled back from areas of archaeological interest, to ensure no adverse impacts:
  - i. Exclude development along the length of the western boundary of the site to avoid ground disturbance and potential direct physical impact on the scheduled monument and the associated remains;
  - ii. The villa site and the historic outlook of the villa to the east to be kept open;
  - iii. Avoid direct impact on the iron age remains in the northeast corner of the site;
  - iv. Avoid locating development in the southern and western part of the site to protect the Scheduled Monument, avoid and impact on the setting of Blenheim Palace WHS and RPG, and help reduce any potential impact on the sense of separation between Woodstock and surrounding settlements;
  - v. Road access to be distanced from the scheduled area which should be accessible only on foot or cycle;
  - vi. Avoid intervisibility by limiting building heights and drawing the development back from the western / southern boundary of the Site with Historic England; and
  - vii. The access road to the site must be designed and constructed to avoid harm to the significance of buried nationally significant archaeology and to minimise its impact on the setting of the Blenheim Villa Scheduled Monument and the relationship between the Monument and its associated archaeology
10. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructural connections between Woodstock and Kidlington and the wider surrounding countryside, providing links with surrounding public rights of way including Footpath 265/36/10 to the east and Footpaths 342/4/10, 342/5/10 and 342/5/20 to the north.
11. Create crossings which link new development to existing and proposed networks including Oxford Road and Campsfield Road;



- 12. New footway and cycleway along the eastern side of the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road to provide a direct pedestrian link between the site and Bladon Roundabout;**
- 13. Main access from the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road. The site will require a secondary vehicular access. Access to be linked within the site;**
- 14. Spine road suitable for bus operation and provision of two pairs of bus stops;**
- 15. Set back development from Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' along the northern and eastern edges of the site and include a buffer zone to allow for a semi-natural habitat of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity;**
- 16. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats;**
- 17. Enhance and strengthen the southern, south-eastern and north-western site boundaries including the introduction of hedgerow trees, to help filter views and to strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network.**

#### **Planning application requirements**

- 18. Predicted views of the housing from the schedule monument villa;**
- 19. Development parameters to reflect the accepted location, density and appropriate offset from Blenheim Roman Villa in consultation with Historic England;**
- 20. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;**
- 21. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;**
- 22. Heritage Impact Assessment measures to avoid or minimise conflict with identified heritage assets within and adjacent to the site including legibility and intervisibility evidence between the site and Bladon Hill;**
- 23. A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) assessment to establish from where in the Site proposed development might be visible from. This will help provide greater clarity as to the potential visual effects that may be experienced from the development of the Site and greater certainty as to any development's interaction with any key visual links;**
- 24. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD8;**
- 25. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network.**

## CHAPTER 7: **Heyford Park Area Strategy**

### Heyford Park Vision 2042

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- 7.1. Heyford Park will continue to make a significant contribution to delivering homes and jobs in Cherwell during the lifetime of this Plan. By 2042:
- The 2022 approved masterplan will have been delivered.
  - Heyford Park will be a distinct and sustainable community with its own facilities and employment opportunities, well related to Bicester and the wider rural area in Mid Cherwell.
  - The area's sensitive natural environment and the importance of its heritage legacy will have continued to be protected and enhanced.
  - The area will be an attractive location for business and a focus for creative industries in Oxfordshire
  - Public transport will have improved
  - New and improved walking and cycling routes will be created within Heyford Park and to the wider countryside;
  - The preservation of the historic environment and environmental improvement of the former airbase will have been secured;
  - New services, community facilities, and cultural and recreation opportunities will have been delivered;
  - Improved drainage solutions to avoid the risk of flooding to neighbouring villages;
  - Environmental and recreational improvements to the wider area beyond Heyford Park will have been delivered, including to the Canal and River corridors with improved public access and an enhanced natural environment.

### Heyford Park Policies

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#### **Policy HEY 1: Heyford Park Strategy**

- 7.2. To achieve this vision, our strategy for Heyford Park is as follows:

##### *Overall Spatial Strategy*

- Ensure the implementation of the committed growth at Heyford Park to fully establish the new settlement already planned whilst preserving and enhancing the area's heritage significance.

##### *Heyford Park Area Strategy*

- Successful implementation of the approved masterplan (2022);

- Delivery of further transport investment to mitigate impacts on the highway network and support sustainable modes of travel;
- Improvements to the range of employment, local community facilities and infrastructure, and further enhancements to sustainable transport options and the connectivity of the area;

### *Housing & Employment*

- 7.3. Our previous adopted Local Plan identified the Former RAF Upper Heyford for a mixed use land allocation of 520 ha (Policy Villages 5). That policy is retained. It supports the development of a new settlement at Heyford Park comprising approximately 2,400 dwellings and approximately 120,000 sqm of land for employment provision. A masterplan was approved in 2022 to guide the delivery of the 2015 Local Plan allocation and ensure the planned new settlement responds sensitively to the environmental and heritage context of the site. To date approximately 1,100 new dwellings have been completed and a further circa 1500 homes are committed.
- 7.4. In addition to the housing proposed, the masterplan approved 8.3ha of employment floorspace with up to 35,175 sqm of new build employment in a proposed Creative City area.

### *Delivery of Green and other Strategic Infrastructure in the Heyford Area*

- 7.5. Existing community facilities at Heyford Park include a secondary school, nursery and a village centre. The approved 2022 masterplan has helped secure further leisure and education provision and food and non-food retail opportunities.
- 7.6. The existing local centre is expected to provide for the majority of the needs of the new community with higher order services located in the nearby settlements of Bicester and Oxford.
- 7.7. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022) 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.
- 7.8. The study also describes a larger cluster of protected habitat 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.
- 7.9. The following opportunities have been identified for the Heyford Area:
- 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;

- 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.

### **Heyford Park's Historic Environment and Landscape**

- 7.10. The former RAF Upper Heyford airbase in its entirety is designated as a conservation area, reflecting the role that the airbase played in the Cold War years. It contains a number of Scheduled Monuments identified as 'Cold War Structures' as well as five listed buildings.
- 7.11. The site has been divided into three main functional character areas: the main flying field and a technical site to the north of Camp Road, and the residential area that is primarily to the south of Camp Road. The flying field represents the core area of historic significance and is of national significance due to its cold war associations.
- 7.12. 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.
- 7.13. The 2007 RAF Upper Heyford Planning Brief is still a relevant document today. It provides detailed heritage and landscape information and sets out key principles to maintain the central open character and functional appearance of the site's former flying field and the preservation of buildings of international and national importance on site.
- 7.14. Any new proposals within the Heyford Area will therefore need to take account of important views and vistas, avoid coalescence with neighbouring settlements, seek to limit of the impact of development on the surrounding countryside and preserve and enhance the historic environment.

### **Strategic Transport Improvements within the Heyford Area**

- 7.15. There are a number of strategic transport improvements currently identified in the *Local Transport Plan* area strategies, and *Oxfordshire's Infrastructure Strategy* for the Heyford area. These include:
- 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.

**Policy HEY 1 Heyford Area Strategy**

Our over-arching priority for this area is to secure the delivery of the adopted 2015 retained Policy Villages 5. This will be achieved by aligning the delivery of housing and employment with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development, whilst sustaining the site's heritage significance.

All non-strategic development in the Heyford Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in *Policy SP 1*

Overview & Scrutiny

## CHAPTER 8: Rural Areas Strategy

### Rural Areas Vision 2042

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- 8.1. There is a need for some limited housing and employment development at our larger and more sustainable villages to help sustain local services and enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Our vision is that by 2042:
- Housing and employment growth will have been managed to protect the character, appearance, heritage and identity of our villages;
  - Our most important landscapes will have been protected or enhanced;
  - We will have continued to meet local community and business needs and created sustainable housing and employment opportunity;
  - We will have directed most development in our rural areas to our larger and best served villages with most opportunity for sustainable travel choices, particularly those better connected by public transport to nearby urban areas; and
  - Farming and rural business will have had the opportunity to thrive within the context of a more restrictive policy context for the countryside.

#### **Policy RUR 1: Rural Areas Strategy**

- 8.2. To achieve this vision we will deliver the following strategy:

##### *Overall Spatial Strategy*

- Protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas and avoid unplanned development in the open countryside;
- Provide for limited development to meet local community and business needs and help support the vitality of these more rural settlements and the viability of existing businesses and agriculture/farms;
- Direct the development of new housing to the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services, and to a lesser extent to villages that are well-connected to our urban areas and sustainable villages;
- Maintain the designated Green Belt;
- Conserve and enhance the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty); and
- Protect the character of locally designated landscapes and preserve and enhance conservation areas and registered parks and gardens and their settings.

##### *Rural Areas Strategy*

- Development opportunities to meet identified local needs;
- Tight management of speculative development and the avoidance of comparatively less

sustainable development outcomes;

- Greater emphasis on development being supported by sustainable transport and active travel opportunity;
- Greater emphasis on development being designed and supported by infrastructure to support health and well-being; and
- Protection and enhancement of our natural and heritage assets.

## *Housing*

- 8.3. Our overall housing need is essentially being met from our existing housing supply. Our rural areas have contributed significantly in meeting the needs of our last Local Plan and continue to do so through our current housing supply. Developing greenfield sites on the edges of our villages is generally attractive to developers in terms of sales values and relative ease of construction.
- 8.4. For sustainability reasons it is important that we have an urban focus in this Plan. However, we recognise that some additional planned development in our rural areas helps provide contingency including for our five year land supply. It provides further opportunities for newly forming households and those presently unable to access the housing market or affordable housing, and for those whose housing needs have changed over time.
- 8.5. We need to carefully manage development pressures in the interest of seeking housing delivery which benefits local communities, does not lead to unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure, can be supported by sustainable and active travel options and which does not cause damage to the environment that makes our rural areas attractive and distinctive.
- 8.6. We have considered the potential of our villages to provide some additional homes in this context. Our settlement hierarchy at Policy SP1 defines our most sustainable villages as 'Category A'. We have considered these villages in terms of existing housing supply and their potential for some limited additional housing. We have also considered where it would be appropriate to provide a housing allocation to those Parishes engaged in preparing their own Neighbourhood Plans.
- 8.7. The overall level of housing growth for our villages and rural areas is set out in Policy RUR 1 below. 'Windfall' development on small sites of less than 10 dwellings will be additional to this and will contribute to our overall housing supply.

### **Policy RUR 1: Rural Areas Housing Strategy**

**Development in the rural areas will be considered against the spatial strategy and *Policy SP 1: District Wide Housing Distribution*. 565 homes will be provided on sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plans, this Local Plan or a subsequent Development Plan document in addition to the existing supply set out at Appendix 1.**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Adderbury</b>                             | <b>75</b> |
| <b>Bletchington, Hampton Gay &amp; Poyle</b> | <b>50</b> |
| <b>Bloxham</b>                               | <b>75</b> |

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| <b>Bodicote</b>     | <b>75</b>  |
| <b>Deddington</b>   | <b>90</b>  |
| <b>Hook Norton</b>  | <b>75</b>  |
| <b>Mid Cherwell</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Milcombe</b>     | <b>25</b>  |

## **Policy RUR H1 - Land west of Springwell Hill, Bletchingdon**

8.8. Land west of Springwell Hill and North Sand Furlong at Bletchingdon is a greenfield site located to the north of development at Sand Furlong and to the west of Springwell Hill. Bletchingdon is located between Kidlington to the south west and Bicester to the north east and lies within the Cherwell Valley Landscape Character Area.

### *Site description*

- 8.9. The site comprises approximately 2.9 hectares of relatively flat arable land and covers two agricultural fields. It is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, east and west. It is bounded to the south by existing residential development, which is relatively recent and also includes Bletchingdon village hall and primary school. There is an existing footpath which crosses the site from southeast to northwest from the residential development to the south, through the site to land to the north.
- 8.10. The site lies to the west of the Bletchingdon Conservation Area, which is focussed on the historic core of Bletchingdon and Bletchingdon Park House and Gardens.
- 8.11. The site slopes gently from south west to north east and there is a spring towards the south western corner of the site. The western edge of the site is bordered by several areas of mature trees and shrubs which line the spring. To the east, there is a tree belt of semi-mature mixed woodland.
- 8.12. A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the site informs this proposed allocation and policy requirements.
- 8.13. Development at this location would encroach further into the open countryside, though it is not considered that the development of this site would represent a significant change to the settlement form of Bletchingdon. The west and south western parts of the site have a poorer relationship with the existing pattern of development at this village.
- 8.14. There are no known heritage assets located within the site, though it does lie in an area of archaeological interest and potential. Though the site lies outside of the historic core of Bletchingdon, there may be Medieval remains surviving which should be investigated prior to any development on the site.



8.15. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs the site allocation and policy requirements.

## **Policy RUR H1 - Land west of Springwell Hill, Bletchingdon**

**Site area – 2.9 hectares**

**Land west of Springwell Hill is allocated to accommodate 44 dwellings as an extension of the existing built form of Bletchingdon.**

**The development should provide a range of dwelling types and densities that reflect character and context, which should be determined as part of the design process.**

**Proposals must follow a contextual landscape led approach to design and a landscape and planting strategy.**

**Provision of formal sports facilities, play areas and allotments adopted standards within the developable area unless otherwise agreed with the Council.**

- 1. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;**
- 2. Financial contributions towards primary and secondary school provision to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;**
- 3. Financial contributions towards primary care health provision at a location to be agreed with the Council in discussion with BOB ICB;**
- 4. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils.**

### **Key design requirements**

- 5. Development should seek to preserve the positive vistas identified in the Bletchingdon Conservation Area Appraisal as well as the historic approach towards the Conservation Area from the north;**
- 6. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets adjacent to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back in the east and northern extents of the site, to ensure no adverse impacts;**
- 7. Key characteristics of the Conservation Area should be reflected in the development design;**
- 8. Retain and strengthen tree and hedgerow planting along Springwell Road to minimise views of built form;**
- 9. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the south and the wider surrounding countryside;**
- 10. Main access from the Springwell Hill Road, subject to satisfactory design including visibility splays being achievable within the constraints of available land;**
- 11. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats;**

12. Retain public footpath within an attractive, overlooked landscaped corridor;
13. Locate public open space within the western part of the site - SuDS provision must be fully integrated into the open space design to maximise amenity and habitat value;
14. Provide a clear and legible pedestrian link to the adjacent development, co-op and school to the south;
15. Ensure secure perimeter blocks are created with adjacent development rear garden boundaries whilst being sensitive to the amenity of these properties;
16. Opportunity to reinforce hedgerow and tree planting to the sites northern and western boundaries to ensure an appropriate visual relationship with the wider rural context; and
17. Ensure the scheme is fully integrated with the existing settlement both visually and physically.

#### Planning application requirements

18. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
19. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist; and
20. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network.

#### Policy RUR 2: Rural Exception Sites

- 8.16. Most of our rural areas have high house prices and a limited supply of affordable homes. We will therefore continue to support rural exception sites that provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs. In some cases we will also need to consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would make a scheme more viable. In these circumstances we will ensure that the inclusion of any element of open market housing must benefit the provision of rural affordable housing and must not inflate the 'threshold land value' (the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land).

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

The Council will support development for small scale affordable housing schemes within or immediately adjacent to villages to meet specific, identified local housing needs that cannot be met through the development of sites allocated for housing development.

Arrangements will be secured to restrict the occupancy of the housing to ensure that it continues to meet local needs in perpetuity.

Market housing for private rent or sale will only be considered on rural exception sites when:

- i. The number of market homes does not exceed 25% of the total number of homes proposed;
- ii. The market housing is shown to be required to secure the viability of the proposal. Development costs must be justified;
- iii. No alternative, suitable site is available to provide a rural exception site following a robust site

search;

- iv. **The market housing ensures that no additional subsidy for the scheme is required;**
- v. **The development has the support of the local community, and**
- vi. **The total number of dwellings and the scale of the development is in keeping with the settlement categorisation, character and form of the village and its local landscape setting.**

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

- 8.17. National guidance states that rural housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Development of isolated homes in the countryside should generally be avoided. There are some exceptions, for example, where there is an essential need for a rural worker, or where the design is of exceptional quality.
- 8.18. We also recognise that it may be beneficial to permit the replacement of a dwelling in the open countryside, for example where an existing dwelling is unfit or substandard. There may also be opportunities to improve the quality of local environments through the re-development of some brownfield sites.
- 8.19. Where planning permission is given for a rural worker in the open countryside we will impose an appropriate occupancy condition. Such conditions will only be removed if it can clearly be demonstrated that there is no need for a rural worker's dwelling in the locality.
- 8.20. Planning applications will need to provide sufficient details 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).
- 8.21. Our preference is that new dwellings should be through the conversion of existing rural buildings, to use land efficiently and reduce impacts on the countryside. Where a new build dwelling is proposed we will normally expect them to reflect the local vernacular and be closely related to existing buildings in the interest of protecting the appearance and open character of the countryside.

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

**The Council will permit the development of a rural worker's dwelling where it has been demonstrated that there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.**

**Dwellings beyond the built up limits of settlements which are not essential for rural workers 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.

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

- 8.22. The conversion of rural buildings to dwellings will help contribute towards meeting the district's housing needs and can allow farms to diversify and remain economically viable. However, it is also important that employment opportunities continue to be provided in our rural areas and that farms continue to thrive.
- 8.23. Many conversions of farm buildings to dwellings do not need planning permission, but where they do, we will prioritise employment re-use over residential conversion to promote the diversification of the rural economy.
- 8.24. Permitted development rights may be removed to ensure there is no further inappropriate alteration to the form, character and setting of the dwelling.

#### **Policy RUR 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.

#### **Policy RUR 5: Community -Led Housing Development**

- 8.25. Community led housing developments. are primarily affordable housing schemes promoted by a local not-for-profit organisation, for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of the local

community.

- 8.26. The councils will work closely with parish councils and local communities to progress community-led housing development.
- 8.27. They may take various legal forms including a community land trust, housing co-operative and community benefit society.

## **Policy RUR 5 – Community-led housing development**

**The council will support proposals for small sites for community-led affordable homes where:**

- a. it is located within a settlement or, it is adjacent to an existing settlement with a safe walking and cycling connection to it.**
- b. it is proportionate in scale to the settlement, with the number of dwellings proposed not exceeding 5% of the dwellings in the settlement; and the total site area not exceeding 1 hectare.**

**Proposals must demonstrate that:**

- a. they will be developed by a not-for-profit organisation set up and run primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of the local community;**
- b. the organisation should own, manage or steward the homes in accordance with an agreed management plan and demonstrate the financial viability of the proposal;**
- c. the local community has been meaningfully engaged with, and involved in preparing the proposal, and there is local support for it; and**
- d. there are benefits to the local community, with satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.**

## **Policy RUR 6 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

We recognise that it will occasionally be necessary to permit the replacement of an unfit or substandard dwelling in the countryside. The protection of the character of the countryside will be a primary objective, and proposals for substantially larger and more conspicuous dwellings in the landscape will be resisted. Proposals for the replacement of a single dwelling by two or more new dwellings will also be resisted.

## **Policy RUR 6 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

**Proposals for the one-for one replacement of an existing statutorily unfit or substandard dwelling beyond the built up limits of a settlement will be permitted provided that**

- 1) the existing building is not a listed building capable of restoration or suitable for an alternative and beneficial use;**
- 2) The use of the building as a dwelling has not been abandoned or extinguished and its proposed replacement is similar in scale and within the same curtilage.**

### *The Economy*

- 8.28. We recognise that our rural economy is diverse and provides benefits to our rural communities. We

will continue to support the sustainable economic growth of our rural businesses, including farming. Proposals for employment development on unallocated rural sites will be considered against Policy XX.

Overview & Scrutiny

## CHAPTER 9: **Implementing the Plan (to be updated)**

### **Policy IMP 1: Delivery and Contingency**

This Plan sets out how the district will develop over the Plan period to 2042, identifying where homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered, and the types of distinctive and characterful places that the Plan would like to create.

Monitoring allows us to understand whether policies are working as intended. It enables decisions to be taken that are well-informed and based on an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of policies based on evidence.

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.

Each year the Council must produce reports which assess the implementation of the Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2042 and the extent to which its strategic objectives and policies are being achieved.

The Sustainability Appraisal also plays an integral role in monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of Local Plan policies.

### **Policy IMP 1: Delivery and Contingency**

**The Council will monitor progress towards the achievement of indicators and targets set out within the Monitoring Framework. 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, and**
- 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.**