

Executive

Population and Household Projections for Cherwell and Key Implications for the Local Development Framework

7 March 2011

Report of Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline for members the updated population & household projections for Cherwell and to consider the implications in terms of proposed changes to the Local Development Framework procedures and the consideration of a locally determined level of growth for the district.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note the information contained in this report and in the attached technical paper (Appendix 1).
- (2) To agree the emerging broad population and household figures for Cherwell District for the period up to 2026 set out in Appendix 1 as a basis for further work on the Core Strategy.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The preparation of updated population and demographic projections was initiated in response to the Secretary of State's announcement on 06 July 2010 that the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) had been revoked and that local planning authorities could take responsibility for assessing their own needs and aspirations for local housing development. The purpose of progressing the updated projections was to inform the Council's consideration of what a locally appropriate level of development should be. Members will recall that this was also prompted by a motion which the Council passed in July 2010 which stated (amongst other matters):–

This Council welcomes the letter from Eric Pickles MP signalling a clear intent to release us from the constraints of the SE Plan. The Council instructs Officers to continue work on a Local Development Core Strategy, but to progress on the basis of meeting the locally proposed

housing target originally endorsed by Councillors and included in the submission of the draft plan to the Government (11,800 to 2026). In general terms the Council anticipates this may result in a Core Strategy that creates less pressure on Banbury to expand beyond its natural boundaries, less pressure on Rural Areas to accept housing growth, and a firming up of housing growth for Bicester in line with its Eco Town status

- 1.2 All of the nationally produced projections, including the Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and the Department of Local Communities and Government (CLG) household projections (which are based on the ONS population projections), are trend based i.e. they assume that recent population and household trends will continue. In the case of the recent CLG household projections published in November 2010, the development rate over a 5 year period (2004 – 2008) is projected forward. Therefore, they give an indication of what the future population might be if recent trends continue but they do not take account of potential future development strategies at the local level. Therefore work has been progressed since September 2010 to generate such projections and it is hoped that these will begin to inform a decision regarding a locally appropriate level of housing for the district. The work considers a range of scenarios to illustrate the effects of different levels of development over the plan period (2006 – 2026).
- 1.3 The appended technical paper (Appendix 1) summarises the updated population & household projections for Cherwell and considers the implications in terms of the emerging development strategy for the district set out in the Draft Core Strategy.

Proposals

- 1.4 The technical paper attached as Appendix 1 considers a number of different population growth scenarios for the district and for each forecasts the population size, population age profile, household numbers, level of net migration and projected resident labour force. These scenarios are summarised in the attached technical paper.
- 1.5 On the basis of the most recent household projections, a figure of approximately 12,750 may be able to be justified in terms of meeting potential need within the district. Any figure less than this would mean that the likely future needs will not be met and the Council will in effect be recognising that not all identified needs would be met. This level of development may achieve a reasonable balance between meeting the identified need indicated in the projections and reducing the impact of development upon local communities to a more satisfactory level. As such this level of growth may reflect the best way of meeting future needs whilst also seeking to protect local communities.
- 1.6 It is proposed that members are asked, without prejudice to further work to be undertaken, to agree the emerging broad population and household projections for Cherwell for the period up to 2026 as the basis for further work.
- 1.7 Having identified a broad population and household forecast for the district,

the next stage is to consider what implications this has for the development strategy. In February 2010 the Draft Core Strategy was approved for public consultation by the Council and so this should properly be used as a starting point from which to re-assess the strategy now. The South East Plan provides our current housing target 13,400 dwellings.

- 1.8 Appendix 1 sets out options for taking forward the work of the Core Strategy in light of the proposed changes to the plan making procedures. There are still a number of issues that need to be explored further before a more detailed revised development strategy can be put before members for consideration. This would include further consideration of:-
- The responses to the public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy (carried out in the Spring of last year) in the light of these new figures.
 - Further assessment of the implications of the projections for different parts of the district (Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and the rural areas).

Conclusion

- 1.9 The preparation of the Local Development Framework is a statutory requirement. However, the Government has proposed that changes to the statutory procedures for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks will be introduced in April 2012. These changes are expected to include greater responsibility for local planning authorities in assessing their local housing needs.
- 1.10 The population and household projections set out in this report, together with the options for taking forward this work, will provide a basis for the Council to undertake further work to refine the Draft Core Strategy.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 2.1 To consider the updated population and household projections and the likely implications of different levels of growth over the plan period and of proposed changes to the statutory procedures for preparing the Local Development Framework.
- 2.2 To consider how the Council can move forward with the Core Strategy in light of this information.

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

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| Option One | To agree the recommendations as set out in the report. |
| Option Two | To amend the recommendations |
| Option Three | Not to agree the recommendations. |

Consultations

Councillor Michael Gibbard

Informal briefing

Implications

Financial:

The costs of the technical work undertaken and further technical work to be undertaken are met within the existing budget. The options set out for taking forward the Core Strategy will incur significant financial costs but members are not being asked to make a decision on these costs at this stage.

Comments checked by Joanne Kaye, Service Accountant, 01295 221545

Legal:

The current legal position in planning policy is very uncertain. The law has not yet been changed to reflect the new government's approach. Recent cases make clear that the regional spatial strategy targets remain in place and must therefore be part of the consultation. However we can consult concurrently on the work done on local housing targets thereby retaining the flexibility to act quickly when the situation becomes clearer.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, 01295 221686

Risk Management:

If the Core Strategy is not progressed according to appropriate procedures and on the basis of robust evidence it may result in delays to the progress of the Core Strategy and the possibility that the Core Strategy will not be adopted. This may result in a risk to the Council's credibility/reputation.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Equalities

Before we submit a Core Strategy we will need to undertake an Equality Impact assessment, however that will be done at a later stage.

Comments checked by Caroline French, Equalities & Diversity Officer 01295 221586

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

A District of Opportunity

A Cleaner Greener Cherwell

A Safe and healthy Cherwell

An Accessible Value for Money Council

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Portfolio Holder for Planning & Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Report on Population and Demographic Projections for Cherwell
Background Papers	
Letter from Chief Planning Officer 06 July 2010 and attached Q&As Meeting of Cherwell District Council Agenda & Minutes, 19 July 2010 Previous report to Council on the Draft Core Strategy including on 01 February 2010. The South East Plan, May 2009	
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