

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

4 December 2023

## Annual Monitoring Report 2023

### Report of Assistant Director – Planning and Development

This report is public.

#### Purpose of report

To seek approval of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023 including a housing land supply update (November 2023).

To seek approval of accompanying updates to the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Brownfield Land Register.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve for publication the 2023 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) presented at **Appendix 1** including a housing land supply statement and a 2022/23 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) update;
- 1.2 To approve for publication the 2022/23 Brownfield Land Register (BLR) presented at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.3 To authorise the Assistant Director - Planning and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Planning and & Development to make any necessary minor and presentational changes to the Annual Monitoring Report, and Brownfield Land Register if required prior to publication.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to produce a planning (authorities) monitoring report. An Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) has been prepared for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and is presented at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 The AMR presents information on development that took place or was permitted from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

- 2.3 The AMR reviews progress in preparing the Council's planning policy documents as well as assessing whether current adopted development plan policies are effective. It therefore incorporates the monitoring indicators and targets from the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review for Oxford's unmet needs.
- 2.4 Subject to approval, the information contained in the AMR will be used to inform policy making, planning consultation responses and in decision making on planning applications. The AMR will be made publicly available but is not subject to consultation as it is a factual update.
- 2.5 The monitoring work undertaken to prepare the AMR has also informed the preparation of a 2022/23 update to the Council's Brownfield Land Register. This is presented at **Appendix 2** to this report for approval.

### **3.0 Report Details**

#### **Annual Monitoring Report**

- 3.1 Section 5 of the Annual Monitoring Report summarises its main monitoring results. Key findings are presented below.

#### *Housing Delivery / Housing Land Supply*

- 3.2 The AMR's key findings for housing delivery include:
- i. a total of 1,318 (net) housing completions were recorded in 2022/23. Since 2015 the level of housing completions in the district remains high, with six of the last seven years exceeding the annualised Local Plan requirement of 1,142 per annum. Total completions for 2011 to 2023 are 12,312. However, this includes a four-year period before adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan in 2015. Completions from 2015 to 2023 have been 10,260, an average of 1,283 per annum;
  - ii. there were 181 net affordable housing completions in 2022/23;
  - iii. 34% of all housing completions were at Bicester, 36% at Banbury and 30% elsewhere. 32% of the 1,318 homes delivered during the monitoring year were on previously developed land.
  - iv. The district can demonstrate a five year housing land supply of 5.6 years for Cherwell's requirements. It cannot yet demonstrate a five year supply for the district's contribution to Oxford's requirement but the sites identified are progressing through the planning system.
- 3.3 Following the decision of the Council's Executive in February 2023 the Council adopted a district local housing need figure as calculated by the Standard Method solely for the purpose of assessing housing land supply for Cherwell's needs. This was 742 dwellings per annum. The Housing Land Supply position statement approved by the Executive concluded that the district had a five year supply of 5.4 years.

3.4 A new land supply update has now been produced using the Standard Method with a base date of 31 March 2023 for permissions and completions and informed by developer expectations as of November 2023. This forms part of the 2023 AMR. Using the latest Standard Method calculation there is a need to provide 710 dwellings per annum to meet Cherwell's needs. Table 1 below sets out a summary of the calculations. Further details on the sites and their status are provided in the AMR (Appendix 1).

**Table 1**

Step	Description	Five year period 2023 to 2028
a	Requirement (2023 – 2031) Standard Method	5,680 (710x8)
b	Annual Requirement (latest standard method)	710
c	5 year requirement (b x years)	3,550
d	5 year requirement plus 5% buffer (C + 5%)	3,728
e	Revised annual requirement over next 5 years (d/5)	745.6
f	Deliverable supply over next 5 years	4171
g	Total years supply over next 5 years (f/e)	<b>5.6 years</b>
h	Surplus (f-d)	443

3.5 It is important to note that applying the Standard Method for the purposes of assessing current housing land supply does not mean that the Council is identifying its housing need for the purpose of progressing the new Local Plan. It is for the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2022 (HENA) prepared to support the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 and the scenarios presented within it provide this evidence. The recommendations of the HENA will need to be tested through the Local Plan process in due course.

3.6 The Partial Review of the Local Plan, which provides for housing to help meet Oxford's unmet housing needs was adopted in September 2020 so is therefore less than five years old. The Council monitors a separate land supply for this as set out in Policy PR12a of that Plan. Policy PR12a states: '*The Council will manage the supply of housing land for the purpose of constructing 4,400 homes to meet Oxford's needs. A separate five-year housing land supply will be maintained for meeting Oxford's needs.*' As this local Plan is less than five years old the use of the standard method, is therefore not appropriate under the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.7 The calculation of the five year housing land supply for the unmet housing needs for Oxford will therefore continue to be applied separately using the Partial Review's housing requirement. This requires 340 homes per annum for the period 2021 to 2026 and 540 homes per annum for the period 2026-2031. The five year land supply presented in this year's AMR for the Partial Review is **0.1** years.

- 3.8 This is the third AMR which reports on the monitoring framework for the Partial Review of the Local Plan. To date no homes have been delivered on the allocated sites. Nevertheless, work towards delivery has been progressing. With the exception of PR8, the site development briefs have been completed. There are current planning applications for PR9 (at appeal) and PR7a, and pre-application discussions are in progress for PR6a. The Council has resolved to approve applications at sites PR7a and 7b.

*Policy Villages 2 – Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas*

- 3.9 Policy Villages 2 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 provides for an additional 750 dwellings at Category A villages (between 2014-2031) in addition to the rural allowance for small site 'windfalls' and planning permissions as at 31 March 2014. New planning permissions at the Category A villages from 1 April 2014 and completions on those sites therefore contribute to the requirement of 750 dwellings.
- 3.10 During 2022/23 there were 86 dwellings completed at Category A Villages that contribute to the Policy Villages 2 requirement of 750 dwellings. This means that since 2014 there has now been a total of 792 completions with a further 100 dwellings under construction but not completed at 31 March 2023. This gives a total of 892 dwellings. There are also an additional 303 dwellings with planning permission on sites with planning permission but where construction has not yet started. The requirement to deliver 750 new dwellings at Category A villages set out in Policy Villages 2 has therefore been met.

*Travelling Communities*

- 3.11 The 2017 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Cherwell, Oxford, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils informed the examination and adoption of Local Plans covered by the study area and remains the most up-to-date assessment of need available. The Council has recently commissioned a new GTAA with the other Oxfordshire authorities which, when finalised, will replace the 2017 study.
- 3.12 The 2017 GTAA identifies a need for 7 additional pitches for households for Cherwell by 2032. It also highlights that there are many households where it is 'unknown' whether or not the strict Government definition of Gypsies and Travellers is met. Should further information arise, it states that the overall need could increase by up to 12 pitches. Additionally, a potential need for 8 pitches is highlighted due to the closure of the Smiths Caravan Park in Bloxham. This gives a potential need of an additional 27 pitches between 2017 and 2032. For Travelling Showpeople, the 2017 GTAA identifies a known need for 12 plots from 2017-2032.
- 3.13 Since 2017, 14 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches have been provided but no new sites for travelling showpeople have yet come forward.
- 3.14 At 31 March 2023, there was a total of 71 gypsy and traveller pitches and 14 travelling showpeople plots in the district. There is a current requirement for only one additional Gypsy and Traveller pitch and 8.8 Travelling Showpeople plots in the district.

## *Employment*

- 3.15 The AMR's key findings on employment generating development include:
- i. The district has seen a considerable gain in employment floorspace with over 77,000 sqm completed during 2022/23. Key employment sites include:
    - at Banbury - Land South of Overthorpe Road, adjacent to the M40 and Employment Land North East of Junction 11
    - at Bicester - North West Bicester, Land North East of Skimmingdish Lane, South East of Bicester and adjacent to Oxford Road
    - at Kidlington and the Rural Areas – Heyford Park and Land South of Oxford Airport.
  - ii. At 31 March 2023, there was over 450,000 sqm (net) of employment floorspace with planning permission that has yet to be built;
  - iii. Overall, only 0.32 hectares of employment land (net) was lost to non-employment uses during 2022/23.

## *Natural Environment*

- 3.16 Key findings for the natural environment include:
- i. There were no planning applications granted permission contrary to Environment Agency's advice on flood risk or water quality grounds. This continues the trend from previous AMRs.
  - ii. During 2022/23, 42 planning applications were approved for renewable energy schemes, an increase from 27 in 2021/22.
  - iii. The land area of priority habitats has increased from 3,780 ha in 2022 to 3,863 ha in 2023.
  - iv. 77.9% of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) units are in "favourable condition". This means that the habitats and features are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management. Not all sites are surveyed annually so this figure can fluctuate.
  - v. The area of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) has increased by 0.04 hectares since last year whilst the area of Local Geological Sites remains unchanged. This information is based on a revision to the area of Local Wildlife Sites in 2021/22, as a result of more accurate information on the condition of Local Wildlife Sites in the previous monitoring year being made available by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre following the completion of the 2021/22 Annual Monitoring Report.

## *Local Development Scheme*

- 3.17 The AMR reports on progress in preparing the Council's planning policy documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The latest approved LDS is dated September 2023. The LDS contains the overall programme for the Local

Plan. Work has progressed on the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 with consultation on a draft Plan (regulation 18) completed in November 2023.

- 3.18 In the 2022/23 monitoring year, preliminary work was carried out with a view to bringing forward a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule. It is anticipated that a new Draft CIL Charging Schedule will be consulted on during the 2023/24 monitoring year.
- 3.19 On 17 March 2023, the government published a consultation on potential reforms to the system of developer contributions in England. We will continue to monitor the progress of these proposed reforms and consider any implications for the LDS.

#### *Neighbourhood Planning*

- 3.20 The AMR provides the updated position on Neighbourhood Planning in Cherwell. There are currently five made Neighbourhood Plans in the district. During the monitoring period, two new neighbourhood areas, Hampton Gay & Poyle and Bletchington, and Milcombe were designated. The Deddington Neighbourhood Plan is currently at Examination. Work has also started on an updated Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan with pre-submission consultation expected early 2024.

#### *Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Update*

- 3.22 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which supports the adopted Local Plans is maintained and monitored and includes updates from the County Council and other infrastructure providers. An updated 2023 IDP is included at Appendix 3 the AMR.

#### **2022/23 Brownfield Land Register**

- 3.23 The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 require local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a register of brownfield sites. Local planning authorities must review the register at least once within each register year. A Brownfield Land Register (BLR), the first to be produced under the new legislation, was published in December 2017. An updated Register, which is the seventh BLR prepared by the Council, is presented at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.24 The Register was reviewed alongside the AMR to include new qualifying sites and to remove sites that are being developed. The base date for planning permissions and completions is 31 March 2023.

#### **Self-Build**

- 3.25 There were 10 self-build dwellings completed at Graven Hill during 2022/23.

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

- 4.1 The Annual Monitoring Report provides important information to measure the effectiveness of planning policies and to assist policy making and development management decision making. It is the statutory mechanism for monitoring housing delivery.

4.2 Its most significant conclusions are that Cherwell is continuing to deliver homes and employment land despite the widely reported national pressures faced by the development industry such as disrupted supply chains, finance costs, and labour shortages.

4.3 It is recommended that the AMR be approved for publication.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 Councillor Daniel Sames – Portfolio Holder, Planning and Development.

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

6.1 Deferment to seek significant *amendment of the: 2023 Annual Monitoring Report, Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Brownfield Land Register.*

Officers consider the documents to comprise robust factual reporting and updating against relevant indicators and requirements, supported by data and research. Members are therefore asked to consider amendment through delegation and consultation with the Portfolio Holder should they consider significant changes to be necessary.

6.2 *Not to approve the documents for publication*

Production of an Authorities Monitoring Report is a statutory requirement and the AMR's wider information supports the Local Plan implementation and review. Updating the Brownfield Land Register is also a statutory requirement. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is required to monitor and support delivery of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and its Partial Review.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work collecting data and preparing the AMR is met within existing budgets. There are risks of costs associated with unsuccessful refusals of planning permission upon appeal and this risk can be reduced through having a robust AMR.

Comments checked by:

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### **Legal Implications**

7.2 The production of a monitoring report and Brownfield Land Register are statutory requirements. Their availability, and that of the IDP update, also assists the Council in making informed decisions.



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

This report directly links to the strategic priorities from the Business Plan 2023/24:

- Housing that meets your needs.
- Supporting environmental sustainability.
- An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres.
- Healthy, resilient and engaged communities.

## **Lead Councillor**

Councillor Daniel Sames – Portfolio Holder – Planning and Development

## **Document Information**

### **Appendix Title and Number**

- Appendix 1: 2023 Annual Monitoring Report including Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2023
- Appendix 2: 2023 Brownfield Land Register

## **Background papers**

None

## **Report Authors and contact details**

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