

## Chapter 10 Social and community effects

### Introduction

- 10.1 Socio-economic impacts result from the interaction of the characteristics of a project or development, and the characteristics of the 'host' community, for instance the existing population, facilities and services. The effect of a development on the local community is an important part of an EIA, and the associated issues are examined in detail in this chapter.
- 10.2 Social and community effects was scoped as an issue of primary importance. The potential issues identified for study as part of the EIA included the provision of market and affordable housing, nursing home, employment land, education facilities, local centre, recreation and open space, health facilities and the hotel, and the potential impact on the local community. The potential change to the population density and the demographic profile of Bicester and the associated pressure of the new development on existing local services such as health facilities will be considered.
- 10.3 Terence O'Rourke has undertaken the social and community effects assessment of the proposed development. The sources of information used in the preparation of this chapter are listed in figure 10.1.

Cherwell District Council, Cherwell Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft, July 2004
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan (proposed modifications (May 2005)
Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), Environment Select Committee, Report of the Head of Planning and Development Services, Central Oxfordshire Sub-regional Strategy, 9 November 2004.
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire School Organisation Plan 2004 – 2009 (November 2004)
Oxfordshire County Council, Economic Development Strategy Oxfordshire, 2001-2005.
North East Oxfordshire NHS Primary Care Trust, Future Healthcare for Bicester, Kidlington and the Surrounding Area, Consultation Document, January 2005.
Cherwell District Council, Index of Deprivation 2004, Summary of IMD2004 results for Oxfordshire, June 2004
Cherwell District Council, Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011, March 2005
<a href="http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk">www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.nationalstatistics.gov.uk">www.nationalstatistics.gov.uk</a>

Figure 10.1 Data sources and references

## **Legislation, policy and guidance**

- 10.4 There is no specific legislation relevant to the social and community effects assessment. The key policies relevant to the site and the proposals have been considered in summary in chapter 1 and in detail in the supporting statement.
- 10.5 Specific issues relevant to the social and community effects assessment include:
- development of a mixed use scheme including housing, employment, two primary schools and a secondary school, local centre, community uses, recreation and hotel in accordance with the site allocation (policy reference H13)
  - provision of housing of a density to make efficient use of land (policy reference H3 and H13)
  - provision of a variety of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability including affordable housing to meet the housing requirements of the whole community (policy reference H4, H5 and H7)
  - provision of a new local shopping centre within the South West Bicester urban extension area (policy reference S18)
  - provision of outdoor recreation playing space and new amenity areas in accordance with the new housing (policy reference R8 and R9).
- 10.6 The Environment Select Committee Report prepared by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of SEERA provides background information on the sub-regional strategy. This document has raised issues with respect to further growth in the Bicester area. The key issues with reference to the social and community environment include improvement of Bicester town centre, increased community health provision, a further secondary school and primary school, increased local recreational opportunities and provision of leisure facilities, such as a cinema. The report also raised concerns about quality of life issues for residents of Bicester and absorbing growth socially.
- 10.7 The '*Good practice guide for the preparation of environmental statements for planning projects that require environmental assessment*' (DETR, 1994) sets out the potential ways that projects can affect humans and examines particular concerns relating to population, housing and services. The guidance emphasises that social and community effects assessment can be both objective and subjective, and both types of assessment are required to determine the overall potential effects of proposals.

## **Methodology**

### ***Baseline conditions***

- 10.8 To examine the effects of the proposed development on the existing community and social baseline with reference to the DETR good practice guide, the following issues have been considered:
- demography – existing and future trends
  - housing – existing supply and demand
  - economic – existing and future trends of employment and economic environment
  - socio-cultural factors

- community facilities – including education, health services, social services, retail outlets, local amenities, recreation and leisure and other services.

- 10.9 The baseline assessment mainly comprised a desk top study and review of the existing information. In most cases, data from the 2001 census were acquired and reviewed with respect to population, housing and economy. The Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council websites were also reviewed to gather additional information on the social and community environment.
- 10.10 Reference has been made to the Home Office crime statistics for data relevant to Cherwell District. Summary statistics are available from April 2003 to March 2004 for a range of crime type definitions. The topics covered include burglary, criminal damage, drug offences, fraud and forgery, robbery, sexual offences, vehicle and other theft, violence against the person and other offences. The data for Cherwell can be compared to equivalent data for England and Wales.
- 10.11 To supplement the desk top study, site visits were carried out to survey the shops and services currently available in Bicester.
- 10.12 Assumptions have had to be made where data are missing, unobtainable or non-existent. In such instances, the worst case scenario has usually been assumed and has been acknowledged in the text.

#### *Future baseline conditions*

- 10.13 In the absence of the development, there will be changes to the baseline environment. A future baseline section has been included in this chapter to address the potential trends associated with the demographic, housing and economic environment.

#### *Assessment of potential effects*

- 10.14 In order to determine the potential effects of the development on the environment the following scenarios have been assessed:
- activities associated with the construction of up to 1,585 dwellings and associated development from 2007 to 2014
  - the occupation of the proposed development.
- 10.15 The assessment has focused on the potential changes to the existing social and community environment. The proposal will introduce new residents to the area. However, these residents are not considered to be as sensitive as the existing residents of Bicester. The key focus of the assessment is the impact on existing sensitive receptors. Where adverse effects may result, mitigation measures have been considered and the residual effects of the proposals have been determined. Any overlapping effects arising from construction and post-construction activities have also been addressed.
- 10.16 Strutt and Parker assessed the agricultural viability of the revised Whitelands Farm land holding in November 2005. Consideration was given to the proposed reduction of the land holding associated with the development and the potential impact on the farm business.

### *Assessment of significance*

- 10.17 The significance of potential effects has been determined using criteria developed from best practice techniques and expert knowledge. Significance has been derived from measures of the magnitude / scale of the change, and the importance / sensitivity of the resource affected, as shown in figures 10.2 and 10.3 respectively.
- 10.18 There are no known published 'standard' criteria for determining the significance of effects on social and community interests. In determining whether an effect on a receptor is significant, reference has been made to a wide range of criteria relating to the sensitivity / importance of area of interest and the magnitude of the change to the feature or site.
- 10.19 Feeding the two sets of criteria (magnitude and sensitivity) into the potential significance matrix generates standard definitions of potential effects. The significance matrix and the definition of potential effects are set out in figure 10.4.

### **Baseline**

#### *Study area*

- 10.20 The site currently comprises agricultural land which is managed by the farmer resident at Whitelands Farm.
- 10.21 The site is located immediately to the south of the residential area of Bicester adjacent to Middleton Stoney Road and A41 Oxford Road. There are three main urban centres in Cherwell District, Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, and over 60 villages. Bicester is the second largest town after Banbury and these three urban centres provide for many of the service needs of the communities located in the district.

### *Demography*

#### *Population size and trends*

- 10.22 In Cherwell District, population has grown by 6% between the 1991 and 2001 census. The total population in 2001 in Cherwell was 131,785, of which 65,168 (49%) were male and 66,617 (51%) were female. Population estimates confirm that the population of Cherwell had increased slightly since 2001 and had reached 132,900 people mid-2003.
- 10.23 Of the people living in Cherwell District, 27,722 (21%) are under 16, 95,757 (73%) are between 16 and 74 years and 8,306 (6%) are 75 or above. The average age of the population in Cherwell was 37.3 years, which compared with an average age for England and Wales of 38.6 years.
- 10.24 At a smaller scale, there were 28,672 people in the Bicester parish in 2001, of whom 14,098 were male, 14,574 were female. There are a total of 11,612 households in the parish. Further to the south lies Chesterton parish, which had a total of 835 people in 2001, of whom 409 were male and 426 were female. There are 312 households in Chesterton.

## ***Housing***

### *Existing stock and demand*

- 10.25 In Cherwell, there were 53,225 households in 2001, which comprised 98% of the resident population and a total of 129,326 people. The remainder (2,459) lived in communal establishments which are managed residential accommodation, for example supervised hostels, hotels, large hospitals and prisons.
- 10.26 Of the people living in households, 67% of people aged 16 or over are living in a couple, compared with 33% who are not. The average size of households in Cherwell was 2.4 people.
- 10.27 As shown by figure 10.5, the majority of households in Cherwell are owner occupied with a mortgage or loan (47.68%). This figure is higher than the figure for England and Wales as a whole (38.76%).

	Cherwell	England and Wales
Owner occupied: owns outright	26.76	29.46
Owner occupied: owns with a mortgage or loan	47.68	38.76
Rented from: Council (local authority)	8.18	13.24
Rented from: Housing Association/ RSL	4.82	5.95
Rented from: Private landlord or letting agency	8.81	8.72
Rented from: Other	3.34	3.22

Figure 10.5 Tenure; percentage of households, April 2001

### *Affordable housing*

- 10.28 The council transferred all of its affordable housing stock to Charter Community Housing Association in March 2004. All social housing in the district is now owned and managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Sixteen different RSLs own about 6,700 dwellings.
- 10.29 The council maintains a housing register for households who want to be nominated to an RSL for social-rented or other types of accommodation such as shared-ownership. The number of households on the register has averaged around 2,700 households for the last four years. In terms of lettings available, on average around 582 properties are available each year over the same period. There is a shortfall of affordable properties available each year, when compared to the number of households on the register.

## ***Economy***

- 10.30 The census 2001 provided information on the economic activity levels of all people within Cherwell District aged between 16 and 74. The proportion of these people who are economically active is 75.4%, which includes those people who are employed either full time or part time, self employed, unemployed or are full-time students. The remainder of people aged between 16 and 74 (24.6%) are economically inactive, either retired, looking after family or home, permanently sick or disabled.

- 10.31 Figure 10.6 shows the occupational group of all people aged between 16 and 74 in employment. The largest group is managers and senior officials (16.9%), followed by associated professional and technical occupations (14.4%) and administrative and secretarial occupations (13.3%).

	Total	Percentage
Managers and senior officials	11,903	16.9
Professional occupations	7,266	10.3
Associated professional and technical occupations	10,137	14.4
Administrative and secretarial occupations	9,323	13.3
Skilled trades occupations	7,923	11.3
Personal service occupations	4,270	6.1
Sales and customer service occupations	5,315	7.6
Process; plant and machine operatives	5,971	8.5
Elementary occupations	8,132	11.6
Total	70,240	100

Figure 10.6 The occupational group of all people aged between 16 and 74 in employment. (2001 Census)

#### *Unemployment*

- 10.32 The level of unemployment in Cherwell is calculated as 1.9% of all people aged between 16 and 74. The average for England and Wales in 2001 was 3.4%. According to the 2001 census, of the people in Cherwell who were unemployed, 19.96% were aged 50 and over, 4.24% had never worked and 18.78% were long term unemployed.

#### *Socio-cultural indicators*

##### *Crime*

- 10.33 Between April 2003 and March 2004, there were on average 2,637 offences during each quarter. This equated to an average of 20 offences per 1,000 population each quarter. The quarterly average for England and Wales as a whole was 28.2.
- 10.34 Figure 10.7 shows the breakdown of statistics for a range of categories of crime. The highest number of offences occurred in the vehicle and other theft group. The second highest group was criminal damage followed by violence against the person.
- 10.35 The offences per 1,000 population for Cherwell District were all below the average for England and Wales, except in the case of sexual offences where the rate was the same. The recorded level of crime in Cherwell District is therefore below the average for England and Wales.

	Total number of offences	Offences per 1000 population	
		Cherwell District	England and Wales
All crime	2637	20	28.2
Burglary	296	2.3	3.9
Criminal damage	571.5	4.3	5.7
Drug offences	71.8	0.6	0.7
Fraud and forgery	157	1.2	1.5
Robbery	14	0.1	0.5
Sexual offences	29.5	0.2	0.2
Vehicle and other theft	1004	7.6	10.8
Violence against the person	454	3.5	4.6
Other offences	40	0.3	0.4

Figure 10.7 Crime statistics for Cherwell District (quarterly average figures for April 2003 to March 2004)

### *Quality of life*

- 10.36 According to the index of deprivation survey of 2004, the south-east is the least deprived region of the country. In the county rankings, Oxfordshire has relatively low levels of deprivation, coming 137th out of 149 counties (where 1 is the most deprived).
- 10.37 In the local authority index of deprivation rankings, Cherwell is ranked 274 out of 354 (where 1 is the most deprived). The results for Oxfordshire are shown in figure 10.8.

Cherwell	274
Oxford	144
South Oxfordshire	332
Vale of White Horse	339
West Oxfordshire	347

Figure 10.8 Index of deprivation rankings for local authorities within Oxfordshire

- 10.38 Bicester town itself is ranked between 20% and 50% in the index (with up to 10% being the most deprived and over 90% the least deprived). The areas to the north, west, east and south of Bicester are either between 50% and 90% or over 90%. The site itself is currently ranked between 50% and 90% in the index of deprivation.

### *Local amenities / services*

#### *Education services*

- 10.39 Bicester has nine primary schools and a further five are located in the surrounding villages. The primary schools are:
- Brookside Primary School
  - Bure Park Primary School
  - Glory Farm Primary School and Nursery
  - King's Meadow School

- Chesterton CE Controlled Primary School
- Dr Radcliffe's Church of England School
- Five Acres Primary School
- Fringford CE Primary School
- Langford Village Community School
- Launton Church of England Primary School
- Southwold County Primary School
- St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- Longfields Primary and Nursery School.

10.40 There are two secondary schools in Bicester, Bicester Community College, which is a state comprehensive with Technical College status (11-18 years), and the Cooper School, which is a state comprehensive (11-16 years). There is also an adult education centre in the town known as Bicester Adult Continuing Education Centre (BACEC) at the Bicester Community College.

10.41 The school organisation plan 2004 to 2009 (published November 2004) provides forecasts of surplus or insufficient capacity which take into account housing developments which have planning permission.

10.42 Figure 10.9 shows that only two of the 14 primary schools are predicted to be at capacity in 2011. This is based on population projections and new housing developments that currently have planning permission. It is predicted that there will be spare capacity at the two secondary schools in Bicester.

Surplus spaces (negative means places needed)	2004	2005	2011
Brookside Primary School	70	78	88
<i>Bure Park Primary School</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>-6</i>
Glory Farm Primary School and Nursery	104	116	149
King's Meadow School	143	150	164
Chesterton CE Controlled Primary School	4	9	20
Dr Radcliffe's Church of England School	18	18	31
Five Acres Primary School	102	93	83
Fringford CE Primary School	17	23	21
Langford Village Community School	37	33	39
<i>Launton Church of England Primary School</i>	<i>-13</i>	<i>-18</i>	<i>-32</i>
Southwold County Primary School	8	15	19
St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School	71	73	72
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	1	-5	12
Longfields Primary and Nursery School	70	69	49
Bicester Community College	202	199	59
Cooper School	134	113	117

Figure 10.9 Local school forecasts of surplus or insufficient capacity, School Organisation Plan 2004-2009 (*schools at capacity are listed in italics*)



*Health services*

- 10.43 Key health services in Bicester include GP surgeries, dental surgeries, opticians, pharmacies and the community hospital.
- 10.44 The five GP surgeries in Bicester are Montgomery House Surgery, The Health Centre, Dr Galuszka JA & Partners, Langford Medical Practice and North Bicester Surgery.
- 10.45 There are seven dentists in Bicester town: Oxford Priority Dental Clinic; The Dental Surgery, The Causeway; The Dental Surgery, Market Square; Mr JP du Toit, The Dental Practice; Mr AD Kelbrick and Assistants; Messrs Dhatt and Tatineni and Associates, Greytown Dental Practice and The Dental Surgery, Sheep Street.
- 10.46 Only one of these dentists has no restrictions on receiving new NHS patients. Three are not receiving any new NHS patients and the remaining three have set restrictions on the type of new patients that the practices are able to accept. For example, paying adults are accepted but there are restrictions on non-paying adults and children.
- 10.47 There are three opticians in Bicester, Specsaver, Boots and Melson Wingate Ltd, and four pharmacies, which include Cooks chemists, Superdrug, Boots and Lloyds.

**Bicester Community Hospital**

- 10.48 The site is located in close proximity to the Bicester Community Hospital. The North East Oxfordshire National Health Service Primary Care Trust (PCT) is proposing to modernise and enhance the services available for the people of Bicester, Kidlington and the surrounding area.
- 10.49 The aim is to provide a facility that is flexible and able to meet the demands of the growing population. The ability to purchase or rent health provision rather than to provide in-patient beds will allow the new facilities to meet fluctuating demand. The proposed services will include a minor injuries unit, out of hours services, therapy services, x-ray and out patient services, intermediate care, day hospital provision for the assessment and rehabilitation, fall clinics, specialist older person clinic and NHS-funded palliative care.
- 10.50 The existing hospital offers limited opportunities for expansion of services due to the age and nature of the building. The preferred option is to provide a new primary health care centre on the existing site in the overspill car park, with the old facility remaining operational until the new hospital was ready to receive patients. Any surplus land would then be sold off to raise capital and attract an independent care home provider to develop a care home in the vicinity.

*Social services*

- 10.51 Cherwell District Council provides a range of services to meet the needs of children, older people and disabled people. Information is provided on council's website for access to all. Services are also available to help to reduce crime and to address domestic violence. With regard to mental health, the council provides information on the services available through partnerships with the council, other agencies and voluntary organisations.

*Retail outlets*

- 10.52 There are two main retail areas, Bicester town centre which is focused around Sheep Street and includes the Crown Walk Shopping Centre, and the Bicester Village Outlet Shopping Area located south of the town centre immediately north of the A41.
- 10.53 Bicester town centre provides local services and amenities including banks and building societies (Lloyds, HSBC, Bradford and Bingley and Halifax), bakeries, grocery stores, butchers, estate agents, travel agents, pharmacies, hairdressers, card shops (Clinton cards) and a post office. There is a small Tesco store and a Somerfield. Other high street chains that have stores in the town centre include Millets, WH Smiths, H Samuel, Bonus Print, Argos, New Look, Dorothy Perkins, Clarks and Woolworths. There are also a number of pubs, restaurants and fast food establishments. There are limited clothing stores in the town centre and no department stores or any of the larger chain stores such as Next, River Island, Topshop or Topman.
- 10.54 Bicester Village Outlet Shopping Area has around 90 retail stores and three restaurants, covering 170,000 square feet. It offers top quality merchandise from end of lines and previous seasons' stock. The shops include designer names such as Valentino as well as high street names such as Monsoon and manufacturers such as Samsonite.

*Hotels*

- 10.55 There are two hotels in Bicester, The Kings Arms Hotel and The Littlebury, and a further four in the surrounding area, Bignell Park Hotel (Chesterton), Jersey Farm Hotel (Middleton Stony), Travelodge Ardley, (Moto Services Area, Junction 10, M40) and the Weston Manor Hotel (Weston-on-the-Green).

*Recreation and leisure*

- 10.56 A range of recreational and leisure facilities are available for residents in Cherwell District. This includes sport, nature conservation, countryside walks and rides, and arts activities as well interests offered by the museum, tourist information centres and the multimedia arts venue.
- 10.57 To support the leisure services provided by the council, there are also three leisure centres in the Bicester area, which are available to the public. These include the Bicester and Ploughley Sports Centre, Cooper School and the Kidlington and Gosford Sports Centre.

10.58 There is a current shortfall of formal sports provision in Bicester and scope for improving the town's recreational facilities in this respect.

**Future baseline**

10.59 Oxfordshire County Council has provided information on the population projections from 2001 to 2011 (as shown on figure 10.10). The population of Oxfordshire as a whole is projected to increase by over 33,000 people, or 5.5%, from 2001 to 2011. All Oxfordshire districts and Oxford city are expected to grow in population, with Cherwell expected to experience the highest growth (10.2%) and Oxford city the lowest (2.8%).

	2001	2011		% change
Oxfordshire	607,277	640,646	+33,369	5.5%
Cherwell	131,988	145,443	+13,445	10.2%

Figure 10.10 Forecast population change, 2001 to 2011

10.60 The total population of the five Bicester electoral wards is expected to increase by 11.7% between 2001 and 2011 (as shown on figure 10.11). This is higher than the proposed change for the district as a whole (10.2%), which is expected to experience the highest growth in Oxfordshire.

	All persons				Households			
	2001	2006	2011	% change	2001	2006	2011	% change
Cherwell	131,988	138,157	145,442	10.2	53,225	56,772	61,108	14.8
Bicester	28,705	30,436	32,074	11.7	11,612	12,798	13,761	18.5

Figure 10.11 Population and households for districts and major towns

10.61 The wards in Cherwell district which are predicted to undergo the greatest percentage increases in population from 2001 to 2011 are shown on figure 10.12.

Ambrosen & Chesterton ward (which will include part of the development)	+66%
Banbury Hardwick ward	+40%
Bicester Town ward	+39%

Figure 10.12 Cherwell district – wards percentage growth in population, 2001 to 2011

10.62 The increase in population is predominantly in the older age groups, partly reflecting the ageing of the relatively large cohorts aged 30-39 and 50-54 in 2001. The number of children under 10 is expected to decline as the number of females in the main child-bearing age groups reduces and the large cohorts born in the 1960s age on to their 40s.

	2001	2011	Change	% growth
Aged 0 to 9	73,280	67,405	-5,875	-8.0%
Aged 10 to 15	45,029	44,192	-837	-1.9%
Aged 16 to 24	75,269	82,814	7,545	10%
Aged 25 to 44	184,631	179,829	-4,802	-2.6%
Aged 45 to 64	140,955	165,831	24,876	17.6%
Aged 65 and over	88,113	100,575	12,462	14.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>607,277</b>	<b>640,646</b>	<b>33,369</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

Figure 10.13 Oxfordshire population change by broad age band, 2001 to 2011

### ***Housing***

- 10.63 The Cherwell Housing Strategy (2005 – 2011) sets out the objectives and priorities of Cherwell District Council for housing delivery. Housing delivery is important to meet housing needs and help maintain a buoyant economy. Key issues for consideration by the strategy are housing supply to 2011 and the need for more affordable housing. The local plan seeks qualifying housing schemes to achieve the provision of 30% affordable dwellings.
- 10.64 In recent years, the supply of new housing in Cherwell district has fallen below levels in the approved Oxfordshire Structure Plan. From 1996 to 2005, only 75% of new housing required by the plan in Cherwell was built.
- 10.65 The strategy has set out key priorities to be addressed. These include:
- increase provision of new affordable housing
  - prevent homelessness and improve provision of assistance and accommodation for those accepted as homeless
  - improve delivery of new housing
  - improve housing standards including condition and energy efficiency
  - help people live independently
  - promote effective management of affordable housing across Cherwell.

### ***Economy***

- 10.66 The Economic Development Strategy Oxfordshire 2001 – 2005 sets out the strategy for economic development in the county. The strategy deals with three main issues; competitiveness and innovation, sustainable development and social inclusion. In addition, Cherwell District Council has set up an economic development unit for north Oxfordshire to provide information and long term assistance to business. By establishing and sustaining a healthy local economy in association with local partners, the unit has helped to create employment and wealth in the district. Economic development is undertaken on the basis of a strategy involving key business groups. Over the past decade, there has been a large growth of business activity in the area. Much of this is due to council's determination to work with the business community to expand and encourage sustainable business growth.

- 10.67 The unit operates through the Cherwell–M40 investment partnership, which is a public/private sector initiative that promotes a high quality image for Cherwell, attracting investment and enquiries from companies all over the world. In addition, to encourage enterprise, the economic development unit sponsors the local enterprise agency, Oxfordshire Business Enterprise, and works with a range of agencies to help create a more diverse and successful local economy.

#### *Future developments*

- 10.68 The council is proposing a comprehensive redevelopment of Bicester town centre. The proposals include the redevelopment of the existing car parks for new development comprising a foodstore and other retail, a multi-screen cinema, multi-storey car park and, if it can be funded by Oxfordshire County Council, a public library. These proposals will help to address the concerns raised by the Environment Select Committee Report with respect to improvements to Bicester town centre and the provision of leisure facilities such as a cinema.

#### *Assessment of sensitivity*

- 10.69 With reference to figure 10.3, it is considered that in general, the existing community and social environment at Bicester is of low-negligible sensitivity. There is low unemployment in the area, a low crime rate and the local economy is vibrant. There is a range of local shops, accommodation and services and these can accommodate an increase in demand.
- 10.70 The areas of the community and social environment where sensitivity differs are housing, recreation and provision of dental services. There is demand in the local area for additional market and affordable housing, as set out by local and regional policy. The local area is therefore considered to be of medium sensitivity. There is a shortfall of formal sports provision in Bicester, therefore the town is considered to be of medium sensitivity in this respect. There are restrictions on the registration of patients at dental surgeries in Bicester and this health service is considered to be of medium sensitivity.

#### **Potential effects**

##### *During construction*

- 10.71 It has been assumed that the construction of the proposed development will commence in 2007 and will continue to the end of 2014. Development will occur in phases with different areas and facilities being developed at different times. Construction workers will be employed for the duration of the construction period and there is the possibility of a population increase with the in-migration of construction workers
- 10.72 The proposals will include the construction of the mixed use development and associated highway works including the perimeter road. It has been assumed that up to 25 workers will be employed to construct the perimeter road, a further 200 workers will be employed to construct the residential development and approximately 45 for each non-residential building (e.g. schools, local centre, hotel etc). With regard to the residential development, it is assumed that four developers will be working on-site at any one time and that each developer will employ approximately 50 skilled or semi-skilled workers.

- 10.73 The employment generated will be beneficial to both local residents and the local economy. Bicester has low unemployment and is therefore considered to be of low sensitivity to the proposed job generation. The magnitude of change is considered to be medium to large due to the number of jobs generated and the length of time that the workers will be employed. The generation of jobs during construction is therefore considered to be a beneficial effect of moderate significance. These jobs will, however, be limited to the construction period and therefore this potential effect is temporary.
- 10.74 It is likely that the majority of the construction workers will be from the local area, for example Bicester or Oxford. However, some of the construction workers, especially certain specialists, may be recruited from a wider area. These construction workers may require temporary accommodation in the town. Bicester is very accessible from surrounding towns due to the road and rail connections. It is therefore considered unlikely that many workers will need temporary accommodation and the magnitude of change is negligible. No significant effects have been predicted.
- 10.75 Some residents will experience disturbance during construction which could affect quality of life. The nearest local residents are those living immediately north of Middleton Stoney Road. There may be some initial disturbance as the houses adjacent to Pingle Brook are developed. However, as construction work will generally take place in a north to south direction, the new homes will form a buffer and therefore significantly reduce the level of disturbance experienced by existing residents on the long term. Middleton Stoney Road itself will also act as a buffer minimising disturbance. It is therefore considered unlikely that there will be any long term effects on the quality of life of the local residents and no significant effects have been predicted. Disturbance arising from traffic, noise and dust has been examined in the traffic and transport, noise and air quality chapters respectively.

*Whitelands Farm*

- 10.76 The site is currently agricultural land managed by the farmer at Whitelands Farm. The development proposals will lead to the loss of a large area of agricultural land which will impact on the farm's operations. This change will occur as soon as the site preparation and construction work commences. However, Whitelands Farm complex will be retained and will still operate as a farm utilising the retained agricultural land to the west of the farm and south of the proposed perimeter road. There will be a change to the operations of the farm due to a reduction in farmland.
- 10.77 Strutt and Parker assessed the agricultural viability of the revised land holding of approximately 75 ha. The report concluded that although this remaining farm area will be larger than both UK and EU average farm size, it will not provide enough work for full time employment. The farm will be viable either to provide a living to a working owner-occupier or a net income to a landowning company if farmed by outside contract. An owner-occupier would have spare time during the quieter periods of the farming year either to gain employment elsewhere or to pursue some other diversified opportunity. It is now relatively common for farming businesses to collaborate together or for a farmer to use an outside contract for cultivation and other works. The proposals will result in a change to the farm's business. However, the farm itself will remain and the business will continue. The farm's business is considered to be of low sensitivity. There will be a

small change to the farm's business as a result of the proposal and this will result in an adverse effect of slight significance.

### ***Post-construction***

- 10.78 The proposed development involves the construction of up to 1,585 houses and it has been estimated that around 3,804 people will move into the new housing. This is based on the 2.4 people living in each household, which is the average for Cherwell district.
- 10.79 The potential post-construction effects associated with the development arise from changes to the population, and to the provision of housing, education and local facilities. Consideration has also been given to the potential changes to employment and the economic environment.

### ***Population***

- 10.80 The proposals will increase the population of Bicester by 3,804 people, of whom 476 will be children. The baseline surveys have shown that there were approximately 28,672 people living in the parish of Bicester in 2001. The development will increase the population of the town by 13.3%. This may result in a change to the population profile of the town or to the quality of life of existing residents.
- 10.81 The population projections for Bicester between 2001 and 2011 estimate that the town's population will increase by 11.7% in this period. These projections use trends in migration and mortality, births, fertility projections, census data, information provided by planners on actual and planned housing completions and local information on likely changes to communal establishments. The site is allocated in local and regional policy and this will have been a factor considered in the projection assessments. It is predicted that there will be an increase in the population of older age groups in Bicester and a decline in the number of children.
- 10.82 A wide mix of housing is proposed and this will encourage a cross section of the population profile to move into the area. It is unlikely that the population profile of the new residents will be significantly different to that of Bicester or the wider Cherwell district. Therefore, in terms of a potential change to the population profile, the magnitude is likely to be negligible and the significance of any potential effects will be none.

### ***Quality of life***

- 10.83 Consideration has also been given to the quality of life of the existing residents of Bicester, and whether the new housing and new residents have the potential to change the status quo. This is an issue that has been raised by the Environment Select Committee Report. It is considered that the new residents will have no significant effect on the levels of deprivation in Bicester. However, there may be other changes to the quality of life of the local residents, for example, there will be an increase in the number of people using the town and its facilities. The additional demand for these facilities may cause annoyance, alternatively they may lead to further services being provided due to the greater demand. Cherwell District Council is proposing to redevelop Bicester town centre to improve existing facilities and the new residents will help to support the proposed improvements.

- 10.84 In drawing up the development proposals, a wide range of issues have been taken into account, including many that relate to the quality of life of existing and future residents. These design principles will help to ensure a high quality of life for new residents and will also ensure that the quality of life of existing residents will not be adversely affected. Some changes will be experienced by existing residents in the short term, however, it is likely that any negative effects will be offset by benefits arising from the services provided. As such, no significant effects have been predicted.

### *Housing*

- 10.85 The development proposals will provide a wide range of dwellings for the residents of Bicester and other people moving into the area. The housing mix will reflect need in the local area and will ensure that a broad cross-section of the population will benefit from the development. As the need for housing has been recognised in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, the area is considered to be of medium sensitivity. The provision of up to 1,585 houses is considered to be a beneficial change of medium magnitude. This is therefore a beneficial long term effect of substantial significance.
- 10.86 Approximately 30% of the proposed housing will be affordable and its provision will result in a medium change. Bicester is of medium sensitivity to the proposals, as there is a need for affordable housing in the district. Therefore the provision of affordable housing is a long term beneficial effect of substantial significance.
- 10.87 The scale of the development proposals may have an influence on house prices in the area, as the supply of housing will be increased. However, there is demand for this housing. The housing will be designed to a high standard, and be complemented by a range of facilities and services. As such, it is unlikely that the development will have a significant effect on house prices in the local area. A greater influence is likely to be national and regional trends, and fluctuations in the economic market. No significant effects have been predicted.

### *Education*

- 10.88 There is currently spare capacity at most of the primary schools in Bicester and it is predicted that there will be capacity in 2011 based on population forecasts and permitted housing developments. The proposal has not been included in these forecasts and due to the scale of the development, additional education facilities are proposed to serve the new residents and to benefit the local population of Bicester. The proposals will lead to the development of a new primary school, land for a second primary school, and a secondary school. These facilities will adequately serve the additional demand raised by the 1,585 dwellings and no adverse significant effects on existing schools in Bicester have been predicted.
- 10.89 The new primary and secondary schools will benefit the wider population. The provision of a primary and secondary school was included in the Environment Select Committee Report as a prerequisite for further growth in Bicester. There is currently capacity at the two secondary schools in the area and Bicester is considered to be of low sensitivity. The proposals will lead to a medium change in the facilities for the town. This long term beneficial effect is therefore of moderate significance.



*The local centre*

- 10.90 The local centre is **located centrally within the development, so that most houses will be** within 400m walking distance of the new development and will include retail units with dwellings above, a family-friendly pub and community centre. The local centre will be linked to the areas of housing and recreation and leisure facilities by a network of footpaths, cycleways and internal roads. This network will ensure that all the facilities on-site are easily accessible from all residential areas.
- 10.91 The local centre will not compete with the neighbourhood centres located north of Middleton Stoney Road. The new facilities will be accessible to the existing residents of Bicester and may improve the quality of life in terms of ease of access and choice. However, the facilities will primarily serve the new development. The magnitude of change is considered to be negligible and no significant effects have been predicted.

*Recreational facilities and open space*

- 10.92 The proposals include **17.29** hectares of formal sports provision, a clubhouse and changing facilities, children's play space and informal open space. The facilities will complement existing provision in the local area and will be available to all local residents.
- 10.93 Of the **17.29** hectares of formal sports provision required, six hectares are needed to accommodate the proposed development and the remaining ten hectares will make up for the shortfall in the town. The provision of local recreational opportunities was included in the Environment Select Committee report as a prerequisite for further growth in Bicester. This provision represents a medium change and, as there is a current shortfall in the town, the sensitivity of the receptor is medium. This provision represents a long term beneficial effect of substantial significance.
- 10.94 The development will potentially increase demand for local recreation and leisure facilities in the area, for example the three local leisure centres. A range of facilities will be incorporated into the development and this will potentially limit the increase in demand on other services in the area. The magnitude of change is considered to be negligible and no significant effects have been predicted.

*Hotel*

- 10.95 The proposals include a new hotel that will add to the range of accommodation in and near to the town. This will be a benefit to potential visitors in terms of level of provision and choice. The magnitude of change is considered to be negligible and no significant effects have been predicted.

*Employment opportunities*

- 10.96 Permanent employment opportunities will be generated from the 2 hectares of employment land to the east and 1000m<sup>2</sup> employment area in centre, new schools, retail units, pub and hotel. Additional employment opportunities will arise from **a nursing home** and health development (GP surgery, medical centre and new community hospital). The new employees may be new residents of the housing development or

locals from the Bicester area. This increase in employment represents a medium change. Bicester has a low unemployment rate and is considered to be of low sensitivity with regard to an increase in employment. This is therefore a long term beneficial effect of moderate significance.

### *Health*

- 10.97 The increase in population associated with the proposed development will create more demand for local health services such as GP surgeries, hospitals etc. The proposal includes provision for a nursing home, and land reserved for a health village. This could include a branch GP surgery, a community hospital, diagnostic clinic and medical centre. The health village option, if taken up, (either directly through the NHS or by the private sector), will help to address the existing shortfall in medical facilities within the North East Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. If the health village option is not fully utilised, and the PCT's plans (set out in paragraph 10.48 to 10.50) are implemented, the population growth of Bicester (including the South West Bicester proposal) would have been incorporated into their service provision thereby ensuring demand is met. Both of these options will ensure that the proposed development will have no adverse effects on healthcare services.
- 10.98 The provision of a nursing home and health village is considered to be a beneficial effect of the proposals. The magnitude of the change will range from small to medium depending on the level of services provided at the health village, to be determined at the detailed stage. The sensitivity of receptor is low and this is a long term effect of slight to moderate significance.
- 10.99 There are restrictions at some of the existing dentists in Bicester on registering NHS patients. The proposed development will increase the number of residents requiring dental services and there is limited capacity available, especially with respect to NHS non-paying adults. The proposed development may lead to a small change and the baseline environment is of medium sensitivity due to the current restrictions. The proposals could potentially lead to a long term adverse effect of moderate significance.
- 10.100 The proposals will increase the local population of Bicester, which will potentially impact on local ambulance and fire services in Cherwell district and Oxfordshire. There will be an increase in revenue for local services associated with the additional council tax from the new development. The development proposals are supported by local and regional policy and this will allow funding issues to be addressed in this context. It is considered that these provisions will adequately address any increase in demand arising from the development. No significant effects are considered likely.

### *Safety*

- 10.101 The safety of new residents has been considered through the design of the site's masterplan. There is a low crime rate in Cherwell district. As a safety precaution, the proposed housing will overlook the areas of open space and the footpaths and cycleways where possible. At the detailed stage, consideration will be given to installing CCTV around the local centre if necessary. These measures will help prevent crime and minimise the potential demand on the services of the local constabulary. No significant effects with regard to safety have been predicted.

*Library services*

10.102 The proposed development will increase the local population of Bicester. This will potentially increase demand for local services such as library facilities, although the increase is unlikely to be significant. There is currently a library in Old Place Yard near St Edburg's church and the Bicester town centre redevelopment proposal includes reference to a new public library for the town, which will enhance local facilities. With respect to the proposal, the magnitude of change is considered to be negligible and no significant effects have been predicted

*Indirect effect on the economy*

10.103 The increase in population associated with the new housing will have an indirect effect on the local economy. It is likely that there will be an increase in spending in Bicester as a result of the new residents. The local centre will provide some retail facilities on-site, but will be deliberately sized so as not to compete with the shops and services already in the town centre. As a result, it is possible that new shops, services and facilities will move into the general area due to an increase in demand. The new development will also increase demand for the town centre redevelopment proposals. The additional employment generated by the schools, hotel, local centre and employment land will lead to associated benefits for the local economy. The magnitude of change is considered to be medium. Bicester is considered to be of low sensitivity to the change. Therefore the potential increase in spending represents a beneficial effect of moderate significance.

*Period of overlap*

10.104 There will be a period when some of the housing will be finished and occupied, but some of the proposed facilities (e.g. the buildings in the local centre) may still be under construction. During this period, there may be some additional pressure on existing services in the town. However, this will only be a short term effect as only a small number of residents will have moved into the housing. This effect is not considered to be significant.

**Mitigation**

10.105 The provision of a mixed use development at the site is considered important for new and existing local residents in terms of providing greater choice and alleviating pressure on existing facilities such as housing and sports provision. This will lead to a number of beneficial effects with respect to the local community and economy as set out in the residual effects section.

10.106 The proposed development will potentially lead to an increase in demand for local dentists. There are currently restrictions with respect to registering new patients and the additional demand from the development could lead to an adverse effect. There is a degree of uncertainty with respect to this issue. It is not known whether there are plans for new dentists in the Bicester area nor how the government will address the shortfall of NHS dentists across the UK. Demand may change over the next few years in line with government policy and with respect to new dental surgeries opening. If there is still capacity issues at the detailed, reserved matters stage, there is scope for a dental surgery

to be included in the local centre as mitigation. This will ensure that no significant residual effects will result.

**Residual effects**

10.107 The community and social residual effects of the proposals are listed in figure 10.14.

Topic	Residual effects	Importance of receptor	Magnitude of change	Duration	Nature	Significance	Level of certainty
<b>Social and community effects</b>	Increase in employment during construction	Low	Medium to large	Short term	Beneficial	Moderate	Reasonable
	Change to the operational area of Whitelands Farm	Low	Small	Long term	Adverse	Slight	Reasonable
	Increase in market housing	Medium	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Substantial	Absolute
	Increase in affordable housing	Medium	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Substantial	Absolute
	Provision of education facilities	Low	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Moderate	Absolute
	Provision of a nursing home and health village	Low	Small to medium	Long term	Beneficial	Slight to moderate	Reasonable
	Increase in formal sports provision	Medium	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Substantial	Absolute
	Increase in employment post-construction	Low	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Moderate	Reasonable
	Increase in spending in the local economy	Low	Medium	Long term	Beneficial	Moderate	Reasonable

Figure 10.14 Social and community residual effects

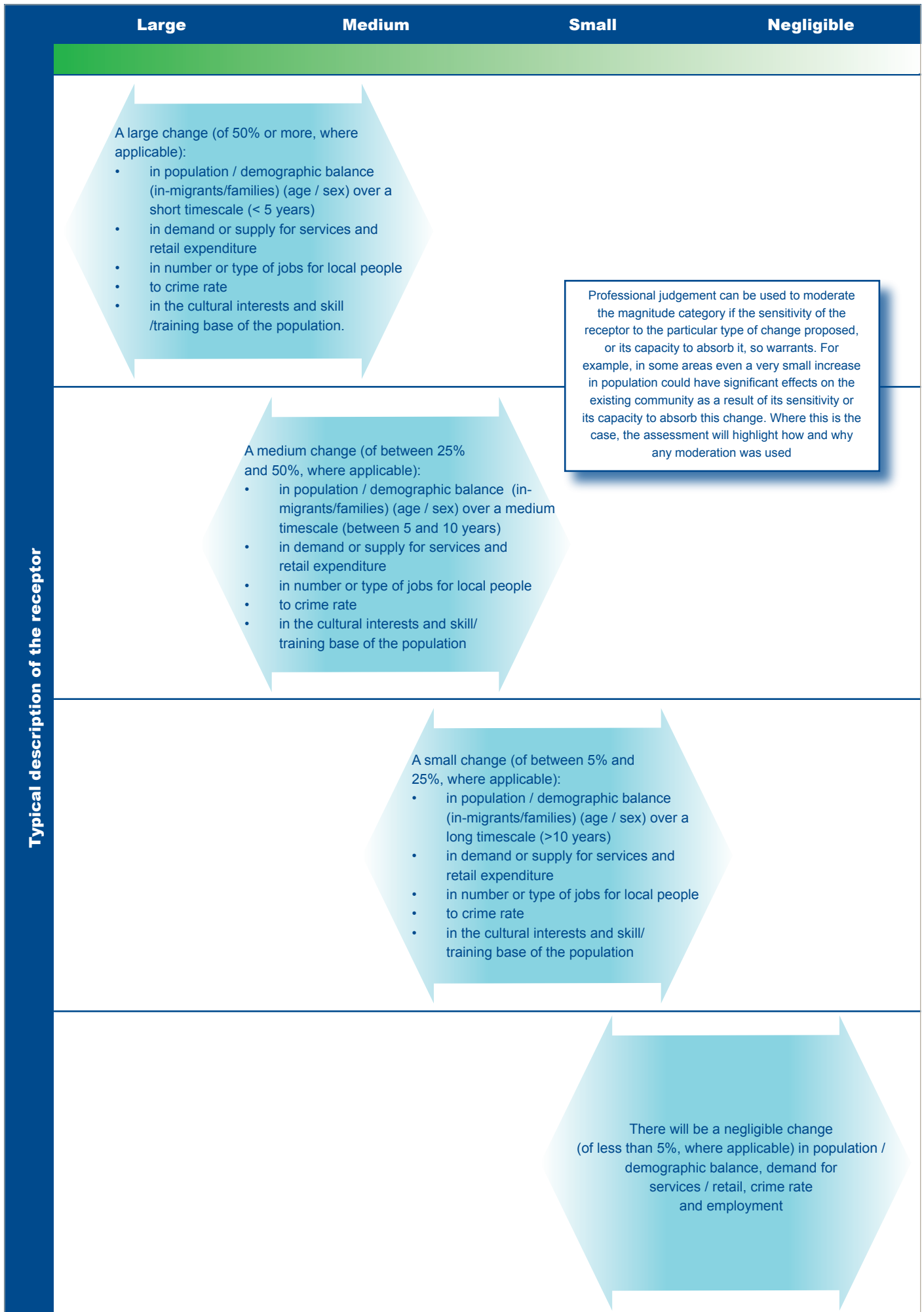
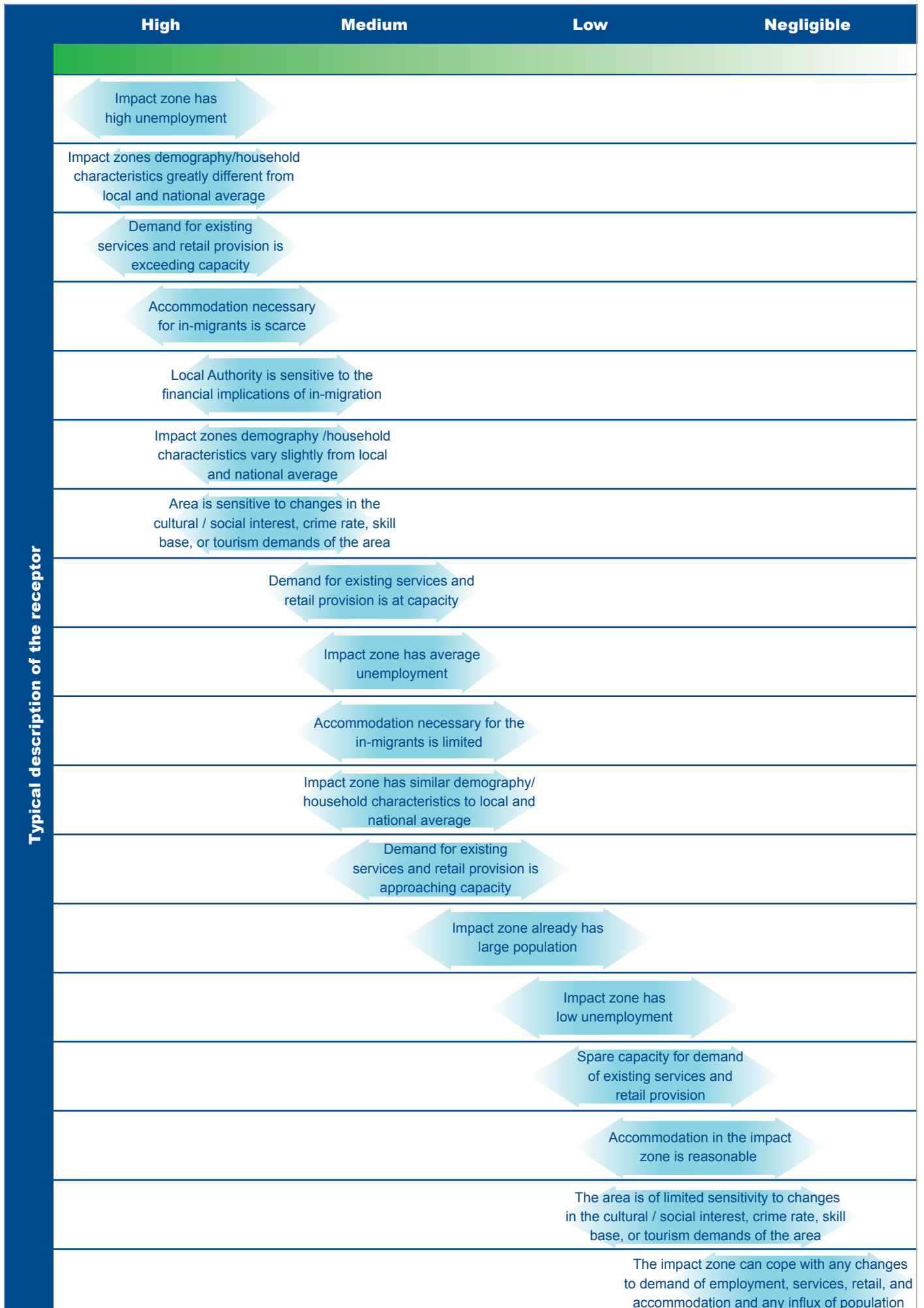


Figure 10.2 Social and community effects: magnitude of change



**Figure 10.3 Social and community effects: sensitivity or importance of receptor**

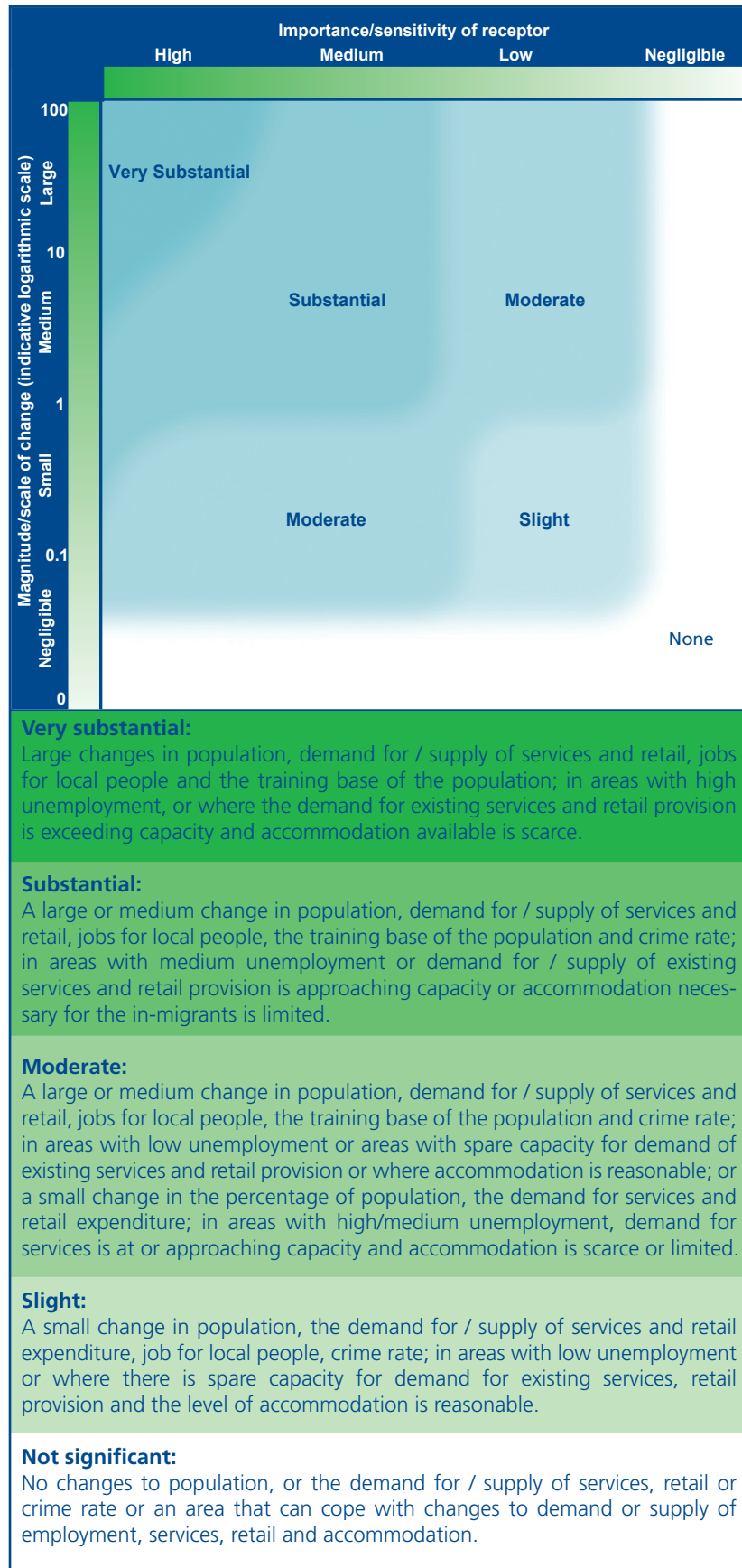


Figure 10.4 Social and community effects significance matrix