

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031

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Part 1
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Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation

C.254 Policy Villages 1 provides a categorisation of villages to guide the consideration of small-scale proposals for residential development within the built-up limits of settlements. Village categorisation helps understand which villages are in principle best placed to sustain different levels of residential development. The Policy ensures that unanticipated development within the built-up limits of a village is of an appropriate scale for that village, is supported by services and facilities and does not unnecessarily exacerbate travel patterns that are overly reliant on the private car and which incrementally have environmental consequences. Policy Villages 1 seeks to manage small scale development proposals (typically but not exclusively for less than 10 dwellings) which come forward within the built-up limits of villages. It also informs Policy Villages 2 which provides a rural allocation for sites of 10 or more dwellings at the most sustainable category A villages and which will guide preparation of both the Local Plan Part 2 and Neighbourhood Plans.



C.255 Villages have been categorised based on the following criteria:

- population size
- the number and range of services and facilities within the village (shops, schools, pubs, etc.)
- whether there are any significant known issues in a village that could be materially assisted by an increase in housing (for example to maintain pupil numbers at a primary school)
- the accessibility (travel time and distance) of the village to an urban area by private car and public transport (including an assessment of any network constraints)
- accessibility of the village in terms of walking and cycling
- local employment opportunities.

C.256 Survey work was previously undertaken to inform village categorisation and this was supplemented by 'the Cherwell Rural Areas Integrated Transport & Land Use Study' (CRAITLUS) which was produced in association with Oxfordshire County Council. The survey work was updated in 2014.

C.257 The principle of categorising villages is well established within the District, with this approach being taken in both the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan in 2004. It is considered that this approach is still appropriate.

C.258 This Local Plan has also considered the issue of village clustering. Some villages, which may not necessarily have many services and facilities of their own, are geographically close to villages which do have services and facilities. People living in the rural areas may use services and facilities in other nearby villages. Those larger villages with services and facilities (the ‘service centre’ villages) in combination with the smaller “satellite” villages can be considered to form a functional “cluster”. Clustering will allow for:

- the support of community facilities (such as shops) in service centres, by locating new development and therefore people/customers close to as well as within service centre villages
- small sites to come forward for development in satellite villages where sites in service centres may be limited
- the reduction in length of car journeys in the rural areas (i.e. between satellite villages and service centres)
- where appropriate, the potential for developer contributions or other mechanism to support the delivery of infrastructure and services to be applied to needs in any village in a cluster.

C.259 It is not proposed that clustering forms part of the development strategy in 'Policy Villages 2: Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas' as the services and facilities in most satellite villages are too limited to sustainably accommodate the development of larger allocated sites. However, it is considered to be a role for satellite (Category B) villages to accommodate minor development which is set out in 'Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation' below.

C.260 The following categorisation will be used to assess residential proposals that come forward within villages.

Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation

Proposals for residential development within the built-up limits of villages (including Kidlington) will be considered having regard to the categorisation below. Only Category A (Service Centres) and Category B (Satellite Villages) will be considered to be suitable for minor development in addition to infilling and conversions.

Category	Villages by Category	Type of Development
A	Service Villages Adderbury, Ambrosden, Arncott, Begbroke, Bletchingdon (*), Bloxham, Bodicote, Chesterton, Cropredy, Deddington, Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Hook Norton, Kidlington, Kirtlington, Launton, Milcombe, Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower, Steeple Aston, Weston-on-the-Green(*), Wroxton, Yarnton	Minor Development Infilling Conversions
B	Satellite Villages Blackthorn, Claydon, Clifton, Great Bourton, Hempton, Lower Heyford,	Minor Development

	Middle Aston, Milton, Mollington, South Newington, and Wardington.	Infilling
		Conversions
C	All other villages	Infilling
		Conversions
(*) Denotes villages partly within and partly outside the Green Belt. In those parts that lie within the Green Belt, only infilling and conversions will be permitted.		

C.261 There is a need for Cherwell’s villages to sustainably contribute towards meeting the housing requirements identified in Policy BSC1. Policy Villages 1 allows for the most sustainable villages to accommodate ‘minor development’ and all villages to accommodate infilling or conversions. The appropriate form of development will vary depending on the character of the village and development in the immediate locality. In all cases, ‘Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment’ will be applied in considering applications.

C.262 In assessing whether proposals constitute acceptable ‘minor development’, regard will be given to the following criteria:

- the size of the village and the level of service provision
- the site’s context within the existing built environment
- whether it is in keeping with the character and form of the village
- its local landscape setting
- careful consideration of the appropriate scale of development, particularly in Category B (satellite) villages.

C.263 In considering the scope of new residential development within the built-up limits of Kidlington, consideration will be given to its role as a larger service centre and its urban character, the functions that existing gaps and spaces perform and the quality of the built environment.

C.264 Infilling refers to the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage. Not all infill gaps will be suitable for development. Many spaces in villages’ streets are important and cannot be filled without detriment to their character. 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 may be as important as the buildings.

C.265 Adderbury, Ambrosden, Arncott, Begbroke, Bletchington, Bloxham, Bodicote, Chesterton, Cropredy, Deddington, Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Hook Norton, Kidlington, Kirtlington, Launton, Milcombe, Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower, Steeple Aston, Weston on the Green, Wroxton and Yarnton are Category A villages. The Category A villages which perform as “service centres” for the “satellite villages” (forming a “village cluster”) shown in the table at paragraph C.260 are Adderbury, Ambrosden, Bloxham, Cropredy, Deddington and Steeple Aston.

C.266 The category B villages are satellite villages associated with a larger service centre. The satellite villages are: Blackthorn, Claydon, Clifton, Great Bourton, Hempton, Lower Heyford, Middle Aston, Milton, Mollington, South Newington, and Wardington. They do not 'score' highly enough in their own right to be included as category A villages but are considered to be appropriate for minor development because of the benefits of access to a service centre within a village cluster. For example, Claydon, Great Bourton, Mollington and Wardington benefit from their relationship with Cropredy. As smaller settlements, the satellite villages have been given a separate 'B' Category as they would not be suitable for larger scale development provided for by Policy Villages 2.

C.267 All other villages are classified as Category C villages.

C.268 Appropriate infilling (and minor development for affordable housing) in these "satellite villages" may help to meet needs not only within the village itself but also the larger village with which it is clustered.

C.269 Policy Villages 1 applies to all villages in the District including those that are, in whole or in part, within the Green Belt. The general extent of, and policy for, the Green Belt is set out in 'Policy ESD 14: Oxford Green Belt' and on the Policies Map (Appendix 5: Maps). The villages of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke (all "category A" villages) are "inset" villages within the Green Belt and therefore will not be covered by Green Belt policy. All other villages within the Green Belt, however, are "washed over" by Green Belt designation and Policy ESD 14 will apply in relation to whether development maintains the Green Belt's openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or harm its visual amenities. Policy ESD14 will apply in the same way for those parts of Weston on the Green and Bletchingdon that lie within the Green Belt.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

A.28 The principles of 'sustainable development' are central to the planning system. The NPPF (paragraphs 11-16) sets out what is meant by the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and recommends that Policies in the Local Plan should follow this presumption.

A.29 The Framework recognises that sustainable development is about change for the better. It is about positive growth, making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly. They are mutually dependent.

A.30 In line with Government policy advice, the Council has adopted a positive approach in seeking to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the District. The policies in the Local Plan provide a clear framework to guide development that creates positive, sustainable growth, therefore following the presumption in favour of sustainable development, enabling proposals that accord with the Plan objectives to be approved without delay. This policy is therefore at the heart of decision making when assessing planning applications.

A.31 There may be instances where the Plan is silent or in future years, policies become out of date. To enable the Council to continue to take a sustainably positive approach to decision making, the applicant will need to assist by submitting evidence to demonstrate how the benefits of the proposal outweigh any adverse impacts.

A.32 The challenge here is to reconcile the need to deliver sufficient jobs and homes, supported by appropriate infrastructure to meet Cherwell's needs, whilst conserving the natural and built environment, minimising the need to travel and addressing climate change.

Policy PSD 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council will always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (or other part of the statutory Development Plan) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- **any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or**
- **specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.**

Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections

B.69 The District has excellent road and rail links. New investment has substantially reduced the travel time from Banbury and Bicester to central London and Birmingham, with regular high quality train services via the Chiltern line. New investment is due in the Plan period to open up frequent rail links between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford reinforcing the role of Bicester. The M40 corridor provides links to the wider national motorway network and rail links help secure a central location for rail based freight movement.



B.70 The Local Plan promotes a series of proposals to support a modal shift away from an over reliance on the car to less energy intensive forms of transport. The strategy proposes more

sustainable locations for housing and employment growth, whilst recognising the importance of the car in a rural District. The strategy seeks to avoid increasing the function of the towns as dormitory centres by strengthening their employment base and transport connection to those sites.

B.71 Over the life of the Local Plan public transport will continue to improve and become more demand responsive. The partners to the plan anticipate that support will be provided for the extension of real time timetable information across the network, across the whole District.

B.72 New development in the District will be required to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of development. This will support delivery of the infrastructure and services needed to facilitate travel by sustainable modes, whilst also enabling improvements to be made to the local and strategic road and rail networks.

B.73 Over the life of the plan there will be investment in the highway network as well as contributions from development to strengthen the road infrastructure of the plan area. This will include the South West Bicester Perimeter Road (Vendee Drive, already completed) and new highway improvements, including a potential relief road on the south east and south of Bicester, works to the A34 south from Bicester and improvements to junctions 9 and 10 of the M40, of which Junction 9 is programmed for early delivery. There will also be improvements to the Windsor Street/Upper Cherwell Street Corridor in Banbury to Hennef Way junctions and to the Bridge Street/Cherwell Street junction. The potential for a link road on the eastern side of the M40, to mitigate the impact of traffic on the approach to Junction 11 along Hennef Way will also be explored with the County Council and Highways England. Cherwell is working with Aylesbury Vale District Council to ensure the impacts of growth at Bicester and Aylesbury on the A41 are fully addressed and appropriate mitigation considered.

B.74 Phase 1 Improvements to Junction 9 of the M40 motorway are complete and Phase 2 is being progressed with the Department for Transport, Highways England and Oxfordshire County Council. The proposals to improve the rail link between Bicester and Oxford are also supported as it will promote more sustainable modes of transport and reduce congestion on the A34 and M40 trunk roads. These improvements will enable additional development capacity to be provided within the two towns.

B.75 The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan provides the strategic framework for transport in the County. It aims to support the local economy and the growth and competitiveness of the county; to make it easier to get around the county and improve access to jobs and services for all by offering real choice; to reduce the impact of transport on the environment and help tackle climate change; and to promote healthy, safe and sustainable travel. Our strategy for managing growth across the District is to locate development in sustainable locations and identify appropriate and deliverable measures to meet the transport needs of the District.

B.76 Integrated Transport and Land Use Studies for Banbury, Bicester and the Cherwell Rural Areas were completed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council and have informed the Local Plan. More recent Movement Strategies have been produced for Bicester and Banbury to support the preparation of Banbury and Bicester Masterplans. The Movement Strategies propose sustainable movement and access strategies.

B.77 Infrastructure will need to be provided which allows for more walking, cycling, the use of public transport and integration between modes. Cycling and walking in the two towns is a means to secure an effective integration between the established areas and new areas of development. Consideration will be given to the implementation of walking and cycling improvements which connect to employment areas, the town centre and key services and that link urban routes with the rights of way network. We will also seek improved public access to the River Cherwell valley in support of our policies to increase tourism and public well-being.

B.78 New rail investment provides the opportunity to both strengthen the role of the two towns and their locations as places to live and work. The new East - West rail project will strengthen the location of Bicester through a vastly improved connection and service links to Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford. Rail investment, including electrification, reinforces the critical role that rail has to play as the centrepiece of wider town centre regeneration in Banbury associated with Canalside redevelopment (Policy Banbury 1); and in Bicester, associated with the town centre and through to Bicester Village from an upgraded Bicester Village Station. Due to the implementation of strategic development proposals in the Plan including East West Rail, the new station at Water Eaton and a growth in employment opportunities at Kidlington and Bicester the Council would expect demand for an increased role for London-Oxford airport. The Council will work with London-Oxford Airport operators, the County Council and the Civil Aviation authority and other stakeholders to consider any proposals.

B.79 We will support expansions to the existing railway stations at Banbury and Bicester and in the villages to provide improved access to the wider rail network. Proposals should accord with other policies in the Plan.

B.80 At Bicester, the Graven Hill site ('Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill') has the major potential to capitalise on the Network Rail Freight Route Utilisation Strategy (2007) for upgrading the national freight network. This will assist removing freight travelling north from Southampton on the A34, past Oxford and onto the M40 and A43, with consequential gains for the environment with reduced emissions.

B.81 This development will confirm Bicester's location as a Rail Freight Interchange (RFI) and a distribution hub within the regional economy, which will help consolidate its economic growth.

B.82 A skilled workforce is available at Bicester, one of the locational factors necessary for the RFI to operate successfully, as stressed in the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy Guide (DfT 2011). Recent studies from Cranfield and GVA Grimley show that logistics employment output is 30-40% greater than manufacturing. In addition, the range of jobs engaged in logistics has widened to include a higher proportion of elementary and process operatives skill levels employed compared with the manufacturing sector, and this proportion has been rising. Cranfield and GVA Grimley also revealed that wage levels are between 10 & 17% higher in the distribution sector than the manufacturing sector. At a time when UK manufacturing has declined, High Performance Engineering and Defence continue to grow, as does logistics. Bicester has a unique opportunity from the presence of all three sectors.

Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections

The Council will support the implementation of the proposals in the Movement Strategies and the Local Transport Plan to deliver key connections, to support modal shift and to support more sustainable locations for employment and housing growth.

We will support key transport proposals including:

- Transport Improvements at Banbury, Bicester and at the Former RAF Upper Heyford in accordance with the County Council's Local Transport Plan and Movement Strategies
- Projects associated with East-West rail including new stations at Bicester Town and Water Eaton
- Rail freight associated development at Graven Hill, Bicester
- Improvements to M40 junctions.

Consultation on options for new link and relief roads at Bicester and Banbury will be undertaken through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) review process. Routes identified following strategic options appraisal work for LTP4 will be confirmed by the County Council and will be incorporated in Local Plan Part 2.

New development in the District will be required to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of development.

All development where reasonable to do so, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Encouragement will be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.

Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution

B.93 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. It requires the Council to plan for at least 15 years of housing delivery, to meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing, and to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites with a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.



B.94 The Council is committed to meeting housing needs and accelerating delivery. Cherwell's housing needs are identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014. The SHMA identifies a need for 1,140 dwellings per annum equating to 22,800 dwellings from 2011 to 2031. The SHMA analysis includes an assessment of housing need based on demographic trends having regard to past shortfalls in housing delivery to 2011, consideration of 'committed economic growth', modelling of the level of housing provision that might be required to meet affordable need in full and wider evidence of market signals. Paragraph 9.58 of the SHMA states "For Cherwell District the evidence indicates a need for 1,142 dwellings per annum (2011-2031) to support the Strategic Economic Plan. This is based on supporting Committed Economic Growth..."

B.95 Cherwell District Council will continue to work under the 'Duty to Co-operate' with all other Oxfordshire Local Authorities on an on-going basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and to meet joint commitments such as the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014). As a first step Cherwell District Council has sought to accommodate the housing need for Cherwell District in full in the Cherwell Local Plan. Cherwell District Council recognises that Oxford may not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary. The urban capacity of Oxford is as yet unconfirmed. Cherwell District Council will continue to work jointly and proactively with the Oxfordshire local authorities and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to assess all reasonable spatial options, including the release of brownfield land, the potential for a new settlement and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt. These issues are not for Cherwell to consider in isolation. These options will need to be undertaken in accordance with national policy, national guidance, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to establish how and where any unmet need might best be accommodated within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. Joint work will need to comprehensively consider how spatial options could be supported by necessary infrastructure to ensure an integrated approach to the delivery of housing, jobs and services. Full public consultation will be central to a 'sound' process and outcome. If this joint work reveals that Cherwell and other Districts need to meet additional need for Oxford, this will trigger a partial review of the Local Plan, to be completed within two years of adoption, and taking the form of the preparation of a separate Development Plan Document for that part of the unmet need to be accommodated in the Cherwell District. The Council will engage in joint working on supporting technical work such as countywide Sustainability Appraisal as required to support the identification of a sustainable approach to meeting agreed, unmet needs.

B.96 The Council is committed to meeting the District's objectively assessed needs and, as described above, to working with partner authorities (including the Oxfordshire Growth Board) to determine how any other unmet needs arising from the SHMA can be sustainably accommodated within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. The housing strategy of this Local Plan seeks to deliver growth in accordance with the NPPF's Core Planning Principles including:

- Providing a positive vision for the future of Cherwell: a strategic growth and investment approach to the towns; an enlarged settlement in the centre of the District, further development at the villages to sustain them.
- Proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development by meeting the SHMA's Committed Economic Growth scenario.

- Seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity by developing new neighbourhoods and achieving regeneration and redevelopment of key sites.
- Taking account of the different roles and character of Cherwell's places by promoting the vitality of Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington and their ability to serve their hinterlands, protecting the Oxford Green Belt and concentrating development in sustainable rural locations to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and to support thriving rural communities.
- Encouraging the effective re-use of existing land and buildings and bring forward sites that contain land of lesser environmental value such as at Graven Hill (Bicester 2), Canalside (Banbury 1), Bolton Road Development Area (Banbury 8), Higham Way (Banbury 19) and at the Former RAF Upper Heyford (Villages 5).
- Promoting strategic, mixed use developments conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance such as those of national importance at Former RAF Upper Heyford, actively encouraging wildlife potential such as at South East Bicester (Bicester 12) and Gavray Drive (Bicester 13), and making the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and supporting community well-being such as at the North West Bicester Eco-Town (Bicester 1).

B.97 In total, the Plan provides for five strategic development sites at Bicester in addition to the on-going construction of an urban extension at South West Bicester (Kingsmere) and a committed site at Talisman Road. It provides for 10 strategic development sites at Banbury, also in addition to an on-going urban extension at Bankside and committed sites at West of Warwick Road and Southam Road. The Plan makes allowances for non-strategic urban and rural sites in sustainable locations and includes realistic and reliable windfall allowances for (previously developed) sites of less than 10 dwellings. Development at villages will be considered against Policy Villages 1: Village Categorisation, Policy Villages 2: Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas and Policy Villages 3: Rural Exception Sites.

B.98 The Plan supports the objectives of the Council's Housing Strategy 2012-2017 to increase the supply of homes and to improve access to housing. It provides for new affordable homes for those in most housing need and seeks to ensure the opportunities for home ownership are widened. The Plan aims to extend choice, to provide high quality homes and development, and to secure a mix of house types, size and tenure that meets housing need. This includes meeting the requirements of an ageing population through the provision of extra care, supported and sheltered housing and providing new forms of access such as community self-build or self-finish housing.

B.99 Overall housing delivery from 2011 to 2031 will be as set out in the policy below. Further delivery will be seen at the North West Bicester site (Policy Bicester 1) beyond 2031 but the Plan does not preclude earlier or faster delivery.

Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution

Cherwell District will deliver a wide choice of high quality homes by providing for 22,840 additional dwellings between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2031. 1,106 completions were recorded between 2011 and 2014 leaving 21,734 homes to be provided between 2014 and 2031. Housing will be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out below:

	Bicester	Banbury	Rest of District	Totals
Completions	365	213	528	1,106
Permissions (10+)	1,934	2,346	1,760	6,040
Allocations	7,726	4,344	2,350	14,420
Windfalls (<10)	104	416	754	1,274
Totals	10,129	7,319	5,392	22,840

Policy BSC2: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density

B.100 Managing the use of previously developed land is important in maintaining the appearance of our towns and villages and to the well-being of our communities. It can also provide opportunities for enhancing biodiversity. This means ensuring that land and buildings earmarked for development are not underused and that we make the most of vacant and derelict land and buildings.

B.101 The Plan seeks to secure the redevelopment of a number of major previously developed sites comprising Banbury Canalside (Policy Banbury 1), Bolton Road and Spiceball in Banbury town centre (Policies Banbury 8 & 9), Higham Way near the railway station in Banbury (Policy Banbury 19), the MOD site at Graven Hill, Bicester (Policy Bicester 2), a Phase 2 to Bicester town centre redevelopment (Policy Bicester 6) and the former RAF Upper Heyford airbase (Policy Villages 5). The plan also includes a windfall allowance for small previously developed sites. Therefore, although the Plan allocates large areas of greenfield land to meet the District’s development needs, the Council will strive to ensure that these important ‘brownfield’ schemes are delivered.

B.102 It is also important to make efficient use of land. In general, new housing should be provided at a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. 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.

B.103 In considering development on smaller sites, the effective use of previously developed land within urban areas, and within those villages identified by the Local Plan as being suitable places for additional residential development (Policy Villages 1), will particularly be encouraged provided that it is not of high environmental value.

Policy BSC 2: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land - Brownfield Land and Housing Density

Housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. The Council will encourage the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations. New housing should be provided on net developable areas at a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are justifiable planning reasons for lower density development.

Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

B.177 The 2009 UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) set out some key projections of climate change across the UK over the 21st Century. Projected changes by the 2080s, based on a 50% probability level, include:

- increases in summer mean temperatures, particularly in southern England where increases of 3.9 degrees are projected
- decreases in summer precipitation, again particularly in southern England where decreases of 23% are projected
- increases in winter precipitation in southern England of 22%.



B.178 Changes as small as a 2°C global temperature rise will have serious impacts:

- rising sea levels
- extreme events such as droughts and heavy rainfall, leading to disruption to natural and man-made habitats
- communities across the UK may struggle to cope with the effects of warmer summers and wetter winters.

B.179 A Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) has been undertaken to better understand the impact of extreme weather in Cherwell and on the Council itself. The LCLIP reviewed extreme weather events experienced over a five year period (2003 – 2008), finding that within Cherwell flooding was by far the most significant event, with significant flooding occurring 6 times in a 5 year period, 2 of the events being serious and widespread (2003 and 2007). Heatwaves were found to have been infrequent in that 5 years period, but if they were to recur on the scale of 2003 this would have significant impacts on health, biodiversity and infrastructure (including damage to buildings by tree and drought related subsidence, roads, drainage systems and business closures).

B.180 There is increasing recognition that reducing carbon emissions is important in reducing and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Climate Change Act 2008 has an objective of an 80% reduction (from a 1990 baseline) in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. This can be achieved by, for example, reducing dependence on private cars and locating new development in sustainable, accessible, locations, increasing energy efficiency, or by increasing the use of renewable or low

carbon energy sources. It is particularly important to reduce carbon emissions from dwellings and business through increasing energy efficiency. Similarly it is important to ensure that we adapt to the inevitable changes to future climate. This applies to the built development, its location, design, layout and proposed land uses, as well as the natural environment, by seeking to reduce exacerbated habitat fragmentation by increasing landscape permeability and connectivity (see 'Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment', 'Policy ESD15 Built and Historic Environment' and 'Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure').

B.181 Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change are an important priority for the District and have been recognised in the following:

- the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy 'Our District Our Future'
- the Council's Low Carbon Environmental Strategy
- the Council's signing of the Nottingham Declaration
- Eco Bicester: seeking to deliver sustainable building standards across the town.

B.182 Consequently this Local Plan and its strategic objectives are focused on delivering sustainable development. Specifically, Strategic Objective 10 (see Section Strategy for Development in Cherwell) relates to climate change mitigation and adaptation (to reduce the intensity of climate change and to adapt to its effects) and this will be achieved through policies ESD 1 - 7.

B.183 The most sustainable locations for growth in the District are considered to be Banbury, Bicester and the larger villages as identified in Policies Villages 1 and Villages 2 as these settlements have a range of services and facilities, reducing the need to travel by car. Well designed and connected schemes which promote pedestrian movement can also assist in meeting this objective. (see 'Policy ESD 15 The Character of the Built and Historic Environment'). The Council will develop a sustainability checklist to aid the assessment of the sustainability of development proposals, which will be included in the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell SPD.

Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

Measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development within the District on climate change. At a strategic level, this will include:

- **Distributing growth to the most sustainable locations as defined in this Local Plan**
- **Delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on private cars**
- **Designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently, including water (see Policy ESD 3 Sustainable Construction)**
- **Promoting the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy where appropriate (see Policies ESD 4 Decentralised Energy Systems and ESD 5 Renewable Energy).**

The incorporation of suitable adaptation measures in new development to ensure that development is more resilient to climate change impacts will include consideration of the following:

- Taking into account the known physical and environmental constraints when identifying locations for development
- Demonstration of design approaches that are resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling
- Minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods, and
- Reducing the effects of development on the microclimate (through the provision of green infrastructure including open space and water, planting, and green roofs).

Adaptation through design approaches will be considered in more locally specific detail in the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction

B.189 Policy ESD 3 sets out the Council's approach to implementing the first step of the energy hierarchy in Policy ESD 2 specifically, its encouragement for the use of sustainable design and construction measures.



B.190 The delivery of sustainable development is a fundamental theme of the Local Plan and the Council places a high priority on the achievement of sustainable construction.

B.191 The expectations in Policy ESD 3 will be applied flexibly. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate (with robust evidence) why the requirements cannot be met, for example where the application of the policy would conflict with other policy objectives, or where it can be satisfactorily shown that implementing the standards would not be feasible or financially viable, undermining delivery of the development. Negotiations will take place to ensure that sustainable construction is achieved as far as possible and we encourage discussion with the Council in the early stages of any development proposal. This policy will be subject to monitoring and review to ensure the standards and guidance remain appropriate and relevant. Any new national standards will need to be reflected in revisions to the local policy.

B.192 Sustainable design and construction issues will be considered and illustrated in more local detail in the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell SPD.

Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction

All new residential development will be expected to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development through a combination of fabric energy efficiency, carbon compliance and allowable solutions in line with Government policy.

Cherwell District is in an area of water stress and as such the Council will seek a higher level of water efficiency than required in the Building Regulations, with developments achieving a limit of 110 litres/person/day.

All new non-residential development will be expected to meet at least BREEAM 'Very Good' with immediate effect, subject to review over the plan period to ensure the target remains relevant. The demonstration of the achievement of this standard should be set out in the Energy Statement.

The strategic site allocations identified in this Local Plan are expected to provide contributions to carbon emissions reductions and to wider sustainability.

All development proposals will be encouraged to reflect high quality design and high environmental standards, demonstrating sustainable construction methods including but not limited to:

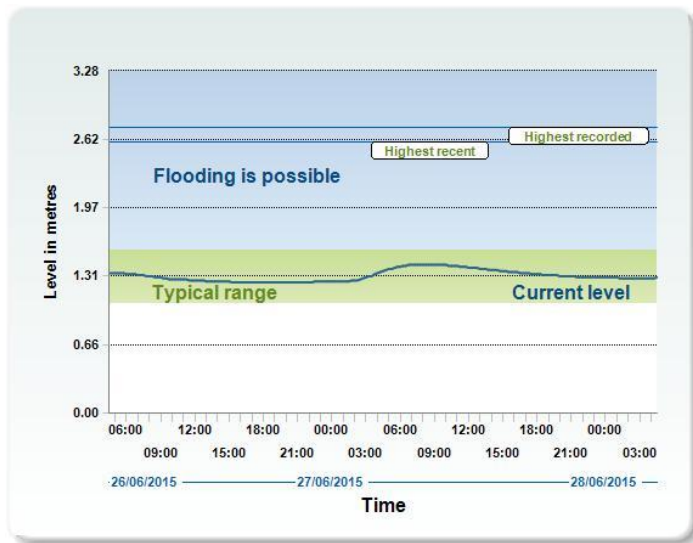
- **Minimising both energy demands and energy loss**
- **Maximising passive solar lighting and natural ventilation**
- **Maximising resource efficiency**
- **Incorporating the use of recycled and energy efficient materials**
- **Incorporating the use of locally sourced building materials**
- **Reducing waste and pollution and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste**
- **Making use of sustainable drainage methods**
- **Reducing the impact on the external environment and maximising opportunities for cooling and shading (by the provision of open space and water, planting, and green roofs, for example); and**
- **Making use of the embodied energy within buildings wherever possible and re-using materials where proposals involve demolition or redevelopment.**

Should the promoters of development consider that individual proposals would be unviable with the above requirements, 'open-book' financial analysis of proposed developments will be expected so that an independent economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an economic viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter.

Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

B.203 The risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses across the District is high, with large extensive floodplains a feature of our rural landscape. The District falls within three major river catchments. The River Cherwell forms part of the larger Thames catchment, which comprises about 80% of the District's total area covering much of the urban and rural development in the District. During flood conditions the River Cherwell also largely co-joins with the adjacent Oxford Canal. The Great Ouse catchment covers approximately 15% of the District's total area and the Warwickshire Avon catchment approximately 5%. Groundwater and sewer flooding have also occurred at various locations in the District. Flooding events are detailed in the Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk

Assessment (SFRA) and further information is also provided in the Council's Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) (See Appendix 3: Evidence Base).



B.204 Properties at risk of flooding are dispersed across the District but there are clusters of properties at risk in Banbury and Kidlington (more than 100 properties in total). The SFRA also highlights that some rural settlements are potentially affected by fluvial flooding.

B.205 Construction work commenced in February 2011 on a Flood Alleviation Scheme for Banbury to protect the town centre and surrounding businesses from flooding and the scheme is now complete. The project was funded by the Environment Agency supported by Cherwell District Council and contributions from local landowners.

B.206 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 assigns local authorities with a responsibility for managing flood risk. In Cherwell District, Oxfordshire County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), with the District Council having an important supporting role to play as a Risk Management Authority. The probability of flooding can be reduced through the management of land, river systems and flood defences, and the impact reduced through influencing the type of development located in flood risk areas. The following policy will be used to manage and reduce flood risk in the District.

Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the District through using a sequential approach to development; locating vulnerable developments in areas at lower risk of flooding. Development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and where necessary the exceptions test as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. 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, 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 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 or 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 watercourses.**

Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood risk and demonstrate that:

- **There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year 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 remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.

B.207 The above policy reflects government planning guidance on sustainable flood risk management set out in the NPPF and NPPG. The suitability of development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and where necessary the exceptions test as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Defended areas should be sequentially tested as though the defences are not there. Applications will also be assessed against the Environment Agency's standing advice on flood risk.

B.208 The Council's Level 1 SFRA (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base) provides the framework for applying the sequential and exception 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 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 - see 'Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas').

B.209 Level 2 SFRA's have also been carried out to assess the level of flood risk for strategic site allocations in more detail (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base). The assessments provide site specific guidance for flood risk assessments, policy recommendations and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance. The findings of the assessments will be taken into account in the final determination of planning applications at the strategic sites.

B.210 Site specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) will be required in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG. The FRA should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account. Fluvial flood events up to and including the 1 in 100 year event with an allowance for climate change should be considered. For major developments in Flood Zone 1, the FRA should identify opportunities to reduce the probability and consequences of flooding. The FRA should also include investigation of the use of sustainable drainage systems (see 'Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems' (SuDS)).

B.211 Briefly, there are 3 levels of FRA, as follows:

- Level 1 - Screening: identify if a development site has flood risk issues
- Level 2 - Scoping: qualitative assessment to determine how flood sources affect the site and options available for mitigation
- Level 3 - Details: where the quality and/or quantity of information is insufficient to enable a robust assessment of the flood risks, further investigation will be required potentially involving hydraulic modelling.

B.212 An FRA does not need to go through every stage (i.e. if it is known that detailed modelling will be required, just a Level 3 FRA can be carried out). The Council's SFRA makes the following recommendations for FRAs undertaken in particular locations across the District, as follows:

Location	Site Specific FRA Requirement
Wherever applicable	Where a site is in close proximity of the Oxford Canal, the Level 3 FRA should include breach analysis.
Wherever applicable	Flood defended areas will require a FRA to include assessment of risk from catastrophic failure of defences.
Banbury	A detailed level 3 FRA is required for development within the River Cherwell Floodplain to include flood compensation. Groundwater risk to be highlighted at Crouch Hill.
North East Bicester	A level 2 FRA using existing data can be applied.
South East Bicester	A level 3 FRA including hydraulic modelling will be required in the vicinities of these watercourses.
Kidlington	Where EA modelled data is available a level 2 FRA can be completed using existing modelled flood levels. Where no data is available a Level 3 FRA including hydraulic

	<p>modelling may be required for sites in close proximity to the Rowell Brook or the River Cherwell.</p> <p>A level 2 FRA to include detailed assessment of groundwater flood risk should be included at all sites.</p>
Rural Areas	There are village specific recommendations contained in the SFRA

B.213 Additional recommendations are included in the Level 2 SFRA for the proposed strategic site allocations.

B.214 We will work actively with the Environment Agency, the Local Lead Flood Authority, other operating authorities and stakeholders to ensure that best use is made of their expertise and so that spatial planning supports existing flood risk management policies and plans, River Basin Management Plans and emergency planning.

Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

B.215 Policy ESD 7 sets out the Council's approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). 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 in the South East, which include more intense rainfall events. Policy ESD 7 is supported by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which presumes that SuDS will be used for all new developments and redevelopments in order to prevent surface water run-off from increasing flood risk, and sets out that national standards be published to address SuDS design, construction, operation and maintenance issues at a national level.

B.216 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. SuDS are considered to be suitable for use in association with developments across the District. 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.

B.217 In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, 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.

B.218 All relevant organisations should meet at an early stage to agree on the most appropriate drainage system for the particular development. These organisations may include the Local Authority, the Sewage Undertaker, Oxfordshire County Council as the LLFA and Highways Authority,

and the Environment Agency. Highways SuDS will be adopted by Oxfordshire County Council but must be located on the most appropriate land, requiring consideration of the need to provide access for maintenance purposes, and topographical factors. Non-highway SuDS draining two properties or more will be adopted by the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) after Schedule 3 of the 2010 Act comes into force.

B.219 Advice on SuDS and their various techniques is provided in the Council's Level 1 SFRA (August 2008). All areas of the District are suitable for SuDS in one form or another but the SFRA contains maps of a range of geological and ground condition data which can be used to identify the general permeability of the underlying ground conditions (bedrock, superficial deposits and soil) and the vulnerability of the groundwater resources (aquifers), to determine which SuDS system might be suitable. However the SFRA's mapping of SuDS opportunity does not provide a detailed and definitive investigation at site specific level, and so further assessment may be required to further investigate SuDS opportunities on individual sites. The Level 2 SFRAs contain additional guidance relating to the use of SuDS on the proposed strategic site allocations.

Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off.

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 must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS will require the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as LLFA and SuDS Approval Body, and proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features.

Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

B.233 Development proposals likely to affect a site of international ecological importance will need to be accompanied by a thorough Habitats Regulations Assessment of the potential effects of the development on that site of international importance, to enable the Council to determine whether the development would result in significant adverse effects on the integrity of the site. Any development that is unable to demonstrate that it would not have a significant adverse effect upon the integrity of a European site, having taken account of proposed mitigation, will be refused. This is in accordance with the precautionary principle enshrined in the Habitats Directive. Where there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest and the Council is unable to conclude no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC, the authority will notify the Secretary of State to allow the application to be called in for determination. In these situations compensatory measures to protect the site must be put in place.



B.234 Sites of national importance comprise Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves. Cherwell District has 18 SSSIs but does not contain any National Nature Reserves.

B.235 Sites of regional/local importance comprise Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), non-statutory nature reserves and other sites of importance for nature conservation including Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs- formerly known as County Wildlife Sites), 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, 3 LNRs, 83 Local Wildlife sites (completely or partly within the District), 16 proposed LWSs and 8 proposed LWS extensions (as of August 2013). The sites are indicated on the biodiversity map at Appendix 5: Maps, but it must be acknowledged that the number and location of sites changes over time as surveys and re-surveys take place. A living list of Local Wildlife Sites and associated maps are available at <http://www.tverc.org>. Sites of regional/local importance also include the habitats of those species of principal importance for biodiversity (as identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act).

B.236 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. Also landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, trees, rivers and 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. Some development can remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on ecology. 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 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 will be protected from development and where possible strengthened by it.

B.237 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 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.

B.238 There are a number of features which can be incorporated into developments to encourage biodiversity including green roofs and walls, SUDs, using native and locally characteristic species in landscaping schemes, using landscaping to link up existing areas supporting biodiversity and including features such as bird and bat boxes. The Council is compiling further guidance on the incorporation of features to encourage biodiversity which will form part of the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell SPD.

B.239 Consideration will be given to the introduction of a tariff based approach to securing biodiversity improvement through development. Further information on the use of planning obligations to secure contributions from development towards biodiversity will be contained in the final Developer Contributions SPD.

Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:

- **In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources**
- **The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District**
- **The reuse of soils will be sought**
- **If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted.**
- **Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated**
- **Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance 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 the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity**
- **Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity**

- Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity
- Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value
- Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution
- Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably
- A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long term suitable management.

Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

B.261 Conservation of the historic environment and securing high quality urban design are very important in protecting and enhancing the character of the District and ensuring that Cherwell is an attractive place to live and work. Cherwell District is composed of four landscape character areas, which each display distinct, settlement patterns, building materials and styles of vernacular architecture to create a rural environment that is strongly locally distinctive. Each of the three urban areas also displays its own unique character.



B.262 The following features contribute to the distinctive character, appearance and high quality environment of Cherwell District:

- over 2,200 listed buildings and many others of local architectural and historical interest.
- currently 60 conservation areas

- 36 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 5 registered Historic Parks and Gardens and a Historic Battlefield, and 6 Historic Parks and Gardens considered as non-designated heritage assets
- three urban centres: Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington – with quite distinct characters, retaining their medieval street patterns
- the Oxford Green Belt (see 'Policy ESD 14: Oxford Green Belt')
- the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the north-west of the District (see 'Policy ESD 12: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)')
- the District's waterways, in particular the River Cherwell and the Oxford Canal
- sites of ecological importance including 18 Special Areas for Conservation (see 'Policy ESD 9: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC') and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

B.263 We will protect our historic environment; it is a major resource contributing to the local distinctiveness of the District. Conservation Areas and other heritage assets (including both designated and undesignated assets) form part of the historic fabric of the District and contribute to the character of the area and will be maintained. We will protect our Conservation Areas and other heritage assets from harmful growth as these help to define how the area looks and feels, both in the towns and villages. The Council has a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and review. We will maintain a local register of Buildings at Risk and use Article 4 Directions to maintain the character of our historic villages and towns. A Register of non-designated heritage assets is also being compiled. Further information on these measures is contained in the Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell.

B.264 The Council will protect and enhance the special value of these features individually and the wider environment that they create. The strategic policy on landscape protection can be found under 'Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement'. It is also important, however, to provide a framework for considering the quality of built development and to ensure that we achieve locally distinctive design which reflects and respects the urban or rural landscape and built context within which it sits.

B.265 We will ensure that the new developments, area renewal and town centre expansions are safe places to live, work and visit through design standards by using tools such as 'secured by design', also through requiring CCTV where appropriate.

B.266 Design standards for new development whether housing or commercial development are equally important. High design standards are critical in the town and village centres where Conservation Areas exist, but more generally in ensuring development is appropriate and secures a strong sense of place and clear sense of arrival at points of entry into the towns and villages. Particular sensitivity is required where development abuts or takes place within designated Conservation Areas.

B.267 It is also important to take into account heritage assets located outside of the District which may be affected by development inside the District such as Blenheim Palace, a World Heritage Site.

Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.

New development proposals should:

- Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions
- Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged
- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- 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
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features
- 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 should be followed

- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation
- Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design, 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 see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). 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
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.

The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2.

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 expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website.

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, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction 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.

B.268 The appearance of new development and its relationship with its surrounding built and natural environment has a significant effect on the character and appearance of an area. Securing new development that can positively contribute to the character of its local environment is therefore of key importance. This policy identifies a number of key issues that need to be addressed in the design of new development.

B.269 These issues are as relevant in urban areas as in rural locations and also in recent development as in historic areas. The policy seeks to protect, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets'. The NPPF defines these as 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. Heritage assets with archaeological interest will require the submission of relevant assessment. In sensitive locations severe constraints may direct the design approach, but in many cases the Council will not wish to prescribe a specific design solution. Designs need to be sensitive and complimentary to their surroundings but this does not require merely replicating existing styles and imitating architectural details; modern interpretation is possible if informed by a full contextual analysis and proposals promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

B.270 Our urban areas will see significant growth during the period of the Local Plan, and will need to adapt and respond to these pressures both within their existing boundaries and beyond, while retaining their unique character and heritage. A balance will need to be struck between making best use of land and respecting established urban character and creating new and vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods. Applicants should also have regard to national guidance and best practice advice on design, including on public space, street design, trees in the street scene, public buildings, housing, work environments inclusive design, tall buildings and eco-towns, e.g. guidance published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment CABI (now merged with the Design Council). English Heritage has also published much guidance on integration of development into the historic environment. Applicants will also need to have regard to policies from Oxfordshire County Council, such as the Parking Policy.

B.271 Our rural areas will need to accommodate new development which reinforces the locally distinctive character by being sensitive in its location, scale, materials and design, reflecting the traditional pattern of development within the settlement, balancing making best use of land with respect for the established character and respecting open features that make a positive contribution. A large proportion of rural settlements fall within conservation areas, where the quality and special interest of the area is protected. Council publications, such as its Countryside Design Summary, which analyses settlement types, and Appraisals of the District's Conservation Areas, which analyse the special qualities and identify those features that make a positive contribution to the character of the place, will assist in understanding a settlement. National guidance includes Natural England's guidance on undertaking Village Design Statements.