

- create new opportunities for additional retail, leisure and cultural activities, and environmental improvements, in an extended Village Centre
- secure the growth potential from the presence of London-Oxford Airport.

**B.36** Employment growth in the rural areas will be limited and will involve:

- farm diversification schemes
- small scale, appropriate employment sites
- sustainable growth in tourism including recreation based tourism
- improvement of existing employment sites and reuse of existing buildings and brownfield sites (reflecting their historic or cultural significance where appropriate)
- support for working from home.

**B.37** More detail is provided in Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'.

## Policy SLE 1: Employment Development

**B.38** The Council will, as a general principle, continue to protect existing employment land and buildings for employment (B class) uses. The Council will support existing businesses and will seek to ensure their operational activity is not compromised wherever possible. Inevitably, over the period of the Local Plan, businesses will relocate or close, leaving land and premises available for re-use or re-development.



**B.39** Where existing employment sites have good transport links for commercial vehicles and the proposed use of these sites accords with the Local Plan we will encourage new development here to ensure the efficient use of land on these sites and in our towns, avoiding the need to use valuable countryside. This will not always meet the needs of some companies so new sites will be required.

**B.40** We will create new employment sites for commerce and engineering/manufacturing to meet the needs of existing and new companies. We will also actively promote those sites for inward investment.

**B.41** To promote growth we have allocated an increase in the amount of employment land in the District. This is focused more at Bicester in order to match the growth in housing and make the town more sustainable.

**B.42** A flexible approach to employment development is set out in this Plan with a number of our strategic sites allocated for a mix of uses and many allowing for different types of employment. Employment development will be supported in a number of locations as long as it meets certain policy criteria. In all cases very careful consideration should be given to locating employment and housing in close proximity and unacceptable adverse effects on the

amenity of residential properties will not be permitted. Live/work units will be encouraged in locations such as Banbury Canalside.

**B.43** This Local Plan identifies strategic sites for employment use in Banbury and Bicester (see 'Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester', 'Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill', 'Policy Bicester 4: Bicester Business Park', 'Policy Bicester 10: Bicester Gateway', 'Policy Bicester 11: Employment Land at North East Bicester', 'Policy Bicester 12: South East Bicester', 'Policy Banbury 6: Employment Land West of the M40' and 'Policy Banbury 15: Employment Land North East of Junction 11'). A number of these sites have recent planning permissions and are under construction. The former RAF Upper Heyford site will also provide for employment uses. The sites identified in the Employment Trajectory in the Local Plan cover 200 hectares (gross) and result in approximately 20,500 jobs generated on B Use class land. There may be a slight change in jobs on sites due to site constraints such as flood risk and differing B use class mixes, which will be determined at the master planning stage. Further jobs will be generated generally through other means such retail and home working. Policies seek different types of employment units to ensure a range of employment uses are provided. Land is allocated taking account of economic evidence base, matching growth in housing and to cater for company demand, particularly for logistics. The Council's assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and take full account of relevant market and economic signals.

**B.44** To ensure employment is located in sustainable locations, to avoid problems such as traffic on rural roads and commuting, employment development in the rural areas will be limited. This accords with the

Council's strategy for focusing new housing development at Banbury and Bicester, ensuring housing and employment are located in the same place.

**B.45** The new strategic employment sites set out in Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places' have been allocated because they:

- are, or will be accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply
- have good access, or can be made to have good access, by public transport
- have good access and transport links for commercial vehicles
- have the least effect on the natural environment.

**B.46** The new allocated employment sites in Banbury and Bicester along with existing employment sites are considered to ensure a sufficient employment land supply.

**B.47** The Local Plan Part 2 will consider where further, smaller, allocations need to be made in the urban and rural areas to support the delivery of a flexible supply of employment land. Where new small sites are proposed we will consider the most appropriate use class for the location. Opportunities for developing small 'hubs' of activity to meet local needs will be explored. New employment uses will be supported where appropriate in residential areas, where they are proposed on existing employment sites. Employment development will be focused at the more sustainable villages. These villages are also considered to be the most appropriate for any further employment development.

**B.48 Policy SLE 1 applies to B use class employment development.** The provision or the loss of jobs in general terms will be a material consideration for determining proposals for any use classes. The policy applies to sites which have planning permission for employment uses. Where

any allocated or committed employment sites in the District remain undeveloped in the long term and there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose other uses will be considered. Policy SLE 2 will apply for proposals for main town centre uses.

### **Policy SLE 1: Employment Development**

**Employment development on new sites allocated in this Plan will be the type of employment development specified within each site policy in Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'. Other types of employment development (B Use class) will be considered in conjunction with the use(s) set out if it makes the site viable.**

**In cases where planning permission is required existing employment sites should be retained for employment use unless the following criteria are met:**

- **the applicant can demonstrate that an employment use should not be retained, including showing the site has been marketed and has been vacant in the long term.**
- **the applicant can demonstrate that there are valid reasons why the use of the site for the existing or another employment use is not economically viable.**
- **the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal would not have the effect of limiting the amount of land available for employment.**

**Regard will be had to whether the location and nature of the present employment activity has an unacceptable adverse impact upon adjacent residential uses.**

**Regard will be had to whether the applicant can demonstrate that there are other planning objectives that would outweigh the value of retaining the site in an employment use.**

**Employment development will be focused on existing employment sites. On existing operational or vacant employment sites at Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and in the rural areas employment development, including intensification, will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan and other material considerations. New dwellings will not be permitted within employment sites except where this is in accordance with specific site proposals set out in this Local Plan.**

**Employment proposals at Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington will be supported if they meet the following criteria:**

- **Are within the built up limits of the settlement unless on an allocated site**
- **They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated**
- **Make efficient use of previously-developed land wherever possible**
- **Make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises increasing the intensity of use on sites**
- **Have good access, or can be made to have good access, by public transport and other sustainable modes**
- **Meet high design standards, using sustainable construction, are of an appropriate scale and respect the character of its surroundings**
- **Do not have an adverse effect on surrounding land uses, residents and the historic and natural environment.**

**Unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, employment development in the rural areas should be located within or on the edge of those villages in Category A (see Policy Villages I).**

**New employment proposals within rural areas on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria:**

- **They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.**
- **Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site.**
- **They will be designed to very high standards using sustainable construction, and be of an appropriate scale and respect the character of villages and the surroundings.**
- **They will be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding environment.**
- **The proposal and any associated employment activities can be carried out without undue detriment to residential amenity, the highway network, village character and its setting, the appearance and character of the landscape and the environment generally including on any designated buildings or features (or on any non-designated buildings or features of local importance).**
- **The proposal will not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic and will wherever possible contribute to the general aim of reducing the need to travel by private car.**
- **There are no suitable available plots or premises within existing nearby employment sites in the rural areas.**

**The Local Plan has an urban focus. With the potential for increased travel by private car by workers and other environmental impacts, justification for employment development on new sites in the rural areas will need to be provided. This should include an applicant demonstrating a need for and benefits of employment in the particular location proposed and explaining why the proposed development should not be located at the towns, close to the proposed labour supply.**

**Monitoring and review will be undertaken regularly.**

**Extensions to existing employment sites will be considered in the Local Plan Part 2.**

## **Policy SLE 2: Securing Dynamic Town Centres**

**B.49** We are looking to ensure that Bicester and Banbury have a strengthened role in achieving economic growth, as a destination for visitors, and in serving their rural hinterlands.



**B.50** We are determined to secure dynamic town centres as the focus for commercial, retail and cultural activity at the heart of our District. The renewal and strengthening of the town centres is critical if the towns are to expand, with the creation of new retail, commercial and other employment generation (such as leisure) that reduces the

overall level of out-commuting and maintains their role as the focal points of the District economy and their historic role as the heart of the community.

**B.51** We envisage town centres that are:

- easy and pleasant to walk around
- attractive for shopping and going out
- easy to do business in
- have housing for all ages
- served by efficient public transport.

**B.52** The increasing rationalisation of public assets (libraries, civic centres & public access points), is an opportunity to ensure multiple use of public sector buildings and so strengthen their role as a draw to secure additional footfall into the town centres.

**B.53** In 2010 the Council commissioned an update to its 2006 PPS6 Retail Study. In 2012 a further study was commissioned which examines the capacity for comparison and convenience retail floorspace in the District. The study identified a need for comparison