

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.