

## 5. Socio-Economics

### 5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. This chapter determines the baseline socio-economic conditions and considers the likely socio-economic and health effects of the Proposed Development. The considerations of this chapter are mostly related to the effects of the Proposed Development on job creation and economic output in the local area.
- 5.1.2. The assessment presented in this chapter is made by studying the potential effects arising from the alteration in mix and quantum of the land allocated for 'Social/ Community' and 'Other Uses' in the Proposed Development and assessing the impact this could have on the economy. It identifies the socio-economic baseline in relation to key variables. It then examines the potential effects that could occur, both direct and indirect, resulting from the Proposed Development during operation (permanent effects).
- 5.1.3. The chapter has been authored by Richard Cook, Senior Director, and Angus Hannah, Consultant, both in Pegasus' Economics team. Richard has over 20 years' experience of working in socio-economic assessment and EIA for a schemes in a range of sectors including residential, commercial, mixed use, and renewable energy and energy infrastructure across the country. Angus has over 2 years' experience in socio-economic assessment and HIA for built environment schemes.

### 5.2. Assessment Approach

#### Methodology

- 5.2.1. There is no specific guidance available which establishes a methodology for undertaking socio-economic effects of a Proposed Development in the context of an EIA. The approach adopted for this assessment is based on professional experience, best practice, and taking into account the policy requirements/tests set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

#### Study Area

- 5.2.2. The spatial scales that are considered relevant and make up the study area for this assessment are presented in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 shows the site location and the wards that make up the Bicester Wider Area<sup>1</sup>. This geography is referred to in the socio-economic ES chapter prepared for the original planning application.

**Table 5.1: Study area for the socio-economic assessment**

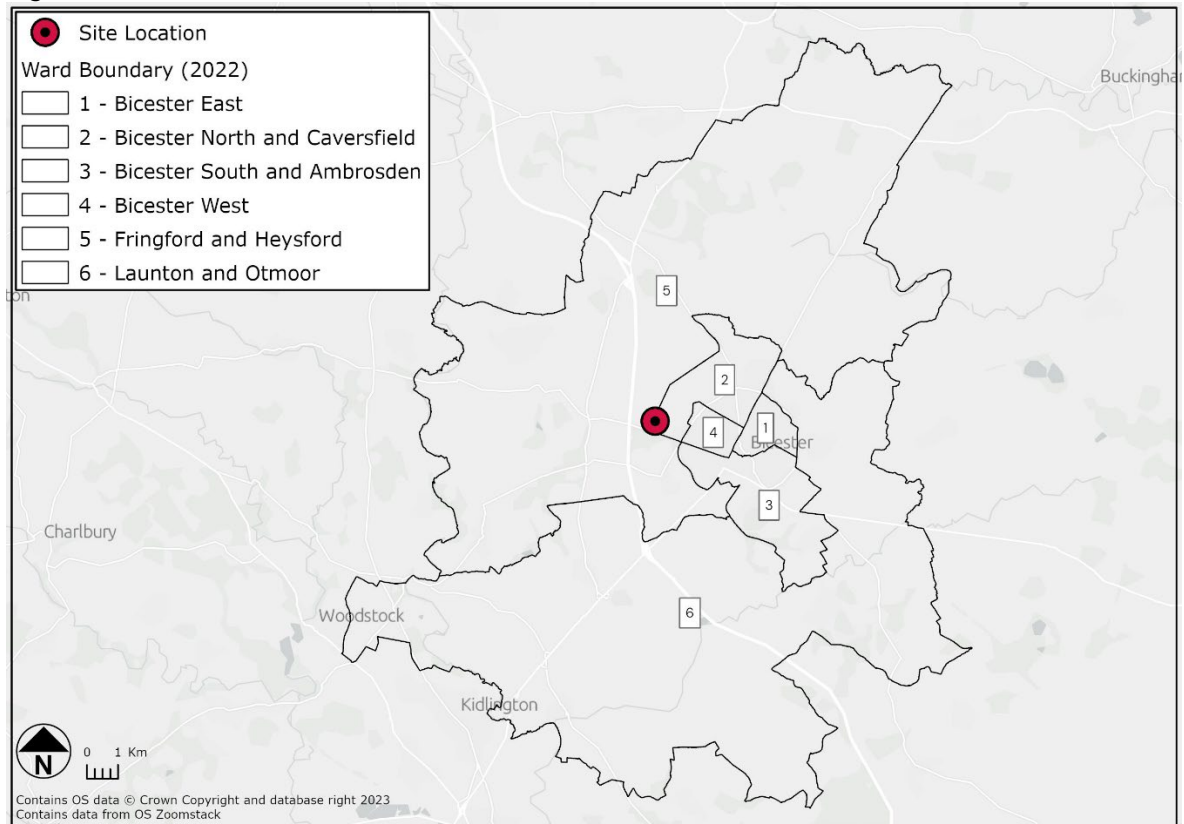
Spatial scale	Title
Lower Super Output Area	Cherwell O16A & Cherwell O11B
Ward	Bicester Wider Area
LPA	Cherwell
Regional	South East
National	Great Britain / England*

<sup>1</sup> The Bicester Wider Area comprises the wards of Bicester East, Bicester North and Caversfield, Bicester South and Ambrosden, Bicester West, Fringford and Heysford and Launton and Otmoor.

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\*Dependent on availability of the data

Figure 5.1: Site location & Bicester Wider Area



Desk Study

5.2.3. The analysis presented in this ES chapter is desk-based, drawing on a range of data sources (ONS, NOMIS and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) to inform the findings.

Surveys

5.2.4. No survey work has been necessary when producing this ES chapter.

Modelling

5.2.5. No modelling work was required to inform this ES chapter.

**Assessment of Significance**

Criteria for Receptor Sensitivity

5.2.6. The first step in the assessment is to identify the sensitivity of the receptors. In socio-economic assessments, receptors are not sensitive to changing environmental conditions in the same way as many environmental receptors are. To address this, the assessment draws on a combination of measurable indicators (jobs, population, etc.) and a consideration of the importance of the receptor in policy terms to gauge the receptor’s sensitivity. The sensitivity criteria proposed to be used in this chapter is presented in Table 5.2. Depending on the type of scheme, they may not all be relevant to a proposed development.

**Table 5.2: Criteria for Receptor Sensitivity**

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
High	<p>Evidence of direct and significant socio-economic challenges relating to receptor. Accorded a high priority in local, regional or national economic regeneration policy.</p> <p>Evidence of direct and significant socio-economic challenges including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of population increase / decrease well in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas of employment increase / decrease well in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with levels of unemployment well in excess of / below regional / national averages and high levels of relative deprivation (i.e. top 10%).</li> <li>• Areas with claimant count well in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with economic activity rate well in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with GVA increase / decrease well above / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with a significant undersupply of housing against the housing target.</li> <li>• Deficit in terms of existing education provision</li> <li>• Ratio of GP : patient considerably higher than national average and / or no capacity to accept new patients</li> </ul> <p>Considerable undersupply of open space and / or provision beyond 15 minutes walking distance / 1km.</p>
Medium	<p>Some evidence of socio-economic challenges linked to receptor, which may be indirect. Change relating to receptor has medium priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy.</p> <p>Some evidence of socio-economic challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of population increase / decrease in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with housing supply below target.</li> <li>• Areas of employment increase / decrease in excess of / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with levels of unemployment above / below regional / national averages and levels of relative deprivation (i.e. top 50%).</li> <li>• Areas with claimant count well above / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with economic activity rate above / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Areas with GVA increase / decrease above / below regional / national averages.</li> <li>• Limited capacity in terms of existing education provision</li> <li>• Ratio of GP : patient higher than national average and / or no capacity to accept new patients</li> </ul>

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Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undersupply of open space, but provision within 15 minute walking distance / 1km.</li> </ul> <p>Areas with a moderate oversupply / undersupply of housing against the housing target.</p>
Low	<p>Little evidence of socio-economic challenges relating to receptor. Receptor is accorded a low priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy.</p> <p>Little evidence of socio-economic challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas of population increase / decrease in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas of employment increase / decrease in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas with levels of unemployment in line with regional / national averages and levels of relative deprivation (i.e. bottom 50%).</li> <li>Areas with claimant count in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas with economic activity rate in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas with GVA increase / decrease in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas with levels of crime in line with regional / national averages.</li> <li>Healthcare facilities accepting new patients.</li> <li>Available capacity in existing education provision</li> <li>Ratio of GP : patient similar to national average and accepting new patients</li> <li>Availability of open space and provision within 15 minute walking distance / 1km.</li> </ul> <p>Areas with an oversupply of housing against the housing target.</p>
Negligible	<p>No socio-economic issues relating to receptor. Receptor is not considered a priority in local, regional and national economic development and regeneration policy.</p> <p>No socio-economic issues relating to a receptor, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No or little change in population.</li> <li>No change to employment levels.</li> <li>Areas with levels of unemployment less than regional / national averages and low levels of relative deprivation (i.e. bottom 10%).</li> <li>Areas with claimant count higher than average regional / national averages.</li> <li>Areas with economic activity rate higher than average regional / national averages.</li> <li>Healthcare facilities accepting new patients.</li> <li>Surplus capacity in existing education provision</li> <li>Ratio of GP : patient below national average and accepting new patients</li> <li>Considerable availability of open space within 15 minute walking distance / 1km.</li> </ul>

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
	Areas with a considerable oversupply of housing against the housing target.

Criteria for Magnitude of Change

- 5.2.7. The magnitude of change upon each receptor is then determined by considering the predicted deviation from baseline conditions, both before and, if required, after mitigation. The magnitude of effect criteria proposed to be used in this chapter is presented in Table 5.3.
- 5.2.8. Wherever possible the magnitude of change will be quantified. Where this is not possible, consideration of magnitude of change will be on a qualitative basis and justified through baseline research, a review of relevant policy, and consultations undertaken. Similar to the sensitivity receptor, not all of the criteria may be relevant to a proposed development.

**Table 5.3: Criteria for Magnitude of Change**

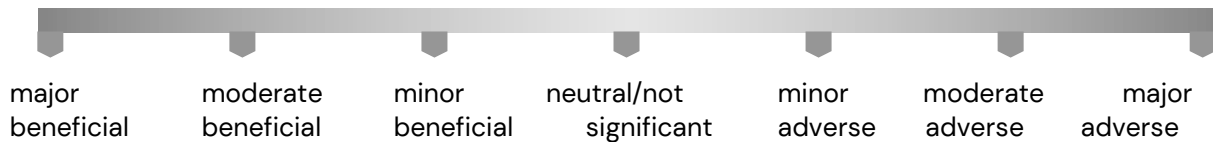
Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
High	<p>Proposed Development would cause a large change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute and/or percentage change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater than 5% increase / decrease on existing baseline levels of employment.</li> <li>• Greater than 5% increase / decrease in GVA from baseline.</li> <li>• Greater than 5% increase / decrease in Council Tax revenue.</li> <li>• Considerable increase / decrease in economy factors.</li> <li>• Greater than 10% of minimum annual housing target.</li> <li>• Considerable increase / decrease in provision quality of open and recreational space generated.</li> </ul> <p>Considerable increase in demand on social and community infrastructure with no capacity / decrease in demand on social and community infrastructure with ample surplus capacity.</p>
Medium	<p>Proposed Development would cause a moderate change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute and/or percentage change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% – 5% increase / decrease on existing baseline levels of employment.</li> <li>• 1% – 5% increase / decrease in GVA from baseline.</li> <li>• Greater than 5% of minimum annual housing target.</li> <li>• 1% – 5% increase / decrease in Council Tax revenue.</li> <li>• Moderate increase / decrease in economy factors.</li> <li>• Moderate increase / decrease in provision/quality of open and recreational space generated.</li> </ul> <p>Moderate increase /decrease in demand on social and community infrastructure with limited capacity.</p>
Low	<p>Proposed Development would cause a minor change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute and/or percentage change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited increase / decrease on existing baseline levels of 0.1% – 0.99% increase / decrease on existing baseline levels of employment.</li> </ul>

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Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.1% – 0.99% increase / decrease in GVA from baseline.</li> <li>• 1% – 5% of minimum annual housing target.</li> <li>• 0.1% – 0.99% increase/decrease in Council Tax revenue.</li> <li>• Limited increase / decrease in economy factors.</li> <li>• Limited increase / decrease in provision/quality of open and recreational space generated.</li> </ul> Limited increase /decrease in demand on social and community infrastructure with limited capacity.
Negligible	No discernible change in baseline socio-economic conditions.

Significance Scale of Effect Criteria

Diagram 1



5.2.9. Using this scale, effects identified as major or moderate are regarded as being significant. Effects of minor or lesser significance are also identified but regarded as not significant.

Table 5.4: Significance Matrix

Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity of Receptor				
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible	
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible	
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Negligible	
Low	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible	
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	

Legislative and Policy Framework

National Planning Policy

5.2.10. The most recent National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024. The NPPF outlines the buildings blocks for sustainable development within planning sectors across the nation and the overall planning system. This requires three distinct objectives that must be carried out in a mutually supportive way. These objectives are (paragraph 8):

- **Economic Objective:** Ensure that the economy remains strong, stable, and reactive to fluctuations, whilst continuing to be competitive and productive to facilitate economic growth. This will be achieved through ensuring that adequate land type and location is available to support growth.

- **Social Objective:** Support the expansion of diverse, healthy, and secure communities by meeting required housing provision alongside providing accessible and dependable services to support overall community wellbeing.
- **Environmental Objective:** Preserve and enhance the natural and historic environment through the effective and appropriate use of land within planning, boosting biodiversity through increased initiatives and adopting a low-carbon approach to economic activity.

5.2.11. Further relevant points raised within the NPPF are:

- Paragraph 61 states that to meet the Government's target of providing an adequate supply, type, and tenure of homes within communities, sufficient and appropriate land needs to be utilised whilst developing the properties to ensure that an area's locally identified housing requirements are met.
- Paragraph 72 affirms that when identifying potential sites for planning developments, there should be clear identification of the site's suitability and capacity, alongside the economic viability of the development within planning policies.
- Paragraph 77 states that to achieve the supply of a large number of homes it is often best done through planning for larger scale development, such as settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure.

5.2.12. The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity, with chapter 6 setting out the objective of building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 86 states that the planning policies should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration.
- Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.
- Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services, housing, or a poor environment.
- Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

5.2.13. Paragraph 87 finds that alongside this, planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

5.2.14. Section 8 of the NPPF looks at Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, which recognises that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Paragraph 96 outlines that planning policy should enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.

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- 5.2.15. Paragraph 101 also outlines that to ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as health, blue light, library, adult education, university and criminal justice facilities, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

### Local Planning Policy

#### ***Cherwell Adopted Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>2</sup>***

- 5.2.16. The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in July 2015 and it sets out proposals to support the local economy and communities. The Local Plan has three central themes which are to develop a sustainable economy, build sustainable communities and ensuring sustainable development. The spatial strategy for how growth in the District is managed can be summarised as:

- Focusing the majority of the proposed growth in and around Bicester and Banbury.
- Limiting growth in rural areas and directing it more towards larger and more sustainable villages.
- Aiming to strictly control development in open countryside.

### Guidance

- 5.2.17. As already noted, there is no specific guidance available which establishes a methodology for undertaking socio-economic effects of a Proposed Development in the context of an EIA. The approach adopted for this assessment is therefore based on professional experience, best practice, and taking into account the NPPF and adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

### **Consultation**

- 5.2.18. Given the ES update is only considering the impacts from the 'social/community' and 'other uses' floorspace being delivered by the scheme rather than the full development, no consultation has been undertaken to inform the socio-economic analysis. This is on the basis that there is limited change to what was assessed previously.

### **Scoping Criteria**

#### Technical Scope

- 5.2.19. The assessment focuses on the operational impact of the 'social/community' and 'other uses' floorspace in terms of creating permanent jobs and the contribution to economic output (measured by gross value added).

#### Receptors

- 5.2.20. From a socio-economic perspective, the receptor is the economy of Cherwell Local Planning Authority. The previous ES considered the impact on the Bicester Wider Area. However, given this ES update is focused exclusively on the impact of job creation and contribution to economic

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<sup>2</sup> Cherwell Adopted Local Plan 2011-2031. Cherwell District Council. Available at: [Final\\_adopted\\_Local\\_Plan\\_2011\\_2031\\_incorporating\\_re\\_adopted\\_policy\\_Bicester\\_13.pdf](#) Accessed 08/01/2024.



output, the LPA is considered to be a more appropriate geography when assessing the Limitations to the Assessment

- 5.2.21. Baseline information is derived from the latest available statistics, however there is often a time-lag associated with the publication of this data. Construction phase effects have not been considered in the ES update. This is because it is not possible to split out build phase impact between the residential part of the scheme and the mixed-use employment floorspace element.

### 5.3. Baseline Conditions

#### Site Description and Context

- 5.3.1. The overall development is a Section 73 Application to vary conditions in connection with Proposed Development of up to 1,700 residential dwellings, a retirement village, flexible commercial floorspace, social and community facilities, land to accommodate an energy centre and land to accommodate a primary school at land north of Middleton Stoney Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire (14/O2121/OUT).

- 5.3.2. The Application Site is approximately 90 hectares (ha). The part of the Site which has been identified for ‘Social/Community’ and ‘Other Uses’ and subject of the intended S.73 application, is approximately 6.2ha split into four development parcels. Table 5.5 shows the full floorspace breakdown of the ‘social/community’ and ‘other uses’ floorspace. It should be noted that while the total floorspace is 8,425 sq. m. GIA, in reality the scheme will align with Condition 44 in the original planning permission which states that “No more than a total of 8,000 sq. m. floorspace shall be provided for mixed uses.” The table effectively gives a range of floorspace types to choose from, with a maximum for each use. For the purposes of assessing job and GVA impacts, it has been assumed that the water treatment plant would be a maximum of 400 sq. m. in order to align with the planning condition for assessment purposes. It should also be noted that while the energy centre is part of the Proposed Development’s description, it will not be built out because the energy strategy approved by the LPA does not require an energy centre to be delivered. It has been included in the table below for completeness.

**Table 5.5: Proposed Employment Floorspace**

Floorspace Type	GIA (sq. m.)
Hotel	2,000
Veterinary surgery	300
Pub/Community	500
Retail	300
Office	1,000
Health facility	500
Nursery	500
Discount food store	2,500
Water treatment plant	450
Energy centre	375
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,425</b>

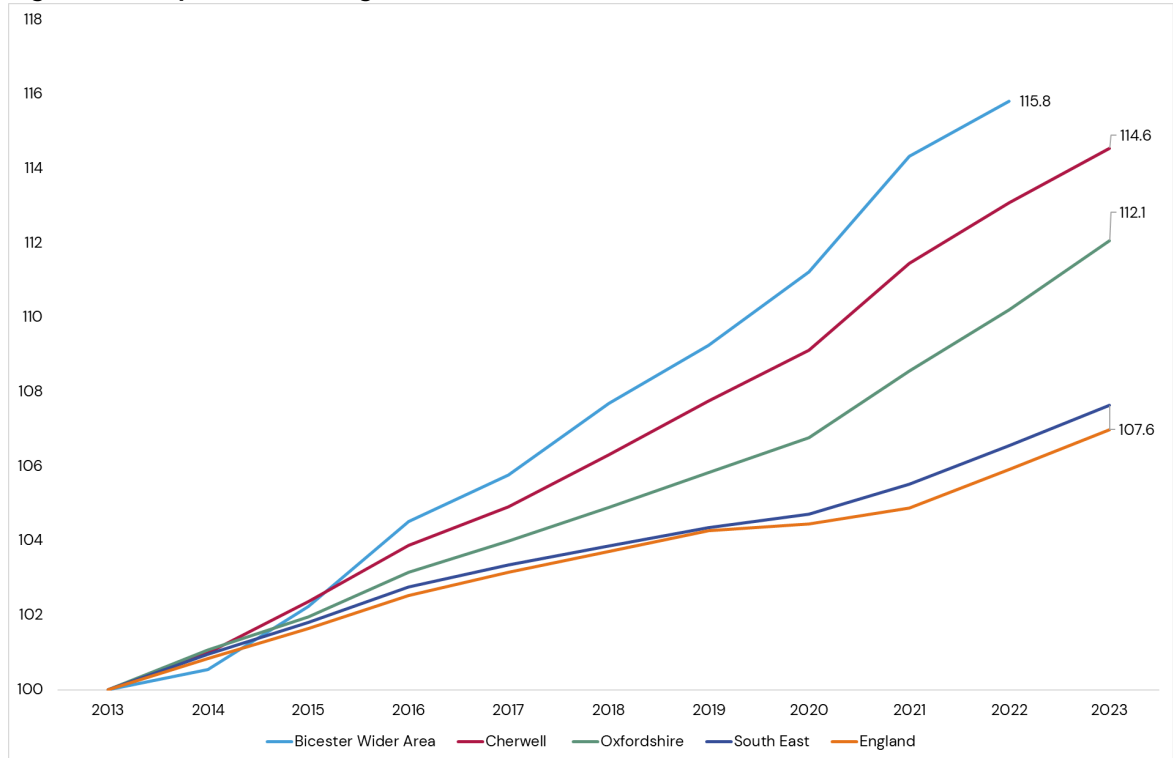
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Baseline Survey Information

Population Estimates

5.3.3. Based on ONS data, the population in Cherwell grew from 145,185 to 166,321 between 2013 and 2023, a rise of 14.6%. Figure 5.2 shows the population growth in this timeframe for the local authority and comparator areas. The growth rate of the population in Cherwell between 2013 and 2023 was lower than the growth in Bicester Wider Area (15.8% between 2013 and 2022<sup>3</sup>) higher than the growth seen in Oxfordshire (12.1%), the South East (7.6%) and England (7%).

Figure 5.2: Population Change, 2013–2023 (2013=100)



Source: ONS, Population Estimates

5.3.4. Data on population change by age in Cherwell show that from 2013 to 2023, the fastest growing population group was those aged 65+ with a growth rate of 24.4% (an increase of 5,795 – see Table 5.7). This was below the growth rate of those aged 65 and over in Bicester Wider Area (27.1%) but above the rate of growth seen in Oxfordshire (22.4%), the South East (17%) and in England (16.1%).

5.3.5. The working age population (16–64) increased by 13.2% (12,206) between 2013 and 2023. This compares to a growth of 14.8% (5,101) in Bicester Wider Area, 10.6% (45,854) in Oxfordshire, 5.6% (308,729) in the South East and 5.2% (1.8 million) in England. Those aged 0–15 increased by 10.9% in this period, an increase of 3,135, compared to growth rates of 11.5% (1,231) in Bicester Wider Area, 7.9% (9,879) in Oxfordshire, 5.5% (92,298) in the South East and 4.6% (467,853) in England.

<sup>3</sup> Ward level population estimates are currently only available up to 2022.

**Table 5.6: Population Change by Age in Bicester Wider Area, 2013–2022**

	2013	2022	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	10,721	11,952	1,231	11.5%
16–64	34,366	39,467	5,101	14.8%
65+	7,109	9,037	1,928	27.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,196</b>	<b>60,456</b>	<b>8,260</b>	<b>15.8%</b>

Source: ONS, Population Estimates

**Table 5.7: Population Change by Age in Cherwell, 2013–2023**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	28,683	31,818	3,135	10.9%
16–64	92,748	104,954	12,206	13.2%
65+	23,754	29,549	5,795	24.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>145,185</b>	<b>166,321</b>	<b>21,136</b>	<b>14.6%</b>

Source: ONS, Population Estimates

**Table 5.8: Population Change by Age in Oxfordshire, 2013–2023**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	124,664	134,543	9,879	7.9%
16–64	432,766	478,620	45,854	10.6%
65+	111,960	137,067	25,107	22.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>669,390</b>	<b>750,230</b>	<b>80,840</b>	<b>12.1%</b>

Source: ONS, Population Estimates

**Table 5.9: Population Change by Age in the South East, 2013–2023**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	1,669,792	1,762,090	92,298	5.5%
16–64	5,537,561	5,846,290	308,729	5.6%
65+	1,602,029	1,874,127	272,098	17.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,809,382</b>	<b>9,482,507</b>	<b>673,125</b>	<b>7.6%</b>

Source: ONS, Population Estimates

**Table 5.10: Population Change by Age in England, 2013–2023**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	10,180,497	10,648,350	467,853	4.6%
16–64	34,453,788	36,258,886	1,805,098	5.2%
65+	9,284,401	10,783,087	1,498,686	16.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,918,686</b>	<b>57,690,323</b>	<b>3,771,637</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

Source: ONS, Population Estimates

Population Projections

- 5.3.6. Tables 5.11 – 5.14 show the population projections for Cherwell, Oxfordshire, the South East and England respectively. All areas are expecting to see an increase in total population, with Cherwell set to increase by the highest percentage at 11.6% followed by England with 8.6%, then Oxfordshire with an increase of 7.8% and lastly the South East with an increase of 7.3%.
- 5.3.7. Cherwell is expected to see a decrease in those aged 0–15 of 3.4%. There is also expected to be a decline in this age cohort in Oxfordshire (6.7%), the South East (6.2%) and England (8.6%) between 2018 and 2038.
- 5.3.8. A similarity of the areas is that they are all expected to experience an aging population, with ages 65+ rising the most between 2018 and 2038. Cherwell is expecting to see the largest

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proportional increase of ages 65+ with an increase of 53.1%. This is slightly higher than the increase expected in Oxfordshire (46.1%) and also higher than the regional and national increases of 41.3% and 40.8% respectively.

**Table 5.11: Population Projection in Cherwell, 2018–38**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	29,791	28,765	-1,026	-3.4%
16–64	92,411	96,420	4,009	4.3%
65+	26,959	41,287	14,328	53.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,161</b>	<b>166,472</b>	<b>17,311</b>	<b>11.6%</b>

Source: ONS, 2018–based population projections

**Table 5.12: Population Projection in Oxfordshire, 2018–38**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	130,136	121,404	-8,732	-6.7%
16–64	431,961	436,252	4,291	1.0%
65+	125,427	183,253	57,826	46.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>687,524</b>	<b>740,909</b>	<b>53,385</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

Source: ONS, 2018–based population projections

**Table 5.13: Population Projection in the South East, 2018–38**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	1,755,267	1,646,261	-109,006	-6.2%
16–64	5,616,593	5,664,106	47,513	0.8%
65+	1,761,765	2,489,387	727,622	41.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,133,625</b>	<b>9,799,754</b>	<b>666,129</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

Source: ONS, 2018–based population projections

**Table 5.14: Population Projection in England, 2018–38**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
0–15	10,748,458	10,370,237	-378,221	-3.5%
16–64	35,049,467	36,066,076	1,016,609	2.9%
65+	10,179,253	14,329,964	4,150,711	40.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,977,178</b>	<b>60,766,277</b>	<b>4,789,099</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

Source: ONS, 2018–based population projections

### Deprivation

- 5.3.9. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation provides an indication of the average levels of deprivation for Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across England. The index provides an overall assessment of the average levels of deprivation as well as an assessment against domains of deprivation. In total England has 32,844 LSOAs.
- 5.3.10. The Application Site falls in the LSOAs Cherwell 016A and Cherwell 011B. Cherwell 016A LSOA falls within the 40% least deprived LSOAs in England with a ranking of 20,824. When looking at individual domains of deprivation it has its lowest rank in the income domain (26,639), placing this domain in the top 20% least deprived LSOAs. It has its highest rank in the barriers to housing & services domain (3,985), placing this domain in the top 20% most deprived LSOAs.
- 5.3.11. Cherwell 011B falls with the top 50% most deprived LSOAs in England with a ranking of 15,914. When looking at individual domains of deprivation it has its lowest rank in the employment domain (29,568), placing this domain in the top 10% least deprived LSOAs. It has its highest rank in the barriers to housing and services domain with a ranking of 1,494, placing this domain in the

top 10% most deprived LSOAs. Tables 5.15 and 5.16 give full details on deprivation in both Cherwell O16A and Cherwell O11B.

**Table 5.15: Cherwell O16A IMD 2019 Domain Rankings**

	Cherwell O16A (out of 32,844, 1 being the most deprived)	Deprivation Status
<b>Overall IMD</b>	<b>20,824</b>	<b>Top 40% (least)</b>
Income	26,639	Top 20% (least)
Employment	24,283	Top 30% (least)
Education & Training	24,467	Top 30% (least)
Health	26,036	Top 30% (least)
Crime	15,507	Top 50% (most)
Barriers to Housing & Services	3,985	Top 20% (most)
Living Environment	7,378	Top 30% (most)

**Source:** Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Table 5.16: Cherwell O11B IMD 2019 Domain Rankings**

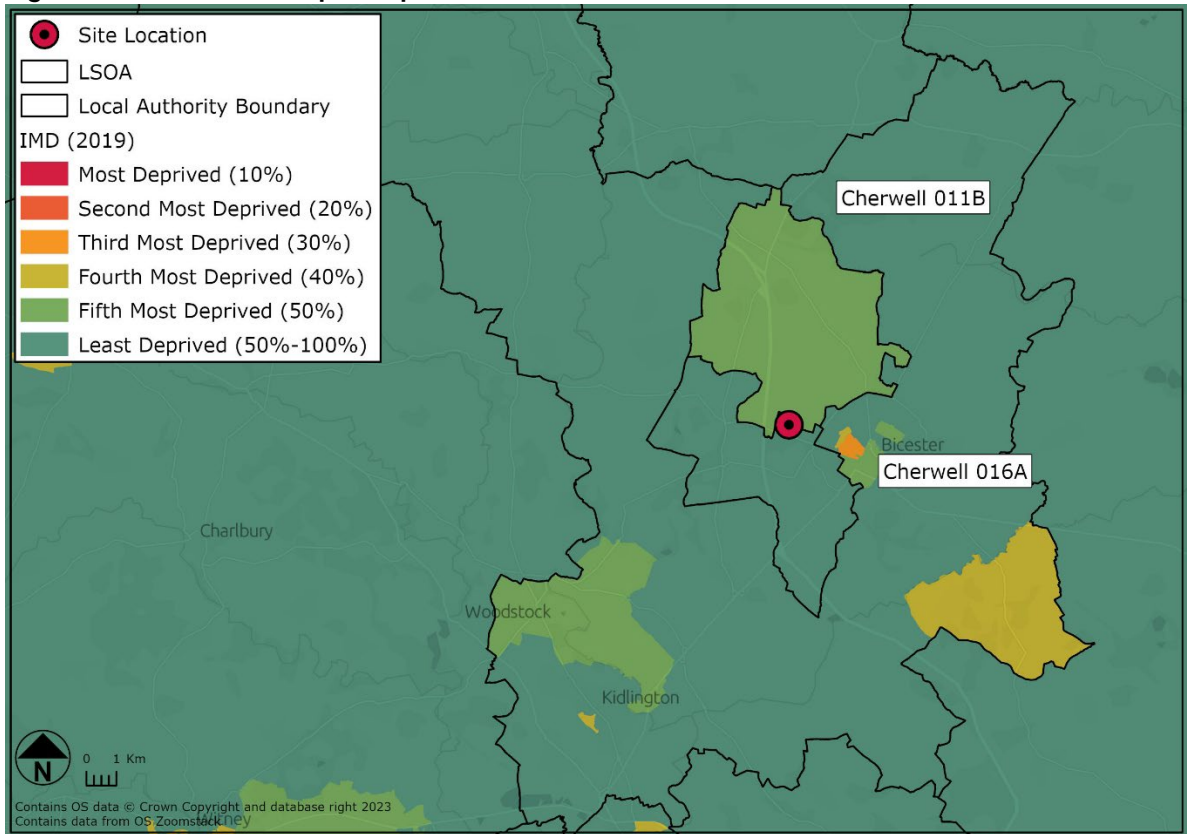
	Cherwell O11B (out of 32,844, 1 being the most deprived)	Deprivation Status
<b>Overall IMD</b>	<b>15,914</b>	<b>Top 50% (most)</b>
Income	29,568	Top 10% (least)
Employment	29,677	Top 10% (least)
Education & Training	22,061	Top 40% (least)
Health	23,257	Top 30% (least)
Crime	4,771	Top 20% (most)
Barriers to Housing & Services	1,494	Top 10% (most)
Living Environment	3,000	Top 10% (most)

**Source:** Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government

5.3.12. Figure 5.3 presents the overall deprivation data for Cherwell O16A and Cherwell O11B and the surrounding area. As the graphic shows, the surrounding area does not have many significant areas of deprivation with Cherwell O16A falling in the top 40% least deprived and Cherwell O11B falling in the top 50% most deprived LSOAs.

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Figure 5.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation for Site Location



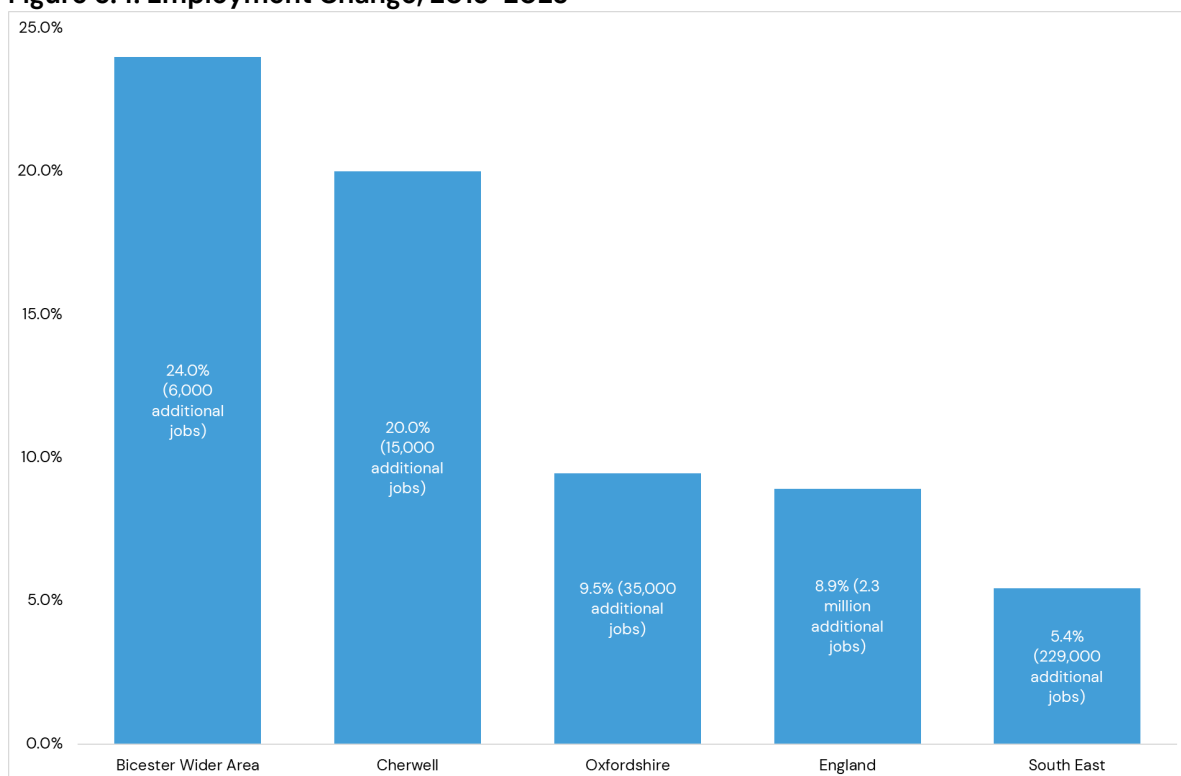
Source: Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government

Employment Change

5.3.13. The Bicester Wider Area<sup>4</sup> saw the highest percentage increase in employment between 2015–2023 at 24%, representing 6,000 additional jobs. This was a notably higher increase than the other areas, particularly the regional increase of 5.4% (229,000 additional jobs) and the national increase of 8.9% (2.3 million additional jobs). Cherwell has experienced an increase of 15,000 jobs (20.0%), with Oxfordshire experiencing a rise in employment of 9.5% (35,000 additional jobs). Figure 5.4 shows the employment change in the listed areas.

<sup>4</sup> The Bicester Wider Area is defined by the combined area of the Bicester East, Bicester North & Caversfield, Bicester South & Ambrosden, Bicester West, Fringford & Heyfords and Launton and Otmoor wards.

Figure 5.4: Employment Change, 2015–2023



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey

5.3.14. The main employment sector in Cherwell is the public administration, education & health sector, which accounted for 29.8% of total employment in the area and supported an estimated 27,000 jobs in 2023 (see Tables 5.17 and 5.18). In Oxfordshire (37%) and at a regional level in the South East and at a national level in England the public administration, education and health sector also accounts for the largest share of employment (both 34.6%). The largest sector in the Bicester Wider Area is the wholesale and retail sector, which accounted for 25.7% of total employment and supported an estimated 7,850 jobs in 2023.

Table 5.17: Percentage of Total Jobs per Sector, 2023

	Bicester Wider Area	Cherwell	Oxfordshire	South East	England
Agriculture, mining, utilities etc	0.7%	3.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%
Manufacturing	7.4%	9.9%	6.7%	6.0%	7.3%
Construction	4.1%	4.4%	4.0%	5.0%	4.8%
Wholesale & retail	25.7%	20.4%	13.1%	14.9%	13.7%
Transport & storage	5.7%	5.0%	3.5%	4.6%	5.1%
Accommodation & food services	9.8%	7.7%	7.9%	8.6%	7.8%
Information & communication	3.3%	2.8%	5.9%	5.4%	4.7%
Business, financial & professional services	13.9%	12.4%	15.3%	13.4%	15.1%
Public admin, education & health	25.4%	29.8%	37.0%	34.6%	34.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	4.1%	4.4%	4.4%	5.2%	4.6%

Source: ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey

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**Table 5.18: Number of Jobs per Sector, 2023**

	Bicester Wider Area	Cherwell	Oxfordshire	South East	England
Agriculture, mining, utilities etc	215	2,800	9,000	102,000	638,000
Manufacturing	2,250	9,000	27,000	264,000	2,056,000
Construction	1,250	4,000	16,000	223,000	1,366,000
Wholesale & retail	7,850	18,500	53,000	661,000	3,870,000
Transport & storage	1,750	4,500	14,000	203,000	1,431,000
Accommodation & food services	3,000	7,000	32,000	380,000	2,206,000
Information & communication	1,000	2,500	24,000	241,000	1,319,000
Business, financial & professional services	4,250	11,250	62,000	594,000	4,279,000
Public admin, education & health	7,750	27,000	150,000	1,537,000	9,783,000
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	1,250	4,000	18,000	231,000	1,298,000

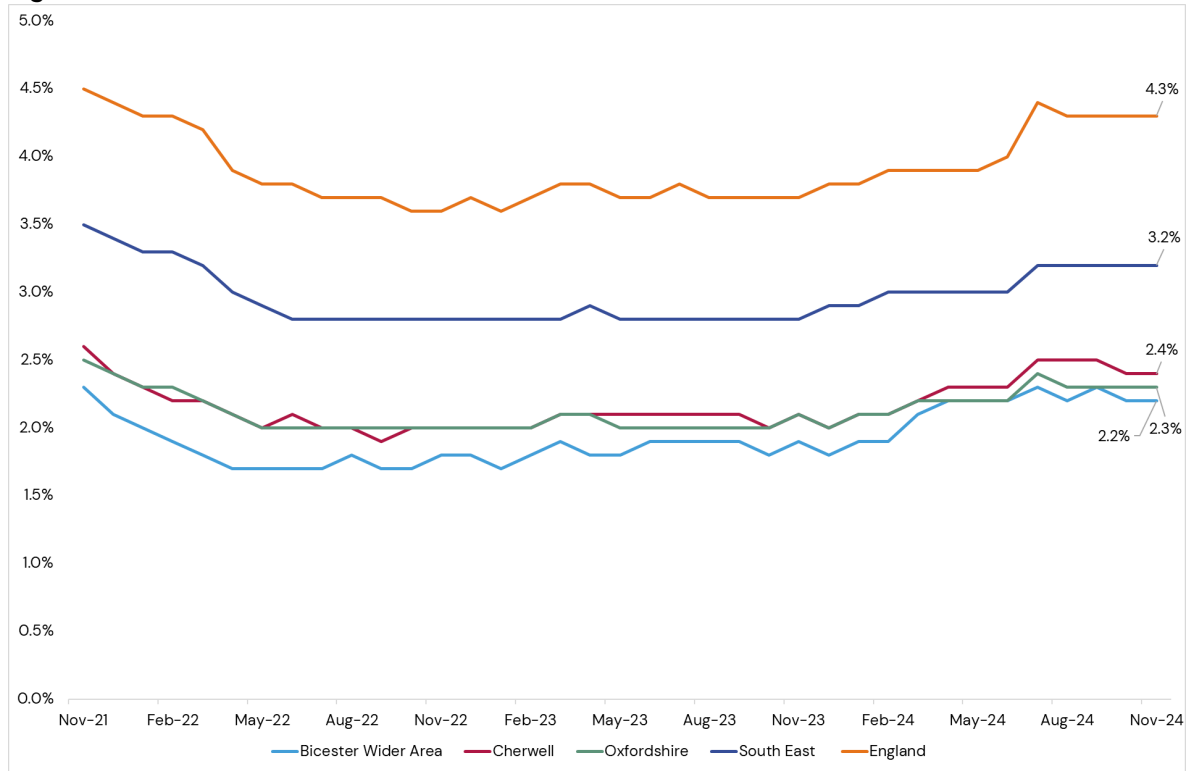
**Source:** ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey

Claimant Count

- 5.3.15. The claimant count records the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work. Figure 5.5 shows the claimant count in the Bicester Wider Area, Cherwell, the South East and England for every month from November 2021 to November 2024, expressed as a proportion of residents aged 16–64.
- 5.3.16. As of November 2024, England has the highest claimant count at 4.3% followed by the South East at 3.2%, then Cherwell with a rate of 2.4% and Oxfordshire at 2.3%. The Bicester Wider Area has the lowest rate as of October 2024, at 2.2%.



Figure 5.5: Claimant Count, November 2021–November 2024



Source: NOMIS

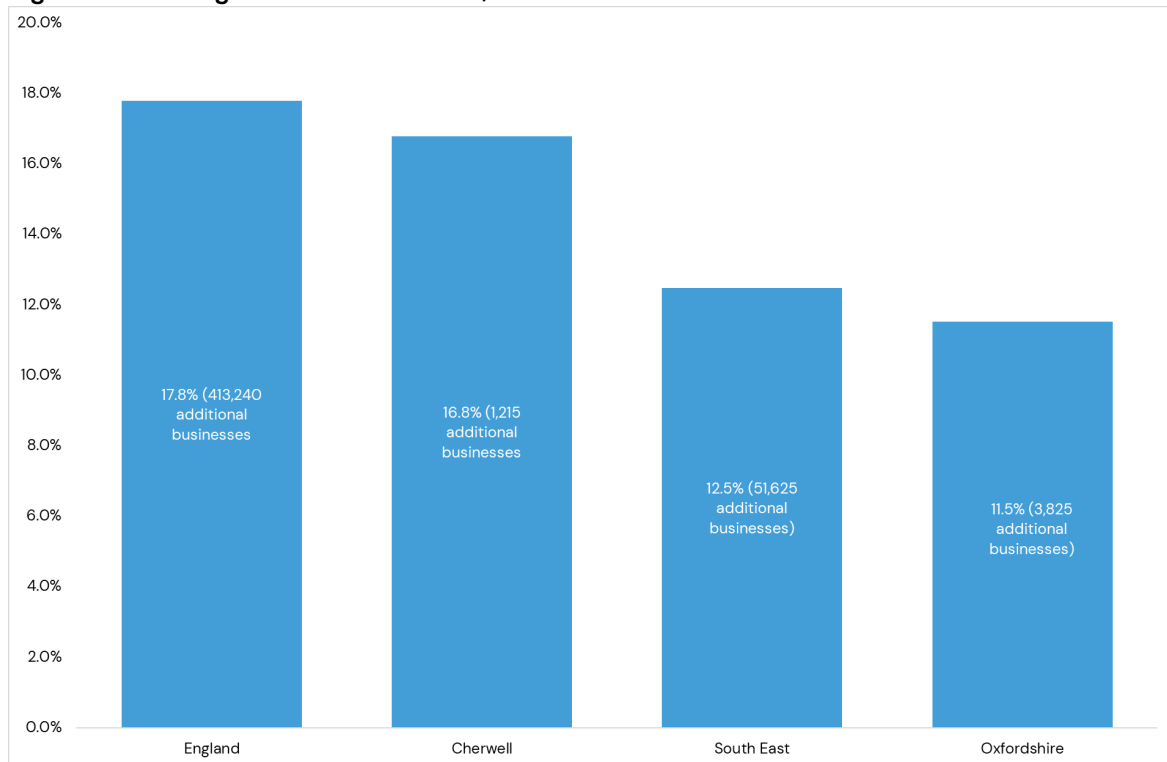
Business Count

5.3.17.

Figure 5.6 shows the growth in business numbers in Cherwell, Oxfordshire, the South East and England between 2014–2024. England experienced the highest proportional growth at 17.8%, a total increase of 413,240 businesses. Cherwell has the next largest increase at 16.8% (1,215 additional businesses), followed by the South East with a smaller increase of 12.5%, amounting to 51,625 additional businesses and Oxfordshire saw the lowest growth in business number of 11.5% equating to 3,825 additional businesses.

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Figure 5.6: Change in Business Count, 2014-2024

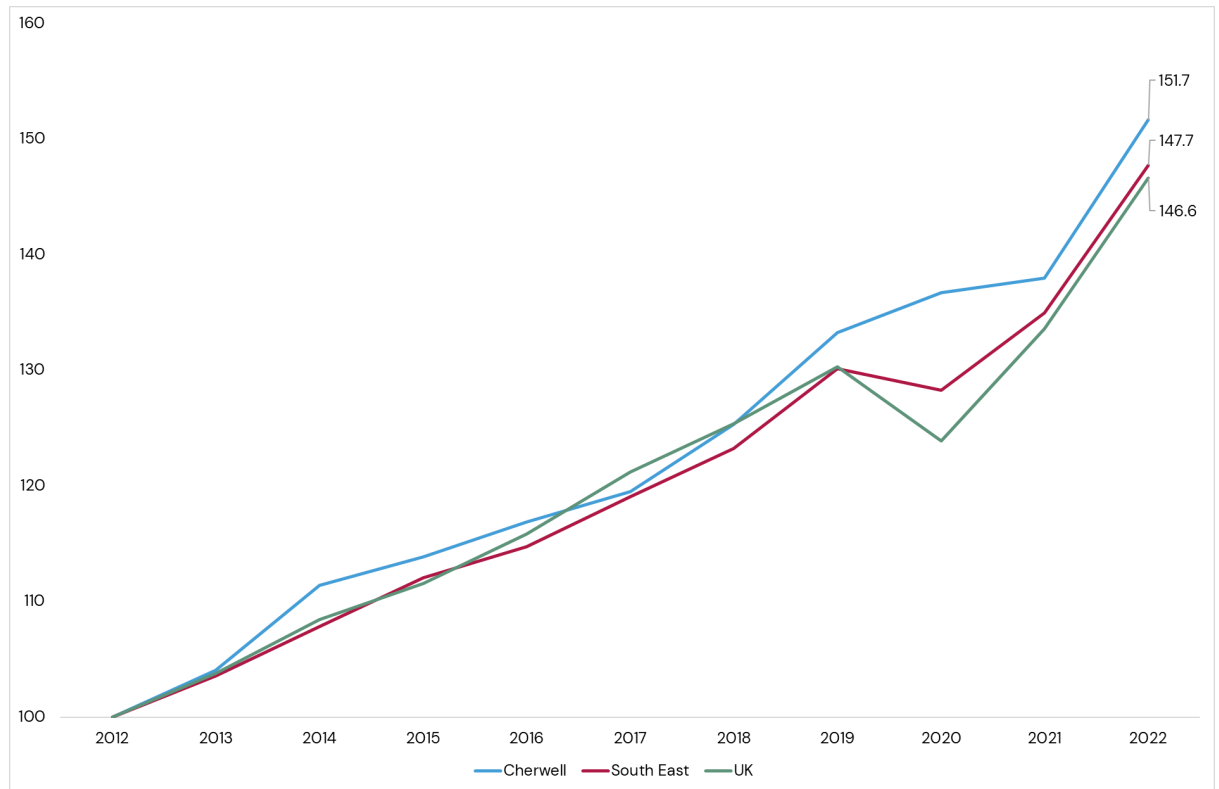


Source: ONS, Business Count

Gross Value Added

5.3.18. Figure 5.7 shows total gross value added (GVA – a proxy for economic output) for Cherwell, the South East, and the United Kingdom between 2012 and 2022. Over this timeframe total GVA in current prices increased by 51.7% in Cherwell. This increase was higher than the increases seen in the South East (47.7%) and the UK (46.6%). In Cherwell, total GVA was around £5.7billion in 2022.

Figure 5.7: Total Gross Value Added at Current Prices, 2012–2022 (2012=100)



Source: ONS

Skills & Qualifications

- 5.3.19. Table 5.19 shows the highest level of qualification attained by proportions of the population in 2021 in the Bicester Wider Area, Cherwell, Oxfordshire, the South East, and England. For each level of qualification held, each area has a similar proportion of population.
- 5.3.20. For example, the most common highest level of qualification held is level 4, which is held by 35.1% of the population in Cherwell. This is slightly higher than the rate in England (33.9%), but lower than the rates in the Bicester Wider Area (37.1%), Oxfordshire (42%) and the South East (35.8%).
- 5.3.21. A notable proportion of the population in all areas hold no qualifications, with the highest percentage in England at 18.1%, followed by Cherwell at 16%. A similar percentage of the population hold level 3 and level 2 qualifications, whilst a small proportion of people hold other qualifications.

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Table 5.19: Highest Level of Qualification, 2021

	Bicester Wider Area	Cherwell	Oxfordshire	South East	England
Level 4 qualifications or above	37.1%	35.1%	42.0%	35.8%	33.9%
level 3 qualifications	16.5%	16.1%	17.1%	17.4%	16.9%
Apprenticeship	5.2%	5.6%	4.6%	5.1%	5.3%
Level 2 qualifications	14.0%	13.9%	11.8%	13.9%	13.3%
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	10.5%	10.5%	8.6%	9.8%	9.7%
No qualifications	14.1%	16.0%	13.5%	15.4%	18.1%
Other qualifications	2.6%	2.8%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%

Source: 2021 Census

Commuting

5.3.22. Based on data from the 2021 Census, in Cherwell there are 67,511 people that live and work in the area. There are a further 18,546 people that work in Cherwell but live elsewhere. The top origin destinations for commuters are people from West Northamptonshire (4,456), West Oxfordshire (2,542) and Buckinghamshire (1,869). There are also 17,452 people that live in Cherwell but travel elsewhere for work. The top destinations commuters travel to are Oxford (6,019), West Oxfordshire (2,464) and West Northamptonshire (2,026). With 18,546 in-commuters and 17,452 out-commuters, Cherwell has a net inflow of 1,094 commuters.

Crime

5.3.23. In the year ending Q2 2024, there were 68.37 total recorded offences (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population in Cherwell. This is slightly lower than the mean rate for all local authority districts in the South East of 69.17, and it represents a 6.9% decline in the rate of offences (an absolute decrease of 5.08) since Q2 2023.

**5.4. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects**

**Effects during Construction**

5.4.1. It is not possible to split out the build phase of the ‘social/community’ and ‘other uses’ floorspace from that of the wider scheme. As such, construction phase impacts have not been updated. The original socio-economic ES chapter concluded that the build phase would have a minor beneficial impact, which is not significant in EIA terms. This is considered to be a sensible conclusion and if it were possible to assess the effects, it would be anticipated that the change in quantum and mix of floorspace would not deviate from the original conclusion of minor beneficial impact.

**Effects during Operation**

Employment

5.4.2. Job numbers for the ‘social/community’ and ‘other uses’ floorspace are presented in two ways:

- **Gross permanent jobs:** Total employment accommodated on-site.
- **Net additional jobs:** The number of jobs which the scheme can be expected to support in Mid Devon. over and above what would have happened anyway. This calculation

makes allowance for leakage, deadweight, displacement, and multiplier factors taken from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA – now Homes England) 2014 Additionality Guide (see **Figure 5.8** for explanations of these terms). For leakage, the assumption has been informed by analysis of the 2021 Census data on commuters.

**Figure 5.8: Additionality Factors**

- **Leakage** is defined as, ‘the proportion of outputs that benefit those outside the programme/project area or group.’ Leakage is assumed to be 21.6%. This is based on origin destination data from the 2021 Census for Cherwell (86,057 working in the area, of which 18,546 (21.6%) travel from elsewhere).
- **Deadweight** is the term used to identify the output that would have occurred without the project. Deadweight is assumed to be zero – i.e. without the proposed scheme, no other jobs will be created.
- **Displacement** is defined as ‘the proportion of project outputs/outcomes accounted for by reduced outputs/outcomes elsewhere in the target area.’ Displacement for the new employment is assumed to be low at 25%.
- **Economic multipliers** are defined as ‘further economic activity (jobs, expenditure or income) associated with additional local income and local supplier purchases.’ A multiplier of 1.1 has been used, which is consistent with the HCA guidance.

**Source:** Homes & Communities Agency (now Homes England), 2014. Additionality Guide, Fourth Edition.

5.4.3. Table 5.20 shows how the floorspace (gross internal area, GIA) has been broken down. It is important to note that the size of the water treatment plant has been reduced from 450 sq. m. to 400 sq. m. in order for the overall floorspace to not exceed the planning condition threshold of 8,000 sq. m. for assessment purposes.

**Table 5.20: Local Centre Floorspace (GIA)**

Facility	Total Estimated Floorspace (sq. m.)
Hotel	2,000
Veterinary surgery	300
Pub/Community	500
Retail	300
Office	1,000
Health facility	500
Nursery	500
Discount food store	2,500
Water treatment plant	400
Energy centre	375 (Not included in overall total because it will not be delivered)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,000</b>

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- 5.4.4. To quantify jobs, an assumption has been made in terms of the density of employment that would normally be expected for the proposed floorspace types. This information has been sourced from the Employment Densities Guide (3rd Edition, November 2015), prepared for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) by Bilfinger GVA. Using this guidance, the employment densities used are outlined below:
- Pub/Community: 1 job per 17.5 sq. m. net internal area (NIA).
  - Retail: 1 job per 17.5 sq. m. NIA.
  - Office: 1 job per 12 sq. m. NIA.
  - Discount food store: 1 jobs per 90 sq. m. NIA.
- 5.4.5. For the nursery, veterinary surgery, health facility and water treatment plant job numbers have been calculated by taking the average number of workers per business in Cherwell local authority as of 2023. This has drawn on data from two ONS datasets: the Business Register & Employment Survey; and the UK Business Count.
- 5.4.6. Taking into account the assumptions outlined above, it is estimated the Proposed Development will generate 207 gross on-site FTE jobs. Once allowance is made for the deadweight, leakage, displacement, and multiplier effects outlined in Figure 5.9 it is estimated that the Proposed Development will support up to 157 net additional FTE jobs in the Cherwell and wider regional economy.
- 5.4.7. The sensitivity of the receptor (employment in construction and other sectors of the economy) is assessed as being **high**, in line with criteria set out in Table 5.2, given total employment in the LPA between 2015 and 2023 grew at a significantly higher rate than the regional and national picture. From November 2021–2024 the claimant count in Cherwell has been consistently below regional and national comparators and the LSOA in which the site is located, Cherwell O16A, ranks in the 40% least deprived LSOAs in the country.
- 5.4.8. The magnitude of effect is considered to be **low**, in line with criteria set out in Table 5.3, given the generation of up to 207 gross FTE jobs would represent a 0.2% increase in total employment in Cherwell.
- 5.4.9. The significance of the temporary effect of employment in the construction phase is considered to be **moderate beneficial** at the District scale which is **Significant** in EIA terms.

Contribution to Economic Output

- 5.4.10. The contribution of the Proposed Development to economic output has been calculated by taking the job creation associated with the scheme and multiplying this by an estimate of average levels of GVA per employee in the South East for the relevant industries.
- 5.4.11. It is estimated that once operational and fully occupied, the GVA associated with the on-site jobs supported by the Proposed Development will be in the region of £11.2million per annum.

Over a longer period of ten years, the GVA generated by the Proposed Development could be in the region of £96.4million (present value<sup>5</sup>).

- 5.4.12. The sensitivity of the receptor (economic output from the construction sector in Cherwell) is assessed as being **medium**, in line with criteria set out in Table 5.2. Economic output in Cherwell increased by 51.7% between 2012 and 2022. This was above the increases seen at a regional and national level.
- 5.4.13. The magnitude of effect is considered to be **low**, in line with criteria set out in Table 5.3, given the generation of up to £11.2million in economic output per annum would increase GVA in Cherwell by 0.2% per annum.
- 5.4.14. The significance of the temporary effect of employment in the construction phase is considered to be **minor to moderate beneficial** at the district scale which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

**Summary of Significance of Effects (Before Mitigation)**

- 5.4.15. A summary of the significance of the operational effects for the ‘social/community’ and ‘other uses’ before additional mitigation is applied is presented in Table 5.21.

**Table 5.21: Significance of Effects (before Mitigation)**

Environmental Effect	Sensitivity of Receptor	Impact Magnitude	Nature of Impact (Permanent/ Temporary)	Effect and Significance
<b>OPERATION</b>				
Employment	High	Low	Permanent	Moderate beneficial (Significant)
Contribution to economic output	Medium	Low	Permanent	Minor to moderate beneficial (Not Significant)

**5.5. Mitigation, Enhancement and Residual Effects**

**Mitigation by Design**

- 5.5.1. There are no significant adverse effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development. As such, no additional mitigation by design is deemed to be necessary.

**Additional Mitigation.**

- 5.5.2. There are no significant adverse effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development. As such, no additional mitigation is deemed to be necessary.

<sup>5</sup> Where future benefits are calculated, they have been discounted to produce a present value. This is the discounted value of a stream of either future costs or benefits. A standard discount rate is used to convert all costs and benefits to present values. Using the Treasury’s Green Book, the recommended discount rate is 3.5%.

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**Enhancements.**

5.5.3. No enhancements are expected to be proposed specific to socioeconomics beyond those already referred to in the impacts section relevant to other topics.

**Residual Effects**

5.5.4. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to provide significant beneficial effects during the construction phase in relation to employment and contribution to economic development. Once operational, significant beneficial effects are expected in relation to job creation and contribution to economic output.

**Table 5.22: Residual Significance of Effects (with Mitigation)**

Environmental Effect	Sensitivity of Receptor	Impact Magnitude	Nature of Impact (Permanent/ Temporary)	Residual Effect and Significance
<b>OPERATION</b>				
Employment	High	Low	Permanent	<b>Moderate beneficial (Significant)</b>
Contribution to economic output	Medium	Low	Permanent	<b>Minor to moderate beneficial (Not Significant)</b>

5.5.5. The residual effects identified in this assessment are in accordance with the residual effects identified in the 2014 ES, and emphasise the effects are beneficial.

**5.6. Cumulative Effects**

5.6.1. Given the overall ‘Assessment of Likely Significant Effects’ conclusions have not changed in respect of the significance of effects, cumulative effects have not been considered further.

**5.7. Summary**

**Introduction**

5.7.1. This chapter has assessed the socio-economic impacts of developing up to 8,000 sq. m. of the ‘social/community’ and ‘other uses’ floorspace.

**Baseline Conditions**

5.7.2. A baseline review of Cherwell’s socio-economic context reveals the following:

- Between 2013 and 2023, Cherwell’s population has grown faster than the rate seen at a regional and national level. In relative terms, those aged 65+ grew at the fastest rate over this timeframe. This trend is projected to continue between 2018 and 2038.



- Cherwell has a lower proportion of its resident working age population with a degree or equivalent when compared to the regional comparator, but slightly higher than at national level and a lower proportion with no qualifications than at national level.
- The LSOAs within which the application site falls, Cherwell O16A and Cherwell O11B, fall within the top 40% least and top 50% most deprived LSOAs in England.
- Employment growth in Cherwell was higher than regional and national comparators with growth in the Bicester Wider Area ward significantly higher than all three areas between 2015 and 2023.
- The proportion of people aged 16–64 in Cherwell claiming benefits is below the rate in the South East and England.

### Likely Significant Effects

5.7.3. In respect of the operational phase, the assessment indicates that the Proposed Development will have the following permanent effects:

- Once operational, the Proposed Development could generate up to 207 gross full-time equivalent jobs (FTEs).
- Around £11.2million of gross value added per annum is estimated to be generated per annum once operational, or £96.4million over a 10-year period (present value).

5.7.4. In EIA terms, overall these impacts are considered to have a significant beneficial effect in the long-term, with no significant adverse effects on existing community infrastructure.

### Mitigation and Enhancement

5.7.5. There are no significant adverse effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development. As such, no additional mitigation is deemed to be necessary. No enhancements are expected to be proposed specific to socioeconomic beyond those already referred to in the impacts section relevant to other topics.

### Conclusion

5.7.6. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to provide beneficial effects during the construction phase in relation to employment and economic contribution. Once operational, significant beneficial effects are expected in relation to wider economic effects.

5.7.7. Adverse but not significant effects are predicted in relation to disturbance to neighbourhood amenity during the construction phase, but this will be managed by best practice measures through CEMP and relation management tools.

5.7.8. **Table 5.23** provides a summary of effects, mitigation and residual effects.

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Table 5.23: Summary of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects

Receptor / Receiving Environment	Description of Effect	Nature of Effect	Sensitivity Value	Magnitude of Effect	Geographical Importance	Significance of Effects	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects
<b>Operation</b>								
<b>Employment</b>	Operational jobs on-site	Permanent	High	Low	LPA	Moderate beneficial	n/a	Moderate beneficial (significant)
<b>Contribution to economic output</b>	Economic output generated by on-site jobs	Permanent	Medium	Low	LPA	Minor to moderate beneficial	n/a	Minor to moderate beneficial (not significant)