

Cherwell Local Development Framework

your place • your space •
your say



Draft core strategy

February 2010

Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Executive Summary

This draft core strategy is an important document for Cherwell District. Upon adoption it will set out broadly how the district will grow and change in the period up to 2026. The Core Strategy must set out the long term

spatial vision for Cherwell District and contain policies to help deliver that vision.

The Council is keen to seek the views of the public and all stakeholders on the content of the draft core strategy.

The consultation is taking place between **22nd February and 19th April 2010**. More details of where the Core

Strategy can be viewed, and how you can make comments, and what happens next, can be found in the

Introduction to the draft core strategy in Section 1 or at

<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/localdevelopmentframework>.

This Executive Summary seeks to give an overview of the main policies in the draft core strategy. It can,

however, only signpost readers to the policies. You are recommended to read the policies in detail to understand

the strategy that the Council is putting forward.

The section numbers highlighted throughout this Executive Summary are references to the draft core strategy document.

Structure of the Draft Core Strategy

The draft core strategy has been structured to look firstly at the whole of Cherwell District, and secondly at the

various places within it.

Section A considers **Cherwell District** as a whole. It includes a vision for the district, a spatial strategy,

a series of key objectives and a number of policies

Section B looks at different places within the district: **Bicester, Banbury** and our **villages and rural**

areas. For each area it also contains a vision, spatial strategy, series of key objectives and a number of policies

Section C considers how the Core Strategy will be **delivered**.

Section D sets out how the objectives and policies of the Core Strategy will be **monitored**.

Vision Strategy and Objectives

Underpinning the draft core strategy is a **vision** and a **spatial strategy** for Cherwell District (Section A.3). Our

spatial strategy for how we manage the growth of the district can be summarised as:-

Focus growth in and around Banbury and Bicester, including the eco-development at North West Bicester

Deliver approximately 1,000 homes at RAF Upper Heyford

Support growth in Kidlington where this meets local needs, subject to green belt constraints

Limit growth in the rest of our rural areas towards larger and more sustainable villages

Strictly control development in open countryside.

There are then fourteen strategic **objectives** (Section A.4) and the policies which follow seek, wherever possible, to meet these objectives.

District Wide Housing Distribution

Policy H 1

Housing Distribution

Cherwell district will provide for 13,400 additional homes to be provided between 1 April 2006 and 31

March 2026 as follows:

Bicester 5,500

Rest of Central Oxfordshire 1,140

Bicester and Central Oxfordshire Total 6,640

Banbury 4,800

Rest of North Cherwell 1,960

Banbury and North Cherwell Total 6,760

Total for Cherwell district 13,400

A further 500 homes will be provided from 1 April 2026 to 31 December 2026

A.128 The South East Plan establishes the number of new homes that Cherwell needs to provide. It sets

separate housing requirements for that part of Cherwell that lies within the 'Central Oxfordshire

sub-region' around Oxford and for the rest of the district. The Central Oxfordshire area covers an

area of south Cherwell including Bicester and Kidlington. We refer to this as the Bicester and Central

Oxfordshire area (BCO) with the rest of Cherwell forming the Banbury and North Cherwell (BNC)

area. Figure 1 shows the two areas.

A.129 The South East Plan provides for 6,400 homes to be provided in the Central Oxfordshire area, including

4,900 homes at Bicester, between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2026. It provides for 7,000 homes to

be provided in North Cherwell and it is implied that about 4,800 homes should be provided at Banbury.

This means a total of 13,400 homes or 670 per year. As the Core Strategy must plan for at least 15

years of housing land supply from the date of the Strategy's adoption, the plan period will run to 31

December 2026. This means a further 500 dwellings need to be planned for.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

A.130 Housing completions have already been recorded for 2006 to 2009 which lower the district's

requirements. Additionally, Cherwell already has a supply of deliverable and developable housing

sites which further reduces the district's remaining or residual requirements. Some additional housing

potential has also been identified. The residual requirements may change as further work on site

availability and suitability takes place before a final Core Strategy is prepared and additional housing

completions are recorded. If any sites currently expected are not delivered then other land would

need to be identified to make up any shortfall. Section D summarises the district's current housing

land supply position.

A.131 The South East Plan and current residual requirements are set out in Table 9 below:

Table 9 Housing Requirements & Proposed Redistribution

Bicester 4,900 2,389 5,500 2,989
 Rest of Central Oxfordshire 1,500 753 1,140 393
 Bicester and Central 6,400 3,142 6,640 3,382
 Oxfordshire Total
 Banbury* 4,800 1,472 4,800 1,472
 Rest of North Cherwell* 2,200 972 1,960 732
 Banbury and North Cherwell 7,000 2,444 6,760 2,204
 Total
 Cherwell Total 13,400 5,586 13,400 5,586
 Extra 500 homes required to 13,900 6,086 13,900 6,086
 extend the plan period to 31
 December 2026

* estimated split based on pages 434-435 of the South East Plan Panel Report.

A.132 Although the Council is required to plan to meet South East Plan housing requirements, it does have

some limited flexibility in terms of how this is distributed. In considering how best to distribute development across the district, the Council has had particular regard to the following factors: the South East Plan seeks to focus development into urban areas in the first instance.⁽¹⁶⁾ the South East Plan states that while a degree of flexibility is associated with the figures, local authorities must in the first instance seek to deliver their sub-regional allocations within their part of Central Oxfordshire the Council has confirmed its support to delivering an Eco-Development at North West Bicester

(see policy NWB 1). Of the total development of 5,000 homes, it is estimated that 3,000 homes

will be provided by 31 March 2026. This figure exceeds the current identified residual requirement

for Bicester by about 600 homes, and this allows for some commensurate re-distribution elsewhere within the district.

there is evidence of needs within Banbury for affordable housing and for open space, sport and

recreation provision that can most successfully be addressed through new development.

Also,

16 Banbury is identified as having an *"important role as a small market town in supporting its wider hinterland"*.

Bicester is identified as a *"main location of development"* within the Central Oxfordshire sub-region.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

Banbury is a significant source of previously-developed land and appropriate development here

would help the Council make best and most efficient use of land.

locating development in rural areas is generally less sustainable than focusing it in urban areas.

There is a greater need to travel to employment, schools, shops and other services, and fewer

public transport opportunities available than in urban areas. Furthermore, the overall level of growth proposed in the South East Plan for the rural areas would require significant development

in some villages that would impact upon the character and appearance of these villages.

Consequently, it is considered that development could be more sustainably accommodated in Cherwell's rural areas if the overall level of development were to be reduced.

the capacity of the southern part of the rural area (that which falls within the Central Oxfordshire

sub-region) has particular constraints acting on it. There are fewer villages in this area that are

capable of sustainably accommodating a significant number of new homes, and a large area is

protected by Green Belt policy (see policy SD 12). Furthermore, the sensitive ecology of the area (see policy SD 7) would suggest that a cautious approach should be taken towards development in this area.

A.133 Accordingly, this Draft Core Strategy proposes a development strategy which increases development at Bicester, maintains it at the level set out in the South East Plan in Banbury, and reduces it within the rural areas, particularly within in the Central Oxfordshire sub-region. The Council considers that this distribution responds to the particular opportunities that are presented by the eco-development at North West Bicester whilst at the same time according well with the principles in the South East Plan.

Ensuring Sustainable Housing Delivery

Policy H 2

Ensuring Sustainable Housing Delivery

Cherwell will meet its housing requirements by delivering allocated strategic development sites at Bicester and Banbury and by allocating development to sustainable rural locations. Housing development will otherwise only be allowed within the built-up limits of Banbury and Bicester and where proposals accord with village categorisation policy (Policy RA 1). Exceptions may be made where development is required to deliver other policies in the Core Strategy. In all cases, development which does not accord with the Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies will not be supported. Housing delivery will be monitored closely to ensure that housing requirements are being met. Remedial action will be taken if the rolling supply of deliverable housing land falls to an unacceptable level or if monitoring shows that total housing requirements are unlikely to be met.

A.134 In planning for 15 years of housing supply, we must ensure that the first five years comprise deliverable housing sites that are available, suitable and achievable. The following ten years of supply should, as far as possible, comprise specific developable sites i.e. sites in a suitable location and where there is a reasonable prospect that they are available for, and could be developed at the point envisaged. A five year rolling supply of deliverable housing land must be maintained throughout the plan period, bringing forward developable sites to 'top-up' as required.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

A.135 The objective is to ensure a flexible, responsive supply. A steady supply of housing will help to avoid large peaks and troughs in the local market and in addressing issues of affordability and availability. Housing must also be delivered in a way that accords with Cherwell's vision, objectives and policies. This includes meeting targets for the development of previously developed land and protecting natural resources.

A.136 Our section on Cherwell's Places sets out how we intend to deliver 13,400 homes by 31 March 2026 and a further 500 by 31 December 2026. Our commitments to providing these homes and to ensuring

that they are built in sustainable locations are contained in our sections on Cherwell's Places and below. More detail on managing housing supply is set out later in Section D.

Making Effective and Efficient Use of Land

Policy H 3

Efficient and Sustainable Use of Land

Housing development in Cherwell will be expected to make efficient and sustainable use of land. At least

40% of new homes built between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2026 will be constructed on previously

developed land. The redevelopment of Banbury Canalside and the former RAF Upper Heyford airbase

will be central to Cherwell's 'brownfield' land strategy.

The priority will be the re-use of previously developed land within urban areas and within villages that

have been identified as suitable places for additional residential development. Elsewhere the advantages

of re-using previously developed land will be weighed against other sustainability considerations.

The density of housing development will be expected to reflect the character and appearance of individual

localities but new homes will not be provided at less than 30 dwellings per hectare.

A.137 Cherwell's countryside, landscape and green spaces are important natural resources in maintaining

and improving biodiversity. They form the setting of our towns and villages, contribute to their identity

and the well-being of Cherwell's communities, and provide recreation opportunities. The countryside

remains an economically important agricultural resource.

A.138 It is important that 'greenfield' land is not developed unnecessarily and that we make effective and

efficient use of all land. 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. This means

ensuring that land and buildings earmarked for development or already in use are not underused and

that we make the most of vacant and derelict land and buildings.

A.139 The final Core Strategy will include a target for the development of previously developed land and a

strategy and trajectory for the delivery of such brownfield sites. Cherwell has relatively modest amounts of underused previously developed land but there are two sites which will be central

to the

Council's brownfield strategy: the former RAF Upper Heyford airbase which has now been granted

planning permission on appeal for a new settlement of 1075 dwellings (gross) with associated works

and facilities and the Canalside area at Banbury.

A.140 The amount of previously developed land that will be developed will be informed by completion of a

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and further work on employment land. Table 10

below summarises the current position excluding permissions for small sites (less than 10 dwellings):

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

Table 10 Current Expected Supply of Previously Developed and Greenfield Land

Housing Completions 2006-2009 1165 569
Deliverable and Developable Sites 2263 3583
Other Identified Housing Potential 234 0
New Sites:
Additional development at Banbury Canalside (1200 in total) 715 0
Other Previously Developed Sites 0 0
Other Greenfield Sites 0 4871
Total 4377 9023
Percentage 32.7% 67.3%

A.141 Although only 33% of new housing is presently expected to take place on previously developed land, unidentified small sites will have a significant effect on overall supply. It is therefore proposed to set a higher target that will help ensure that that small redevelopment and conversion opportunities are not lost and natural resources are not wasted.

Affordable Housing

Policy H 4

Affordable Housing Target

At least 3300 new affordable homes (net) will be provided in Cherwell between 2006 and 2026 (165 homes per year). 2500 of these will be provided at Bicester and Banbury. 800 will be provided elsewhere. Existing properties acquired by Registered Social Landlords will be considered as being additional to these targets.

Consultation Draft - February 2010
Draft Core Strategy

Policy H 5

Affordable Housing Requirements

At Banbury and Bicester, all proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 30% as affordable homes on site.
At Kidlington, all proposed developments that include 10 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 10 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 35% as affordable homes on site.
Elsewhere, all proposed developments that include 3 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 3 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 35% as affordable homes on site.
Explanation of whether or not sites are suitable for accommodating 10 or more dwellings in urban areas, or 3 or more in rural areas, will be expected to be included in applications for planning permission.
Where this policy would result in a requirement that part of an affordable home should be provided, a financial contribution of equivalent value will be required for that part only. Otherwise, financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances.
All qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate affordable homes.
It is expected that these requirements will be met without the use of social housing grant.

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 economic viability assessment can be undertaken.

Where development is proven to be unviable with the above requirements, negotiations with the promoters of development will take place. These negotiations will include consideration of: the mix and type of housing, the split between social rented and intermediate housing, the availability of social housing grant and the percentage of affordable housing to be provided.

A.142 Cherwell has a huge need for affordable housing - housing for social rent or 'intermediate' housing such as shared ownership. Local housing needs estimates (2009) suggest a need for some 390 affordable homes per year (288 on top of the current average supply of 102 per year). Using modelling work undertaken for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment (2007), it is estimated that the shortfall in the provision of affordable housing would be 270 homes per year on the assumption of delivery at current rates (an average of 102 dwellings per year or about 15% of South East Plan requirements (670 per year). Delivery at 25% of total South East Plan requirements would reduce the shortfall to about 170 per year, 30% to about 123 per year, and 40% to about 25 per year (based on SHMA modelling assumptions).

A.143 An Affordable Housing Viability Study (2009) has been produced to assess what levels of affordable housing could reasonably be required from new housing developments having regard to the costs of development and the need to ensure a flexible, responsive supply of housing land. In general, the higher land values in rural areas and at Kidlington allow for higher affordable housing requirements

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

per site than at Banbury and Bicester where land values are lower. Indeed, the Affordable Housing

Viability Study concludes that in some rural areas, a higher percentage of affordable housing would

be viable than we are proposing. The policies proposed are informed by the level of need in Cherwell,

viability considerations, the need to maintain housing delivery generally, and the need to establish a

clear workable policy framework.

A.144 The Affordable Housing Viability Study provides viable options for the delivery of affordable housing

without social housing grant. However, following this consultation the Council will review whether the

proposed requirements should be adjusted to take account of a grant assumption. It will also review

whether a financial contribution should be made where the policy would result in a part of an affordable

home to be provided or whether the affordable housing requirement should be rounded.

Policy RA 1

Village Categorisation

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

Table 14 Village Categorisation

Cat Village Type of development

North Cherwell Central Oxfordshire

Minor Development

Infilling

Conversions

Ambrosden, Begbroke, Kidlington,

Kirtlington, Launton, Weston on

the Green (*), Yarnton

Adderbury, Bloxham, Bodicote, Cropredy,

Deddington, Fritwell, Hook Norton, Steeple

Aston, Sibford Ferris/Gower

A

Infilling

Conversions

Arncott, Blackthorn, Bletchingdon,

Chesterton, Islip, Middleton Stoney

Claydon, Clifton, Finmere, Fringford,

Hempton, Great Bourton, Lower Heyford,

Middle Aston, Milcombe, Milton, South

Newington, Mollington, Wardington, Wroxton

B

C All other villages All other villages Conversions

(*) This village lies partly within and partly outside the Green Belt. In those parts that lie within the Green Belt, only

infilling and conversions will be permitted.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

B.134 This policy sets a framework by which unplanned “windfall” residential planning applications within

the built-up area of villages can be considered. The appropriate form of development will vary depending on the character of the village and development in the immediate locality. In all cases,

policy SD 13 will be applied in considering applications.

B.135 The definition of “minor development” will have regard to the size of the village and the general location

of the site within the village structure. Although the scope of new residential development in Kidlington

is considered to be limited, it is possible that somewhat larger sites where there is greater housing

potential than is envisaged by the policy can come forward for redevelopment. Such proposals would

not be ruled out as Kidlington is considered to be the most sustainable location for new development

outside of Banbury and Bicester.

B.136 Infilling will be regarded as being the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up

frontage that is suitable for residential development.

B.137 Within the category B villages listed in Table 14 are a number of much smaller villages. These are

Blackthorn within Central Oxfordshire and Claydon, Clifton, Great Bourton, Hempton, Lower Heyford,

Middle Aston, Milton, Mollington, South Newington, and Wardington within North Cherwell. All of

these are considered “satellite” villages within a cluster, as described in paras B.134 to B.135 above.

For example, Claydon, Great Bourton, Mollington and Wardington are clustered with Cropredy.

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.

B.138 This policy includes all those villages 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 SD 12 and on the key diagram.

The villages

of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke (all "type A" villages) are "inset" villages and therefore development

within them under this policy, will not be covered by Green Belt policy. All other villages within the

Green Belt, however, are "washed over" by Green Belt designation and these will be covered by

policy SD 12. In considering any residential proposals in such villages therefore, the requirements

of this policy will need to be read alongside those of policy SD 12. This is particularly the case for

Islip and those parts of Weston on the Green and Bletchingdon that lie within the Green Belt, where

infilling will be permitted. In considering any proposals, the Council will need to have regard to the

impact of the infilling proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.

Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas

B.139 In addition to setting out a framework for considering windfall proposals, the Core Strategy must set

out an approach for identifying the development of new sites for housing across the rural areas to

meet the strategic targets set in policy H 1.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

Policy RA 2

Distribution of Housing in the Rural Areas

Development of new housing will be directed to villages across the rural areas as follows:

Table 15 Distribution of Housing in the Rural Areas

North Cherwell Central Oxfordshire

Villages Total no. Villages Total no.

Adderbury, Bodicote, Bloxham, Deddington 350 Ambrosden, Launton 180

Cropredy, Hook Norton, Sibford Gower / 250 - 0

Ferris, Fritwell, Steeple Aston

Arcott, Bletchingdon, Chesterton, 220

Kidlington, Kirtlington, Middleton Stoney,

Weston on the Green, Yarnton

Finnere, Fringford, Milcombe, Wroxton 130

The precise number of homes to be allocated to an individual village, and the allocation of sites, will be

set out in the Delivery Development Plan Document. This document may put additional measures in place

to control the supply of rural housing.

At Bletchingdon and Weston on the Green this development will take place outside that part of the village

that is within the Green Belt.

B.140 The villages which are proposed to receive allocated development are set out in the policy. The figure

shown is for the number of homes to be distributed across the group as a whole. The Delivery Development Plan Document will set out precise level of development for each village and will make

land allocations to meet this target. It is anticipated at this stage that within each group the total

number of homes will be divided broadly equally between villages. This will, however, be considered further in the light of evidence from the SHLAA and other work as the Delivery DPD is prepared.

B.141 The choice of those villages that are suitable for allocations has been derived from the same information

by which the village categories have been identified (see paragraph B.131 above). The lists are not

the same for the following reasons:-

all of the cluster villages named in paragraph B.139 are not considered suitable for major new development. They may have a small role to play in assisting meeting housing needs in adjacent

larger villages, however they are not sustainable villages in their own right capable of accommodating significant levels of new development.

there is evidence from the Council's emerging Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

(SHLAA) that some villages are likely to have fewer available housing sites and their identification

within the policy has been adjusted accordingly. The SHLAA is still in preparation and it may be that when it is completed, the final list of villages may need to be amended prior to the submission of the Core Strategy.

Consultation Draft - February 2010

Draft Core Strategy

B.142 Within the policy are two villages that are "inset" within the Green Belt. These are Kidlington and

Yarnton. This Core Strategy is not proposing that any amendments to Green Belt boundaries are

made around these villages, and therefore any allocations would need to be within the villages. It

follows that these villages are therefore likely to have a lower capacity to accommodate new development than other villages where development on the edge of the village is possible.

The

SHLAA will help to establish more clearly the capacity of these villages and therefore the role they

can play in delivering this policy.

B.143 The distribution proposed in this policy will meet the strategic requirements for the rural areas in this

Core Strategy in full. No allowance has been made for unplanned windfall sites coming forward.

Nevertheless, it is anticipated that such windfall sites will come forward in accordance with policy RA

1 above, and as they do so, they will assist in meeting the requirements of the village for housing

under this policy. Therefore, the Delivery DPD may seek to phase the development of any allocated

sites within villages so that should windfall sites come forward, some allocated sites can be deleted

if they are no longer required.

