

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031

your place • your space
your say



Part 1
Adopted 20 July 2015

July 2015

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections

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



B.70 The Local Plan promotes a series of proposals to support a modal shift away from an over reliance on the car to less energy intensive forms of transport. The strategy proposes more sustainable locations for housing and employment growth, whilst recognising the importance of the car in a rural District. The strategy seeks to avoid increasing the function of the towns as dormitory centres by strengthening their employment base and transport connection to those sites.

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

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

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

ensure the impacts of growth at Bicester and Aylesbury on the A41 are fully addressed and appropriate mitigation considered.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections

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

We will support key transport proposals including:

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

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

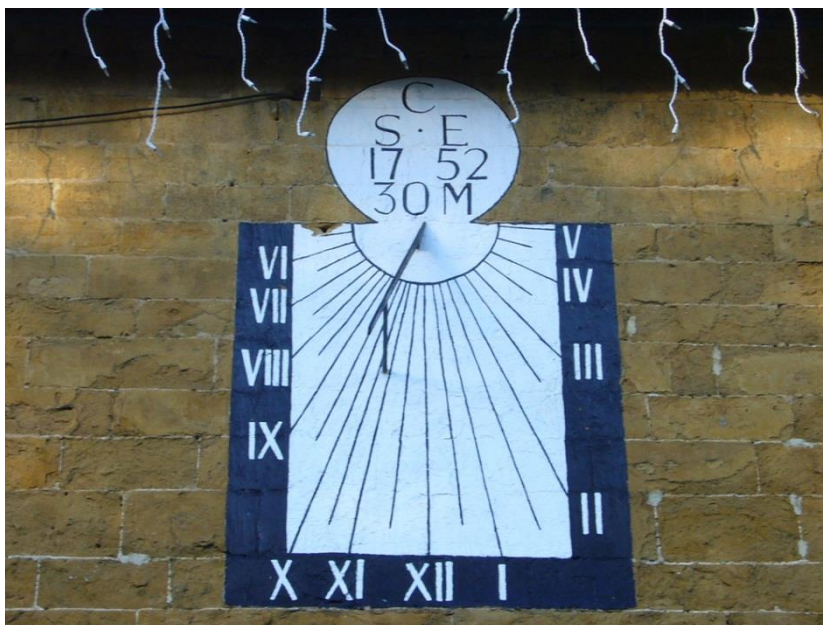
New development in the District will be required to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of development.

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

B.2 Theme Two: Policies for Building Sustainable Communities

Introduction

B.84 In order to build sustainable communities, we will seek to provide an appropriate mix of housing within Cherwell, including housing to address the requirements of a growing and ageing population.



B.85 We will require a mix of housing types, size and tenures, built to high design standards. We will also aim to secure mixed tenure as well as enabling new forms of housing such as community self-build and other imaginative solutions to housing need in the District to ensure new development results in balanced, mixed communities that have taken the housing needs of the District fully into account.

B.86 We wish to ensure that new development fully integrates with existing settlements to forge one community, rather than separate communities (see 'Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment'). We will also require investment in a range of community infrastructure including education, health, leisure facilities and public open space appropriate to the scale of proposed developments (see Section D 'The Infrastructure Delivery Plan').

B.87 Cherwell's countryside, landscape and green spaces are important natural resources. 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's intrinsic character and beauty

is important to the quality of life in Cherwell and remains an economically important agricultural resource.

B.88 By focusing development in and around the towns of Bicester and Banbury we aim to ensure that the housing growth which the District needs only takes place in the locations that are most sustainable and most capable of absorbing this new growth (see Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'). We support town centre locations for housing to create lively centres that are lived in and generate added footfall to support retail and commercial activities.

B.89 We aim to avoid development in inappropriate locations and coalescence with neighbouring settlements.

B.90 New housing needs to be provided in such a way that it minimises environmental impact, including through the elimination and control of pollution and the effective and efficient use of natural resources. It needs to be planned in a way that helps to reduce carbon emissions, reflects the functions of our settlements and protects or enhances the identity of our towns and villages and the sense of belonging of our residents (see Section B.3 'Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development').

B.91 Where appropriate we will encourage area renewal to invest in the physical infrastructure, community facilities and to improve the quality of the current housing stock, helping to secure better educational attainment, health and well-being and improved employment opportunities (see 'Policy BSC 5: Area Renewal').

B.92 In seeking to build sustainable communities the Council will support Town and Parish Councils and relevant Neighbourhood Forums in developing Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policy BSC 1: District Wide Housing Distribution

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

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

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

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

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

B.102 It is also important to make efficient use of land. In general, new housing should be provided at a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. However, the density of housing development will be expected to reflect the character and appearance of individual localities and development principles that are appropriate to the individual circumstances of sites.

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

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

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

Policy BSC3: Affordable Housing

B.104 Cherwell has a high level of need for affordable housing which is defined by the Government in the NPPF as comprising social rented, affordable rented and 'intermediate' housing (such as shared ownership) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.



B.105 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 has identified a net need of 407 affordable homes per year. This is calculated by taking into account the backlog need, need from newly forming households, existing households falling into need and the supply of affordable housing. The SHMA points out that its needs model is based on evidence at a point in time and does not, for example, take account of the role which the Private Rented Sector plays in meeting the needs of households which require affordable housing. The Council's previous 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment Review and Update 2012' concluded that the net housing need based on the ability to afford private rents is 186 homes per year or 831 homes per year based on the ability to buy an entry level property. By applying a social/affordable rent split based on affordability, the overall need was identified as being in the region of 300 homes per year. Assessing need is complex and the level of need will fluctuate. However, the need to provide affordable housing at viable levels is clear.

B.106 The Council's Housing Strategy 2012-17 takes into account Government policy on the provision of affordable housing and the Homes and Community Agency's current funding regime. The additional value in the stock of affordable housing can be used by Registered Providers to secure finance for further investment in new housing.

B.107 The Housing Strategy seeks to increase the supply of, and access to, affordable rented housing. It sets a target of delivering 750 affordable homes in total between 2012 and 2017 which include new homes, the acquisition of market homes by Registered Providers and bringing empty homes back into use. The Housing Strategy highlights the importance of developing sustainable communities.

B.108 The Housing Strategy recognises the need for affordable homes, and aims to ensure that Cherwell is well-placed to maximise investment by Registered Providers and to respond to opportunities as they arise. A Delivery Plan will be prepared to implement the strategy, which seeks

to maximise the resources available to support delivery, to maintain a close dialogue with Registered Providers, and to be innovative in the way affordable housing is provided.

B.109 Securing new affordable housing on site as part of larger developments is the most significant way in which homes can be provided. Policy BSC3 therefore seeks to achieve this so that the supply of new homes reflects the high level of need.

B.110 Housing proposals will need to provide affordable housing where they meet the qualifying thresholds. Where the number of dwellings proposed falls below the relevant threshold, or the number of dwellings is not specified, the Council will consider whether or not sites reasonably have capacity to provide the number of dwellings that would trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing. The purpose of this is to ensure that the policy requirement is not being avoided through inappropriate planning such as ineffective or inefficient use of land or a mix of dwellings that does not reflect other housing policies or local needs.

B.111 An Affordable Housing Viability Study has been produced to assess the levels of affordable housing that could reasonably be required from new housing developments. In general, the higher land values in rural areas and at Kidlington allow for higher affordable housing requirements per site than at Banbury and Bicester where land values are lower.

B.112 The Affordable Housing Viability Study demonstrates that in general affordable housing can be delivered in Cherwell without social housing grant or other grants. The Homes and Communities Agency expects that affordable housing requirements will be met without social housing grant and this assumption underpins this policy.

B.113 Where scheme viability is a concern, consideration of the potential availability of grant or other grant, and negotiations on the mix, type and tenure of housing will take place using an 'open-book' economic viability assessment. Unless otherwise agreed it will use the Council's residual value based, appraisal model.

B.114 The starting point for the mix of affordable housing to be secured will be Local Plan 'Policy BSC 4: Housing Mix', the Council's Housing Register and local housing need surveys. Credible information from Registered Providers and developers will also be considered.

B.115 Discussions as to whether it would be appropriate to include a 'cascade' mechanism in legal agreements, potentially enabling the secured form and/or quantum of affordable housing to be varied, will only be entered into with the benefit of an 'open-book' economic viability assessment and having regard to the risks to delivery in each case.

B.116 Financial contributions made under Policy BSC 3 will be secured by legal agreement for the provision of affordable housing.

B.117 The Council will support proposals for community self-build or self-finish affordable housing particularly where it will result in suitable empty properties being brought into residential use.

B.118 The Council has established a community self-build housing programme known as 'Build!®' and has financial commitment (subject to contract) from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) for new build and for the refurbishment of empty homes. It is a member of a Government-Industry

Self-Build Working Group and has contributed to a National Action Plan to develop community self-build.

B.119 The Council's Housing Strategy 2012-17 includes a target of delivering the first 180 community self-build homes through its 'Build!'® programme by 31 March 2015. The Council is also in the process of establishing a District-wide Community Land Trust which will help create the conditions for, and facilitate, community-led housing more generally. Affordable housing will be expected to reach the HCA standards identified in the Draft Planning Obligations SPD.

Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing

At Banbury and Bicester, all proposed developments that include 11 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 11 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

At Kidlington and elsewhere, all proposed developments that include 11 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 11 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 35% of new housing as affordable homes on site.

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 affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate affordable homes. Social rented housing will be particularly supported in the form of extra care or other supported housing. It is expected that these requirements will be met without the use of social housing grant or other 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 in house economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an external economic viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter.

Where development is demonstrated to be unviable with the above requirements, further negotiations 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/funding and the percentage of affordable housing to be provided.

The Council will require active consideration of proposals for community self-build or self-finish housing in particular where it is to a high design standard and will result in suitable empty properties being brought into residential use. Self-build and Self-finish should contribute towards meeting the need for affordable housing.

Affordable Housing will also be delivered through Policy Villages 3: Rural Exception Sites.

Policy BSC4: Housing Mix

B.120 The Local Plan aims not only to increase supply of housing but to encourage a mix that can help improve the functioning of the housing market system, make it more fluid, and enable households to more easily find and move to housing which they can afford and which better suits their circumstances.



B.121 There is need to provide a mix of housing in Cherwell that reflects the needs of an ageing population, a growth in smaller households and which meets the requirements for family housing. The mix of housing needs to enable movement through the market from one house type to another as the needs of households change. This movement frees up housing which might otherwise be unavailable.

B.122 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2014) provides conclusions on a strategic mix of housing for Oxfordshire over the next 20 years. The SHMA analyses the types and sizes of accommodation occupied by different ages of residents, projected changes in the population and estimates of future need and demand for different sizes of homes. The SHMA's conclusions are shown below:

SHMA Table 67: Conclusions regarding Mix of Homes, HMA Level

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed
Market	5%	25%	45%	25%
Affordable	25-30%	30-35%	30-35%	5-10%
All Dwellings	15%	30%	40%	15%

B.123 The SHMA does advise, however, that at an individual local authority level, there is a greater need for 3-bed properties in Cherwell and that the overall mix identified is focused more towards smaller properties than the existing mix of homes in Oxfordshire.

B.124 The SHMA also advises that in applying policies for housing mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to "...the nature of the development site and character of the area, and to the up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level" (paragraph 7.40).

B.125 The need for housing for those with care needs is also significant. 'Extra care' housing in particular will be important in meeting the housing needs of an older population across all tenures. Extra care housing comprises self-contained accommodation for older and disabled people which enables independent living by providing a range of support facilities on the premises and 24-hour care services. It can help people live longer in their own homes either securely alone or with partners or friends. It meets a need between traditional sheltered housing and residential care and can be purpose-built or adapted accommodation. People have their own front doors but also have the opportunity to benefit from communal facilities. Extra care can also contribute in achieving more social cohesion by providing an opportunity for community living and a better mix of housing within residential areas.

B.126 The NPPF recognises that a key driver of change in the housing market over the next 20 years will be the growth in the population of elderly people. Evidence produced for the Council's former Housing Strategy for Older People (2010-2015) identified a requirement for an additional 788 units from 2010 to 2026 to meet extra care and 'enhanced sheltered' needs. Extra care remains an important housing option in the District Housing Strategy 2012-2017. The SHMA also highlights that an ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people will mean an increasing demand for specialist housing.

B.127 An assessment of the development viability of extra care housing (2011) concluded that the inclusion of extra care housing within mixed tenure schemes will not significantly impact on the viability and deliverability of housing. Consultation with providers suggests that schemes will need to comprise at least 45 dwellings to make the provision of support and care facilities operationally viable.

Policy BSC 4: Housing Mix

New residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed and inclusive communities.

The mix of housing will be negotiated having regard to the Council's most up-to-date evidence on housing need and available evidence from developers on local market conditions.

Housing sites of at least 400 dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 45 self-contained extra care dwellings as part of the overall mix. Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing (use class C3) for older people will be required.

Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older and/or disabled people and those with mental health needs and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities. All

proposals will be expected to provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing.

Policy BSC 9: Public Services and Utilities

B.150 Waste management and disposal is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council and the District Council will continue to consider the emerging Minerals and Waste Development Framework in the preparation of the Local Plan.



B.151 A new library is proposed for Banbury as part of the Spiceball Development Area (Policy Banbury 9). In Bicester a new library is proposed as part of the town centre redevelopment ('Policy Bicester 5: Strengthening Bicester Town Centre'). The new improved library services will be provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

B.152 The preparation of the Local Plan has highlighted the need for additional burial grounds to be provided in some locations. A new burial site for Bicester is being investigated ('Policy Bicester 9: Burial Site in Bicester'). In other cases the need for additional burial site provision will be more appropriately addressed through the Local Plan Part 2 and/or by way of planning application.

B.153 The Planning Obligations Draft SPD provides more details on the provision of public services as part of new development including emergency services (police, fire & ambulance) and places of worship.

B.154 Preliminary enquiries with utility companies have taken place with a view to identifying the infrastructure requirements and constraints to future development in the District. Gas, electricity and heat supply and investment in electricity infrastructure is provided by the private sector and the Council will continue to work with suppliers and distributors to provide the necessary services to strategic sites. Developers will need to take account of the location of existing services and will need to contribute financially to their relocation on development sites.

B.155 Thames Water, Anglian Water and Severn Trent Water provide the majority of the water supply and waste services in the District. Water services business plans are based on 5 year schedules and the scale of investment is substantial. Timelines vary on projects and the Council will work with the water companies to plan the delivery of specific projects.

B.156 Telecommunications infrastructure will be provided as part of the strategic allocations, for example it is a requirement of the Eco-towns PPS that homes should be provided with connection to Superfast Broadband. As a result of the investment by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council full District wide coverage will have been secured by 2017 to support increased business and residential use, supporting increased home working, new business formation and new service provision.

Policy BSC 9: Public Services and Utilities

The Council will support proposals which involve new or improvements to public services/utilities if they are required to enable the successful delivery of sites and where they accord with other relevant policies in the Plan. All new developments will be expected to include provision for connection to Superfast Broadband.

Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision

B.157 The Sustainable Community Strategy, “Our district, our future” 2010, seeks to ensure that social infrastructure grows at the same rate as our communities and that existing deficiencies in provision are addressed, and these aims are reflected in the objectives of this plan. The responsibility for provision of open space and recreation facilities in the District is shared between the County, District, Town and Parish Councils, private sports clubs and associations, and meeting the plan's objectives will therefore require effective partnership working.



B.158 The District's PPG17 Open Space Sport and Recreational Facilities Needs Assessment, Audit and Strategy 2006 and the subsequent Green Spaces and Playing Pitch Strategies 2008 (see Appendix 3 Evidence Base) highlighted the need to protect all sites identified in the audit to ensure an adequate supply of open space provision.

B.159 Development proposals that would result in the loss of sites will be assessed in accordance with guidance in the NPPF and NPPG, and will not be permitted unless the proposal would not result in the loss of an open space of importance to the character or amenity of the surrounding area, an assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that the site is surplus to requirements including consideration of all functions that open space can perform, or the Council is satisfied that a suitable alternative site of at least equivalent community benefit in terms of quantity and quality is to be provided within an agreed time period. Sport England will be consulted on proposals affecting playing fields. Consideration will be given to the need to designate Local Green Spaces (green areas of particular importance to the local community) in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG, through the preparation of the Local Plan Part 2.

B.160 Alternative uses are only likely to be permitted in exceptional circumstances bearing in mind that all of the analysis areas as defined in the PPG17 assessment have deficiencies in at least two types of open space provision. A partial update of the assessment in 2011 indicated deficiencies of one or more types of provision. In addition, apparent "surpluses" in provision often compensate for shortfalls in other types of provision locally, and some larger areas of green space serve wider than local needs with usage catchments beyond the ward boundaries in which they are located.

B.161 The PPG17 Assessment and subsequent Green Spaces and Playing Pitch Strategies established the current and future deficiencies in open space and recreation provision together with recommendations as to how deficiencies should be met. These comprise a combination of improving or enhancing existing provision, using existing open space of one type of provision to meet deficiencies in another type of provision, or through new provision. These assessments and strategies were undertaken before the distribution of development over an extended plan period had been established and further work will be undertaken in conjunction with the Bicester and Banbury Masterplans, the Kidlington Framework Masterplan and the Local Plan Part 2 to update future needs and define new provision for open space. More detail on open space is set out under Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places' and in Section D 'The Infrastructure Delivery Plan'. The quality standards as set out in the strategies, together with information contained in the PPG17 study on the quality and value of open space sites, will be used as a guide in considering enhancements to existing provision. The identification of sites for new provision, other than those identified on the Policies Map (see Appendix 5: Maps) and related to the strategic sites identified in the Local Plan, will be included in the Local Plan Part 2.

B.162 Proposals for new development will be expected to contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision in accordance with Policies BSC 10, BSC 11 and BSC12 below.

Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision

The Council will encourage partnership working to ensure that sufficient quantity and quality of, and convenient access to open space, sport and recreation provision is secured through the following measures:

- **Protecting existing sites**
- **Addressing existing deficiencies in provision through qualitative enhancement of existing provision, improving access to existing facilities or securing new provision, and**
- **Ensuring that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.**

In determining the nature of new or improved provision the Council will be guided by the evidence base and consult with town and parish councils, together with potential users of the green space wherever possible, to ensure that provision meets local needs.

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 in house economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an external economic viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter.

Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision- Outdoor Recreation

B.163 The PPG17 Assessment set out recommended standards of open space provision. These were updated as part of the Green Spaces and Playing Pitch Strategy and a further partial update has been undertaken since the Draft Core Strategy (2010), with the findings being reflected in the policy below. The strategies set out local standards for each typology of open space, but in recognition of the multi-functional nature of many areas of open space, and the need for flexibility in determining the precise composition of provision in new development, combined quantitative standards of provision were recommended. Should the additional analysis work referred to in paragraph B.161 above result in amendments to the open space standards, the standards will be updated in the Local Plan Part 2 and the Developer Contributions SPD.

Table 7: Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation				
Type of provision	Quantitative standard	Accessibility standard	Minimum size of provision	Threshold for on-site provision
General green space (parks and gardens/natural semi-natural/amenity green space)	2.4 ha per 1000 urban dwellers	5 minute walk (amenity open space) (400m)	200 sq m	10 urban dwellings
	2.74 ha per 1000 rural/urban edge dwellers	15 minute walk other (1200m)		6 rural/urban edge dwellings
Play space (combining provision for younger and older children including MUGAs)	0.78 ha per 1000 people	5 minutes walk (400m) except for NEAPs 15 m walk (1200m)	LAP- 100 sq m activity zone; 400 sq m including buffer	10 dwellings (for a LAP)
			LEAP- 400 sq m activity zone; 3600 sq m including buffer	50 dwellings (for a LEAP and LAP)
			NEAP- 1000 sq m activity zone; 8500 sq m including buffer	100 dwellings for a NEAP and LEAPs/LAPs.

			NB In some cases a combined all-age area of play will be preferable to provision of LAPs/LEAPs/NEAPs.	
Outdoor sports provision (combining tennis courts, bowling greens, golf courses and playing pitches) (to be accompanied by changing facilities where appropriate)	1.13 ha per 1000 people	Football, rugby, cricket: 10 minute walk (800m) urban areas, 10 minute travel time (8km) rural areas Tennis courts: 15 minute walk (1200m) urban areas, 15 minute travel time (12km) rural areas Bowling greens, golf courses: 15 minute travel time (12km) Hockey: 20 minute travel time.	0.12 ha	65 dwellings
Allotments	0.37 ha per 1000 people	10 minute walk (800m)	0.2 ha	275 dwellings

Note: See Glossary for terms: MUGAs, LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs

Table 8: Qualitative Standards of Provision

Parks and Gardens	A welcoming, clean, well maintained site that is free from vandalism and graffiti and provides a range of facilities for all users, with a good variety of well kept flowers, trees and shrubs and ancillary facilities that will enhance the user's visit and feeling of safety. The site should reflect local traditions and allow for the viewing of public art.
Natural / Semi-natural green space	A publicly accessible, spacious, clean and litter free site with clear pathways and natural features that encourage wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Sites should be maintained to protect nature conservation interest, with interpretive signage and safety features where appropriate.
Amenity green space	A clean and well-maintained green space site with well kept grass and varied vegetation and large enough to accommodate informal play. Sites should have appropriate ancillary facilities (benches, litter bins) and landscaping in the right places, providing a spacious outlook and overall enhancing the appearance of the local environment.
Play provision	A site providing a suitable mix of well-maintained formal equipment and an enriched play environment to encourage informal play and recreation by children and young people. A safe and secure location with good access to the site that includes ancillary facilities such as teen shelters and seating.
MUGAs	Safe and secure locations with good access to sites that include ancillary facilities such as teen shelters and seating.
Tennis courts	Courts should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be free from dog fouling, vandalism, graffiti and litter• have level, well-drained and good quality surfaces• have good quality ancillary facilities• have maintenance and management that ensures safety and effective usage.
Bowling greens	Greens should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be free from dog fouling, vandalism, graffiti and litter.• have level, well-drained and good quality surfaces• have good quality ancillary facilities• have maintenance and management that ensures safety and effective usage

Golf courses	<p>Courses should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be free from dog fouling, vandalism, graffiti and litter. • have level, well-drained and good quality surfaces • have good quality ancillary facilities • have maintenance and management that ensures safety and effective usage
Allotments	A clean, well kept secure site that encourages sustainable communities, biodiversity and healthy living with appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways to and within the site.
Churchyards / cemeteries	A well maintained, clean and safe site with the provision of seating areas, clear footpaths and car parking either on the site or nearby. The site will encourage biodiversity by providing varied vegetation and aim to be an oasis for quiet contemplation.
Green corridors	Clean, well maintained safe and secure routes with clear, level and well drained paths, which are provided by the protection and reinforcement of existing vegetation. The green corridor should provide links to major open spaces, urban areas and community accommodation such as seating and toilets where appropriate.
Civic spaces	A clean, safe, litter and graffiti free community site which encourages a sense of place where local distinctiveness and traditions can be celebrated. The civic space will provide public art and ancillary facilities, where appropriate, to accommodate a wide range of uses.

B.164 The minimum size of provision and thresholds for on-site provision are intended to act as a guide to developers, however the composition of provision will depend on the details of the proposal and its location. For example, combined play area schemes to cover all age groups may be preferable to provision of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in some cases. Similarly, the smallest size site where on-site provision for outdoor sports is likely to be possible is 65 dwellings as this would generate a requirement sufficient for two tennis courts; however this will not be appropriate for all sites of that size. In addition, open space intended to maintain character or improve connectivity between sites needs to be large enough to be functional, irrespective of the standards.

B.165 Detailed guidance on the implementation of this policy is set out in the Planning Obligations Draft SPD. The general principles underlying the policy are that all new dwellings should contribute towards the provision of open space. For larger developments (10 dwellings or more in urban areas and 6 dwellings or more in rural areas), provision should be made on site unless this is not possible or appropriate.

B.166 For smaller developments where on-site provision is not achievable, a financial contribution will be sought from developers towards the improvement of provision elsewhere, where

appropriate schemes can be identified within the defined catchment. The identification of schemes for which financial contributions will be sought will be defined in the Developer Contributions SPD. In some cases catchment areas will relate to wards, in some to villages and in others to clusters of villages, having regard to accessibility standards outlined above and the likelihood of development coming forward at a rate sufficient to provide the identified schemes.

B.167 The nature of the development including the size and type of each dwelling and their anticipated occupancy rate will be taken into account in determining the contribution required. It may also be appropriate to seek green space provision, or a contribution towards such provision, in conjunction with other forms of development.

Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation

Development proposals will be required to contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its management and maintenance. The amount, type and form of open space will be determined having regard to the nature and size of development proposed and the community needs likely to be generated by it. Provision should usually be made on site in accordance with the minimum standards of provision set out in 'Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation'. Where this is not possible or appropriate, a financial contribution towards suitable new provision or enhancement of existing facilities off site will be sought, secured through a legal agreement.

North West Bicester eco-development proposals for open space will be considered against the requirements of 'Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town'.

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 in-house economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an external viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter.

Policy BSC 12: Indoor Sport, Recreation and Community Facilities

B.168 The PPG17 Indoor Sports and Recreational Facilities Assessment (2006) indicated an under-supply of sports hall and swimming pool provision in the District but concluded that the sports centre modernisation programme would address these deficiencies.



B.169 In terms of future needs to 2026, the assessment indicated that the projected shortfall in swimming pool and sports hall provision could be met through sports centre modernisation combined with dual use agreements to allow public use of school facilities out of school hours. The use of village/community halls for sporting facilities was also highlighted and a survey of village and community halls is currently being undertaken to assess the adequacy of provision. The PPG17 assessment only covered the period to 2026 and in view of the extended plan period and increased level of growth associated with it, a review of indoor sport, recreation and community facilities provision is being undertaken. Initial indications are that there will be a deficiency in sports hall provision by 2031 with unmet demand being particularly noticeable around Bicester. There will be some unmet demand in swimming pool provision by 2031, with a capacity issue at existing facilities and deterioration in attractiveness at the older facilities through aging. Unmet demand could be addressed by the provision of new facilities or increasing the capacity and quality of existing facilities. Further location specific information is included in Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'. The findings will be used to determine whether additional facilities are needed and inform the application of Policy BSC12.

B.170 Should the additional analysis work referred to in paragraph B169 above result in amendments to the indoor sports standards, the standards will be updated in the Local Plan Part 2 and the Developer Contributions SPD. The local standards of provision developed by the PPG17 study are set out below:

Facility Type	Local Quantity Standard per 1000 Population
Sports Hall	0.315 badminton courts
Swimming Pool	9.31m ² swimming water area
Squash Courts	0.059 courts
Health and Fitness	5.28 stations

Indoor Bowls	0.045 rinks
STPs	0.046 pitches
Athletics Tracks	0.0012 8 lane facility

Table 10: Local Quality Standards

Design and technical standard	All new build and refurbishment schemes to be designed in accordance with Sport England Guidance Notes, which provide detailed technical advice and standards for the design and development of sports facilities.
Facility operation and management standard	All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities operation, b) Customer relations, c) staffing and d) Service and development review. The detail of internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy.
Accessibility standard	15 minutes travel time.

B.171 Additional guidance on how the policy and the above standards will be applied is contained in the Planning Obligations Draft SPD. Development proposals will be expected to contribute towards provision commensurate with the needs generated by the development.

Policy BSC 12: Indoor Sport, Recreation and Community Facilities

The Council will encourage the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities, and encourage partnership working to ensure that built sports provision is maintained in accordance with local standards of provision by the following means:

- **Protecting and enhancing the quality of existing facilities**
- **Improving access to existing facilities**
- **Ensuring that development proposals contribute towards the provision of new or improved facilities where the development would generate a need for sport, recreation and community facilities which cannot be met by existing provision.**

B.3 Theme Three: Policies for Ensuring Sustainable Development

Introduction

B.172 To maintain as well as maximise the quality of living in Cherwell District we need to value our environment and find ways to reduce our impact upon it. This includes taking steps to progressively reduce our reliance on meeting our energy needs from fossil sources.



B.173 Critical to achieving progress towards a lower carbon economy is the provision of quality employment in the District and public transport options for rail and bus to reduce the need to travel by private car, hence the importance of Theme One: Securing a Sustainable Local Economy. But we also need to manage development to ensure that the quality of our environment is valued and sustained.

B.174 The Local Plan will help to ensure that growth and development does not take place at the expense of the very features which make Cherwell unique. For example, coalescence between the areas for strategic development and neighbouring villages.

B.175 This Theme sets out how development impact is to be managed by the need to respect the local environment, the need to meet rising building standards and the need to maintain a high quality natural and built environment.

B.176 This Theme also includes provision for protecting important heritage assets such as the Oxford Canal and for ensuring that what is built whether housing or commercial development is to the highest quality of design possible.

Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

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

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



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

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

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

B.180 There is increasing recognition that reducing carbon emissions is important in reducing and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Climate Change Act 2008 has an objective of an 80% reduction (from a 1990 baseline) in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. This can be achieved by, for example, reducing dependence on private cars and locating new development in sustainable, accessible, locations, increasing energy efficiency, or by increasing the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources. It is particularly important to reduce carbon emissions from dwellings and business through increasing energy efficiency. Similarly it is important to ensure that we adapt to the inevitable changes to future climate. This applies to the built development, its location, design, layout and proposed land uses, as well as the natural environment, by seeking to reduce exacerbated habitat fragmentation by increasing landscape permeability and connectivity (see 'Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment', 'Policy ESD15 Built and Historic Environment' and 'Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure').

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

- the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy 'Our District Our Future'

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

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

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

Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

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

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

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

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

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

Policy ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions

B.184 Whilst we need to promote renewable energy where appropriate (see 'Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction'), it would be counter-productive to encourage generation of renewable energy if energy is being wasted by inefficiency. As such Policy ESD 2 expresses our support for an 'energy hierarchy'.



B.185 An Energy Statement will be required for proposals for major residential developments (over 10 dwellings), and all non-residential development to demonstrate how the energy hierarchy has been applied. The Energy Statement can form a standalone document or be part of the Design and Access Statement. The Council will produce a template for use in preparing energy statements.

B.186 Carbon emissions reductions can be achieved through a range of “allowable solutions”; measures which secure carbon savings off site. These have yet to be defined by the government but could potentially include investment in off site low and zero carbon technologies. The concept is relatively new and is seen as a way to enable developments to become carbon neutral where it is not possible to deal with all carbon emissions through on site measures. It will not always be cost effective or technically feasible to meet the zero carbon standard through on site measures and the government is therefore proposing that the zero carbon standard could be achieved by mitigating the remaining emissions off-site through the use of allowable solutions. The Council will support the implementation of the national approach to allowable solutions once defined and any additional implementation guidance required at a local level will be set out in the Local Plan Part 2 and the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell SPD’.

Policy ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions

In seeking to achieve carbon emissions reductions, we will promote an 'energy hierarchy' as follows:

- **Reducing energy use, in particular by the use of sustainable design and construction measures**
- **Supplying energy efficiently and giving priority to decentralised energy supply**
- **Making use of renewable energy**
- **Making use of allowable solutions.**

B.187 The detailed application of the energy hierarchy in assessing proposals will be explained in the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell SPD.

B.188 Policies on each element of the energy hierarchy are set out in order below.

Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction

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



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

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

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

Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction

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

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

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

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

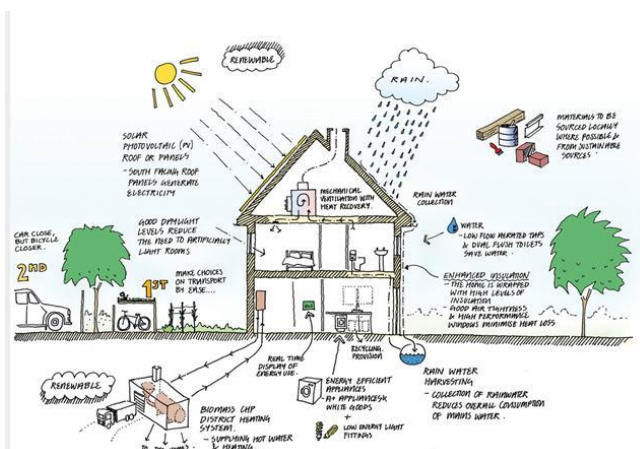
All development proposals will be encouraged to reflect high quality design and high environmental standards, demonstrating sustainable construction methods including but not limited to:

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

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

Policy ESD 4: Decentralised Energy Systems

B.193 This policy sets out the Council's support for decentralised energy systems, the second step of the energy hierarchy in 'Policy ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy'.



B.194 The national Heat Strategy aims to ensure there is affordable, secure and low carbon heating in a nation where 70% of all heat currently comes from natural gas, a fossil fuel. Nearly half the energy we use in the UK is used for heating of one sort or another and 52% of natural gas consumed in the UK in 2011 was used to provide heat for buildings and industry (Heat Strategy, DECC, 2013). Our 'Renewable Energy and Sustainable Construction Study' (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base) found that District Heating and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) will have an important role in delivering low carbon and renewable power and heat in the District. The Heat Strategy and the Carbon Plan (2011) both emphasise the urgent national need to decarbonise our heat supply in order to meet commitments to reduce carbon emissions (Climate Change Act 2008). The Local Plan seeks to tackle this by increasing thermal efficiency through better insulation of buildings ('Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction') and through Policy, ESD 4, by encouraging efficient heat delivery systems.

B.195 Briefly, District Heating involves the distribution of heat (for space heating and hot water) from a decentralised energy centre connected to local customers via a private heat distribution network, meaning that systems can be more efficient, avoiding losses over larger transmission and distribution networks. CHP systems involve the utilisation of 'waste' heat produced when fuel is burnt to generate electricity. Trigeneration, supplying chilled water for cooling, is also possible).

B.196 The fuel source in both DH and CHP systems can be either non renewable or renewable (renewable heat installations will of course contribute to meeting national renewable energy targets). In the UK most DH networks are linked to a gas fired CHP system or use waste heat generated from industrial processes. Some parts of rural Cherwell are without mains gas ('off-gas areas') and here biomass powered DH/CHP could be appropriate. The Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Map at Appendix 5 'Thematic Maps' shows the broad potential for decentralised heat supply in the District, illustrating any potential waste heat sources, the existing DH/CHP schemes in the District that could be extended, the off-gas areas in the District, and the typical major users of heat that could anchor a district heating system. This map should be used in combination with the DECC's mapping of areas of high heat demand density to inform more detailed feasibility assessments of the potential for DH/CHP in new developments in Cherwell. The Council will produce guidance and a template for use in preparing feasibility assessments.

Policy ESD 4: Decentralised Energy Systems

The use of decentralised energy systems, providing either heating (District Heating (DH)) or heating and power (Combined Heat and Power (CHP)) will be encouraged in all new developments.

A feasibility assessment for DH/CHP, including consideration of biomass fuelled CHP, will be required for:

- **All residential developments for 100 dwellings or more**
- **All residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more**
- **All applications for non-domestic developments above 1000m² floorspace.**

The feasibility assessment should be informed by the renewable energy map at Appendix 5 'Maps' and the national mapping of heat demand densities undertaken by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base).

Where feasibility assessments demonstrate that decentralised energy systems are deliverable and viable, such systems will be required as part of the development unless an alternative solution would deliver the same or increased benefit.

Policy ESD 5: Renewable Energy

B.197 This policy sets out the Council's support for renewable energy where appropriate, the third step in the energy hierarchy of 'Policy ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy', in order to contribute to national carbon emissions reductions and renewable energy generation targets. The Council will produce guidance and a template for use in preparing feasibility assessments. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy will be considered against Policy ESD 5 in addition to current government advice in the NPPF and NPPG.



B.198 Mapping of spatial opportunities for renewable energy has been undertaken in The Cherwell Renewable Energy and Sustainable Construction Study (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base) which sets out the potential for different types of renewable energy development in the District and maps the broad spatial opportunities for renewables. We have not allocated specific spatial opportunities for large scale renewable energy in this Local Plan, primarily because very few opportunities have been identified and even these are subject to constraints which require detailed investigation. We have however mapped the broad potential for District heating opportunities in Cherwell (see 'Policy ESD 4: Decentralised Energy Systems').

B.199 Based on local evidence available at the current time (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base) opportunities for large scale wind generation are considered to be limited and uncertain, although there is potential for scattered single turbines or small clusters. Policy ESD5 will apply to all proposals for wind turbine development including monitoring masts. In line with the UK Renewable Energy Strategy, the community ownership of wind power and other renewable energy schemes is encouraged within Cherwell.

B.200 Impacts on residential amenity are particularly pertinent in relation to wind turbines and wind farm development. To minimise adverse impacts on residential amenity, the Council will apply minimum separation distances between turbines and dwellings. Further guidance on separation distances is set out in the Council's "Planning Guidance on the Residential Amenity Impacts of Wind Turbines Development" document (2011).

B.201 There is increasing interest in the development of large scale solar PV arrays in Cherwell. The issues of local significance set out below will be relevant considerations in the determination of such proposals as well as the need to protect the District's high quality agricultural land (Grades 1 and 2).

B.202 Policy in relation to renewable energy generation in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is set out in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, which has been adopted by this council as supplementary planning guidance.

Policy ESD 5: Renewable Energy

The Council supports renewable and low carbon energy provision wherever any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily. The potential local environmental, economic and community benefits of renewable energy schemes will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that there is no unacceptable adverse impact, including cumulative impact, on the following issues, which are considered to be of particular local significance in Cherwell:

- **Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas**
- **Visual impacts on local landscapes**
- **The historic environment including designated and non designated assets and their settings**
- **The Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness**
- **Aviation activities**
- **Highways and access issues, and**
- **Residential amenity.**

A feasibility assessment of the potential for significant on site renewable energy provision (above any provision required to meet national building standards) will be required for:

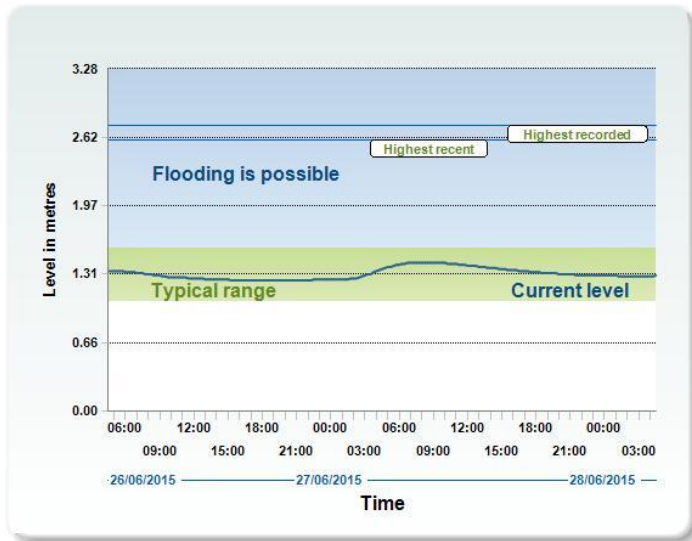
- **All residential developments for 100 dwellings or more**
- **All residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more**
- **All applications for non-domestic developments above 1000m² floorspace.**

Where feasibility assessments demonstrate that on site renewable energy provision is deliverable and viable, this will be required as part of the development unless an alternative solution would deliver the same or increased benefit. This may include consideration of 'allowable solutions' as Government Policy evolves.

Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

B.203 The risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses across the District is high, with large extensive floodplains a feature of our rural landscape. The District falls within three major river catchments. The River Cherwell forms part of the larger Thames catchment, which comprises about 80% of the District's total area covering much of the urban and rural development in the District. During flood conditions the River Cherwell also largely co-joins with the adjacent Oxford Canal. The

Great Ouse catchment covers approximately 15% of the District's total area and the Warwickshire Avon catchment approximately 5%. Groundwater and sewer flooding have also occurred at various locations in the District. Flooding events are detailed in the Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and further information is also provided in the Council's Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) (See Appendix 3: Evidence Base).



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

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

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

Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the District through using a sequential approach to development; locating vulnerable developments in areas at lower risk of flooding. Development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and where necessary the exceptions test as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Development will only be permitted in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and the benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding.

In addition to safeguarding floodplains from development, opportunities will be sought to restore natural river flows and floodplains, increasing their amenity and biodiversity value. Building over or culverting of watercourses should be avoided and the removal of existing culverts will be encouraged.

Existing flood defences will be protected from damaging development and where development is considered appropriate in areas protected by such defences it must allow for the maintenance and management of the defences and be designed to be resilient to flooding.

Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals in the following situations:

- **All development proposals located in flood zones 2 or 3**
- **Development proposals of 1 hectare or more located in flood zone 1**
- **Development sites located in an area known to have experienced flooding problems**
- **Development sites located within 9m of any watercourses.**

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

- **There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year storm event with an allowance for climate change (the design storm event)**
- **Developments will not flood from surface water up to and including the design storm event or any surface water flooding beyond the 1 in 30 year storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.**

Development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.

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

B.208 The Council's Level 1 SFRA (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base) provides the framework for applying the sequential and exception tests in the District. The SFRA identifies and maps the risk of flooding across the District based on a range of data and taking into account predicted climate change impacts, and is a useful source of information in undertaking site specific flood risk assessments particularly in relation to specific locations across the District. The SFRA also highlights the biodiversity opportunities associated with the use of sustainable flood risk management techniques, for example in enhancing or creating priority habitats such as grazing marsh, wet grassland, wetlands and aquatic habitats (particularly so in the Conservation Target Areas - see 'Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas').

B.209 Level 2 SFRA's have also been carried out to assess the level of flood risk for strategic site allocations in more detail (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base). The assessments provide site specific

guidance for flood risk assessments, policy recommendations and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) guidance. The findings of the assessments will be taken into account in the final determination of planning applications at the strategic sites.

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

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

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

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

Location	Site Specific FRA Requirement
Wherever applicable	Where a site is in close proximity of the Oxford Canal, the Level 3 FRA should include breach analysis.
Wherever applicable	Flood defended areas will require a FRA to include assessment of risk from catastrophic failure of defences.
Banbury	A detailed level 3 FRA is required for development within the River Cherwell Floodplain to include flood compensation. Groundwater risk to be highlighted at Crouch Hill.
North East Biceser	A level 2 FRA using existing data can be applied.
South East	A level 3 FRA including hydraulic modelling will be required in the vicinities of these

Bicester	watercourses.
Kidlington	Where EA modelled data is available a level 2 FRA can be completed using existing modelled flood levels. Where no data is available a Level 3 FRA including hydraulic modelling may be required for sites in close proximity to the Rowell Brook or the River Cherwell. A level 2 FRA to include detailed assessment of groundwater flood risk should be included at all sites.
Rural Areas	There are village specific recommendations contained in the SFRA

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

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

Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

B.215 Policy ESD 7 sets out the Council's approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Potential flooding and pollution risks from surface water can be reduced by reducing the volume and rate of water entering the sewerage system and watercourses. Managing drainage more sustainably in this way can ensure that developments are better adapted to the predicted impacts of climate change in the South East, which include more intense rainfall events. Policy ESD 7 is supported by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which presumes that SuDS will be used for all new developments and redevelopments in order to prevent surface water run-off from increasing flood risk, and sets out that national standards be published to address SuDS design, construction, operation and maintenance issues at a national level.

B.216 SuDS seek to manage surface water as close to its source as possible, mimicking surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development. Typically this approach involves a move away from piped systems to softer engineering solutions. SuDS are considered to be suitable for use in association with developments across the District. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required to be submitted to accompany development proposals these should be used to investigate how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

B.217 In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, multiple benefits

including for recreation and wildlife should be delivered. Proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the drainage structures.

B.218 All relevant organisations should meet at an early stage to agree on the most appropriate drainage system for the particular development. These organisations may include the Local Authority, the Sewage Undertaker, Oxfordshire County Council as the LLFA and Highways Authority, and the Environment Agency. Highways SuDS will be adopted by Oxfordshire County Council but must be located on the most appropriate land, requiring consideration of the need to provide access for maintenance purposes, and topographical factors. Non-highway SuDS draining two properties or more will be adopted by the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) after Schedule 3 of the 2010 Act comes into force.

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

Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

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

Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

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

Our Core Assets

Policy ESD 8: Water Resources

B.220 In considering development proposals, the Council will use Policy ESD 8 together with 'Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction', 'Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management' and 'Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems' (SuDS) to reduce the impact of development on the water environment, maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use. This will assist in contributing to the objectives of the Water Framework Directive which seeks to protect and enhance the quality of water bodies, and indicates that development

should not result in any deterioration in the status of surface water bodies. Some development can remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on controlled water and human health. These policies together with Policy ESD 8 are also intended to help deliver the actions contained in the Thames River Basin Management Plan. These actions highlight the importance of development proposals contributing to an improved water environment, through the use of sustainable design and construction techniques for water efficiency, water quality and sustainable flood management, and the incorporation of appropriate green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements.



B.221 Research carried out by the Environment Agency and set out in the Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMs) shows that Cherwell District lies within an area of serious water stress and the Upper Cherwell area (including Banbury) has been over abstracted. Policy ESD 8 will be used to ensure that new development is located in areas where adequate water supply can be provided from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. In addition 'Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change' and 'Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction' will ensure new development incorporates water efficiency measures, reducing demand.

Policy ESD 8: Water Resources

The Council will seek to maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use.

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment. Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted.

Development will only be permitted where adequate water resources exist, or can be provided without detriment to existing uses. Where appropriate, phasing of development will be used to enable the relevant water infrastructure to be put in place in advance of development commencing.

Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

B.222 Conserving biodiversity is an important element of sustainable development. Government guidance in the NPPF and NPPG indicates that in delivering sustainable development local authorities should enhance as well as protect biodiversity and natural habitats. It is also recognised that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change. This reinforces the importance of considering climate change impacts in seeking to avoid habitat fragmentation. Following an initiative in the Natural Environment White Paper 2011, a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire ('Wild Oxfordshire') was set up with the aim of encouraging all sectors to consider the natural environment in decision making and recognise the wider social and economic benefits biodiversity brings. The Council will have regard to the views of 'Wild Oxfordshire' in ensuring sustainable development.

B.223 Cherwell District contains many areas of high ecological value including sites of international and national importance, as outlined below. While the District is predominantly rural, its urban centres, parks and open spaces are just as much part of the local environment and provide important habitats for wildlife. The policies to protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in urban and rural areas are set out below.

B.224 Cherwell contains one site of European importance; part of Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located in the south west corner of the District (indicated on the Cherwell District Policies Map (Appendix 5: Maps). The SAC receives statutory protection under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/42/EEC), transposed into national legislation in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations).

B.225 The proposals in this document have been informed by Habitats Regulations Assessments undertaken in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Habitats Regulations. An HRA was carried out to determine whether the proposals in the Core Strategy Options for Growth paper (2008) were likely, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, to have a significant effect upon European sites. An HRA of the Draft Core Strategy (February 2010) was also undertaken. Copies of both assessments are available on the Council's website (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base).

B.226 Appropriate measures as recommended by the HRA have been incorporated to avoid or minimise the effect of the plan proposals on the SAC in relation to water quality, natural groundwater flow, air quality and recreational use. A revised HRA was undertaken (2012) to accompany the Proposed Submission Local Plan to ensure that the plan proposals will not result in adverse effects on the SAC. Addendums to the HRA were published to accompany the focused consultation on proposed changes to the Plan in March 2013 and the Submission Local Plan in October 2013 which confirmed that there would be no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 Sites as a result of the proposals within the Plan. A HRA (Stage 1 Screening) re-affirming these conclusions accompanied the proposed modifications to the Plan.

B.227 Paragraph B.95 indicates that if Oxford is unable to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary, the Council will continue to work jointly with the other Oxfordshire local authorities to assess all reasonable spatial options of how any unmet need could be met. The consideration of all reasonable options would include undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment to assess the alone and in combination effects on sites of European importance.

B.228 However, as the proposals in the Local Plan are strategic by nature, any more detailed proposals that are identified in the Local Plan Part 2 will also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine if they are likely to have a significant impact. Similarly, if a proposed development submitted as a planning application could have a likely significant effect on Oxford Meadows SAC then consideration and assessment would need to be undertaken (see 'Policy ESD 9: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC' and 'Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment').

B.229 One of the recommendations arising from the HRA was the need to ensure groundwater flows and water quality at the SAC are not affected by development. Policy ESD 9 will be used to ensure that this is the case.

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

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



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

B.235 Sites of regional/local importance comprise Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), non-statutory nature reserves and other sites of importance for nature conservation including Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs- formerly known as County Wildlife Sites), ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats (habitats of

principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act). Cherwell contains 13 LGSs, 3 LNRs, 83 Local Wildlife sites (completely or partly within the District), 16 proposed LWSs and 8 proposed LWS extensions (as of August 2013). The sites are indicated on the biodiversity map at Appendix 5: Maps, but it must be acknowledged that the number and location of sites changes over time as surveys and re-surveys take place. A living list of Local Wildlife Sites and associated maps are available at <http://www.tverc.org>. Sites of regional/local importance also include the habitats of those species of principal importance for biodiversity (as identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act).

B.236 It is not just designated sites that are of importance to the biodiversity resource of the District. Areas adjacent to designated sites can be of value as they can form part of the overall ecological unit and may provide important linkages. Also landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, trees, rivers and riverbanks, ponds and floodplains can be of importance both in urban and rural areas, and often form wildlife corridors and stepping stones. Similarly it is not just greenfield sites that can be of value; previously developed land can also make an important contribution to biodiversity. Some development can remediate contaminated land which may be having an adverse impact on ecology. It is important that any features of value are identified early in the planning process so that adequate measures can be taken to secure their protection. Developers will be expected to incorporate and enhance such features within a site wherever possible and adequate measures should be taken to protect them from damage during construction. Networks of habitats will be protected from development and where possible strengthened by it.

B.237 Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site of known biodiversity value or the biodiversity/natural environment of the local area. A biodiversity survey and report will also be required where it is likely that previously unrecorded biodiversity interest may be present which could be affected by the development. All developments around Bicester will require surveys carried out for the brown hairstreak butterfly. Surveys should include consideration of the site's value as a wildlife corridor and the contribution it makes to ecological networks. In addition to identifying biodiversity impacts, biodiversity surveys and reports should identify opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements.

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

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

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

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

- In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources
- The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District
- The reuse of soils will be sought
- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted.
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity
- Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value
- Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution
- Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably
- A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long term suitable management.

Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas

B.240 Conservation Target Areas in Oxfordshire have been mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) in consultation with local authorities and nature conservation organisations in Oxfordshire. The Target Areas have been identified to focus work to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of UK

BAP priority habitats, and this is their principle aim. They therefore have a major role to play in achieving Strategic Objective 15 (Section A: Strategy for Development in Cherwell). Addressing habitat fragmentation through the linking of sites to form strategic ecological networks can help species adapt to the impact of climate change, and therefore Conservation Target Areas can also contribute to the achievement of Strategic Objective 11. Conservation Target Areas represent the areas of greatest opportunity for strategic biodiversity improvement in the District and as such development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the aims of the target areas through avoiding habitat fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.

B.241 Ten Conservation Target Areas lie wholly or partly within Cherwell District. The boundaries of the Conservation Target Areas are indicated on the Policies Map (Appendix 5: Maps).

B.242 General targets for maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats have been set for each area, to be achieved through a combination of biodiversity project work undertaken by a range of organisations, agri-environment schemes and biodiversity enhancements secured in association with development. These targets are in the process of being made more specific in terms of the amount of each habitat type to be secured within each Conservation Target Area (see Wild Oxfordshire's website <http://wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversityconservation-target-areas>). Habitat improvement within each area will contribute towards achieving County targets, which in turn will contribute towards regional biodiversity targets identified by the South East England Biodiversity Forum. A lead partner has been appointed for several of the Conservation Target Areas to co-ordinate action.

B.243 Biodiversity enhancements sought in association with development could include the restoration or maintenance of habitats through appropriate management, new habitat creation to link fragmented habitats, or a financial contribution towards biodiversity initiatives in the Conservation Target Area. Biodiversity enhancement within the Conservation Target Areas will be considered through the review of the current Planning Obligations Draft SPD and the funding of infrastructure through CIL or other tariff system. Biodiversity offsetting is being explored at national level through a number of pilot projects, as a way of compensating for biodiversity loss in an effective way. If this initiative proves successful the approach could be used to secure strategic biodiversity improvement.

Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas

Where development is proposed within or adjacent to a Conservation Target Area biodiversity surveys and a report will be required to identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Development which would prevent the aims of a Conservation Target Area being achieved will not be permitted. Where there is potential for development, the design and layout of the development, planning conditions or obligations will be used to secure biodiversity enhancement to help achieve the aims of the Conservation Target Area.

Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

B.248 The Cherwell Local Plan 1996 identified Areas of High Landscape Value - land of particular environmental quality - where the Council would seek to conserve and enhance the environment. This Local Plan adopts a character-based approach to seek to conserve and enhance the countryside and landscape character of the whole District, and so Areas of High Landscape Value are not

proposed to be retained. Policy ESD 13 therefore seeks to conserve and enhance the distinctive and highly valued local character of the entire District. The Council will use the CPRE's Tranquillity Map of Oxfordshire available at <http://www.cpre.org.uk> as a guide in assessing areas of tranquillity. Further guidance will be contained within the Local Plan Part 2.

Examples of landscape types (Popup full image)

Landscape Types

	Clay Vale
	Farmland Plateau
	Farmland Slopes and Valley Sides
	River Meadowlands
	Upstanding Village Farmlands
	Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes

B.249 Opportunities for landscape enhancement can also be provided by land in the Council's ownership, and on other land by agreement.

B.250 The relationship between the District's towns and the adjoining countryside and the avoidance of an abrupt transition from built development to open farmland requires special attention to the landscaping of existing and proposed development. This interface is important in determining the relationship between the urban areas and on the character of the countryside. Where new development will extend the built up limits of the towns the Council will seek a masterplan and well-designed approach to the urban edge. This could incorporate the enhancement of existing hedgerows and woodlands and new areas of woodland planting and hedgerows to be incorporated as part of the development, to ensure the satisfactory transition between town and country. These considerations can equally be applied where extensions to villages are required. Landscape mitigation for the proposed strategic sites will be negotiated on a site by site basis.

B.251 In order to understand the local landscape character of Cherwell a Landscape Assessment was undertaken in 1995. The findings of this assessment informed the Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan policy and the Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance. These documents identified four distinct character areas - the 'Cherwell Valley', 'Ironstone Downs', 'Ploughley Limestone Plateau' and 'Clay Vale of Otmoor'. The guidance states how development can complement the most important aspects of the character of that part of the District. More recently the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) looked in detail at the landscape types across the District as well as the biodiversity resource. It identifies the 'forces for change' in a particular location and includes landscape/biodiversity strategies which set guidelines for how developments can contribute towards landscape character. Further landscape assessment work has been undertaken to inform the Local Plan and the Masterplans being prepared for Bicester and Banbury (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base).

B.252 One of the most important elements of the landscape which can add to the character and identity of an area are natural landscape features. Such features include Muswell Hill, Crouch Hill, Madmarston Hill, the River Cherwell and Otmoor, which all make those areas distinct and create a sense of place. Many form local landmarks valued by the local communities. The Council's Landscape

Evidence Base documents identify the key landform and landscape features of value which include the following features around Banbury and Bicester:

- the open and agricultural setting and identity of the outlying villages surrounding Banbury and Bicester, many with locally distinctive historic cores
- ironstone ridges and valleys
- the historic villages and parkland of Hanwell and Wroxton
- Broughton Castle and Grade II Registered Park
- Crouch Hill: an important landmark overlooking Banbury and the surrounding area
- the landscape to the east of the motorway at Banbury which retains a distinct historic pattern
- Salt Way and its setting
- the Sor Brook Valley
- the setting of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridor
- specific features at Bicester noted for their value include those showing notable 'time depth' including Former RAF Bicester, Wretchwick deserted medieval village, Bignell Park and the Roman roads
- Graven Hill and Blackthorn Hill which contrast with the relatively flat surrounding landform
- the River Ray floodplains.

B.253 The Council will seek to retain woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features which are important to the character or appearance of the local landscape as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value. Proposals which would result in the loss of such features will not be permitted unless their loss can be justified by appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures to the satisfaction of the Council.

B.254 In order that development conserves and enhances the character of the countryside, the Council will carefully control the type, scale and design of development, including the materials used, taking into account the advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary SPG and the OWLS.

B.255 In addition to this policy, many villages have conservation areas and in considering development proposals within or adjacent to them, special attention will be given to the preservation or enhancement of their character and appearance under 'Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment'.

Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- **Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside**

- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography
- Be inconsistent with local character
- Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity
- Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or
- Harm the historic value of the landscape.

Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate.

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

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



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

- over 2,200 listed buildings and many others of local architectural and historical interest.
- currently 60 conservation areas
- 36 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 5 registered Historic Parks and Gardens and a Historic Battlefield, and 6 Historic Parks and Gardens considered as non-designated heritage assets
- three urban centres: Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington – with quite distinct characters, retaining their medieval street patterns
- the Oxford Green Belt (see 'Policy ESD 14: Oxford Green Belt')

- the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the north-west of the District (see 'Policy ESD 12: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)')
- the District's waterways, in particular the River Cherwell and the Oxford Canal
- sites of ecological importance including 18 Special Areas for Conservation (see 'Policy ESD 9: Protection of the Oxford Meadows SAC') and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New development proposals should:

- Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions
- Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged
- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages
- Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features
- Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed
- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation

- Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.

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

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.

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

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

possible if informed by a full contextual analysis and proposals promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

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

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

Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

B.274 Green infrastructure comprises the network of green spaces and features in both urban and rural areas including the following: parks and gardens (including historic parks and gardens), natural and semi-natural green space, green corridors (including cycleways and rights of way), outdoor sports facilities, amenity green space, children's play space, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas, river and canal corridors, woodlands, nature reserves, green roofs and walls.



B.275 Securing adequate green infrastructure is an important component of achieving sustainable communities. Green Infrastructure networks can deliver both environmental and social benefits

including conserving and enhancing biodiversity, recreation, landscape, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual health and well-being, contributing to local distinctiveness and helping communities to be more resilient to the effects of climate change. Policy ESD 17 will be used to secure an adequate green infrastructure network in Cherwell District.

B.276 Many sites which contribute to the District's green infrastructure network are not in the Council's ownership or control and partnership working will therefore be required to plan, provide and manage the network to achieve the objectives of the policy.

B.277 Within Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington the key components of green infrastructure are areas of open space, sport and recreation, sometimes linked by public rights of way. Public rights of way are protected in law and comprise four types: footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOAT). The County Council has responsibility for Public Rights of Way, and as such publishes a Rights of Way Improvement Plan and promotes routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders in order to encourage sustainable access to the countryside. In recognition of the health benefits of walking, cycling and horse riding this Council also promotes a number of circular walks and rides. Elsewhere in the District the dominant strategic features include the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal corridors, statutory designated sites such as Local Nature Reserves, and other areas such as RSPB Otmoor reserve and BBOWT reserves. The Conservation Target Areas (indicated on the Policies Map) are the most important areas for biodiversity in the District where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit, and form an important component of the green infrastructure network of the District which can be enhanced over the period of the plan.

B.278 Assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision highlighted various deficiencies in both urban and rural areas of the District, as detailed in Section C 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'. In addition an assessment by Natural England and the Forestry Commission indicated a lack of accessible natural green space provision in the district compared to their standards, with 72% of Cherwell's households meeting none of its requirements. This reflects the relatively low numbers of country parks and common land in the District; however there are a number of smaller areas of open space, and countryside which is accessible solely by Public Rights of Way, which was not taken into account in the initial Natural England analysis. The District has developed its own local standards of provision in accordance with government advice, which differ from those advocated by Natural England. Other than provision in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington there are few accessible large areas of green space within the District; however parks such as Blenheim, Rousham and Stowe are located in close proximity to it. The Council's proposed country park to the north of Banbury will also help to address this issue.

B.279 Protection and enhancement of open space, sport and recreation sites and sites of importance to nature conservation will assist in maintaining the green infrastructure network. Green corridors consist of canals, river corridors and hedgerows, together with public rights of way. These can provide areas for walking, cycling and horse riding and also provide opportunities for wildlife migration, which on a strategic scale can help to address the impact of climate change on biodiversity. Development proposals will be expected to retain and enhance existing green corridors, and maximise the opportunity to form new links between existing open spaces.

B.280 Development proposals, particularly on larger sites, can offer the opportunity to improve the green infrastructure network. Policy BSC 11 usually requires open space provision on site and biodiversity enhancements secured by 'Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment' can contribute to the network by maintaining existing habitats and reducing fragmentation. The incorporation of sustainable drainage systems can contribute to green infrastructure provision and can perform dual roles of helping to alleviate flooding and being beneficial to biodiversity. New landscaping areas, particularly in the case of the strategic sites, will be required to assimilate development into the landscape and assist in the transition between the urban edge and rural areas. Effective links in these areas can enable the urban fringe to provide a recreational resource, providing accessible countryside within walking distance of urban dwellers. Proposals should include details of management and maintenance of green infrastructure to ensure areas are secured in perpetuity. Further guidance on green infrastructure provision is provided in the South East Green Infrastructure Framework - from Policy to Practice (available at <http://strategy.sebiodiversity.org.uk>).

B.281 In Banbury and Bicester successive local plans have sought to establish a series of open spaces in the towns, and this plan includes proposals for a new country park in Banbury ('Policy Banbury 14: Cherwell Country Park'). Additional detail is contained under Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'. The key open space components of existing green infrastructure provision in Banbury and Bicester are shown on the maps for each town (Appendix 5: Maps). Green infrastructure provision will be examined in more detail and progressed through the town masterplans and the Local Plan Part 2. A county level Green Infrastructure Strategy is also being formulated with the District Council being represented on the stakeholder working group.

B.282 South of the Canalside development (Policy Banbury 1) the opportunity exists to turn part of the existing floodplain of the River Cherwell into a managed habitat. This will be explored in more detail through the preparation of the Banbury Masterplan.

Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:

- **Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation**
- **Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16)**

- Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond
- All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.

Strategic Development: Bicester 13 – Gavray Drive (re-adopted)

C.104 The majority of the site is part of the River Ray Conservation Target Area. Part of the site is a Local Wildlife Site and is situated to the east of Bicester town centre. It is bounded by railway lines to the north and west. The site comprises individual trees, tree and hedgerow groups, and scrubland/vegetation. The Langford Brook water course flows through the middle of the site.

C.105 The central and eastern section of the site contains lowland meadow, a BAP priority habitat. There are a number of protected species located towards the eastern part of the site. There are several ponds and a small stream, known as the Langford Brook, which runs from north to south through the middle of the site. A range of wildlife has been recorded including butterflies, great crested newts and other amphibians, reptiles, bats and birds.

C.106 There are risks of flooding on some parts of the site therefore mitigation measures must be considered. There is also a risk of harming the large number of recorded protected species towards the eastern part of the site. Impacts need to be minimised by any proposal. Approximately a quarter of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 therefore any development would need to be directed away from this area.

C.107 Although there are a number of known constraints such as Flood Zone 3, River Ray Conservation Target Area and protected species, this could be addressed with appropriate mitigation measures by any proposal.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted)

Development Area: 23 hectares

Development Description: a housing site to the east of Bicester town centre. It is bounded by railway lines to the north and west and the A4421 to the east

Housing

- Number of homes - 300 dwellings
- Affordable Housing - 30%.

Infrastructure Needs

- Education – Contributions sought towards provision of primary and secondary school places

- **Open Space** – to include general greenspace, play space, allotments and sports provision as outlined in Policy BSC11: Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation. A contribution to off-site formal sports provision will be required.
- **Community** – contributions towards community facilities
- **Access and movement** – from Gavray Drive.

Key site specific design and place shaping principles

- **Proposals should comply with Policy ESD15.**
- **A high quality development that is locally distinctive in its form, materials and architecture. A well designed approach to the urban edge which relates to the road and rail corridors.**
- **[REDACTED]**. Development must avoid adversely impacting on the Conservation Target Area and comply with the requirements of Policy ESD11 to secure a net biodiversity gain.
- **Protection of the Local Wildlife Site and consideration of its relationship and interface with residential and other built development.**
- **Detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife corridors to protect and enhance biodiversity. The preparation and implementation of an Ecological Management Plan to ensure the long-term conservation of habitats and species within the site.**
- **Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments.**
- **The preparation of a structural landscaping scheme, which incorporates and enhances existing natural features and vegetation. The structural landscaping scheme should inform the design principles for the site. Development should retain and enhance significant landscape features (e.g. hedgerows) which are or have the potential to be of ecological value. A central area of open space either side of Langford Brook, incorporating part of the Local Wildlife Site and with access appropriately managed to protect ecological value. No formal recreation within the Local Wildlife Site.**
- **Provision of public open space to form a well connected network of green areas within the site, suitable for formal and informal recreation.**
- **Provision of Green Infrastructure links beyond the development site to the wider town and open countryside.**
- **Retention of Public Rights of Way and a layout that affords good access to the countryside.**
- **New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and schools and community facilities. Access should be provided over the railway to the town centre.**
- **A linked network of footways which cross the central open space, and connect Langford Village, Stream Walk and Bicester Distribution Park.**
- **Ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on downstream Sites of Special Scientific Interest through hydrological, hydro chemical or sedimentation impacts.**
- **A layout that maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods and enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities.**

- **A legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel. Good accessibility to public transport services with local bus stops provided. Provision of a transport assessment and Travel Plan.**
- **Additional bus stops on the A4421 Charbridge Lane will be provided, with connecting footpaths from the development. The developers will contribute to the cost of improving local bus services.**
- **Provision of appropriate lighting and the minimisation of light pollution based on appropriate technical assessment.**
- **Provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity.**
- **Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures including exemplary demonstration of compliance with the requirements of policies ESD 1 – 5.**
- **Take account of the Council’s SFRA for the site.**
- **Consideration of flood risk from Langford Brook in a Flood Risk Assessment and provision of an appropriate buffer. Use of attenuation SuDS techniques (and infiltration techniques in the south eastern area of the site) in accordance with Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and taking account of the Council's SFRA.**
- **Housing must be located outside Flood Zone 3 and the principles set out in Policy ESD 6 will be followed.**
- **The provision of extra-care housing and the opportunity for community self-build affordable housing.**
- **An archaeological field evaluation to assess the impact of the development on archaeological features.**
- **A detailed survey of the agricultural land quality identifying the best and most versatile agricultural land and a soil management plan.**

Section D - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

D.1 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) provides confidence that critical infrastructure can be supported, that the Plan’s development strategy is deliverable, and that social, physical and green infrastructure can be secured to enable the planned development. The Local Plan includes provision for a range of key infrastructure such as schools, new strategic highway improvements including those on peripheral routes, and ‘green’ infrastructure. The IDP identifies indicative costs attributable to the proposed levels of growth, requirements of each type of growth, and considers how and when infrastructure should be provided having regard to the phasing of development and possible funding opportunities.



D.2 The infrastructure needed to support the Cherwell Local Plan will be delivered through partnership working between public, private and voluntary sector organisations. The Council is working with those organisations which have a role in providing services and facilities in Cherwell and has identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan the projects and initiatives required to support the Local Plan policies and overall strategy.

D.3 The IDP identifies the infrastructure necessary for the successful delivery of this plan and informed the policies for Building Sustainable Communities in Section B and Cherwell's Places in Section C. Many sites require infrastructure, such as road access, new schools, neighbourhood and health facilities. The planning process determines at what point in a development they are required. The IDP identified costs as far as possible and gaps in funding in consultation with the infrastructure and service providers operating in Cherwell.

D.4 The funding of infrastructure has traditionally proved to be challenging because of the expense it required. Therefore a cautious, realistic approach has informed the infrastructure assessment of the sites and the Plan as a whole. The involvement of landowners and developers is essential to the delivery of the Plan and continues as an active process, in many cases leading to planning applications for a number of the key strategic developments.

D.5 Our planning for infrastructure is taking a long term focus, using available funding from both the public and private sector wisely. Planning properly for growth over a 20 year period (2011-2031) requires a strategic and rational approach to investment where priorities are set and the phasing of investment is mapped out to secure maximum gain.

D.6 The Local Plan presents an opportunity to take an integrated approach to growth management where infrastructure investment and delivery are coordinated with land-use proposals.

Policy INF 1: Infrastructure

D.7 Infrastructure as defined in the Planning Act 2008, covers a wide range of infrastructure types and can include schools, sports facilities, transport, culture, green infrastructure, community, health and social care facilities among others.

D.8 Infrastructure is a critical underpinning for the development strategy of the District. Infrastructure such as transport, energy, water, waste and communications, as well as community

infrastructure in education and health are essential to meet the needs of residents. Other infrastructure types relate to quality of life and environmental protection or enhancements.

D.9 Although the Council wishes to secure all infrastructure items identified in the IDP, given the resources available to us and our partners, it is likely we will have to prioritise infrastructure items at some point in time.

D.10 The criterion for including items in the IDP is that they have an important role in achieving the vision of the Plan and enable the delivery of strategic policies. The IDP provides a category for each infrastructure item, depending on the level of risk it poses to the delivery of the Local Plan.

D.11 Infrastructure should be provided as an integral part of development in order to achieve the vision and objectives of the Plan. The approach to infrastructure provision is set out within Section B: 'Policies for Development in Cherwell' and Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places'. Infrastructure will need to be provided and phased alongside development and the Local Plan sets out the key elements of infrastructure requirements.

D.12 The Integrated Transport Studies for the two main urban areas and the rural areas, together with the Movement Strategies for the urban areas, as well as updated evidence studies undertaken in 2014, provide the evidence to support the provision of new and improved transport infrastructure.

D.13 The Local Transport Plan sets out the likely transport infrastructure requirements and priorities for Cherwell aimed at tackling congestion, promoting sustainable travel, safer roads and improving the street environment. The specific schemes and projects are included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in Appendix 8.

D.14 Cherwell's future success depends on key public bodies such as the District Council, Town and Parish Councils and Oxfordshire County Council working together on the sustained implementation of this strategy over the long term.

D.15 This plan seeks to support growth by securing infrastructure to ensure development is sustainable and takes into account existing infrastructure deficits. Infrastructure to support housing and employment development is essential to the creation of sustainable communities. The plan considers the physical, social and green infrastructure needed to enable the amount of development proposed taking into account its type and distribution.

Policy INF 1: Infrastructure

The Council's approach to infrastructure planning in the District will identify the infrastructure required to meet the District's growth, to support the strategic site allocations and to ensure delivery by:

- **Working with partners, including central Government, and other local authorities, to provide physical, community and green infrastructure**
- **Identifying infrastructure needs and costs, phasing of development, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery**

- **Completing a Developer Contributions SPD to set out the Council's approach to the provision of essential infrastructure including affordable housing, education, transport, health, flood defences and open space**
- **Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.**

Key Infrastructure Requirements

D.16 In order to ensure the right infrastructure is provided to support the growth set out in the Local Plan, a detailed schedule of infrastructure requirements is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan contained in Appendix 8.

D.17 The IDP suggests that infrastructure to support the local transport network will be a key priority for the delivery of the strategic site allocations in Bicester and Banbury. The Plan supports the delivery of highway capacity improvements on peripheral routes at Bicester and capacity improvements to north-south and east-west routes at Banbury as set out in the IDP schedule in Appendix 8. The Local Plan contains site-specific information relating to infrastructure requirements and a Developer Contributions SPD is being prepared.

D.18 In addition to key transport infrastructure, there are a number of specific issues and deficiencies to be considered further which include the need for new burial capacity at both Bicester and Banbury. In Banbury, the Canalside development (Policy Banbury 1: Banbury Canalside) sets out the development and infrastructure requirements for the redevelopment of the area comprising a mix of uses including up to 700 homes, retail, 15,000sqm of town centre/commercial uses, public open space and multi storey car parks. The now completed Banbury Flood Alleviation Scheme is important to the delivery of the site.

D.19 In Bicester, the North West Bicester eco-town proposals (Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town) involving the development of 6,000 homes and jobs requires schools, 40% open space, sustainable transport, community facilities, local shops and services, energy and waste facilities.

D.20 The Local Plan does not allocate specific sites for growth within the rural areas, other than making an allocation for a new settlement at the Former RAF Upper Heyford, but contains strategic policies for the distribution of growth. Policy Kidlington 1 identifies a small scale Green Belt review at Kidlington and Begbroke for employment purposes and Policy Kidlington 2 aims to strengthen Kidlington's village centre. These policies are important to attract investment.

D.21 The Local Plan Part 2 will allocate non strategic sites in the District and provide greater certainty to the specific location of growth in the rural areas. More detailed information on the provision of infrastructure in the rural areas will arise through the progression of this DPD, and Neighbourhood Plans.

Infrastructure Proposals for Bicester, Banbury, Kidlington and Rural Areas

D.22 The projects included in the IDP (Appendix 8) were identified following the assessment of policies, and discussions with infrastructure providers. Deficiencies and future infrastructure needs were informed by evidence documents and plans and programmes from infrastructure providers

and other organisations. The projects are directly linked to the Local Plan and divided into 3 schedules reflecting planned growth in Bicester, Banbury, and Kidlington and Rural Areas.

Overview of Future Growth in Bicester 2011-2031:

- North West Bicester Eco-Town of 6,000 homes and jobs with 40% open space (3,293 expected to be delivered by 2031)
- Graven Hill, 2,100 homes, logistics and distribution hub
- Land at Bure Place, Town Centre Redevelopment (Phase 2)
- Extension to Bicester Town Centre (Area of Search)
- South West Bicester Phase 1 1,462 homes and 726 homes at Phase 2
- South East Bicester 1,500 homes
- Bicester Business Park
- Employment land at Bicester Gateway
- Employment Land at North East Bicester
- Tourism-led development at Former RAF Bicester
- Gavray Drive 300 homes
- New Cemetery.

Overview of Future Growth in Banbury 2011-2031:

- Bankside Phase 1, 600 homes at Phase 2
- Canalside, including 700 homes, retail, office and leisure uses
- West of Bretch Hill, 400 homes
- North of Hanwell Fields 544 homes
- Southam Road, Banbury 600 homes
- Employment Land West of M40
- Relocation of Banbury United Football Club
- Extended town centre (Area of Search)
- Bolton Road Development Area, 200 homes, retail and other mixed uses
- Retail and other mixed uses at Spiceball Development Area
- Bretch Hill Regeneration Area
- Cherwell Country Park
- Bankside Community Park
- Employment land North East of Junction 11
- South of Salt Way - East, 1345 homes
- South of Salt Way - West, 150 homes
- Land at Drayton Lodge Farm, 250 homes
- Land at Higham Way, 150 homes.

Overview of Future Growth in Kidlington and rural areas 2011-2031:

- Accommodating High Value Employment Needs: Langford Lane/London-Oxford Airport; Oxford Technology Park and Begbroke Science Park (subject to small scale Green Belt review)
- Kidlington Village Centre

- Allocation for 2,361 homes (in total, including 761 already consented) at Former RAF Upper Heyford; 750 across the rural areas and Kidlington. The specific sites to be identified in the Local Plan Part 2 and Neighbourhood Plans when developed.

D.23 The IDP indicates where and when infrastructure is needed. It also indicates potential costs, means and sources of funding, and the delivery progress of infrastructure projects. These have been categorised as critical, necessary or desirable to reflect their relevance to the delivery of the Local Plan.

Critical	Necessary	Desirable
Infrastructure without which development cannot commence.	Infrastructure necessary to support development but the precise timing and phasing is less critical and development may commence ahead of its provision.	Infrastructure is desirable in order to build sustainable communities. Timing and phasing is not critical over the plan period.

D.24 In some instances, infrastructure may be needed ahead of development taking place and some projects such as the Banbury Flood Alleviation Scheme have already been delivered. These projects are included in the IDP because they enable the forthcoming delivery of policies and allocations.

D.25 The IDP is a live document supporting the Local Plan and it will be adjusted to reflect changes in circumstances and strategies over time. It will be monitored alongside Policy INF 1 – Infrastructure, as detailed in the Local Plan Monitoring Framework (Appendix 6) and delivery progress reported in the Annual Monitoring Report.