Planning for Cherwell – the Cherwell Local Plan Review
Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options
September 2021

Representation Form

Cherwell District Council has prepared a document called *Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options* which is the second stage of consultation to inform a new district wide Local Plan.

This consultation paper sets out what has changed since we first consulted, and the current options we are considering for preparing the Cherwell Local Plan Review. There will be other options we will need to consider as we progress, and other plans and programmes become firmer. Some of the options we have identified may also need refinement.

This stage of plan making is about developing our thinking and gathering evidence. The responses to this consultation are an important part of that process and will help shape our new Local Plan. Having previously consulted on issues, we once again wish to ensure that a wide cross-section of views is obtained in identifying and examining our development and policy options.

We are also inviting comments on our emerging evidence base, including an Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report.

These documents are available to view for comment from **Wednesday 29 September 2021 to 11.59pm Wednesday 10 November 2021**.

To view the Community Involvement Paper 2 (Developing our Options) and the accompanying Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report and other evidence documents please visit letstalk.cherwell.gov.uk/cherwell-local-plan-2021. **Please note you can also complete this representation form online.**

Hard copies of the Options Paper and Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report are available for viewing during opening hours at our advertised deposit locations which include Bodicote House, and libraries across the District.

How to use this form
Please complete **Part A** in full.
Then complete **Part B for each question you wish to comment on**.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANONYMOUS OR CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED. ANY COMMENTS RECEIVED WILL BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

The information you provide will be stored on a Cherwell District Council database and used solely in connection with the Cherwell Local Plan Review.

Representations will be available to view on the Council's website, but address, signature and contact details will not be included. However, as copies of representations must be made available for public inspection, they cannot be treated as confidential. Data will be processed and held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Your details will be added to our mailing list which means that you will be automatically notified of future stages of the local plan preparation process. If you subsequently wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us.

Please return completed forms:
By Email to: PlanningPolicyConsultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Or by post to: Planning Policy Team, Planning Policy, Conservation and Design, Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA.

If you have any questions about completing the form or accessing documents, please telephone 01295 227985 or email planning.policy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.

PART A

	Details of the person / body making the comments	Details of the agent submitting the comments on behalf of another person / body (if applicable)
Title		
First Name	**Weston on the Green Parish Council**	
Last Name		
Job Title (*where relevant***)**	**n/a**	
Organisation (*where relevant)**	**Weston on the Green Parish Council**	
E-mail Address	**clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk**	
Postal Address	**Oak View** **North Lane** **Weston on the Green** **Oxon**	
Post Code	**OX25 3RG**	
Telephone Number		

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(optional)		

PART B – Please complete Part B for each option/question you wish to comment on

OPTION 1: VISION – Do you have any observations on the suggested Vision?

The vision values the environment, the economy and the rural feel of the district.
It takes into account the need for more housing, the type of housing as well as the importance of environmentally friendly construction. For our village, protection from overdevelopment and the prevention of the loss of our community is important.
The vision for 2021 – 2041 should align with current population trends which show lower growth than projections based on the 2018 growth figures (ONS). Emphasis should be on preserving the environment versus further large scale housing land allocations. The vision is right to promote connection of the towns (where housing and employment land allocation should be prioritised where this can be justified) to the surrounding rural villages by upgrading public transport and active accessibility (cycle and foot) options.
We would like to see a stronger vision on building back woodland and biodiversity across the region, which has one of the lowest county tree covers at 9% of land area in Oxfordshire.

OPTION 2: KEY OBJECTIVES - Do you have any observations to make on the draft objectives? Which do you consider are the most important?

KO4 – key to people being able to work from home; links with KO5 and KO29
K10 – net zero carbon new development are key to energy efficiency but must be within reach for all householders. The vast roof areas of the large scale distribution buildings around Bicester should use either solar energy generation or living roof covers as a matter of policy; links with KO11
KO13 – biodiversity net gain: importance of minimising pollution. The issue of water pollution is cause for serious concern – the dumping of raw waste into the water system is unacceptable. The major water companies need to be brought under control AND housing developments or entertainment centres should not be permitted in areas where water management is substandard or under significant stress. Natural mitigation measures (tree and reed bed planting) should be prioritised; links to KO14, KO15.
KO19 – in our region which has a high proportion of historic dwellings, we support the pragmatic application of measures to upgrade energy efficiency without destroying the key historic elements of the dwellings or the context in which they are placed.
KO21 – Affordable housing has been a key issue for a number of years in Cherwell but developers don't seem so keen on building them – not as profitable. There is a thorny issue at the centre of planning – the power of developers. Affordable housing also does not abrogate the responsibility to build to high standards, including design standards.

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KO25 – to protect and enhance the historic and natural environment is key to the legacy of Cherwell. Without this as an objective, the district runs the risk of becoming a suburban, bland, or (worse) urban landscape. Again, bespoke solutions should be possible where the cheaper and more familiar and standard 'urban' elements (e.g footpaths, signage, curbs) are out of place in a historic setting or where these might endanger protected trees or landscapes.

KO27 – Cherwell has seen significantly large scale of housing development which has a conventional 'sameness' of design with no local distinctiveness mirrors that seen in any one of many other regions around the UK. The risk of losing regional distinctiveness is high and should be addressed with developers.

KO29 – Supporting infrastructure has not kept pace with the housing increases in our region. More must be done to address water/sewage management, domestic connectivity (increasingly 3-phase supplies will be needed for electric boiler installations and increasing EV charging at home), better local transport options.

KO30 – In the Bicester area, there should be more emphasis on establishing local green space site allocations.

OPTION 3: LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND -Where do you think employment land should be focused to deliver the jobs needed in Cherwell?

1) **At our main urban centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington**
2) **At significant transport interchanges**
3) **Mostly on previously developed land, including in less sustainable locations**
4) **At the larger villages**
5) **A combination of all of the above options**

1 & 3 – enhance urban centres but use previously developed land as a priority. Protect the rural environment. Significant transport interchanges are frequently distant from areas of housing and therefore do not necessarily provide good accessibility for workers.

Employment land in villages has to be managed carefully. In our village, a previous light industrial site has remained poorly connected to the village over the last 30 years.

OPTION 4: EMPLOYMENT LAND - When identifying sites for employment land, what should be our priority to balance protecting communities and meeting the needs of our business?

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1) **Provide sites only for general industry(B2) and distribution (B8)**

2) **Provide mixed use sites to include general industry, distribution (B2 and B8 uses), light industry and other potentially compatible uses such as retail and leisure (E use classes)**

3) **Provide a mixture of the above**

> 3 – Provide a mixture of the above, but reviewing each site on a case by case basis is essential to avoid out-of-town cultural and social deserts.

QUESTION: SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT – Are there any other employment policies we should include in the Plan?

> It is important to support local employment so that people can live and work in their community.   A benefit to this could be a reduced level of local carbon emission.
>
> A major problem for our village is the creation of employment and leisure sites that do not take into account or respect the traffic impact. We are dealing with the village being used as a rat run, with lorries and HGVs using the rural road on a regular basis.
>
> Planning policy needs to move toward a view that the <u>cumulative effect of permissions</u> MUST be considered when approving an application.

OPTION 5: TOWN CENTRES & RETAIL - To support our town centres, should we

1) **Provide more flexibility within our town centres for different uses including residential development but protect key shopping areas by restricting use to retail, restaurants and cafes**

2) **Maximise flexibility within the town centre for different uses including residential development and other community and leisure uses.**

> n/a

QUESTION: TOWN CENTRE USES (BANBURY, BICESTER & KIDLINGTON) - Are there other policies that should be considered in relation to retail to support our town centres?

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Accessibility for local communities from surrounding areas and villages is a key concern – retail and other services should be readily accessible using affordable green transport options.

QUESTION: SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES - Are there any local town centre and retail related policies that we should consider?

Local distinctiveness should recognise the value of locally made produce, providing outlets for local products and supporting local communities.

OPTION 6: RATES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING - Should we

1) **Increase the percentage requirement of affordable housing required on housing developments of 10 or more units?**
2) **Keep the percentage levels of affordable housing the same as in the 2015 Local Plan? (30% at Banbury and Bicester, and 35% across the rest of the District)**

1. Affordable housing should be a minimum of 35% across the board and could be higher on housing of 10 or more units. It would also be useful to focus on specific affordable housing developments of under 10 that will fit into a village or small town and benefit from the infrastructure already in place. Otherwise a small village such as ours will inevitably develop via the incremental addition of sizable homes that will add to the already top heavy number of large homes which are priced out of reach for many people with local connections.

2. HOWEVER, there is no local advantage in increasing the amount of affordable housing, then agreement employment sites – does not help the existing shortage of housing.

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OPTION 7: AFFORDABLE HOUSING TENURE - Should we

1) **prioritise the provision of social rented housing above other affordable housing tenures?**
2) **Keep the same affordable housing tenure mix as set out in the 2015 Local Plan with 70% Affordable and Social Rent and 30% Social Rent?**

> 3. Keep the 2015 mix but also consider first time buyers as per the statement from government. While the range of options for Affordable Houses is very helpful there are some categories that should be included: for example, in our village we have people who wish to buy the homes they have been allocated only to find that as WOTG is in the rural area, the property is exempt from the Right to Acquire scheme. This is a pity as these are exactly the families our village wishes to keep – hardworking young families with multiple children. They benefit from the rural location, great local schools and 'room to run' and will establish their 'place' which may become a focal point for future generations and continue to sustain the village.

OPTION 8: HOUSING INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS - Should we:

1) **Introduce a policy which requires all new dwellings to meet the nationally described space standard and if so, should this be a minimum requirement?**
2) **Introduce a policy which only requires affordable homes to meet the nationally described space standard and if so, should this be a minimum requirement?**

> 1. This should be a policy in the Local Plan and it should be a minimum requirement. The trend is towards increasing housing density and therefore building on smaller plots. In rural areas, consideration should be made towards more external space (gardens) rather than imposing very urban densities in a rural area which would be at odds with the current layout.

QUESTION: SEPARATION DISTANCES - Should we introduce a policy requiring minimum separation distances between residential properties?

> Not essential: in villages, terraces are common and part of the existing housing layout.

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OPTION 9: HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY - Should we:

1) **Introduce accessibility standards for a proportion of new homes?**
2) **Continue to rely on Building Regulations in respect of accessibility?**

> 1. Include accessibility standard on a proportion of new homes – planning for the future means raising the bar on expectations for accessibility and meeting the needs of an aging population..

QUESTION: TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES - We would be interested to hear if there are any specific locations within the district that would be suitable to meet the needs of Travelling Communities and the reasons why these areas are considered suitable. How can we best ensure that the Travelling Communities have sustainable access to services and facilities?

> n/a

QUESTION: HOUSING POLICIES - Are there any other housing policies we should include in the Plan? For example, is there a need to support alternative methods of construction (e.g. modular homes)?

> Clamp down on permitted development rights and enforce breaches diligently.

OPTION 10: SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION - Should we

1) **Not set further standards in the Cherwell Local Plan leaving this for Building Regulations and the Oxfordshire Plan. or**
2) **Set sustainable design and construction standards for new residential and non-residential development that only meet standards set by Government. or**
3) **Set sustainable design and construction standards for residential and non-residential development in Cherwell above those required by Central Government?**

> 3) Two things here: The Central Government construction standards may be adequate but enforcement is poor. Cherwell should set their own standards and enforce them properly.

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QUESTION: RETROFITTING OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS - How should we address the challenges of retrofitting existing building stock balancing this against the need to protect historic buildings?

Historic buildings can benefit from key standardised retrofitted upgrades (boilers, heating solutions, energy consumption) while preserving the original fabric of the building. Where more radical measures are proposed that would result in loss of the original historic fabric or setting of a building, these should be balanced carefully with the need for preservation and should not be enforced using a top-down policy which may not be the best solution. We support bespoke solutions for these cases.

OPTION 11: RENEWABLE ENERGY - Should we

1) **Identify and allocate specific sites for renewable energy generation**
2) **Use a criteria-based policy to assess the appropriateness of proposals for renewable energy generation?**

1 and 2: New sites for renewable solar and wind energy generation can be identified. There should be a good evidence-based criteria policy for their selection.
In addition, there should be a policy on installing energy generation (solar panels) to expansive commercial roofs, or if not possible then green roof coverings. The expansion of very large commercial buildings in rural environments necessitates the use of these areas for climate mitigation.

QUESTION: POLICIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION & RENEWABLE ENERGY - Are there any other policies that you think are required to help support the approach to managing climate change?

See above

QUESTION: GREEN BELT – Are there any local Green Belt matters we need to consider?

In our rural village, the settlement bridges the Green belt boundary with roughly half of the village inside the green belt and the other outside. This has artificially pushed development ever-northwards on land that is not constrained, taking housing further from the village

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centre. There are small village sites inside the green belt that could be developed and would be supported within the Neighbourhood Plan and we would encourage review of these sites for the benefit of the village.

OPTION 12: BIODIVERSITY - Where biodiversity net gain or compensatory measures cannot be achieved on site, should we:

1) **Secure as close to the site as possible**
2) **Prioritise within Conservation Target Areas/those parts of the Nature Recovery Network where habitat creation and restoration is to be focused**
3) **Secure contributions to local environmental bodies undertaking biodiversity enhancement projects within the district**

We would prefer a policy stating that if biodiversity net gain or acceptable compensatory methods cannot be achieved on site, then the development is not viable.

OPTION 13: NATURAL CAPITAL - Should we:

1) **Include a policy in the Plan requiring major development proposals to be supported by a natural capital assessment to demonstrate the impact of the proposals; or**
2) **Include a policy in the Plan requiring major development proposals to:**
   a) **be supported by a natural capital assessment to demonstrate the impact of the proposals and**
   b) **demonstrate environmental net gain; or**
3) **Not require major development proposals to be supported by a natural capital assessment.**

n/a

QUESTION: BIODIVERSITY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - Do you have any views on policies for inclusion in the review of the Plan on biodiversity and the natural environment?

Policies on building woodland (agroforestry, buffer zones and native tree planting on small sites to build biodiversity corridors), protecting ancient pathways.

OPTION 14: CHILDREN'S PLAY - Should we:

1) **Continue to provide children's play facilities through a traditional minimum provision LAP/LEAP/NEAP approach**
2) **Provide children's play facilities through minimum provision combined all-age areas of play**
3) **Seek opportunities to integrate play facilities throughout towns and developments identifying minimum standards and setting expectations through design and other place making policies e.g. inclusion of pocket parks, play streets and informal play within open space areas.**

> 3 – this appears to be a more adaptable solution. Also, play facilities should involve all ages not just younger children -although they are very important.

OPTION 15: OUTDOOR SPORTS PROVISION - Should we:

1) **Continue with the current policy approach of securing new pitch provision as part of strategic development sites**
2) **Seek to secure and establish sports hubs at our main settlements**
3) **Use financial contributions from developers in lieu of on-site provision on strategic sites to enhance existing facilities, to enable increased use**

> 1 & 2 – housing development should have outdoor sports provision as part of the strategic plan. However, local solutions for smaller communities and developments are also very important.
>
> We don't agree that 3 is a fair option as smaller communities will lose out on local provision.
>
> If children can walk to a play area, it makes more sense than driving – constant awareness of carbon emissions is key.

QUESTION: LOCAL GREEN SPACES –

1) **Do you have any comments on the sites submitted for Local Green Space designation so far?**
2) **Do you have sites that you consider meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation?**

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In Weston on the Green we have very little designated green space – the amount of 'village green' has been reduced to very small discontinuous parcels of land. Development pressure on land in and immediately around the village makes green space designation difficult in a very competitive climate.

We note in the Local Plan Review document the statement that "Government guidance allows communities to identify green areas of particular importance to them to be considered for designation as Local Green Space in local and neighbourhood plans. We already have several LGS's within the District designated through neighbourhood plans."

The Weston on the Green Parish Council has identified one parcel of land which has been submitted as a potential housing site allocation that we feel meets the criteria of a Local Green Space and we already know has the overwhelming support of the village.

QUESTION: PROTECTING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – Are there any specific policies for heritage and protecting the historic environment that we should include?

We welcome the protection of ancient routeways as Weston sits on the junction of some major pathways linking important sites in the south and north of the country.

A key consideration in the historic environment is the pattern of dwellings in and around the village. The layout has remained largely unchanged for at least 300 years and is constantly at risk from housing development which will change this irrevocably, impacting on the historic village centre and the organic pattern of housing which spans 17th to 21st century buildings. In small villages, this village landscape should be protected.

QUESTION: ACHIEVING GOOD DESIGN & 'BEAUTY' – How can the local plan best support improvements in design and target local design codes/guidance that follow?

In a rural sector it is hard to see how 'beauty' can be achieved with the high density housing required by government. It is at odds with a village environment and puts biodiversity at risk by interrupting wildlife corridors and reducing 'greening'. We would like to see consideration of housing layouts that are appropriate for the context of a village.

In addition, the rural landscape of the UK has ancient roots and there is a tendancy towards pastiche design which mimics historic features in a 'sanitised' and more urbanised fashion. This should be resisted and some wilding should be encouraged in rural settings to preserve and enhance natural environments, which have natural beauty.

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QUESTION: 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS - Do you agree that 20-minute neighbourhoods offer a helpful set of principles for ensuring places are well-designed and sustainable? Are there features that would work in sub-urban or the rural areas?

Realistically, Weston on the Green is outside of an achievable 20 minute walk or cycle connection with Bicester or Kidlington for most residents.

QUESTION: TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY –

- **Do you agree with the proposed transport and connectivity approach to support the Local Plan Review?**
- **Should the approach be different for the rural areas, for example focusing on low carbon technology rather than a reduction in the need to travel?**
- **What measures would help you drive less or use alternative transport modes with lower emissions?**

"Promoting sustainable and active travel in the district" with specific reference to our village: sustainable travel would be improved through the promotion of electric cars assisted by parish priorities to establish some charge points and continuation of grants for homeowners to put charge points in their home. The grants available still require a significant investment from the homeowner for installation.
Some form of rural bus service would help our residents, but we understand that our passenger numbers are low and we would not want to implement a service which would open the flood gates for out-of-scale housing development. We have looked at commuter buses, shopping buses – financial assistance would be required for both models. We would favour electric transport where possible and small vehicles for local road use.

OPTION 16: DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE - Should we

1) **Provide a policy with the requirements expected from new development to provide digital connections and be designed to accommodate future digital infrastructure needs (future proofing).**
2) **Provide a policy protecting existing telecommunications infrastructure.**
3) **Provide a criteria-based policy on the location and mitigation requirements for telecommunications development.**

1. It is important to 'future proof' new housing developments in terms of digital infrastructure. The new housing development in our village has such connections.

However, rural, established communities, need to have the uplift to new technologies to keep residents able to participate in the working from home necessity and to allow all generations access to full fibre to the premises as well as full mobile connectivity. Broadband and mobile phone connectivity is a major issue in our village.

QUESTION: TRANSPORT POLICIES –

Do you agree with the range of policies and documents we have identified?

Are there any transport-related policies that we should consider through the Local Plan Review?

- Support low emission modes of transport
- Manage the sustainable movement of goods in the transport network and in and around our places
- Promote and fund public transport and active travel improvements
- Rural communicates add to carbon emissions through the predominant use of cars for travel. Our problem is how to reduce car journeys without increasing the risks that regular or expanded scale public transport services direct to the village would bring to the community – that is, a view that bus service would make the village more sustainable and then at risk of housing developments that the local people do not want.

OPTION 17: INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY - Should we:

1) **update the methodology to consider social and environmental benefits of schemes and the contributions they make to Climate Action, Healthy Place Shaping, and a Sustainable Economy?**
2) **Retain the current methodology?**

And, should we:

3) **Continue to prepare the IDP by place or**
4) **look at areas by catchment and how accessible they are?**

1. Update the methodology. All infrastructure should be planned with some future-proofing in place to accommodate future evolution of technology, energy use and resource.

3. continue to prepare the IDP to be place specific. The 'place' is a historic focus and using a catchment basis to identify infrastructure may de-emphasis the historic place, changing it in the national context.

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QUESTION: DELIVERING INFRASTRUCTURE - Are there other infrastructure policies that we should include?

In our local environment land and water management are the key issues.

OPTION 18: HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AT BANBURY - If Banbury is identified as a location for growth, should we:

1) Consider further urban extensions into the open countryside.
2) Limit development at Banbury to protect its landscape setting and maintain separation between the town and surrounding villages
3) Focus development at an existing or new settlement well connected to Banbury

n/a

OPTION 19: BANBURY – DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT - If additional development is directed to Banbury requiring green field sites

Should we:

1) Consider sites to the north of the town.
2) Consider sites to the south of the town
3) Consider sites to the east of the town (including to the east of the M40 Junction 11)
4) Consider sites to the west of the town?
5) A combination of any of the above

We would welcome views on any specific sites identified through the call for sites, or suggestions for new sites.

n//a

QUESTION: IMPORTANT VIEWS OF BANBURY –

1. **Should we retain and update the policy that protects views of St Mary's Church?**
2. **Are there any other specific buildings or locally important views that should be protected through the Local Plan review?**

n/a

OPTION 20: BANBURY TOWN CENTRE – ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS - To help support the vitality of Banbury's main shopping area, should we

1) **consider steps to remove certain development rights within the town centre to prevent the conversion of shops and restaurants to homes without the need for planning permission?**
2) **Allow maximum flexibility of uses under permitted development rules.**

n/a

OPTION 21: BANBURY CANALSIDE – Should we:

1) **Continue to allocate the site for residential led redevelopment involving a transition of the site away from commercial uses to a sustainable, well designed residential area.**
2) **Allocate the site for a more flexible mix of residential and commercial uses creating a sustainable well designed, mixed use area.**
3) **Allocate the site as a regeneration area to provide the most flexibility to the market, but potentially limit the amount of control we have through planning policy around design standards and numbers of homes**

n/a

QUESTION: BANBURY'S OPEN SPACES - How do you think Banbury's network of green spaces, sport and play facilities could be protected and enhanced?

n/a

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QUESTION: ADDRESSING INEQUALITY IN BANBURY – Are there other policies we could include to help address inequalities in Banbury?

n/a

QUESTION: REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCY IN BANBURY - What would help you make fewer trips by car in Banbury?

n/a

OPTION 22: HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AT BICESTER – If Bicester is identified as a location for further growth, should we:

1) **Consider further major urban extensions into the open countryside.**
2) **Limit development at Bicester to protect its setting and maintain separation between the town and surrounding villages**
3) **Focus development at an existing or new settlement(s) well connected to Bicester**

2. Limit development at Bicester to protect its setting and maintain separation between the town and surrounding villages. The villages around Bicester are losing their rural character and a village like Chesterton is all but ruined because of approval of major planning applications on the edges of the villages.

OPTION 23: BICESTER 2 – DIRECTIONS OF GROWTH - If development is directed to Bicester requiring green field sites should we:

1) **Consider sites to the north of the town,**
2) **Consider sites to the south of the town,**
3) **Consider sites to the east of the town,**
4) **Consider sites to the west of the town?**
5) **A combination of any of the above**

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We would welcome views on any specific sites identified through the call for sites, or suggestions for new sites.

n/a

OPTION 24: BICESTER TOWN CENTRE – ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS – Should we

1) **consider the use of an article 4 direction to prevent the conversion of shops and restaurants to residential?**
2) **Allow maximum flexibility of uses under permitted development rules**

2. Flexibility to allow conversion to dwellings in Bicester Centre would reinvigorate the town community, promote a vibrant culture and support social businesses. This would also promote preservation and repair of some of the historic buildings which otherwise are at risk through lack of investment.

OPTION 25: BICESTER – COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES - Should we

1) **Identify a specific site(s) to enable the development of cultural facilities for Bicester**
2) **Facilitate such developments through a criteria-based policy.**

n/a

QUESTION: BICESTER'S HERITAGE & HISTORIC BUILDINGS – Are there specific buildings, areas or historic assets that should be specifically protected through the Local Plan?

n/a

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QUESTION: BICESTER'S OPEN SPACES - How do you think Bicester's network of green spaces, sport and play facilities could be protected and enhanced?

n/a

QUESTION: LOCAL GREEN SPACES IN BICESTER – Do you have any views on the submitted proposals for Local Green Space designation in Bicester?

As far as we can see there are only 2 small green spaces in Bicester (compared to eight around Kidlington). This needs remedial action – Bicester should have more green space to identify the periphery of the town settlement and contain it and identify separation from surrounding villages (e.g. Chesterton, Launton, Caversfield, Bucknell, Wendelbury). This is a rural landscape and should not accept unfettered access for further building.

QUESTION: REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCY IN BICESTER - What would help you make fewer trips by car in Bicester?

Rural areas need dependable bus service into Bicester – people who live in Weston on the Green can currently only access Bicester by car.

Options other than road=based public transport should be considered – at least in the longer term e.g. small light electric tramline for local connections.

QUESTION: KIDLINGTON INFILL HOUSING – Do you think we need a policy to control the redevelopment of larger dwellings or plots to apartments?

What might be the key criteria in such a policy to understand if the proposal is acceptable?

n/a

OPTION 26: KIDLINGTON EMPLOYMENT – Should we:

1) **Undertake a small-scale Green Belt review to test whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate employment uses;**
2) **Accommodate employment land needs outside the existing Green Belt boundaries?**

The degradation of the Green Belt around Kidlington is only for monetary gain by Oxford colleges. It has been a sham to override the Green Belt using the pretence of housing need when in fact much more than housing is being put into this area. For example, there is now a plan to create a high-tech hub with housing for staff – none of this is meeting the current unmet housing need.

OPTION 27: KIDLINGTON CENTRE – Should we:

1) **Maintain and protect the existing Kidlington village centre**
2) **Consider tools such as Article 4 Directions to prevent the conversion of retail and leisure uses to residential**
3) **Investigate the potential of expanding the village centre to include Exeter Close**

n/a

QUESTION: REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCY IN KIDLINGTON & THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES - Are there any specific areas or routes that we should prioritise to promote sustainable travel? What might make you make fewer trips by car?

Villages in the area of Kidlington and Bicester should have public transport. People in the villages do not have access to shopping without the use of cars. Cutting off rural transport has been the cause of loneliness and a sense of isolation for many.

Buses between Bicester and Kidlington should pass through Weston on the Green – at commuter times and for shopping. It may take time, but this option will make a difference to carbon emissions and heavy traffic on the roads, particularly if the transport is electric driven.

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OPTION 28: KIDLINGTON GREEN SPACE – Should we

1) **Explore the potential for creating a network of accessible, and wherever possible, linked green spaces around Kidlington**
2) **Just focus on protecting and enhancing existing green spaces and public rights of way?**

n/a

QUESTION: KIDLINGTON SPORTS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY NEEDS - Do you have any information that could help us plan for the future sports, recreation and community needs of the area?

n/a

OPTION 29: HEYFORD PARK – Should we:

1) **Allocate further land for housing and employment at Heyford Park (e.g. beyond that planned for)**
2) **Limit further development beyond that which is already planned for the plan period.**

We would be interested to understand if some areas/directions for growth are more appropriate than others.

n/a

OPTION 30: HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREAS - If additional development is required should we

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1) **Limit development in the rural areas to that required to meet local needs or**
2) **Direct proportionately more development to the rural areas over the plan period to meet wider district needs**

> 1. Limit development in the rural areas to that required to meet local needs rather than spread more development over rural areas. This will keep the historical sense of villages like ours but allow some managed growth.
>
> Pouring development into small rural villages ruins the villages and changes the landscape from rural and specific historical sense to a suburban sprawl – not organic or sensitive.

OPTION 31: MEETING RURAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS – Should we:

1) **Work with communities to allocate specific sites to meet identified housing needs or**
2) **Provide a parish level figure to each area to allow flexibility for Neighbourhood Planning or other community led plans**
3) **Use a combination of the above**

> 3. Use a combination of the above.

OPTION 32: DEVELOPING A RURAL SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY - In developing a rural settlement hierarchy should we:

1) **Give additional weight to the availability of certain services and facilities (which do you think are the most important?)**
2) **Give additional weight to the accessibility of the settlement to our urban centres by public transport, walking and cycling?**

Please tell us if there are other factors that we should consider in developing a rural settlement hierarchy

> The rural settlement hierarchy has been a problem for Weston on the Green. For some reason it has been considered a Category A village (despite that it currently has no school,

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no public transport of any kind) and the threat of development on our boundary has been constant.

We would recommend giving additional weight in determination of the hierarchy to the availability of certain services and facilities such as: primary schools, services such as employment opportunities and connectivity both technological and physical.

There is a catch here for rural villages – if we were to get a bus service would we be considered more sustainable and thus eligible for housing developments on our border? That is a trade-off we are not prepared to make.

OPTION 33: THE RURAL ECONOMY – In support of the rural economy, including agriculture and tourism, should we

1) **Apply criteria-based policies to assess development proposals**
2) **Allocate specific sites in the rural areas to meet the needs of the rural economy**
3) **Use a combination the above?**

2. Use a combination of the above. Development sites should not be pushed on villages nor exiting rural spaces allotted to employers that have no connection to the community – Great Wolf Resort is an example of a central government push to increase tourism at the expense of a rural village.

OPTION 34: HISTORIC & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – Should we:

1. **Retain the current approach of seeking to conserve and enhance the countryside and landscape character of the whole district**
2. **Define valued landscapes/landscape features in the district which would be the subject of additional policy guidance.**

1. Retain the current approach of seeking to conserve and enhance the countryside and landscape character of the whole district.

It has been pointed out that Cherwell is primarily a rural environment. We need to emphasise that there is a disconnect between the type of economic 'push' that central government appears to be supporting and the type of district Cherwell actually is….there is a continual tension between the value of maintaining a successful rural economy and protecting our villages and the push to maximise our proximity to London

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thus causing a housing, population increase that is in conflict with safeguarding rural villages.

QUESTION: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING - How could we best support Neighbourhood Planning through the Local Plan in those communities that wish to prepare a plan?

CDC has done an excellent job of supporting WOTG Parish Council through the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan.
Only through acknowledging the legitimacy of a Neighbourhood Plan and referring to it in planning decision will more neighbourhoods realise the value of having a NP.
There is a lot for non-specialists to learn and understand in preparation of a NP - CDC has a terrific team supporting this work.

However, there is still much misunderstanding (or willful denial) by the public and developers about the value and power in planning of Neighbourhood Plans. CDC could make it clearer to developers and the public at large how NPs are used in planning decisions.

QUESTION: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – Are there other areas where a local development management policy would be helpful?

The submitted list seems comprehensive.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND TO THIS CONSULTATION. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY 11.59PM ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021 BY EMAIL TO: PlanningPolicyConsultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

ALTERNATIVELY, PLEASE SEND BY POST TO:

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