

A VERY QUICK GUIDE TO THE CDC LOCAL PLAN WITH REGARD TO BLETCHINGDON

(Author Duncan Ledger 17 Jan 2025)

Please note that this is only my interpretation and understanding of the plan. I would urge you to look at the plan itself (it is however very long!). You can do so by going to <https://cherwell.citizenspace.com/planning-policy/cherwell-local-plan-review-2042/>

HOUSING. As it stands the plan provides for 911 dwellings per year for the whole of Cherwell District. This is 81.5% for the figure of 1118 suggested by the government in their latest National Planning Policy Framework. The timing is such however that the plan will be reviewed under the old guidelines and so this figure may not be changed.

The bulk of the housing will be designated for Banbury, Bicester, Heyford Park and Kidlington areas. For the rural areas "Housing and employment growth will have been managed to protect the character, appearance, heritage and identity of our villages". Most of the 565 dwellings will directed in the rural areas to the larger and best served villages with sustainable travel choices.

Policy RUR 1: Rural Areas Housing Strategy

Development in the rural areas will be considered against the spatial strategy and Policy COM 1: District Wide Housing Distribution. 565 homes will be provided on sites allocated in neighbourhood plans, or this Local Plan in addition to the existing supply set out at Appendix 2.

Adderbury	75
Bletchinghamdon, Hampton Gay & Poyle	50
Bloxham	75
Bodicote	75
Deddington	90
Hook Norton	75
Mid Cherwell	100
Milcombe	25

These are the only villages with an allocation. It would appear that the figure does not include completions from 2020 to 2024 and also allows for some windfall gains and infilling. The site in Bletchinghamdon is the only site in the plan for the villages and so

approval of the plan would in effect give approval of the site. It does come with a string of conditions. I have copied these so that we are all aware of what is being proposed. The details are on the next page.

RURAL EXCEPTION AND OTHER SITES

The plan allows for rural exception sites to encourage the development of more affordable housing, particularly where any allocated development fails to provide sufficiently cheap housing to meet local needs. It may allow up to 25% market housing to assist in making these schemes viable. There are a number of conditions attached.

The plan also allows for additional development of "rural workers dwellings" the conversion of rural building to dwellings, community led housing and the one-to-one replacement of unfit or substandard housing. All come with conditions.

Policy RUR H1: Land west of Springwell Hill, Bletchingdon

Site area: 2.9 hectares

Land west of Springwell Hill is allocated to accommodate 44 dwellings as an extension of the existing built form of Bletchingdon.

The development should provide a range of dwelling types and densities that reflect character and context, which should be determined as part of the design process.

Proposals must follow a contextual landscape led approach to design and a landscape and planting strategy.

Provision of formal sports facilities, play areas and allotments adopted standards within the developable area unless otherwise agreed with the Council.

1. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development;
2. Financial contributions towards primary and secondary school provision to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;
3. Financial contributions towards primary care health provision at a location to be agreed with the Council in discussion with BOB ICB, and
4. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils.

Key design requirements

5. Development should seek to preserve the positive vistas identified in the Bletchingdon Conservation Area Appraisal as well as the historic approach towards the Conservation Area from the north;
6. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets adjacent to the site. Developable area to be softened and pulled back in the east and northern extents of the site, to ensure no adverse impacts;
7. Key characteristics of the Conservation Area should be reflected in the development design;

8. Retain and strengthen tree and hedgerow planting along Springwell Road to minimise views of built form;
9. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructure connections between this site, the residential development to the south and the wider surrounding countryside;
10. Main access from the Springwell Hill Road, subject to satisfactory design including visibility splays being achievable within the constraints of available land;
11. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats;
12. Retain public footpath within an attractive, overlooked landscaped corridor;
13. Locate public open space within the western part of the site - SuDS provision must be fully integrated into the open space design to maximise amenity and habitat value;
14. Provide a clear and legible pedestrian link to the adjacent development, co-op and school to the south;
15. Ensure secure perimeter blocks are created with adjacent development rear garden boundaries whilst being sensitive to the amenity of these properties;
16. Opportunity to reinforce hedgerow and tree planting to the sites northern and western boundaries to ensure an appropriate visual relationship with the wider rural context, and
17. Ensure the scheme is fully integrated with the existing settlement both visually and physically.

Planning application requirements

18. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;
19. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist, and
20. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network.

THE GREEN BELT AND RURAL AREAS STRATEGY

The plan is fairly clear in relation to the green belt.

Policy COM 12: The Oxford Green Belt

The Oxford Green Belt boundaries within Cherwell District will be maintained in order to:

- i. Preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;
- ii. Check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl;
- iii. Prevent the coalescence of settlements;
- iv. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and
- v. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with current Government policy and other relevant Development Plan policies.

It is also part of the overall spatial strategy for rural areas.

Overall Spatial Strategy

- Protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas and avoid unplanned development in the open countryside
- Provide for limited development to meet local community and business needs and help support the vitality of these more rural settlements and the viability of existing businesses and agriculture/farms
- Direct the development of new housing to the larger and more sustainable villages that offer a wider range of services, and to a lesser extent to villages that are well-connected to our urban areas and sustainable villages
- Maintain the designated Green Belt
- Conserve and enhance the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
- Protect the character of locally designated landscapes and preserve and enhance conservation areas and registered parks and gardens and their settings.

Although Cherwell's intentions are clear that only in exceptional circumstances will they allow development in the green belt that is an approach that could easily be superseded by Government policy particularly where, as in the case of Bletchingdon, the current designation may not have any effect upon the policies in COM 12 above.

OTHER IMPACTS

General development around Bicester, Heyford Park and Kidlington is likely to have an impact on the village in terms of traffic though this is more a county matter. There are also likely to be more positive impacts on the prospects of developing footpaths and cycle ways.

There is also an emphasis on green energy policy and particularly where this has an impact on housing could be seen in terms of solar panels and heat pumps.

However, whatever the well laid plans of CDC might be, the future is not certain. The plan is for the period to 2042 and a lot can change in 17 years. In the case of local government reorganisation, it is likely that the local plan could be subsumed into a much wider plan for the County or the region where a much wider strategy may dictate alternative approaches.

Similarly, the local plan is only a plan. It has to be approved by central government and they may have different views.