

## Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031

### Response to Consultation Representation by Oxfordshire County Council

We acknowledge the representation made by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in response to the Regulation 14 consultation on the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031 (CNP). We thank OCC for their engagement with the consultation process. We welcome the overall support for the plan and also the many constructive comments made which were all given careful consideration and have been helpful in the revision of the draft plan, ahead of submission to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

The acknowledgment of our position in the Cotswolds AONB, the criteria-based approach to housing development and the need for affordable housing as a key issue are welcomed as an indication of OCC's general support for the CNP. Our response to specific comments is laid out below.

#### **Housing**

We are encouraged by OCC's support for our priority for affordable housing, which will be important when the plan comes into force. The question on consideration of properties on 'living rent' was addressed by revision and clarification of the wording in policies CH2 and CH3 and in the supporting text.

To address the view that Policy CH1 may be contrary to WO Local Plan 2031 policy H2, the wording of policy CH1 and supporting text has been revised to clarify that development within the built up area would be supported so long as it meets Plan's housing objectives stated at paragraph 5.2 and if it is convincingly demonstrated that the scheme would give rise to benefits to the town which would clearly outweigh any likely harms.

We agree that 21st century digital infrastructure should in future be installed at the build phase and the Town Council will be looking for a commitment to this in all development proposals. This is seen to be a key factor in promoting our position as a rural service centre and the anticipated increase in home working that is likely to take place during the lifetime of the plan noted in Policy ECT3.

#### **Local Green Space (LGS) Designations**

Support for LGS designation in general is welcome.

In particular, we note and welcome OCC's acceptance of the LGS designation of Centenary Wood and associated land. We also note OCC's strong objection to LGS designation for Wychwood Paddocks or land south of the Bowls club, neither of which are proposed for such designation in the draft plan.

However, it should be noted that, in response to this consultation, we received many strong representations from residents calling for Wychwood Paddocks to be designated. The site assessment was consequently reviewed but it was still concluded that, in accordance with OCC's comments, LGS designation was not necessary or appropriate in this case. The site has therefore NOT been added in the revised plan but further clarification of the reasons for non-designation has been included in Appendix E.3 (was F.3).

## **Education**

The comments and support for the plans objectives on education are noted and welcomed.

## **Transport Strategy**

References to Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) have been added to policies and elsewhere through the plan where appropriate.

Support for adequate cycling and walking provision for developments is welcomed and the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy has also been acknowledged in section 6.5. References to LTP4 policies have now been added to Policy ECT9. The need for developer contributions to be appropriate and proportionate has also been recognised in the wording of policy ECT9.

A note has been added to the introductory text to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Appendix B) clarifying the fact that the inclusion of delivery partners such as OCC does not imply their agreement or commitment to any project at this time. This merely identifies partners with whom the town council would seek to work to progress each project in the future if and when an opportunity arose to take that project forward.

## **Lead Local Flood Authority**

The extensive comments on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Policy are acknowledged and welcomed. Considerable revision has been made to section 7.5, policy NE8 and supporting text, to address the issue of flood risk and water quality with appropriate references added.

## **Environment and Natural Environment Comments**

We welcome all comments on the importance of green infrastructure. Significant enhancements have been made to Section 7 of the draft plan to reflect these and other comments, and in recognition of the Town Council's declared climate emergency. Reference to the Oxfordshire Landscape and Wildlife Study (OWLS) has also been included.

Coverage of the importance of Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) has been improved and much more detail has been included on biodiversity and trees, particularly in policy NE5 and its supporting text.

## **Waste Strategy Comments**

We acknowledge and support OCC's ambitious targets to reduce waste and increase recycling. We believe this is adequately covered by policy OS3 of the WO Local Plan 2031. Additionally, Charlbury has a proud tradition of active environmental volunteer groups (e.g. Charlbury Green Hub, Sustainable Charlbury and Charlbury Climate Action Network) working hard to promote recycling, resource and crop sharing, and to implement local initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and become more sustainable. This is acknowledged in section 2.1 of the draft plan under "Community Life".

## **Heritage and Historic Environment**

We note the comments that policy HE3 (Archaeology) appears to be restricted to the historic centre, as seems most appropriate. However, policy HE2 (Locally Appropriate Design) and the associated design guidance (Appendix C) seek to sustain or enhance the built environment across the whole parish with separate guidance included for various regions of the parish. The proposed local list of non-designated assets (Policy HE1 and Appendix D) includes properties which lie outside the historic centre. Furthermore, descriptions explaining the reasons for inclusion on the local list are now included in Appendix D in a new section D.3.