

## The Cherwell Local Plan and Banbury Masterplan

### Banbury in 2031 and beyond

The Cherwell Local Plan is the Council's planning framework, setting out policies for development in the district till 2031. It has recently been out for consultation. To download the Plan and the summary leaflet visit

<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleID=2856>

The Civic Society finds much to support in the Plan and is aware of the need for it to counteract the many developments that are coming forward with no regard

for the draft Plan.

As indicated on the plan below, the main features of the plan are:

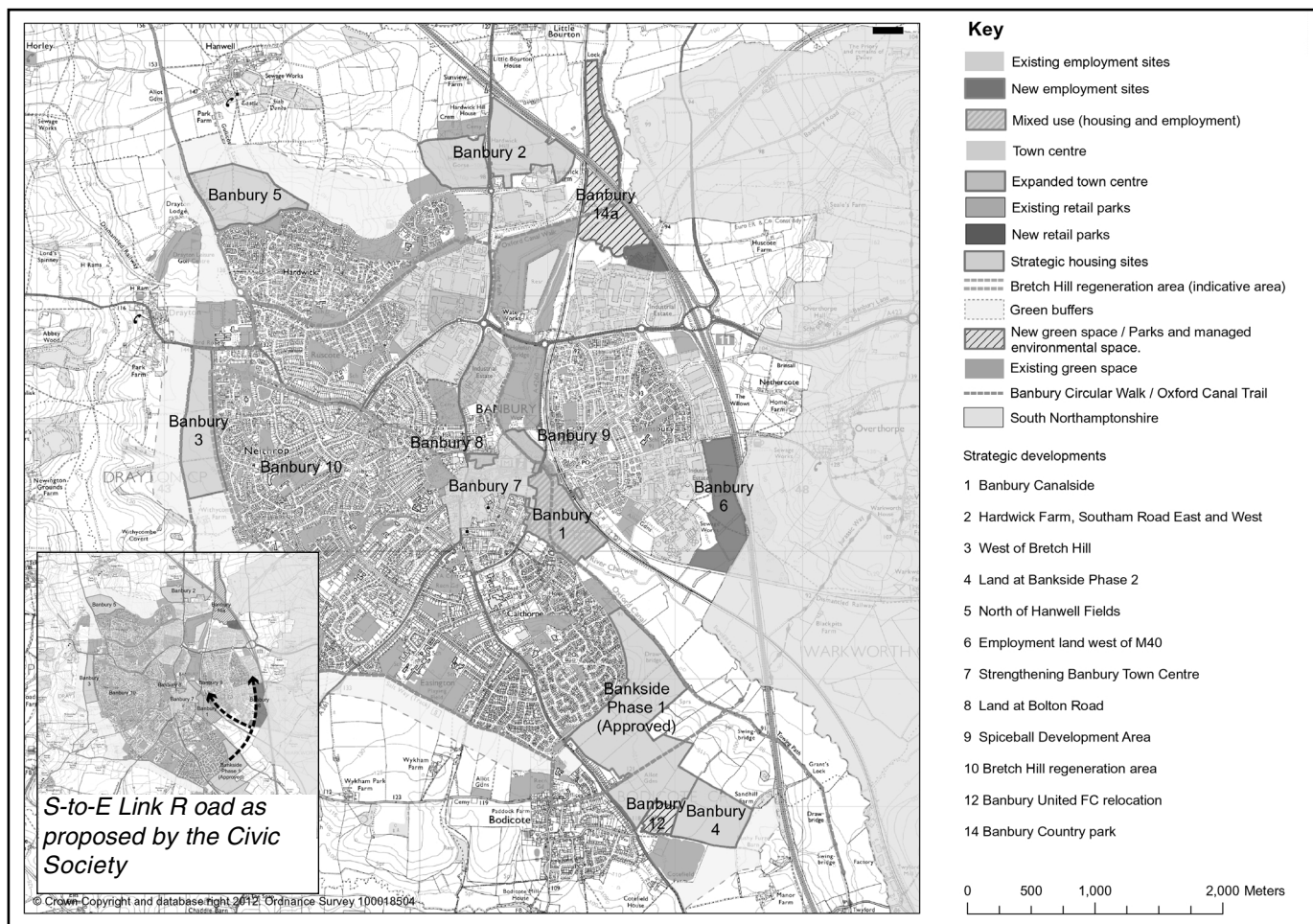
- Mixed development and enhancement at Canalside and Bolton Road.
- Strategic Housing Sites at Bankside Phase 2 (Phase 1 is already approved), Land west of Bretch Hill, Land at Hardwick Farm and Land to the north of the existing Hanwell Fields.
- Employment land west of the Motorway
- A 'green buffer' designed to protect

the town limits

- Strengthening the town centre
- A new Country Park
- A new cultural quarter at Spiceball
- A relocated Banbury United FC

The purpose and exact status of the proposed Green buffer is not clear at the moment, but if it ensures against development beyond the allocated areas it is to be welcomed.

The Local Plan is inherently broad-based



and much of it devoted to the rural areas and other settlements. Cherwell District Council have therefore commissioned consultants to put together a finer-grained 'Banbury Masterplan' to guide the future development of the town. The outline proposals for this are already subject to various consultations and the Civic Society has been represented at two stakeholder meetings and one 'one-to-one' consultation. The Banbury Masterplan will eventually form part of the Local Plan.

The Society's full response to the Local Plan can be viewed on our web-site.

In the response the Society backs much of the Local Plan. We have raised several key issues, however:

**1. Consultation Process** The Council's consultation process restricts itself to the single issue of the legal compliance of the Plan. We believe that the full contents of the plan should be open for comment.

**2. Housing Numbers** We have questioned the origin of the housing numbers given. For Banbury these have more than doubled (to 4352) compared to the aborted 'Core Strategy', which was based on centrally imposed Government targets.

**3. Emphasis on Built, Historic and Natural Environment** We are generally strongly supportive of the increased awareness of the importance of the built, historic and natural environment demonstrated in some small parts of the proposed Local Plan. We would like to see even greater emphasis on this aspect of future planning as we believe that maintaining and nurturing the unique character of the district holds the key to future prosperity.

**4. Banbury South-to-East Link Road** In the light of the very large number of new homes proposed for Banbury, we have insisted that greater consideration must be given to the provision of a direct route from the Oxford Road to the M40, with a link from this to railway station. We have asked that a route corridor be clearly identified in the Plan and that clear and robust policies are put in place, so as to ensure its delivery within the Plan period. Our full response has been posted on our website. For a printed copy please contact our secretary, Jane Chen.

## Other planning issues

### Oxford Canal Conservation Area adopted

On 4th October Cherwell District Council adopted the entire 35 miles of the Oxford Canal within Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Districts as a Conservation Area. (Details are available at: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1672>)

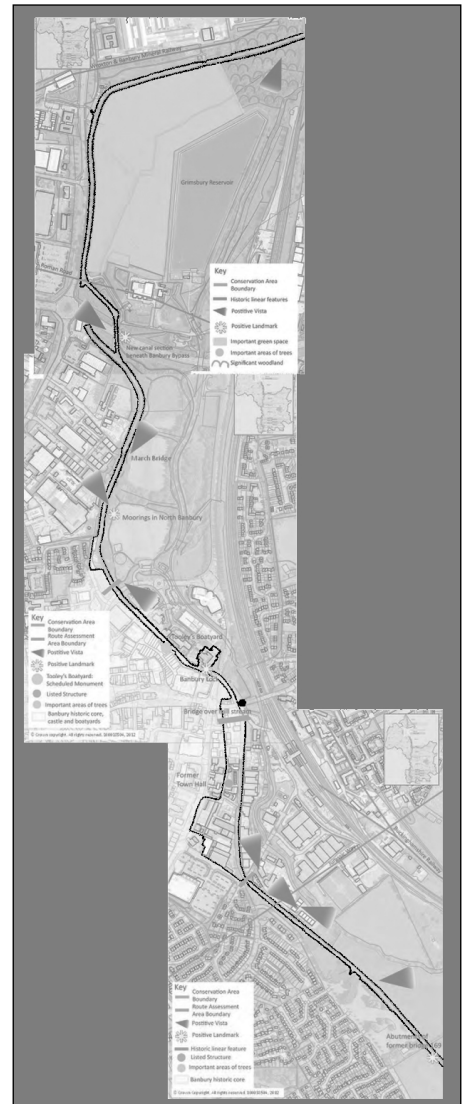
The Civic Society welcomes the designation, not least because the new conservation area gives added protection to The Mill and all of the historic canal-side wharves and buildings within the Canalside regeneration area.

In a press release, Rob Kinchin-Smith (Civic Society Acting Chair) said: "Having long pressed for the Oxford Canal in Cherwell to be designated as a conservation area, we congratulate Cherwell District Council on its timely announcement on the eve of Banbury's Canal Day.

Whilst we were aware of CDC's work and had commented on it, we had no idea until today whether Banbury's historic canal-side wharves and buildings would be included or not. In the draft conservation area description, the words said they were, but the mapping showed them all as excluded.

We believe that the fact that CDC has given conservation area status to all of the historic buildings within Banbury's Canalside regeneration area is evidence of a genuine sea-change in the Council's attitude to conservation, coinciding with the change of Chief Executive and the back-of-house merger with South Northamptonshire District Council. At last we appear to have a Council that understands that the historic and natural environment are critical to local well-being and the local economy, rather than impediments to economic growth.

Our countryside, our old buildings and our canal are what make Cherwell special - they are why people choose to live here. At last we feel we have a Council that understands that these natural and historic assets are at least as important to the District as the area's excellent communications and location and that, as such, they equally deserve to be sustained and enhanced."



The black lines define the new Oxford Canal Conservation area as it passes through Banbury.



The former 'Burgess' premises on Canal Street is locally-listed and now included in the Oxford Canal Conservation Area. The buildings were originally used for erecting stationary and portable steam engines by Victorian agricultural engineers Barrows & Stewart. These buildings will provide the first test for the conservation area as, four days after the area was designated, an application to demolish the erecting shop was deposited with CDC. The Society will do all it can to persuade the Council to refuse the application.

## Land south of Salt Way

Following Cherwell's refusal of a proposal for a housing development south of Salt Way on the A361, a Public Inquiry is to be held in early November.

As a relatively small development of 145 homes, the appeal proposal may not seem large. It nevertheless breaks the long-established principle, upheld at previous Inquiries, that Banbury should not extend beyond Salt Way and the town's natural bowl. It is apparent that the applicant's ambitions for the site extend well beyond the 145 homes proposed. Their website is currently advertising '160 acres to the south of Banbury, dissected by the A361'. The site is described thus: 'The site has potential for 895 dwellings and represents the gateway to a larger site to the south which is being promoted for up to 2,000 houses. We intend to submit an application in the near future.' The appeal application thus represents the tip of an iceberg that could, if successful, lead to further hostile, speculative applications for up to a further 2,750 homes, pushing the bounds of Banbury from the Salt Way (part of the Banbury Fringe Circular Walk) to Wykham Lane, in the process subsuming nearly a mile of the Salt Way and the surrounding countryside in unsustainable suburban sprawl.



*Ambitious plans for the area south of Saltway straddling the A361 shown on the developer's web site*

## Traffic and Transport

### Easing movement round the town

As the Civic Society is dedicated to making Banbury a better place in which to live, we try to ensure that it becomes as easy as possible to travel around the town, whether or not one uses a car.

The Society is represented at the Banbury Town Council Traffic Advisory

Committee by Henry Ormerod and John Bell. At the last meeting, Henry had been asked by the Executive Committee to pursue the matter of car parking improvements at Banbury railway station. We were informed that Chiltern Railways' planning application for the making of an additional 146-space surface car-park on land to the west of the station building had been approved for a 3-year period. Chiltern Railways' planning application for a much larger 707-space car-park (multi-storey) on the east side of the railway awaits a decision while further consultations with Oxfordshire County Council are taking place. The feasibility of this proposal depends on the completion of planned road improvements in the Higham Way and old cattle market area. It is claimed that the new car park is needed as the lease for the existing car-parking area at Tramway Road expires in August 2013. Whether the existing Tramway car park can be successfully replaced by one accessed from Middleton Road remains to be seen...

The County Council has been re-examining the lane markings at the large Southam Road/ Hennef Way roundabout and at the nearby Ruscote Avenue/ Lockheed Close roundabout (providing access to Tesco and the adjacent retail park). The road signage at certain locations on the main roads through the town is also being re-thought, as some anomalies have been identified, making it difficult for drivers unfamiliar with Banbury to find the best route to their destination. Further work has been carried out on the Banbury Transport Strategy, to make it dovetail with the forthcoming Banbury Masterplan. We must await the planned improvements to the Oxford Road, the A4260 inner relief road from Upper Windsor Street to the A422 Spiceball Park roundabout, via the Bridge Street cross-roads and Concord Avenue.

It is understood that modifications made a year ago to bus time-tables on certain routes, allowing buses more time to complete their journeys at busy periods of the day, have definitely improved the reliability and punctuality of the services beset by traffic congestion. We understand that there are plans to upgrade bus stops and to provide fuller information on the B1 (Easington) and B8 (Ruscote/Hardwick) bus routes. We will

see what this amounts to when the plans are implemented, hopefully by the spring of 2013.

All members of the Civic Society are welcome to share their views about travel and transport in and around Banbury - ideas and suggestions will be considered by the executive committee, and if thought appropriate referred to the Traffic Advisory Committee.

## Flood Alleviation

### The Flood Alleviation Scheme opened on 19th October



*(from the Banbury Guardian web site 19th October)* 'A host of dignitaries and officials gathered to open Banbury's new £17 million flood defence scheme this afternoon.

Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry, town mayor Tony Ilott and Chair of the Thames Regional Flood Defence Committee Amanda Nobbs, were among those who gathered at the site alongside the M40 to witness the unveiling of a special plaque to commemorate the event.

Mr Baldry thanked the businesses and organisations who worked on the scheme and added: 'If it hadn't worked at the end of April this year we would have seen very serious flooding in Banbury, there's no doubt about it.' He said keeping Banbury free of flood water would help release viable land for future developments in the town including the much touted Canalside scheme.

Ms Nobbs told those present how the scheme - which was planned after serious flooding swamped properties and businesses in Banbury in 1998 - would help protect the town.

She said: 'In Banbury we now enjoy a standard of protection which is something of a Rolls Royce scheme giving us defences against one-in-200 year flood events.' The scheme incorporates two flood control structures which can alter

the flow of the river Cherwell.

In the event of heavy rainfall, an excess of water can be dammed into a flood storage area which can hold the equivalent of 1,200 Olympic sized swimming pools.

The project was funded by the Regional Flood Defence Committee, Cherwell District Council, Thames Water and Network Rail, and was spearheaded by the Environment Agency.'

## Recent news

### Alcan gate stolen for scrap



*Keiron Mallon, Sir Tony Baldry MP and Sarah Jarvis by the remaining gate*

As predicted by the Society's Chairman Rob Kinchin-Smith, one of the two 1931 gates at the site of Banbury's Alcan factory has been stolen.

The gates, which are Grade II Listed, were due to be reinstated with the old gate lodge as part of the forthcoming redevelopment of the site.

Police believe thieves stole one gate and removed parts from the other for scrap. The gates, which had latterly formed part of the garden of remembrance at the site, in memory of staff killed in the Second World War.

The theft was discovered October 17th.

Anyone with details should call PC Hopkins on 101 or contact the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555111.

## Canal Day

### Great day out for Banbury

Once again Banbury showed what a great venue it is for events, as Banbury residents and visitors from far afield crowded on to the Canalside for Canal

Day (October 7th) despite the cool weather. Visitors were rewarded with a good mix of stalls, a variety of eateries and a high quality crafts market. The BCS stand was devoted to explanations of the CDC Draft Local Plan and the brand new Oxford Canal Conservation Area: both issues creating considerable interest and lively conversations.



## Civic Voice

### Civic Voice AGM

On October 19th representatives from 60 civic societies (including the BCS) met in Coventry, for the third AGM of the Civic Voice, the national organisation of the civic society movement. At the meeting the delegates were introduced to the new Interim Director of the Civic Voice, Steve Graham. The Civic Voice's Hon. President, Griff Rhys Jones, gave a passionate talk for the rejection of the government's plans for deregulation of the planning system, and this was followed by four workshops. Later there was a good deal of discussion towards finding future campaigns and the conference voted on a campaign to encourage their 75,000+ members to write to local MPs and maintain pressure on the Government to cancel the proposed planning reforms. There were also presentations of the guidelines that the Civic Voice has developed to help civic societies operate in a more professional and focused way.

A Civic Voice report of the event will be circulated to those members with email. Members without email who would like access to this can request a printed copy from Hon. Secretary, Jane Chen.

## Out of town perspective

### Villagers' Voice on Town Topics

Once again we are seeking input from the many members who live in the villages surrounding Banbury. While our work concerns Banbury, many of the decisions

made by Councils affect the Villages. Our Society covers many topics which include Transport, Built Environment and much more. We would love to have your views on anything concerning Banbury – our historic Town and how you use it. We would also like to have your observations so that we may be able to address any problems.

Once again we would welcome any news that you may have on Banbury and, indeed, if you would be interested to help in anyway.

Please let me know: Adrienne Rees Brown – [adrienne.brown@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrienne.brown@btopenworld.com).

## Thai Orchid Night

### Banbury - the next 20 years and beyond - *An evening with CDC Planning Chief Adrian Colwell*

Adrian Colwell is the recently appointed Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy for Cherwell and South Northamptonshire District Councils. He has already expressed how keen he is to engage and consult with all relevant people and organisations in helping to devise plans for the future of the District and has already met with the Society's Planning and Built Environment sub-committee. He has agreed to speak at our annual Thai Orchid night to which all BCS members are invited. The date is Thursday, December 6th and your invitation is included with this Newsletter.

All comments to Laurence Carey  
[design@h-and-p.demon.co.uk](mailto:design@h-and-p.demon.co.uk)

## Banbury Civic Society Membership

Help us recruit new members.

**More members = more action.**

**More members = a louder voice.**

**Help us help Banbury.**

Membership forms can be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Please write to:

Jane Chen

BCS Membership Secretary

Flat 7, Northumberland Court

Duke Street OX16 4NJ

or telephone: 01295 279640

or email: [chen\\_yongmei@hotmail.com](mailto:chen_yongmei@hotmail.com)