RESPONSE OF HANWELL PARISH COUNCIL TO THE INVITATION TO CONSULTATION ON CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW, PLANNING FOR CHERWELL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PAPER 2: DEVELOPING OUR OPTIONS SEPTEMBER 2021

Matters with which Hanwell Parish Council is particularly concerned are set out in Section 6.6 Rural Areas and our responses to the options proposed within this Section are as follows:

Option 30: Housing in the rural areas

If additional development is required should we

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

Response

Hanwell Parish Council **p**refers Option 1.

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

Response

Hanwell Parish Council prefers Option 1.

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.

Response

Hanwell Parish Counsel thinks both these matters have to be taken into account together with the need to preserve the identity of historic villages.

Yes, Hanwell Parish Council does think this. Historic villages should not be overwhelmed by encroaching development from outside the village.

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 of the above?

Response

Hanwell Parish Council prefers Option 2.

Option 34: Historic and 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.

Response

Hanwell Parish Council prefers Option 1.

Question: Neighbourhood Planning

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

Response

Provide finance to allow us to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Question: Comment on the following sites listed in Appendix 2:

LPR-A-047 – Land at Hardwick Farm, West of Southam Road, Banbury
LPR-A-154 – Hanwell Rise, Land at Hardwick Hill, Southam Road, Banbury
LPR-A-205 – Land off Dukes Meadow Drive, Banbury

Response

Hanwell Parish Council's response is as follows:-

1 Sustainability

It has not been proved that the proposed or approved housing sites are more sustainable.

2 Planning Principles

Despite the housing supply position and the draft Local Plan policies favouring strategic sites north of Banbury (eg policy Banbury 5), we still maintain these sites are unacceptable on a number of key planning grounds and should be resisted.

3 Urban Boundary

Development of these sites breaches the clear, defensible urban boundary to the north of Banbury created by Dukes Meadow Drive, which defined the limit of built development. That urban edge was carefully set by the Council's adopted 1996 Local Plan policies, and the Hanwell Fields Development Brief and Design Brief in 1997, and is not a developer's or landowner's whim. The 1997 Design Brief described the importance of a clear and rational urban boundary: "*The objective is to create an urban form and new urban edge which appears organic in character relating to land form and local colour and therefore specifically distinctive as Banbury*". In terms of urban form and a new urban edge, we fail to understand why the Persimmon scheme was acceptable. Moreover, the effectiveness of a "Green Buffer" policy has yet to be explained. We need to know how the altered boundary will constitute an effective, defensible long-term urban boundary, how this will protect Hanwell village and its rural setting (previously an Area of High Landscape Value) from further urbanising development and how the various "Green Buffers" now suggested will be achieved.

4 Strategic Gap

Development of these sites seriously erodes the "strategic" physical gap of open countryside between the urban area and Hanwell village, and in fact reduces the gap by almost 50% from about 1000 metres to a mere 500 metres. We have consistently argued that insufficient consideration has been given to the fundamental effects of this on the overall rural setting and character of this small conservation village, ie bringing the town to our doorsteps and mitigated only by planting. Assessing this in narrow terms of purely visual impact from the village is missing the point, since the greatest impact will be on the rural character of the area. Hanwell village has stood independently of Banbury for over 800 years and, despite short term housing pressures, we contend this must be given due weight and not dismissed lightly.

5 Landscape Impact

Development of this scale has a harmful impact on the overall quality of the landscape in the open countryside north of Dukes Meadow Drive. It does not "protect or enhance" it. We contend it is vital to protect Hanwell village and its rural setting (previously an Area of High Landscape Value) from further urbanising development. It is not clear to us how the various "Green Buffers" which have been suggested will be achieved and there appears to be no provision for wider landscape mitigation or protection.

6 Loss Of Farmland

Development has caused the loss of the best quality farmland. As we know, cumulatively this is now becoming a more important issue nationally. This needs to be balanced against argued benefits.

7 Remoteness

The sites are relatively remote from key community facilities at the Hanwell Fields centre and are physically divorced from the rest of Hanwell Fields.

8 Deliverability

We are against undesirable piecemeal development.

9 Access / Roads

Dukes Meadow Drive is full of restrictions and obstructions to traffic. As the developments expand the nature of this road will force people to travel through Hanwell village. This poses a huge problem for our village: the road is winding and narrow, and often single track.

The village suffers serious problems already with heavy traffic using the village street as a main road. The villagers feel threatened by the traffic, and the edges of the road are constantly seriously damaged by heaving vehicles being too big for the road itself. The village faces the expense of carrying out the following traffic controls to reduce this danger and damage:

1) Repainting of all existing white lining, both edging and central;

2) Repainting of the white 30mph lozenges at both entrances to the village;

3) Hiring traffic recording tubes and a recorder that will measure both volume and speed of traffic;

4) A reduction in the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph through the main part of the village;

5) Erection of "Give Way" signs;

6) Erection of "Road Narrows" signs;

7) Having the "Bend Warning" sign and the 30mph sign at the bottom end of the village moved back away from the village by approximately 60m to allow a longer, advanced warning of the bend and reduction in sped limit.

It has no funds to carry out this work itself, and the Highways Authority is either without funds or indifferent to these issues.

10 Growth

The Parish Council's views are that Hanwell and its rural setting should be properly protected from urbanising development, that the best way to protect Hanwell and its rural setting is to retain a firm logical defensible boundary to the North of Banbury, that Dukes Meadow Drive was carefully planned as that and is still that, the suggested housing site extensions in the Plan look rather arbitrary and piecemeal and the justifications for them are weak. We find it difficult to understand why there is no reasoning in the Plan for including the Persimmon Site but excluding the Drayton site, which was assessed as the more sustainable site in 2010.

Over recent years, the Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal has driven growth in the county significantly beyond need. But this has been achieved at considerable cost. For example:

- Many of our market towns and villages are being changed almost beyond recognition, threatening the rural character which makes Oxfordshire an attractive place to live and under pins our economic success. Places such as Chinnor, Hook Norton, Wantage and Eynsham, and many others, are all seeing large-scale housing development way beyond any local need.

- There are now nearly 20,000 houses planned for the Oxford Green Belt, expanding Oxford by a third, removing countryside access, coalescing villages and putting the setting of our historic city at risk.

- Flooding & sewage – 4.2bn litres of sewage was dumped into the Thames and its tributaries in 2017 by Thames Water. The majority of Oxfordshire's eight major rivers were classed as having moderate or poor cleanliness in 2016. Urbanisation has stressed natural drainage and added to the flood risk in the area. Some 1.7% of houses in Oxford have been flooded, well above the national average of 0.7 per cent.

- Flood & farming – the UK already imports about 45% of its food, and as recent events have shown, supply chains are not always robust.

- Land is a scarce resource that we will need for climate change mitigation and adaptation including planting trees and hedgerows.

Any further above trend growth proposals must be considered in the light of issues such as these.

11 Strategy

Cherwell District core strategy is to protect and maintain its rural character. Comment: Merging villages into Banbury is not maintaining it's rural character

Strategic community objective (SO5): To accommodate new development so that it maintains or enhances the local identity of Cherwell's settlements. Comment: This proposal effectively destroys the local identity of Hanwell. Previous developments have already gone too far in eroding this with "Hanwell Fields", "Hanwell Chase", "Hanwell View" etc etc

Cherwell's Environmental objective includes reducing carbon emissions. Comment: Additional housing to the North of Banbury puts additional strain on the existing infrastructure, further worsening the already terrible congestion around the town and to the M40.

Strategic Environment Objective SO11: To focus development in Cherwell's sustainable locations, making efficient and effective use of land, conserving and enhancing the countryside and landscape and the setting of its towns and villages. Comment: Any development that merges a village into a town cannot possibly be enhancing the setting of the village.

Section A100: The following features and characteristics around Banbury... are of particular value: "The open and agricultural setting and identity of the outlying villages". Comment: The draft plan directly and completely destroys the open and agricultural setting and identity of Hanwell village.

Hanwell Parish Council
21 October 2021