

## **CHERWELL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040**

### **WENDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

This is Wendlebury Parish Councils response to the Draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040. In addition to the direct affect of the policies on Wendlebury we have also had to consider the proposed allocations impact on the neighbouring Chesterton as they have a combined impact on both villages and due to Chesterton's location any development in or around the village has a knock on effect on Wendlebury.

Wendlebury is not listed as a Smaller Village so we have assumed it is considered to be part of the Open Country designation – development will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other local or national planning policies.

Chesterton – listed as a smaller Village designation – Limited infill development within existing built areas or on allocated sites. Proposals will be supported where they are: in keeping with the local character and proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs and or provide local employment services or facilities.

We have assessed the proposed polices set out in the Draft Local Plan and how they will affect and impact Wendlebury and made our comments based on this.

#### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES; SO 9**

**Recognise the economic benefits of preserving and enhancing the character and beauty of Cherwells built and natural heritage, and landscape and the wider benefits from its natural capital and ecosystem services to ensure that Cherwell remains attractive to business and as a place to live, work and visit for current and future communities.**

The proposed allocations LPR 37A and LPR 38 go against this strategic objective destroying the natural heritage and landscape around Wendlebury and Chesterton, changing the approach to Bicester along the A41 which currently is through countryside to one that will be an urban environment with industrial buildings and residential units. The green buffers that were supposed to stop the spread of Bicester are being leap frogged and development placed in inappropriate locations away from the main centre and its services.

#### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: SO 12**

**Focus development in Cherwell's sustainable locations making efficient and effective use of land conserving and enhancing the countryside landscape the natural environment and the setting of its towns and villages.**

The proposed allocations LPR 37A and LPR 38 do not satisfy this objective, their location is not sustainable as they will require workers and residents to use cars to access them as the services need to support them are in Bicester from which they are separated. They neither conserve nor enhance the countryside and destroy the setting of both Chesterton and Wendlebury as villages in a countryside setting.

#### **CORE POLICY 7: SUSTAINABLE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

Wendlebury has suffered in the past from flooding of the brook that runs the length of the village, climate change is increasing the occurrence of storms and high levels of rainfall. Development of land despite efforts to provide flood alleviation, enhances the flows off the land as systems are overcome

by the volume of water. The proposed development of Chesterton will build over fields that currently act as storage for rainfall before the water flows into the brook. Any development puts the properties in Wendlebury at risk of flooding and therefore there should be no development upstream as it goes against this Core Policy.

#### **CORE POLICY 15: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE**

LPR 37A includes various public rights of way. Wendlebury has limited access to the countryside it is set in, due to previous development either removing or altering its rights of way. Current footpaths include historic routes linking Wendlebury with Chesterton and Little Chesterton. The proposed allocation includes these routes and will remove the setting of these countryside routes to ones that will be enclosed within development, removing habitats, biodiversity, reducing the amenity value. The allocation should be removed due to its impact on these routes.

#### **CORE POLICY 43: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE**

Proposed allocations LPR37A and LPR38 go against this policy as they neither protect or enhance the landscape in fact they will negatively affect and change the landscape both of the villages and the access to Bicester. At present the A41 is a green corridor which only has visible development once you reach the Vendee roundabout. The proposed allocations will create development from Junction 9 towards Bicester and encourage further development so that there is a complete loss of the setting of Bicester being a Garden Town.

#### **CORE POLICY 45: SETTLEMENT GAPS**

Proposed allocations are removing settlement Character. Chesterton will nearly double in size and change from a setting in open countryside, accessed by minor country roads to an urban setting accessed via a dual carriageway with an employment area which is far larger than its resident population could support or needs.

The proposed allocation will hasten the coalescence of Bicester into its surrounding villages resulting in them becoming neighbourhoods of the town rather than distinct settlements in their own right. Anyone visiting Bicester will assume that from J9 the whole settlement is Bicester, with the settlement gaps being small green breaks in an over developed settlement.

#### **CORE POLICY 47: ACTIVE TRAVEL – WALKING AND CYCLING**

Proposed allocations will directly act to discourage the active walking of residents of Wendlebury. By removing open countryside and turning it into developed land the attractiveness of walking through countryside will be removed.

Increased development around Bicester will see greater use of the highway network especially the routes to Oxford. Wendlebury already suffers excessive traffic in the mornings as traffic tries to avoid J9. With no footpaths or street lighting high levels of traffic actively discourage walking or cycling. Roads have become dangerous with little regard given to walkers cyclist or horse riders and with few options to access safe routes around the village and the existing ones under threat any development that threatens the ability to walk or cycle should be resisted.

#### **CORE POLICY 48: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

Proposal LPR 37A directly affects a number of PRW which will cause a significant reduction in their amenity, removing them from the countryside and incorporating them in to a urban setting. No development should be allowed as per this policy. These PRW are some of the very few access routes available to Wendlebury to access open countryside.

#### **RURAL AREAS STRATEGY**

**The Draft Local Plans Rural Area Strategy sets out that it should protect the identity and character of our villages and rural areas. Provide limited development to meet local community and business needs.**

**The proposed allocations LPR37A and LPR38 go against this Strategy as they do not under any circumstances protect the identity or character of the villages and in fact will change them to such an extent that they will be viewed as part of the greater Bicester settlement.**

**The volume of employment proposed goes far beyond that need to support the needs of both Wendlebury and Chesterton and are being located in this site simply due to the convenience of the developer promoting the land with no regard to the sustainability of the location which can not be supported by its adjacent population and requires workers to commute to the site most likely by cars.**

**It is well known that J9 cannot support the levels of traffic currently using it. Combine this with the proposed development will lead to increased congestion, poorer air quality and noise levels for those settlement close to the junction. Both Chesterton and Wendlebury suffer from cars avoiding J9 particularly in the morning rush hour but also in the evenings. Wendlebury has no footpaths or street lighting which results in the public being put at risk as they walk around the village. Vehicle counts from a speed warning camera in the village indicate that there were in excess of 345,000 movements through the village for the last 10 months. No development should be approved without appropriate mitigation being provided to the village that will remove this dangerous level of traffic from the village.**