



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Equality and Climate Impact Assessment

Releasing Development Strategy in Didcot
and surrounding villages in the vicinity of HIF 1 schemes

June 2021

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Communities – Environment & Place
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Releasing Development Strategy in Didcot and surrounding villages in the vicinity of HIF 1 schemes
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New Strategy
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>OCC's Cabinet is being recommended to adopt a new strategy to assist with the delivery of new development in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts to allow some growth to come forward in a controlled manner prior to HIF 1 funded infrastructure being open for public use in 2024 based upon the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Development site housing build programmes / trajectories / occupations being aligned with (or after) the delivery of HIF 1 which will require occupation thresholds / controls on development sites.</i> • <i>Development sites to provide agreed sustainable / active travel infrastructure at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites to reduce traffic impact on the highway network prior to HIF 1 delivery.</i> • <i>New services or enhancements to existing bus service arrangements being implemented at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites.</i> • <i>Local off-site and on-site highway works to be delivered at the early stages of development to lessen the direct impact of a development site on the highway network.</i> • <i>Travel Plans prepared and approved by the council's Travel Plan team with deliverable and monitored targets.</i> • <i>Strategic transport / highway contributions will be sought in accordance with Regulation 122 and the three Section 106 tests.</i>

	<p>This strategy has been prepared to assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts allowing for some controlled development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use.</p> <p>Some negative impacts may be identified by concerned residents or local protection groups regarding air quality issues or carbon reduction matters associated with housing growth. However, such environmental risks would be expected to be mitigated through local and national planning policies controlled through the planning application process.</p> <p>The planning application process will secure early active traffic management, new public transport services and highway asset improvements to ensure mitigation of transport impacts. It is acknowledged there will so some residual carbon impact from development proposals coming forward. However, as noted above all development will be provided in line with relevant environmental policies and impacts of development proposals, and are to be considered against the gains in delivering much needed housing and economic growth in the districts of the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.</p>
Completed By	Michael Deadman, TDC Leader Officer, Environment & Place
Authorised By	Eric Owens, Assistant Director, Environment & Place
Date of Assessment	8 th June 2021

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Prior to Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure (HIF 1) funding being secured in June 2020, it was established that the local and strategic highway network that serves Didcot and the surrounding area has severe congestion and capacity issues during the morning and evening commuter periods. The areas of concern most affected have been identified as the river crossing between Sutton Courtenay and Culham, Clifton Hampden village signal junction, and the A4130 as the main route between Didcot and Milton Interchange (A34).</p> <p>To manage the highway network a strategy was devised in 2018 between officers of the district councils and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to manage development within the areas that have the most severe capacity issues in the absence of strategic highway infrastructure, to support new growth in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts (as identified in LTP4 and district Local Plans). This strategy involved OCC in the role as Local</p>
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Highway Authority objecting to new developments (including single dwellings and house holder extensions) that will generate a new vehicular trip in the morning and evening commuter peak times.

While this approach enabled both district councils and OCC to manage the impact of new development on the highway network and support the HIF 1 bid, it has placed OCC's position under immense scrutiny and officers are aware of frustration from developers who have been unable to progress their allocated development sites since HIF 1 funding was secured. Such frustrations have led to some development sites appealing their planning applications, with one of the reasons identified as OCC's position being considered unreasonable by not allowing some development when sites build out programmes are aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1. Defending the established position through such appeals places a significant financial (and reputational) risk on OCC.

Pressure is also being placed on OCC by the district councils to allow some development due to the ongoing delays of application responses which is impacting on their housing supply numbers. Such delays are providing an opportunity for speculative development impacting on planned development and associated infrastructure, which is also placing further resource pressures on both district councils to resist such proposals. There also remains an expectation that homes will be delivered in a timely manner in accordance with the agreement on funding secured through Homes England.

Securing HIF 1 funding, the adoption of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan and the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has provided OCC with more confidence in the delivery of HIF 1. Although it continues to be recognised by officers that in the absence of the HIF 1 infrastructure, much of the highway network is at design capacity during the morning and evening commute times. It remains the fact that all applications are assessed on their merits and officers are mindful that there is an overall national planning gain in delivering houses and economic growth. OCC should not be seen to be obstructing this for a further 3.5 years, whilst also maintaining a working highway network. To assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, officers have identified the need for a development strategy to be implemented by OCC. Allowing for some controlled development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use

<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The development strategy seeks to avoid speculative development without appropriate mitigation packages, potential appeal costs against the council and deliver much-needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. It assumes that housing build programmes / trajectories can align with the delivery programme of HIF 1 and applicants demonstrate to that there will be no severe harm to the operation of the highway network. This would be secured through aligning build out with an enhance package of active travel measures secured through a Section 106 legal agreement. A tiered approach is proposed to reduce the risk of planning appeal while also managing the risk / impact of new development on the highway network. Each development proposal will continue to be assessed on its merits.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="723 499 2002 986"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tier</th> <th>Development Type</th> <th>Risk to OCC</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Single dwelling / householder proposals</td> <td>Low</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Development sites of less than 10 houses</td> <td>Low / Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Allocated sites</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Culham & Berinsfield sites in adopted SODC Local Plan.</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Speculative (non-allocated) large development sites</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Commercial developments</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Tier	Development Type	Risk to OCC	1	Single dwelling / householder proposals	Low	2	Development sites of less than 10 houses	Low / Medium	3	Allocated sites	Medium	4	Culham & Berinsfield sites in adopted SODC Local Plan.	Medium	5	Speculative (non-allocated) large development sites	Medium	6	Commercial developments	Medium
Tier	Development Type	Risk to OCC																				
1	Single dwelling / householder proposals	Low																				
2	Development sites of less than 10 houses	Low / Medium																				
3	Allocated sites	Medium																				
4	Culham & Berinsfield sites in adopted SODC Local Plan.	Medium																				
5	Speculative (non-allocated) large development sites	Medium																				
6	Commercial developments	Medium																				
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you</p>	<p>All matters related to evidence etc will be captured through the planning application process and will be expected to be in line with national and Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire core local plan policies. It is the role of the district council as the local planning authority to consult with stakeholders and manage development proposals in accordance with their local plan policies.</p>																					

<p>make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Officers considered there were three scenarios to allow development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scenario 1: Now OCC has secured HIF 1 funding OCC remove the current restriction in respect of all development in the restriction area.</i> • <i>Scenario 2: Have a phased approach to releasing development that allows for a proportion of housing to come forward aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1.</i> • <i>Scenario 3 don't allow any economic or housing growth until the HIF 1 schemes are open for use.</i> <p>Officers considered that there is too much risk financially and reputationally to recommend either Scenarios 1 or 3 and therefore considered that Scenario 2 should be adopted to provide a balanced way forward. The risks associated with Scenarios 1 and 3 are not detailed on why they were rejected, however, the main risks from them were that OCC entirely blocked development or increase the risk of delivery of an unworkable highway network that will be gridlocked.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific impact. New developments when they come forward are required to be designed, constructed and provide infrastructure to serve all users of the public highway in accordance with national and local design standards, guidance and planning policy.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer	Not applicable.
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific impact. New developments when they come forward in any area are required to be designed, constructed and provide infrastructure to serve all users of the public highway in accordance with national & local design standards, guidance and planning policy.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer	Not applicable.
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New development may provide improved facilities for carers to use.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New development may attract and bring investment to areas of deprivation.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No additional impacts identified for staff that are not already involved in the assessment of planning applications from a transport perspective.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impact on council services is expected to be positive in the long terms bringing forward development in a controlled manner as this will provide funding and physical improvements to existing council services i.e. new bus services, new schools, new active travel infrastructure etc.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Social Value ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New development may attract and bring investment to areas of deprivation.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC and CDC aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Energy use in our buildings or highways	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Our fleet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Staff travel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Purchased services and products (including construction)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Maintained schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New development may provide improved facilities for existing schools.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.

We are also committed to enable Cherwell to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Oxfordshire by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New developments when they come forward in any area are required to be designed and constructed in accordance with county, district and national carbon emission and reduction standards.		Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	31st March 2023
Person Responsible for Review	Michael Deadman
Authorised By	Eric Owens