

## CONSULTATION RESPONSE: MAPP FOR BICESTER AND MID-CHERWELL

### Mid-Cherwell

The area defined as Mid-Cherwell on the plan on p.6 will cause considerable confusion. Mid-Cherwell is already defined by the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in 2019 and an official part of the formal Development Plan for Oxfordshire since that time. The area named as Mid-Cherwell for the MAPP is twice as large and includes numerous villages around Bicester that are not designated in the MCNP area. These parishes do not consider themselves to be part of the description of Mid-Cherwell that has been in use for over six years, and with which many of them are familiar.

The situation is further complicated by the inclusion of Heyford Park, for which a separate masterplan already exists, which includes elements of provision for sustainable transport and active travel. OCC are making matters very difficult for themselves and others by attempting to adapt a document originally written for Bicester alone, which makes perfect sense, to now include a large rural hinterland of many small villages, and a further major development which is separately planned to become a New Town. Each of these three components – existing town, New Town, and rural environment, has different needs and priorities. The attempt to embrace them all in one document will end up incoherent and much less effective than separate plans that treat them according to their dissimilar merits.

We therefore **require** OCC to remove the name 'Mid-Cherwell' from the document, and to substitute a more suitable and acceptable alternative.

We think instead that OCC should produce a separate MAPP for the rural areas, and we would be happy to co-operate in its production. We appreciate that this consultation will result in submissions from many of the parishes identified in the MAPP, and we recommend that instead of attempting to incorporate them into the Bicester document, that they form the basis for a new separate document. It is too important a topic for us in Mid-Cherwell and the other villages to be treated as an afterthought to an existing document.

So, to summarise:

- Adopting the pre-existing name 'Mid-Cherwell' for a new area twice as large will cause confusion, and **we object** to it being used in this document.
- There are already adopted planning documents for Mid-Cherwell and for Heyford Park which address some of the aims of the MAPP.
- Attempting to produce a single document that includes policies that embrace Bicester, Heyford Park and a large number of small villages will likely produce a result much less effective than one that recognises the unique qualities of each type of location.
- There should be a separate MAPP for the rural communities around Bicester and Heyford Park. We would be happy to participate in the production of that document.

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## **Vision**

The current text on p.2 does not work for the villages or for Heyford Park. It was clearly written for Bicester, and has a largely urban focus. It is inappropriate to attempt to draft a new Vision as if Bicester, Heyford Park and the villages are all one 'place'. They are not.

We initially attempted to revise the Vision statement so that it works for all, and found it impossible to produce a result that is clear and easily understood. It can only be done by dividing the Vision into three parts – separately addressing aims for Bicester, Heyford Park and the villages.

This confirms the point made above, that the misguided attempt to bring them all together in one document should be abandoned, and the strategy re-thought.

We urge you not to ignore this strongly-held view, which is fully supported by the Executive of MCNP Forum.

While individual parish council members of the Forum may have taken the opportunity of this consultation to submit their ideas and proposals, that does not diminish the argument presented here that the use of our name will lead to confusion and avoidable conflict. We reiterate that the Forum and its member parishes would be happy to work with OCC on a separate MAPP for the rural areas, and look forward to engaging with officers on this.

On behalf of **MCNP Forum**

1.12.25