



HFDAG - Hanwell Fields Development Action Group

District Council planning confusion

Back in late 2011 Cherwell District Council issued a report with figures for their projected housing plans out to 2031. This showed a total of 4142 houses to be built in Banbury.

The first 5 years of the projection, years 11/12 to 15/16 showed 400 houses. This projection was made up of just 50 houses at the approved site at Bankside I, and another 350 at sites which had not been, nor are likely, to get planning approval (Southam Road, West Bretch Hill and North Hanwell Fields).

The Governments new National Policy Planning Framework calls for Cherwell to make a "market forecast" plan for new builds based on approved sites. The Council has made no market forecasts. But we could assume they believe the forecast is for just 50 houses at Bankside I?

It gets worse. The Council's new Local Plan 2012 issued in August 2012 proposes green field sites all around Banbury for huge amounts of new housing, a ridiculous total figure for which there is no justifiable market forecast, for the simple reason there is no demand, as neither people nor builders have money to pay for their construction.

To continue to justify their 4142 Banbury house plan, Cherwell have also rejected in

August the adoption the Government NPPF rules for deciding the number of new houses to be built, based on a 'evidence based market forecast' over 5, 10 and 15 year periods, and have insisted on sticking to the obsolete, Labour party, top-down plans requiring over 16750 houses in Cherwell in the next 25 years, 4325 for Banbury. Figures, in the current recession, that are clearly ridiculous.

Based on the Council's current plans, many sites all round Banbury have been acquired by developers and planning applications are underway. Developers buy land not to build houses as there are no buyers, but to speculate on land values, to grab land and inflate asset values for their companies.

What is more, the huge plan numbers were again defended at a recent meeting of Hanwell Development Action Group (HFDAG), attended by Councillor Barry Wood, who said he had over 4000 people on his housing list.

But now, he has announced in the Banbury Guardian, this figure of 4000 has been reduced to just 1200, with no explanation. This takes away the need for all of the proposed green field sites as the, already approved, Bankside I site for 1092 houses and the, next to be approved, Canalside site for 1050 houses plus Windfalls will adequately cover Banbury's housing needs for the next 15 years. (See Note below).

It seems there is no truth about the planning of housing in Banbury and Cherwell's plans have been submitted to Government Planning Inspectors which have no basis in law or realistic market numbers.

Notes:

1. Even assuming a plan of 4325 in Banbury over 25 years (870/year) we calculate these numbers in line with the NPPF requirements:

5 years: Bankside I, 1092 - 870 = 222 left over

6-10 years: add Canalside, 1050 + 222 - 870 = 402 left over

11-15 years: 870 - 402 = 468 needed, which is covered by Windfalls

There are around 320 houses for sale today in Banbury but few buyers and few mortgages. Bankside I, for 1092 houses, has been approved for development since 2009, but not one house has been built due to the financial crash.

2. Sites currently named for development are

Bankside I 1092

Canalside 1050

West Bretch Hill 400

West Warwick Road 400 - now removed from the plan

North Hanwell Fields 400

Southam Road 800

Bankside II 400

Total 4142.