



Cherwell housing plans are still wrong

This is not the first time we have disputed the planning numbers put forward by Cherwell District Council. But the new Local Plan continues the errors of the past.

Cherwell District Council are still using the old SE Plan top-down numbers because they have not made a NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) "fact based market forecast" of housing need. They say that keeping the old numbers in the revised Local Plan "responds to regional and sub-regional objectives", but these, along with the SE Plan, and all central government targets, have been revoked. The SE Plan was for 4800 houses 2006-26, they extended this at a flat rate of 240/yr out to 2031 to give 6000 houses for Banbury.

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), now law, calls for them to make

- A fact based market forecast
- Covering 5 yrs (12/13 to 16/17) and 15 yrs (17/18 to 26/26)
- On a rolling annual basis

There is no call for a plan out to 2031, in fact they are supposed to make a annual rolling updated forecast not fix it for 25 years!

The numbers are too big

We firmly believe if they did a correct current market survey they would find that nowhere near 6000 houses are in demand, due mainly to lack of finance and mortgages to build them and pay for them. People simply cannot get mortgages or cannot afford them at current house prices. For example, the Bankside 1 site (1092 homes) has been approved for years but not a brick has been laid. Now developers forecast that only 150 houses will be built there towards the end of the next 5 years!!!

Plans must respect market demand

CDC have put a single useful spreadsheet in the revised Local Plan 2013 (see www.cherwell.gov.uk/LocalPlan2013) with a forecast of the houses that could be built from 2012/13 out to 2030/31. This forecast comes from developers and must be very suspect as it is in their interest to quote low numbers, and then ask for more sites to be approved!. CDC should not worry about forecasting builds, their job is to identify sites meeting the market forecast and approve developers/builders that will deliver houses.

Relying on a forecast made up from developers numbers, and then seeing that these are too low, and as a consequence simply naming more and more sites for development, won't change the fact that demand is low, lower than the old SE Plan numbers. It will however cause a "land grab" by developers to inflate land assets from agricultural levels to approved building levels (say x20 times).

Some numbers and reality

Total houses built 2006 to 2012 was 1376. Housing built on approved sites in Banbury was 1245. Five year 's of the old SE Plan is 1200, 15 years is 3600

The 5 year plan for 1200 houses can be met by the already approved Bankside 1 (1092) plus other smaller sites and windfalls.

The 15 yr plan can be met by the approval of BAN1 Canalside, plus BAN4 Bankside 2 (400) and BAN3 West Bretch Hill (400) and a new proposal from Miller homes for West Warwick Road (290). In addition further "windfalls and other site approvals" could amount to an additional 390 houses over the 15 yr period. All these together are enough to meet

even the unjustified and bloated CDC SE housing plan. The sites at Southam Road (800) and North Hanwell (500) are not needed and should NOT be included in the plan.

Wrong thinking?

Some of us are getting quite suspicious of CDC decision-making. Naming Southam Road and North Hanwell specific sites is bowing to inputs from developers, not respecting the wishes of the local community.

The Southam Road site developer (Rapleys) is working for a foreign speculator (Bedworth Trading) and this site only popped up in the obscure AMR (Annual Monitoring Report) December 2011. The site was never mentioned as being feasible for housing and in fact was rejected as being too landscape sensitive in the Core Strategy 2010.

North Hanwell was, in 2010, a 2nd reserve site (1st was West Warwick Road). This is a second attempt by developer Persimmon to gain approval, their previous submission was rejected, after CDC fought against it in a costly court case, and yet here it is again on the plan.

West Warwick Road has been summarily removed from any plans. It was in the Core Strategy 2010, but removed, with no explanation, from the AMR 2011 report. (It was previously joined together with North Hanwell as one development). Well, well, would you believe, it is next to Councillor Turner's golf course, as reported in the local press! A number of weak arguments have been given by CDC for its removal, but Miller Homes have made a very good planning application which gets our community support. This could be included to give the numbers above and an increased margin as required by the NPPF.

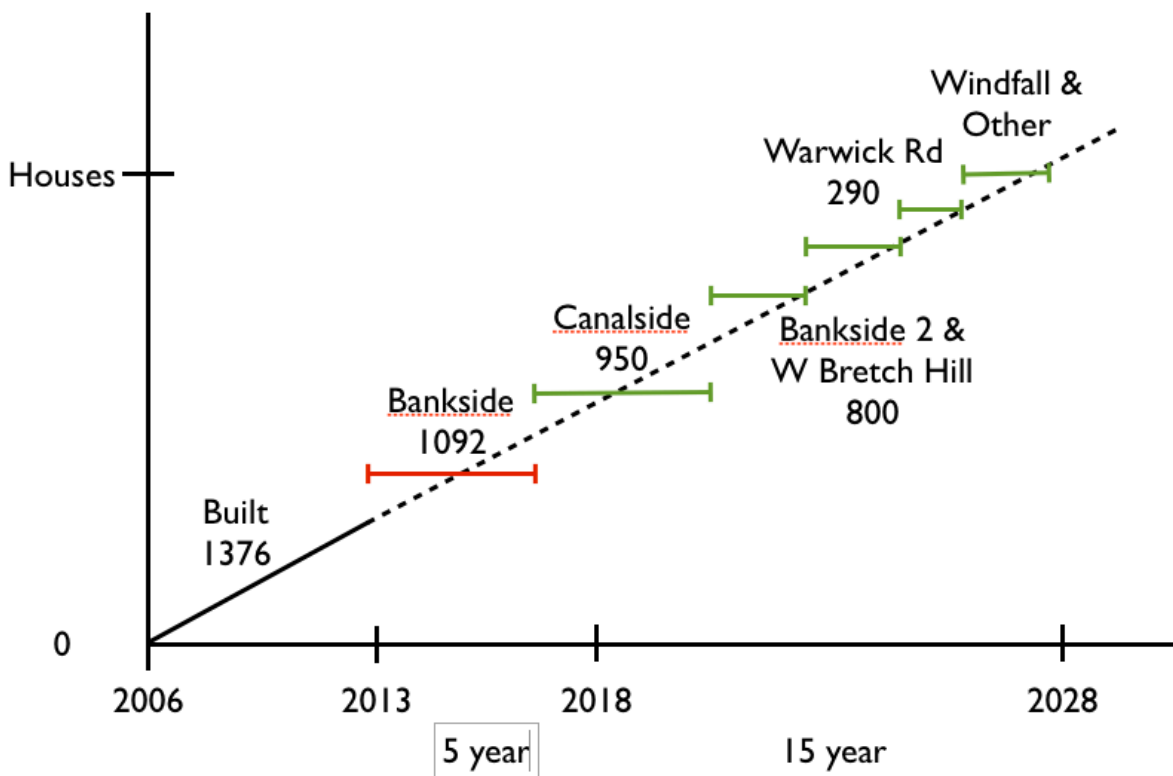
Last important point.

75% of the sites proposed by CDC are greenfield ones, only 25% are on brownfield. But the government says that brownfield must come first. The green field sites North of Dukes Meadow Drive (Southam Road and North Hanwell) are in what is today green fields, open space and productive agricultural land. The new "green buffer" that CDC talks about has been drawn out around them. Dukes Meadow Drive must be made the northern boundary

of Banbury and these areas included in the “green buffer” to protect the landscape setting, the amenities and to stop the sprawl of housing on green field sites.

Here’s how it should look

The graph below clearly shows the housing trajectory based on the sites listed, in line with the NPPF. It shows that North Hanwell and Southam Road sites are not required and should be removed from the Local Plan.



CDC should focus on gaining planning approvals for the sequence of sites here, and offering these to developers and builders in an open market competition.

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