



Impact of proposed developments on North Banbury

A recently published report “Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment” gives us a better picture of the terrible impact any development would have in the North of Banbury.

As background to the recently revised Local Plan 2013 a new Landscape and Capacity Assessment was published 25 March 2013,. This gives a very negative picture for development to the North of Banbury. Three of the areas evaluated, called Sites A, B and J, cover proposed developments. Sites in the report do not correspond accurately to the areas proposed for development, Site B covers BAN2 Southam Road, and Site J covers both West Warwick Road (recently removed from the Plan) and North Hanwell BAN5. Site A is the land stretching between Hanwell Fields estate and north to Hanwell village.

One of the most significant statements in the report is:

“The development of residential properties north of Dukes Meadow Drive may result in urban sprawl to the north of Banbury and create a poorly defined development limit which currently exists at Dukes Meadow Drive.”

This is the view of Hanwell Fields Development Action Group which we have expressed in objections to Cherwell District Council’s Local Plan on many occasions.

A landscape with a character of **high** sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive. So let's see what the report says...

Site A - Hanwell Fields, Dukes Meadow Drive to Hanwell Village

The Landscape Sensitivity of this whole area is judged as **High**. Some quotes from the report clearly show the justification of this assessment:

"The area forms a buffer to the northern edge of Banbury with development bound by Dukes Meadow Drive."

"In the west of the site, the area is crossed by a number of public footpaths all of which are well trodden routes."

"There are a number of ecological features both within and surrounding the area including protected species such as bats, badgers, barn owl and water voles."

"The site area has a direct influence upon the setting of the Hanwell Conservation Area located to the north of the site due to the visual association. "

"The area has scenic and recreational value within the local area and is valued for providing a buffer to the northern edge of the town."

"Much of the area is used as arable land with strong hedgerow field boundaries that are well established."

The Visual Sensitivity is judged **High**, some quotes:

"The site forms part of the visual setting of the Cemetery which is important to be retained."

"...within Hanwell village is the Hanwell Community Observatory which relies upon the current dark skies for its successful operation."

"The area is considered to be of high sensitivity to the surrounding population."

And Finally the Landscape Value and Capacity are judged **Medium** and **Medium-Low**, some quotes:

“...the western area of the site forms part of the visual setting for the Hanwell Conservation Area which should be maintained ...”

“The area is of importance to local residents due to the formal recreational use located within the eastern corner of the site whilst it is also of importance for the informal recreational use by walkers as identified along field boundaries during the site walk over.”

“The development of residential properties north of Dukes Meadow Drive may result in urban sprawl to the north of Banbury and create a poorly defined development limit which currently exists at Dukes Meadow Drive. properties north of Dukes Meadow Drive may result in urban sprawl to the north of Banbury and create a poorly defined development limit which currently exists at Dukes Meadow Drive.”

Site B - BAN2 Southam Road

Landscape Sensitivity is judged **Medium-Low**, they say:

“...the area as a whole does perform an important function in defining the northern extent to the urban development limit whilst enabling views north and west when heading north out of Banbury.”

Visual Sensitivity is **High**, this has long been the opinion of residents of Hanwell Fields who appreciate the aesthetics of the landscape, some quotes:

“...the site is visible when heading north out of Banbury and forms part of the transitional views to open countryside north of Banbury.”

“...forms part of the visual context and setting of Banbury Cemetery and Crematorium and the rural setting of the town. These are important views that should be retained.”

“The presence of the Cemetery within the area does however elevate the sensitivity within the west of the area as users/visitors to the cemetery use the area for contemplation and reflection; the visual sensitivity of the area is therefore elevated to the west of Hardwick Hill [Southam Road].”

“The sensitivity of the area to the residential population and users of the area is considered to be high overall.”

Landscape Value and Capacity are judged **Medium**, some quotes:

“Within the local context, the site has important views connected with the presence and setting of Banbury Cemetery and Crematorium as the area is visited for the peace, tranquillity and contemplation.”

“The development of residential properties within the western area would not be in keeping with the existing landscape character of the area or the presence of Banbury Cemetery and Crematorium due to the change in the cemetery setting that would occur. “

Site J, including both Warwick Road and North Hanwell (BAN5)

Previous proposals for development in Banbury have grouped together the West Warwick Road site, now removed, and the current North Hanwell site retained as BAN5.

Landscape Sensitivity is judged as **Medium-High**, a quote:

“...the site [BAN5] is however linked to the historic landscape of Site A in forming the barrier between Hanwell and the residential area of Banbury.”

Visual Sensitivity is judged **Medium-High**, some quotes:

“...high potential for mitigation along the boundary of Dukes Meadow Drive within the rough grassland area.”

This judgement has been overtaken by events as Amber developments are now proposing houses all along Dukes Meadow Drive, with no potential for this visual impact mitigation. Together with Persimmon a total of over 500 houses are proposed.

Landscape Value and Capacity are judged as **Medium**, some quotes:

“...areas are currently subject to proposals for residential development and as a result of this a local action group has established (Hanwell Fields Development Action Group). The existing

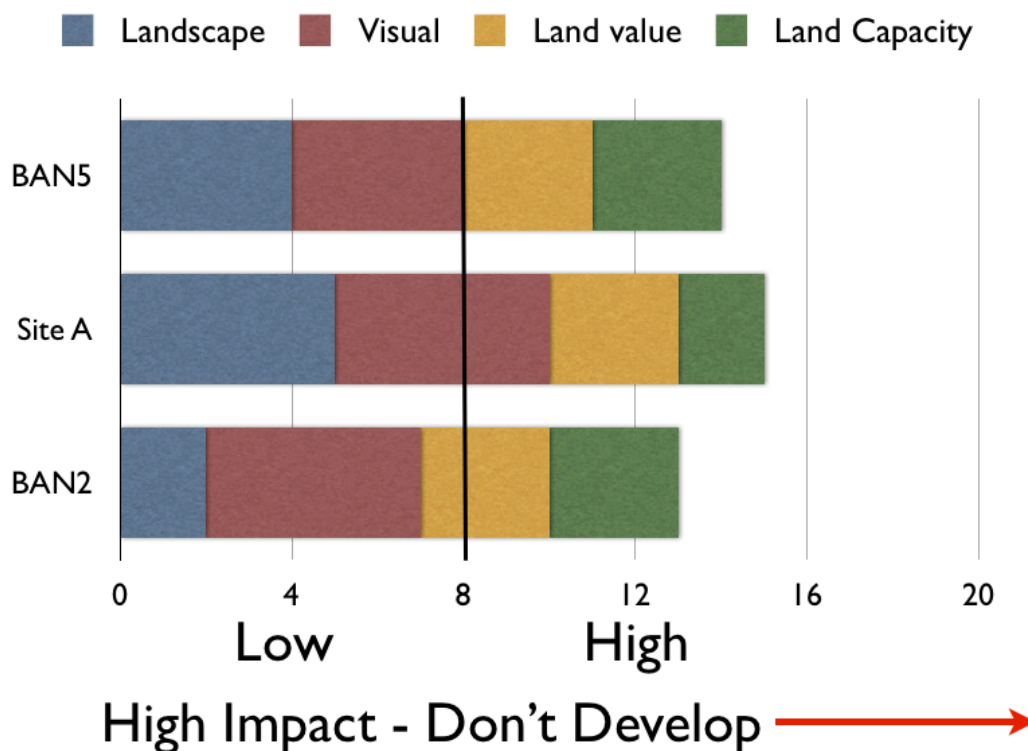
recreational value of the land and as a green buffer on the edge of Banbury is highly valued to the local residents.”

“The capacity to accommodate residential development within the northern area of the site in accordance with the density set out within the methodology of 30 dwellings per hectare is considered to be medium.”

“...the northern area is not considered to have high capacity for development, there is opportunity to locate residential properties to the north of Hanwell fields at a lower density...”

“The site does however retain a high potential for development of informal recreational uses and woodland.”

Expressing this result graphically, with larger numbers having **High** impact - or “don’t develop”:



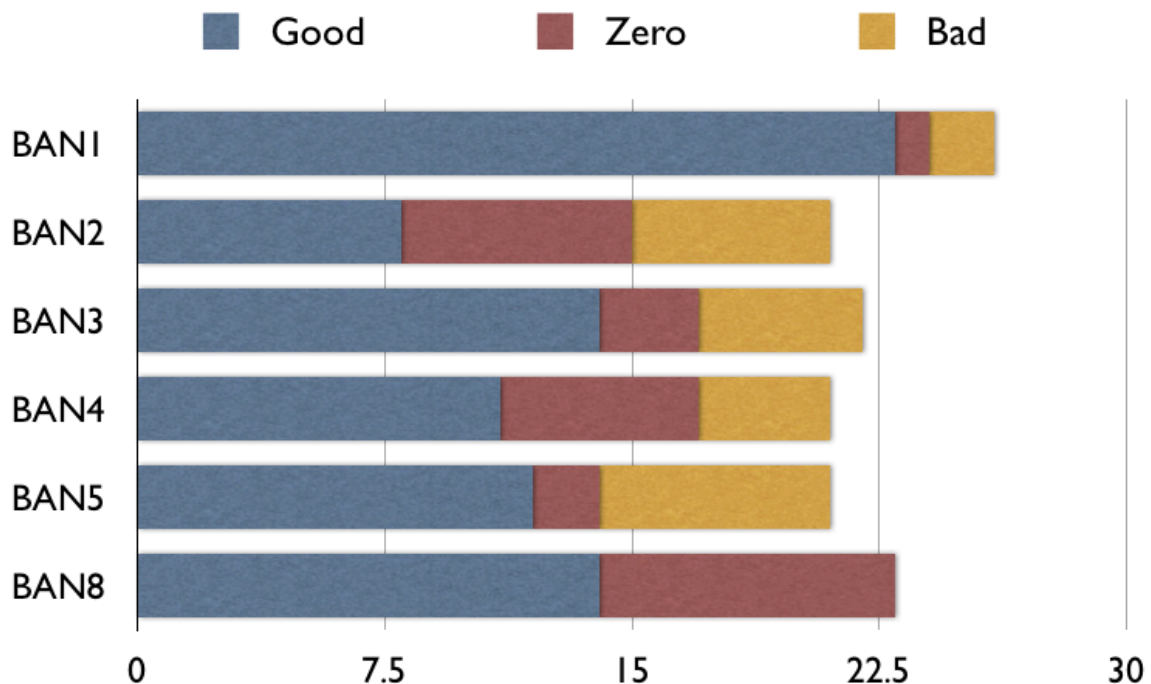
Showing that for all three sites, and especially for the proposed sites BAN5 and BAN2 there is a very high score for “Don’t Develop”, almost as high as the very sensitive Site A.

It is abundantly clear that any developments north of Hanwell Fields estate would have a severe impact on the landscape, usage, open space and amenity provided to residents.

The Sensitivity report adds to the overwhelming evidence that developments in this area would be wrong, when added to the objections over local services, traffic and pollution from increased car use and many other factors previously identified by Hanwell residents.

More evidence of the impact on North Banbury

Looking at the Sustainability of proposed sites. A summary of a recent report shows:



The results are for Canalside (BAN1), Southam Road (BAN2), West Bretch Hill (BAN3), Bankside 2(BAN4), North Hanwell (BAN5) and Bolton Road (BAN8).

BAN2 - Southam Road:

No positive effects identified. Negative effect is use of land/loss of agricultural land. Negative air pollution as far from town. Negative effect due to distant from Employment sites. Negative impact on landscape and historical environment.

BAN5 - North Hanwell:

Negative effect is use of land/loss of agricultural land. Negative effect due to distant from Employment sites. Some positive effects (if 400 houses 30% affordable).

The best sites for developments are clearly in this order BAN1, BAN8, BAN3, BAN4. The worst in the list are BAN2 & BAN5. This evidence, combined with the data on the number of houses to be built (See Press Release 121) in the next 5 and 15 years, shows firmly that BAN2 & BAN5 should be removed from the Local Plan.

Applying the criteria of using brown field sites first, the best choices are Canalside and Bolton Road, these would also greatly benefit the development and rejuvenation of the town centre.

The reports can be found at [www.cherwell.gov.uk/LocalPlan 2013](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/LocalPlan%202013)
and on the HFDAG web site.

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