

Banbury Civic Society

News and Views

Issue No. 25

March 2015

7319 New Homes for Banbury but where's the Infrastructure?

The 'new' Local Plan proposals –
Housing and Transport update

Following the suspension of the Local Plan Inquiry in June, due to major uplift in 'required' housing numbers deriving from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the Inspector's examination of the modified Local Plan was completed at the end of December. His recommendations regarding the 'soundness' of the Local Plan and any amendments he wishes to see made, is expected in the spring, possibly in March 2015.

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What is the future of roads and transport for Banbury?

see page 3.



Is Banbury taking more than its fair share of new housing?

see page 4

What did a national newspaper think of Banbury in 2015?

see page 5



Letter from the Chairman

After a gap of rather too many months, it is my pleasure to write this introduction to our latest newsletter. Thanks to our new wordsmith, Nick Poole, and our expanded committee, the newsletter now has an amended format, which I hope you will enjoy. My thanks are extended to our contributors, Nick, Peter Monk and Adrienne Rees-Brown, and as ever, to Laurence Carey for typesetting and graphics.

As you will see, the Executive and Admin Committees have not been idle. The main challenges and opportunities that have kept us busy have been:

- The Bill Trinder Blue Plaque (to be unveiled 28th March)
- Cherwell Local Plan Inquiry (suspended last June and completed in December following major changes arising from the hostile

Oxfordshire SHMA), including challenging very strongly the lack of proposed new infrastructure

- Ongoing consultation regarding changes and modifications to the Castle Quay 2 proposals, and
- Routine planning applications, the most recent being the proposed demolition of the former Barrows 'steam factory' on Canal Street.

Our next challenge looks set to be OCC's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which is being consulted on now. Whilst this still excludes an 'outer' 'south-to-east link road' for Banbury, it does include a series of new roads that link Tramway to Junction 11 (an 'inner' 'south-to-east link road'), which we had strongly pressed for at the Local Plan Inquiry as an interim alternative. It also includes an outer south-to-west link (White Post Road – Bloxham Road), which would be blessed relief to residents of

Springfield Avenue and the Timms estate.

(It appears that OCC's insistence at the Inquiry that no additional road infrastructure was needed in Banbury cut little ice with the government's planning inspector, thanks to the hell he experienced every day simply getting between the railway station and Bodicote House).

As ever, the Executive and Admin Committees and the Built Environment sub-committee are always on the look-out for enthusiastic new members to assist us in our mission to make Banbury a better place to live, work in and enjoy. If you think you would like to take a more active part in framing what we do, or if you feel that there is something we should, or shouldn't be doing, please don't hesitate to email me or call me for a chat (07818 091862 / rob.kinchinsmith@btinternet.com)

from p1

The modified Local Plan proposes the same overall strategy as previously, ostensibly with all development targeted at sites in Banbury and Bicester, with almost no development at all in the countryside or villages. Including sites already consented and 'windfalls', no less than 7,319 new homes are proposed for Banbury between now and 2031, plus 1700

additional homes at the former RAF Upper Heyford.

The major new development sites which had already been earmarked in Banbury have been revised to take additional homes. Four completely new sites are also proposed as a result of the SHMA:

In addition, the revised, post-SHMA Local Plan envisages a further expansion of the Central M40

commercial development south of Junction 11, plus a completely new commercial development east of the M40, between the Middleton and Daventry roads.

Of the new target of 22,800 new homes for the District, some 1,100 homes have already been built, and permission already granted for a further 6,500. The new target is over a shorter time period than in the original plan (2011 – 2031). Whilst new housing is clearly needed, the Banbury

Civic Society is shocked that the Local Plan expects Banbury's population to grow by more than 33% in fifteen years without the provision of any new road infrastructure. Further, we are far from convinced that the private sector has the appetite to deliver, or the market to absorb, a new 'Bankside' in Banbury every two years for the next 15 years. If the house-builders fail to deliver these new homes at the proscribed rate, the entire District will be plunged back to 'planning by appeal', with obvious ramifications for the Bloxhams, Adderburys and Hook Nortons of this world.

Whilst it would have been futile to object to the housing targets emanating from the Oxfordshire SHMA (as CPRE found at the Local Plan Inquiry), we are dismayed that Cherwell's response to Oxford City's housing shortfall and the housing requirements of OCC's proposed 'Science Vale' is to continue to pile up housing in those areas where house prices would indicate that demand is

IN BRIEF: The Local Plan proposes:

- 22,800 new homes for the District
- 7319 new Homes in Banbury
- Further expansion of the M40 commercial development south of Junction 11
- For the first time, commercial development east of the M40 (between A361 Daventry Road and B4525 Middleton Cheney Road)

Major development sites proposed in the Local Plan

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--|
| Canalside | 700 | |
| Bankside Phase Two | 600 | |
| North Hanwell Fields | 544 | |
| Bolton Road | 200 | |
| Salt Way West | 150 | New proposal – recently conditionally consented in outline for 350 dwellings |
| Salt Way East | 1,345 | New proposal |
| Drayton Lodge Farm | 250 | New proposal |
| Higham Way | 150 | New proposal |
| TOTAL | 3,939 | |

weakest: Banbury and Bicester (and now RAF Upper Heyford), rather than in the south of the District, where current and future demands are clearly strongest. The failure to respond to the SHMA with any substantial site allocations in the south of the District is frankly astonishing, given that Kidlington has historically been one of the District's three 'sustainable centres for growth'. It must not be forgotten that Kidlington is soon to get a rail connection to London (Marylebone) in the shape of the new station at Water Eaton under the banner of Oxford Parkway.

The Civic Society was represented at the Local Plan Inquiry, where we chose to major on Banbury's infrastructure requirements, in particular the need for the 'south-to-east link road' scheme, following up on our previous written representations to the draft Local Plan. Unfortunately Oxfordshire's transport planners poured cold water on the idea at the Inquiry, insisting that Banbury has no traffic problems and that Banbury's existing roads could easily accommodate a 33% rise in population subject to its population adopting a 'substantial modal shift' (i.e. it'll all be fine if we all leave our cars at home).

Cllr. Ian Hudspeth, the Leader of

Oxfordshire County Council, has agreed to visit Banbury to look at potential routes for the south-to-east link road, although no date has been fixed for this. The view of the BCS Executive Committee is that this proposal is not only a realistic and viable proposal in the medium term, but that it is absolutely essential if the town really has to grow by over a

third in the next fifteen years.

Based on approved schemes elsewhere in the country of similar size and complexity, BCS considers that a direct link from Bankside to Ermont Way could be achieved for £ 20m. A less direct scheme through the Canalside, Higham Way and Central M40 sites could be achieved for little more than the cost of a new bridge over the railway, south of the station.

At the Inquiry it emerged that OCC consider the Henef Way / Ermont Way junction to be approaching saturation and that the consented Central M40 development will push this junction to breaking point. Indeed, the state of this junction was their stated objection to the south-to-east link road proposal. As a result, the revised Local Plan does include one new road for Banbury, running to the east side of the M40, connecting Overthorpe Road to Junction 11. Whilst this road would, in isolation, only benefit freight traffic between Thorpe Way / Central M40 and the motorway, it would nevertheless provide a new springing-off point for the south-to-east link and remove OCC's stated reason for objecting to it.

It remains to be seen if the Inspector was convinced by OCC's arguments. One thing that is known for sure is

that he was far from impressed by the experience of his taxi journeys between Bodicote House to the railway station during the Inquiry.

Transport Newsflash

Local Transport Plan (LTP4) – a Public Consultation



Oxfordshire County Council has launched a public consultation on Local transport Plan 4 (LTP4 - OCC's transport aims and aspirations) for the period 2015 -2031. The closing date for comments is **2nd April 2015**.

The draft Plan may be accessed at: - https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO_LTP4/consultationHome

For those without internet connection, a copy may be viewed at the Branch Library, Marlborough Road, Banbury.

The consultation document comprises four volumes – which is pretty intimidating for the 'man in the street'.

Banbury residents will mainly be interested in Volume 3, although the other volumes have interesting things to say about the background scenario, public transport, cycling and freight.

Members are urged to have a look at, and comment on, the issues most relevant to this area, keeping in mind that Banbury's population is set to grow by a third in the Plan period.

Whilst LTP4 contains much that is positive, particularly with regard to cycling and public transport, we feel the most controversial plans for Banbury are:

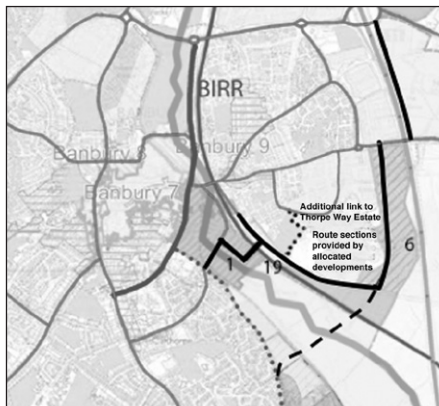
- **The proposal to reduce north-south traffic flows away from the North Bar / South Bar axis by routing all through traffic to the**

Cherwell Street / Concorde Avenue route, over the Bridge Street crossroads, and

- **To make the south-to-east link road (Bankside to Junction 11) a distant aspiration at best.**

Also proposed are a new south-to-west link road from the Bodicote flyover to the Bloxham Road, west of Salt Way (to be delivered with up to 2000 new homes), an upgrade of Bankside, and a new road to the east of the M40, connecting the Central M40 development directly to Junction 11.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding OCC's claims at the Cherwell Local Plan Inquiry that that no substantial new road infrastructure is necessary for Banbury to grow by a further 33% by 2031, LTP4 does now include a number of connecting roads through other new developments that we had asked for during the Inquiry. These include:



Suggested Routes

- **a bridge over the railway from Tramway to Higham Way (thereby connecting Tramway to the multi-storey station car park),**
- **a spine road from Higham Way to the Central M40 development, and**
- **a spine road through the Central M40 development to Overthorpe Road.**

These will not only be useful additions in their own right, but together with the upgraded Bankside and the new

road from Central M40 to Junction 11, they will form a south-to-east link road of sorts (an 'inner' south-to-east link), pending sense prevailing on a more direct outer by-pass.

As a Society we will be strongly opposing the proposal to route more traffic through the town centre (Bridge Street crossroads). We will continue to ask for a proper south-to-east link within the Plan period (i.e. before 2031). We will be strongly supporting the component parts of the cobbled together 'inner' south-to-east link, most particularly the railway bridge between Tramway and Higham Way. It would be very helpful if you could make similar comments independently.

A 'guided' response is provided with the document, but members may wish to comment in a more personalised form to that suggested.

Housing Allocation

Oxford's housing market – a clue to why Banbury is taking the pain

As recently made local and national headlines, the Government's Help to Buy scheme has failed to assist the sale of a single house in Oxford in the past 18 months. There is a significant shortage of housing in the city, with no affordable homes built last year. Conversely, across the county, the equity loan scheme, available for houses below £600,000, stimulated 493 sales, with 73 in the Cherwell District.

46 per cent of Banbury's residents commute to Oxford, which sees 46,000 commuters daily, putting additional strain on the road networks. Bob Price, the leader of Oxford City Council, said the absence of any take-up of Help to Buy in Oxford illustrated a "significant problem. The amount of house-building has been very low for the past couple of years, because of the recession, and there's very little land in the city."

With the Cherwell Local Plan currently being considered for a second time by the government's Inspector, following a significant uplift to its housing targets, Banbury Civic Society is concerned that housing is being 'dumped' on Banbury, with no thought for additional infrastructure.

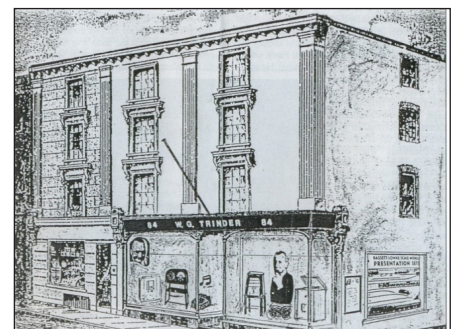
Blue Plaque

Mrs Cynthia Turner (Bill Trinder's daughter) to unveil Blue Plaque in Banbury

On Saturday 28th March, Bill Trinder's daughter, Mrs Cynthia Turner, will help the Banbury Civic Society and Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society with the ceremonial unveiling of a commemorative plaque to mark the birth of the world-wide railway preservation movement at 84 High Street, Banbury.



Bill Trinder cuts the tape at Wharf Station in Tywyn on the first day of TRPS operation 14 May 1951



The shop at 84, High Street, Banbury

You may be wondering what a small shop in Banbury High Street has got to do with The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society and steam railways all around the world.

The answer is that Banbury may fairly lay claim to be the birthplace of the Railway Preservation movement

because of the endeavours of local businessman, enthusiast and committed Rotarian, Bill Trinder, who ran his radio and gramophone record shop from 84 High Street .

It was a defining moment in the bid to save the Talyllyn Railway, when Bill Trinder's friend Tom Rolt walked into the shop at 84 High Street and showed him a copy of the Bill to nationalise the railways in the winter of 1947/8. The two men were gripped by this news and it transpired that the ancient but failing Talyllyn Railway in Mid Wales was to fall outside the net of state control. During discussions in Bill's flat above the shop, Trinder and Rolt resolved not only save the Talyllyn Railway, but to run it using volunteers. Following the inaugural meeting of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society in 1950, Bill Trinder was appointed its first Chairman.

Following the success of Talyllyn – the Talyllyn Railway turns 150 years old this year and remains a leading example of its kind – there are now countless heritage railways around the world, most of them wholly or substantially staffed and run by volunteers, following the model pioneered by Trinder and Rolt. Every one of them can trace its origin to Trinder and Rolt's decision to save the Talyllyn, and thus to 84 High Street, Banbury.

The Banbury Civic Society and Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society have jointly commissioned the commemorative plaque which will be situated just above the shop where everything started – 84 High Street – now occupied by The Men's Room hairdressers.

Bill Trinder and Tom Rolt made their first visit to the Talyllyn Railway in the last weekend in March, 1948, hence the chosen date for the unveiling.

Both Societies would like to express their thanks to the building's owner, Mr S. Rand of Ravenscourt

Securities, for permission to site the plaque on Bill's old shop.

National press view of Banbury

The Times visits Banbury

The Times published a full page travel review of Banbury and its environs just before Christmas. Nicholas Roe reviewed various eateries and pubs such as the Wroxton House Hotel, and the White Horse at King Sutton as well as the Old Town Deli and ye Olde Reine Deer Inn. Overall, Banbury received a positive review, which recounted highlights of its rich and varied history. The reviewer was less complimentary of its built environment, noting how the remaining 'handful of ancient shopping streets nudge uneasily against the sparkling modern grandeur of Castle Quay shopping mall', with a passing swipe at the 'attitude of planners to history'. The full article can be found on line at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/travel/article4294235.ece> (NB available to subscribers of The Times only)



Ye Olde Reine Deer Inn, Banbury

Future of Local Government

Oxfordshire Consolidation to save £33m? – *The Big Debate*

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is considering a report by Ernst Young – commissioned by the council - which outlines possible savings of nearly £33 million that are claimed would arise if OCC took over all of the roles and responsibilities of Oxford City Council and the four District Councils – including Cherwell. The District

councils have united in opposition to the Unitary bid. The leader of OCC, Ian Hudspeth, has suggested that further savings through cuts are now almost impossible to achieve and that the report was commissioned to explore ways of providing the best services for Oxfordshire's residents. The plan could cost up to £15.9 million to implement but those costs would be recovered in 2 years, it is claimed. Sir Tony Baldry, the outgoing MP for Banbury, welcomed the report, but also indicated that other options were equally worthy of consideration, such as bringing together Cherwell, South Northants and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils as a single Unitary authority instead. Because of Banbury's remote location on the edge of several council boundaries, one of the options long considered by the Banbury Civic Society is the creation of 'Banburyshire', placing Banbury at the heart of its own jurisdiction. Further information at <http://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news/local-news/new-council-model-could-save-millions-for-oxfordshire-1-6528885>

Banbury's SW expansion

More homes as Banbury expands into countryside while interest groups campaign for more

Plans to build 350 homes on land south of Salt Way have been approved, 30% of which will be designated for affordable rent and shared ownership. Cherwell District Council have acknowledged that pressures, including OCC's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which now underpins the 5-year housing supply targets, was an influencing factor in its decision to approve the planning application. The SHMA has identified that that Cherwell has to provide 1,140 new homes a year.

In the meantime, at the national level, a huge rally is planned on March 17th

playing a part.

As reported in an earlier edition of this newsletter, ours is a part-time role run through Cherwell District Council using central government High Streets funding. For the second half of our year-long term, a much appreciated additional contribution has come from the owners of Castle Quay.

We've focused thus far on two main things: working with landlords and agents to overcome barriers to the letting of the 54 empty ground floor units the town had when we started in April 2014. Encouragingly that number is down into the thirties, with some very welcome new businesses taking up space in the town's retail heart.

We're also focusing on finding innovative uses and building partnerships to bring back to life some of the town's bigger, more prominent empties – including the Grade II Listed ex- Pizza Hut building on Bridge Street and the locally listed ex-WonderLounge (former Grand cinema / Chicago Rock) on Broad Street.

Our other main focus has been on what we call 'town look' issues. These involve building partnership to enhance the street scene in some key areas that currently are not presenting at their best. So far these initiatives involve Butcher's Row and the Bolton Road/back of Parsons Street area – the latter of which we've been delighted to have support with from leading Civic Society members.



Castle Quay 2

We'd very much welcome your thoughts and comments, and you can reach us via iain@prbi.co.uk and neil@wild-property.co.uk.

Castle Quay 2

Canalside Castle Quay 2 makes progress

But an uncertain future lies ahead for the old Spiceball/gravel car park.

Representatives of our Executive have met with the architects (Panter Hudspith), planning consultants (Turleys) and PR Consultants (Proteus), the key players working on the Castle Quay 2 project, and were appraised of work in progress. To gain an idea of the architect's previous work, it is well worth visiting their website www.panterhudspith.com for the following projects: Davygate in York, Bedford Sq in Exeter, Museum in Lincoln amongst others.

We were informed that the proposed supermarket on the old Spiceball Centre site (the gravel 'car parking area' below the new Spiceball) is in limbo – there being no prospective tenant in place yet. Part of the issue is that prospective operators are awaiting a decision on the rival Kraft Foods site on the outskirts of town, which would influence any prospective tenant's decision regarding this site. The danger is that this part of the Castle Quay 2 site may lie dormant for many years. If this is the case, Banbury Civic Society will push for the

Council to landscape and plant the area as an interim measure.

With the remainder of Castle Quay 2, opportunities for suggesting changes were limited, given that the architects are working to approved outline permission. They have drawn up new ideas to make the best of the scheme, with limited room for manoeuvre.

The plan to include a 7-screen cinema on the North/East (Spiceball) side of the canal remains, with bars and restaurants and an arcade below, facing on to the Canal, and with car parking at the rear.

On the South/East (town) side of the canal, the proposed hotel remains, to be built occupying the land between the existing Castle Quay multi-storey car park and the canal. The hotel, proposed to have 6 storeys and 117 bedrooms, is shown as a very tall, narrow block. The architects have come up with a scheme of chamfered angles and shapes to the canal-side facade to give the effect of depth and interplay of light and shadow.

The original ideas for a canopy over the canal, subsequently reduced to a covered bridge, have been dropped and replaced by a simple bridge rather like the existing. On the South/West (town) side of the canal, there are two options, one is a series of steps down to the bank of the canal, whilst the other is a low wall and pavement, much as exists at present.

There has not been scope for providing the pedestrian link we have pressed for. Instead the promoters have committed to keeping Castle Quay open until midnight to allow free movement of people from the restaurants, bars and cinema back into the old town (once the development is completed). Currently discussions continue between the developers and the planners. Subject to agreement, the developers hope to be on site before the end of 2015, with completion of the Hotel in late 2016 and the Restaurants/Cinema in early 2017.

Banbury's Heritage at risk

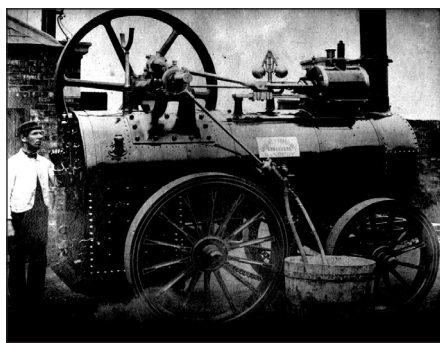
End of the road for Banbury Last Steam Factory?

An application has been lodged for the demolition of a range of historic buildings at the former Burgess site

on Canal Street, to be replaced with six new industrial units. If the demolition is carried through, it will mean the end of Banbury's last substantially intact Victorian steam engine and agricultural implement manufactory and the loss of the last substantive reminder of the town's once internationally significant Victorian agricultural engineering industry

The buildings, previously the Cherwell Iron Works, were built c.1861 in the new industrial suburb of Newlands by Tipton coal-master Thomas Barrows and a local engineer and millwright, Joseph Kirby, who had been building steam engines and threshing machines in North Bar Place from about 1855. The firm, who operated as Kirby & Barrows, Barrows & Carmichael, Barrows & Stewart and Barrows & Co., ceased trading in 1919.

In terms of scale, with some 100 employees, Barrows fell somewhere between Thomas Lampitt's Vulcan Foundry (Neithrop, established 1796) and Bernhard Samuelson's world-famous Britannia Works (established



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in Newlands in 1839 by James Gardner). These three engineering firms were not only the town's largest employer, employing a tenth of the town's working population, but two of them, Barrows and Samuelsons, also famously exported their wares to the four corners of the globe.

Of the three companies, Barrows had the most varied and interesting catalogue, based from 1855 on its



pioneering portable steam engines, steam ploughing machinery and threshing machines. Other specialist products included mortar mills, saw benches, street sweepers, water vans and winding and pumping engines for coal mines. The company was wound up after the cessation of urgent contracts for essential war work.

The surviving buildings, which appear to have probably been Barrows' main assembly buildings, fitting shops and stores, are on the Local List for their historical interest as a reminder of lost industry and a now vanished industrial heartland that stretched from Morrisons to Bridge Street. Since 2013 they have also been included within CDC and SNDC's Oxford Canal Conservation Area, as part of the last small group of industrial buildings on the canal.

It would seem a great pity to lose this last reminder of a lost world to a new-build shed, particularly as the area is not short of small industrial units. The Society is doing all it can to convince the owner and the council that a more imaginative alternative scheme involving re-use is not only equally viable, but also more distinctive and more marketable. The application is likely to be determined on 17th April. For more information see www.banburycivicsociety.org/

by Rob Kinchin-Smith

Supporting CPRE

CPRE Petition reaches 1007 signatories – only 493 more needed

CPRE Oxfordshire has launched a joint e-petition with Rural Oxfordshire Action Rally (ROAR) to ask Eric Pickles and our local MPs to end the unrestrained development in the county.

It calls for a number of changes, including an end to ad-hoc, unplanned and speculative development when a District does not have a committed Five-Year Housing Supply.

As Cherwell has been forced into a Local Plan that commits it to the impossible target of delivering a new Bankside in Banbury every two years until 2031, the Banbury Civic Society would encourage as many people as possible to sign the petition. If you would like to do so, please click on this link:
<https://www.change.org/p/eric-pickles-secretary-of-state-for-communities-and-local-government-end-the-unrestrained-development-in-oxfordshire>



All comments to Laurence Carey
design@h-and-p.demon.co.uk

Banbury Civic Society Membership

Help us recruit new members.

More members = more action. More members = a louder voice.

Help us help Banbury. Membership forms can be obtained from the Treasurer

Please write to:

Adrienne Rees Brown – Treasurer
Banbury Civic Society

The Corner Close, Epwell, Banbury
Oxon. OX15 6LH

(01295) 780334 or email:

adrienne.brown@btopenworld.com