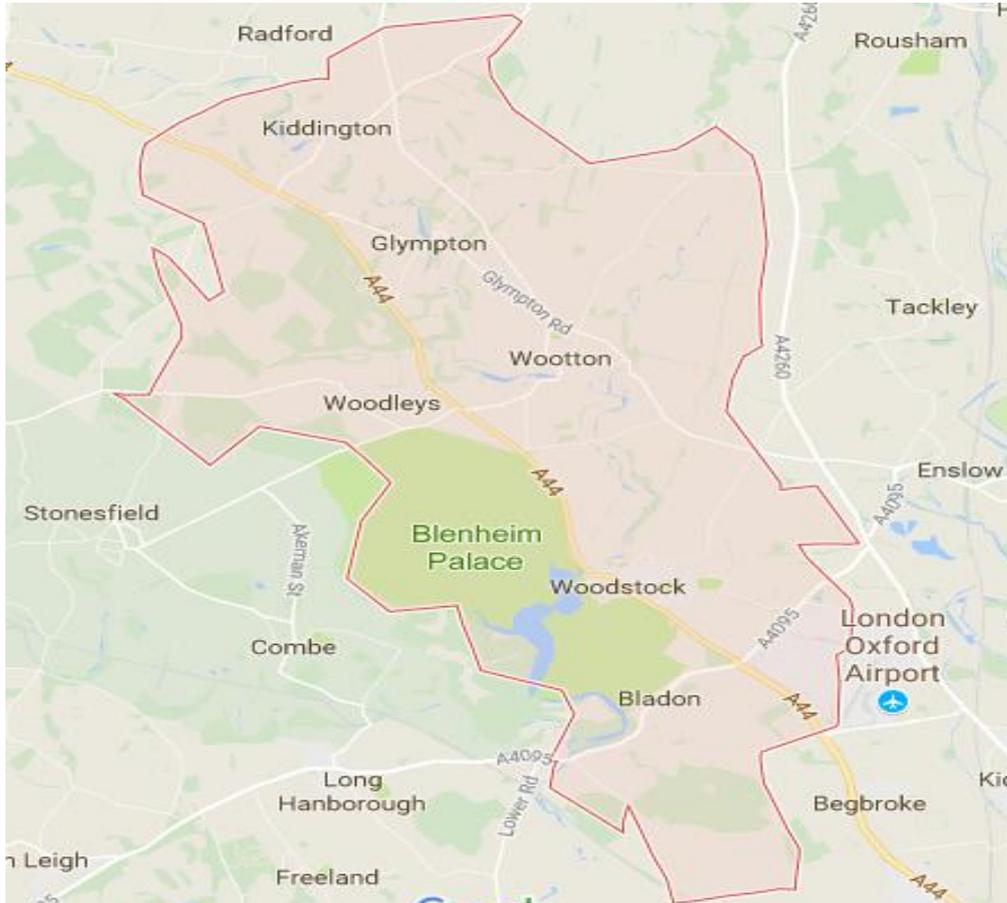


**HERITAGE IMPACT REVIEW
AND
TRANSPORT CONGESTION AND LOCAL PLAN POLICY PROPOSALS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES**



**ON BEHALF OF
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
AS A
REPRESENTATION TO PARTIAL REVISION OF THE
CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN**

CLIENT: Woodstock Town Council

Sept/Oct 2017

**HERITAGE IMPACT REVIEW
AND
TRANSPORT CONGESTION AND LOCAL PLAN POLICY PROPOSALS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES**

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BOB HINDHAUGH ASSOCIATES LTD
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In addition to the main Heritage Impact Review and Transport Congestion and local plan policy proposal report documents, and to assist the Inspector, Woodstock Town Council have provided this supplementary document of the Executive Summaries of both technical reports. The Planning Policy elements are contained in detail within Section 4.1 of the Transport Congestion and Local Plan Policy Proposals Appraisal.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Woodstock is a small market town to the north-west of the city of Oxford. The current settlement has c 1500 houses and c 3000 residents. Housing allocation plans published by Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils would add a further 1080 houses on the south-east, east and northern edges of the town, all on prominent gateway sites into the existing urban core. Such a dramatic increase would inevitably have a substantial impact on the historic town in many ways, such as traffic, infrastructure and services. This report addresses issues specifically relating to the site's rich cultural heritage. It contends that the proposed developments either will cause or have the potential to cause moderate impacts individually on the town and its heritage assets. In a few cases impacts are likely to be moderate to high. The cumulative impact of all four developments (or combinations of them) would be moderate to high. This amounts to substantial harm as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 132-3). The public benefits (including the conservation benefit claimed for the Blenheim Park Estate) do not outweigh the cumulative harmful impacts.

Specific points of concern are that

- Any one of the sites, if developed as planned, would represent a substantial increase on current housing provision in Woodstock, and would involve the permanent loss of green space and agricultural land outside of the current settlement limits. This would harm the character and heritage significance of the town.
- The cumulative harm of any more than one site being developed would be exponentially greater than any individual impact.
- The combined effects of WODC site EW1c and CDC site PR10 would be a particular concern, as they would represent a very substantial development extending well beyond the current limits of the town into open fields, with permanent loss of vital open space and agricultural land. This would represent the loss of a crucial buffer zone between Woodstock and London Oxford Airport. The effect would be a virtual merger with Kidlington, as the airport would be all that lay between them.
- All four sites are on important gateways into the historic town. WODC site EW1c and CDC site PR10 lie on the south-eastern approach along the A44, while WODC site EW1e is on the northern approach along the same road. These are the main routes into and out of the town. WODC site EW1d is on the Banbury Road, a route in from surrounding villages. The fields are currently open agricultural land, part of an important green buffer zone around the settlement. Housing development will create a new hard edge instead of green space, and will be particularly damaging on the A44 approaches.
- All of the fields either contain known archaeological sites or have such sites in their immediate vicinity. It is possible that further important remains exist within the fields. This issue has not been addressed adequately in the current proposal documents.
- CDC site PR10 contains the Blenheim Roman villa, a Scheduled Monument designated (and thus protected) because of its national archaeological importance. The site has been excluded from the development area, but new housing within the field would harm its setting. Furthermore, it is known that associated Roman remains extend well beyond the Scheduled area into other parts of the field. Some of these remains lie within the area currently identified for development. Potentially associated remains also exist in the neighbouring WODS site EW1c, again within areas identified for development.
- There does not appear to have been any coordination between the two district councils over their development proposals. This is surprising given that these two sites are contiguous, thus exacerbating cumulative impacts should both sites go forward for housing development.

HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING ASSESSMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The local highway network links via the A44/A4095/A4260 interchanges close to and including Woodstock are already and demonstrably running at 85% -95% of their full operational capacity at peak times. It is Woodstock Town Council view that Cherwell District Council (CDC) have not provided any up to date evidence by way of traffic or planning assessment relating to the Environment based on the forecast transport requirements of existing riparian residents and businesses likely to be affected by additional planned housing and industrialisation around Woodstock using the A44 transport corridor. Nothing relevant appears in the CDC local plan. Nor has additional traffic likely to be generated by such forecast development been factored into either of these plans. Through various standard traffic assessments using robust vehicle trip rates, this Assessment demonstrates that the existing highway infrastructure or local area cannot be expected to cope with any significant new development without substantial and seemingly unbudgeted expenditure.

There is no clearly defined timetable or delivery mechanism within the CDC local plan that further demonstrates the processes or procedures for delivery of any reasonable form of sustainable transport solution that would significantly reduce the traffic generation growth effects on this link. The predicted modal shift of around 15% as highlighted in the Connecting Oxfordshire Strategy are optimistic and, without any background evidence to substantiate this figure, it is difficult to accept this as a realistic objective.

It is reasonable to conclude following this Assessment including all the current planning applications in place within the CDC area close to the A44 and indeed any associated traffic issues on the A40, that there will be significant transport or highway related reasons why the proposed development allocations should not be encouraged unless infrastructure, sustainable transport provision and realistic planning policies are fully identified, committed and delivered by the developers and local authority.

At this stage of the local plan proceedings there is no realistic adopted transport policy in place with regards to safeguarding traffic management and highway improvements; the Highway Authority are at present in the process of appointing consultants to determine exactly what is required. There are no longer grants from central government and therefore the delivery relies on developers. The current CIL levels in the Town Council's opinion are not set at prerequisite level to provide these vital improvements. Great care must be taken when relying on CIL; in many cases developers state that any improvement is financially unviable because of the level of affordable housing that has to be provided. It is clear from all current traffic flow data that the additional predicted developments, in the absence of a sound and tested planned policy, will have a serious impact on the network and without significant improvement, the additional traffic effects caused by new development must be classed as 'Severe' as outlined in the NPPF.

