**Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (Regulation 19) Consultation - Proposed Submission - DRAFT**

Islip Parish Council has reviewed the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 and submits the following response:

**Settlement Hierarchy and Development Strategy**

We support the Plan's approach to protecting the identity and character of villages through a clear settlement hierarchy. The focus on directing major development to main urban centres while providing for limited development in rural areas aligns with sustainable development principles. We particularly support the policy that development in rural areas should be limited to meeting local community and business needs while protecting village character.

**Conservation and Heritage**

We strongly endorse Policy COM 27 on Conservation Areas, particularly:

* The emphasis on protecting views within, into and out of Conservation Areas
* The recognition of the importance of green spaces and historic street patterns
* Requirements regarding scale, massing and design of developments
* Protection of features that contribute positively to Conservation Area character.

These provisions are essential for preserving Islip's historic character and significant heritage assets.

**Strategic Gaps Policy**

We welcome Policy COM 13 on Settlement Gaps and support its objectives to:

* Maintain separate identity of settlements
* Prevent coalescence of built-up areas
* Protect high quality landscapes on urban fringes.

However, we note that Islip is not currently included in the list of Strategic Gaps associated with Bicester. Given our proximity to areas of planned growth, we request consideration of including appropriate strategic gaps to protect the distinct character and setting of our village.

**Climate Change and Sustainability**

We support the Plan's strengthened climate change policies, particularly:

* Policy CSD 1 on mitigating and adapting to climate change
* Policies on flood risk management and sustainable drainage
* Protection of biodiversity and natural capital
* These are particularly relevant given Islip's riverside location.

**Flood Risk and Water Management**

As a riverside settlement with significant flood risk areas, we welcome Policy CSD 7 on Sustainable Flood Risk Management and Policy CSD 8 on Sustainable Drainage Systems. However, we have specific concerns that need addressing:

1. **Existing Flood Risk We strongly emphasise that:**

* Islip has experienced significant historical flooding from the River Ray
* Parts of our village lie within Flood Zones 2 and 3
* Surface water flooding is already a concern in several areas of the village
* Recent years have seen increased frequency of flood events

1. **Development Impact**

We seek assurance that:

* The sequential test will be rigorously applied to any development proposals affecting Islip
* Cumulative impacts of development on flood risk will be properly assessed
* Surface water management will be given appropriate weight in planning decisions
* The impact of climate change on flood risk has been fully considered

1. **Infrastructure Capacity**

We request specific consideration of:

* The capacity of existing drainage infrastructure
* The impact of East West Rail infrastructure changes on local drainage patterns
* The need for investment in flood prevention and mitigation measures
* Maintenance requirements for existing flood management systems

1. **Policy Implementation** We strongly support the requirement that development must:

* Not increase flood risk elsewhere
* Provide appropriate freeboard above design flood levels
* Include comprehensive Emergency Flood Plans where appropriate
* Consider all sources of flooding including surface water and groundwater

**Housing Development and Impact**

We note the Plan's overall housing requirement of 911 homes per annum (20,042 homes from 2020-2042). While we support the Plan's strategy of focusing major development at Bicester, Banbury and to a lesser extent the Kidlington area, we have specific concerns regarding potential housing impact on Islip:

1. **Rural Housing Development**

As a rural settlement, we seek clarification on:

* The implications of any windfall development for our village
* How "local needs" will be defined and assessed for rural housing development
* Protection against speculative development outside settlement boundaries

1. **Infrastructure Capacity**

Given our limited local infrastructure, any housing development in or near Islip must carefully consider:

* The capacity of our local roads and parking
* Impact on our primary school
* Pressure on drainage and flood management systems
* Capacity of other local services and facilities

1. **Affordable Housing**

While we support Policy COM 2's requirement for affordable housing provision, we request clarification on how this will be applied to any rural exception sites that may come forward in villages like Islip.

1. **Character and Design**

Any new housing must respect Policy COM 14 on achieving well-designed places, particularly given our Conservation Area status and distinct village character. We strongly support the requirement for development to respond to local character and history.

**Transport Infrastructure and East West Rail**

We note the Local Plan makes several references to East West Rail and its implications for development in Cherwell. With Islip being directly impacted by EWR proposals, we have specific comments:

1. **Policy Integration**

We request clarification on how the Local Plan will:

* Integrate with EWR's proposals for expanded rail services through Islip
* Address potential increased development pressure from improved rail connectivity
* Manage potential changes to local transport patterns and parking demands
* Coordinate infrastructure improvements with EWR's construction timeline

1. **Settlement Character**

Given EWR's proposed infrastructure changes at Islip, including a new passing loop, we particularly support:

* Policy COM 10 on Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape
* Policy COM 11 on Local Landscape Designations

These policies will be crucial in managing the cumulative impact of both rail infrastructure and any associated development pressure.

1. **Future Growth Pressures**

We seek assurance that:

* The Plan has fully considered the potential growth pressures that enhanced rail connectivity might bring to Islip
* Appropriate protections are in place to prevent speculative development based on improved transport links
* The rural character of our village will be protected despite increased accessibility

1. **Infrastructure Coordination**

We request that the Plan specifically addresses how it will coordinate with EWR regarding:

* Local highway improvements
* Sustainable transport connections to the station
* Management of construction impacts
* Protection of public rights of way
* Drainage and flood management considerations

**Infrastructure and Services**

While we support the Plan's general approach to infrastructure provision through Policy COM 20, we request:

* Careful consideration of local infrastructure capacity in any future development decisions
* Protection and enhancement of existing community facilities
* Improved public transport connectivity
* Assessment of cumulative traffic impacts on rural communities

**Public Rights of Way**

We strongly support Policy COM 16 on protecting and enhancing public rights of way, which are vital to our community's quality of life and sustainable transport options.

**Local Green Spaces**

We welcome Policy COM 25 on Local Green Spaces and the additional designations in this version of the Plan. These designations are crucial for protecting valuable community spaces.

**Conclusion**

Overall, we believe the Plan provides a sound framework for sustainable development while protecting rural character. However, we request consideration of our specific concerns regarding strategic gaps, flood risk management, infrastructure capacity, and the integration of EWR proposals.