

4.4.1

Rural Areas

2.94 There are over 90 villages and hamlets in the District. Bloxham in the north with a population of just over 3,000 is the second largest village after Kidlington. Adderbury, Deddington, Hook Norton and Bodicote all have populations in excess of 2,000. In total approximately 31% of the District's population live outside the main urban areas.

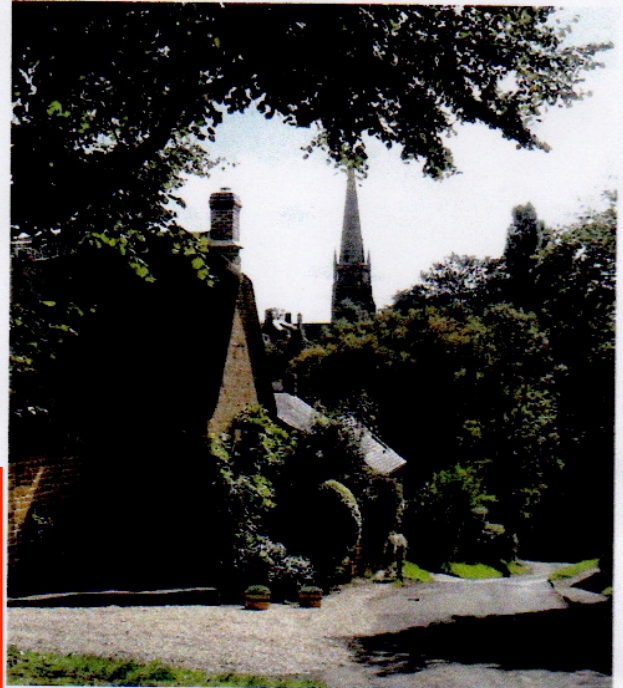
2.95 Each of Cherwell's villages has its own unique character and many have conservation areas which help to conserve and enhance their historic core. All villages have seen growth over the centuries, and some have grown significantly in the 20th and 21st centuries.

2.96 In general Cherwell's villages can be characterised as having a relatively limited range of services and facilities, although we recognise that there are significant differences. Larger villages often have some or all of the following: a post office, primary school, shop, pub, bus service, recreation and community facilities. Some also have local employment opportunities. Unfortunately, in recent years some of these facilities have been lost. In particular, a number of pubs have closed, and rural bus services have been significantly reduced.

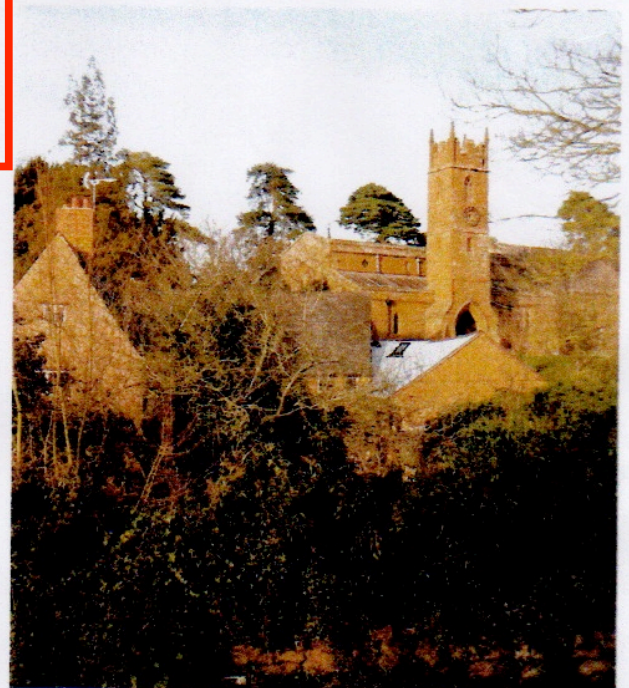
2.97 We recognise that although the area is relatively affluent, high house prices and lack of public transport mean that those on limited incomes, and those seeking to live, work and access services locally, can be disadvantaged.

2.98 Government rural housing policy seeks to be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. In order to promote sustainable development this new housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Our last Local Plan reflected this approach by defining a hierarchy of settlements which considered the following factors:

- The availability of services and facilities including shops and post offices
- Primary and secondary school provision
- Public transport availability
- Accessibility to the towns and other villages
- Employment sites
- Population size



Bloxham



Balscote