Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

First, a background note: the idea for the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, which I'll refer to as MCNP, was initiated 12 years ago by Dorchester Living, the developers that had bought the area of the old airbase called RAF Upper Heyford. In this area they developed what has become Heyford Park. The villages all around the old airbase plus Dorchester Living then developed the MCNP and got it formally adopted as a neighbourhood plan in 2019.

What was significant in November 2023 was that Heyford Park withdrew as a member of the MCNP Forum, leaving the MCNP doughnut shaped. This added a complexity for the MCNP, which had already started working on its "resubmission", and caused that resubmission work to be totally revised to omit Heyford Park.

The main MCNP activity for these last 12 months has been the resubmission of the MCNP for its formal re-adoption. The review was submitted to Cherwell District Council in September 2025 (Reg 15), after which CDC opened a public consultation on the documents, then extended the deadline for responses to that consultation, due to a technical issue on its website. CDC then published and studied the responses and produced material for the MCNP Executive to comment on, which has all been done and returned to CDC. The next action will be the appointment of a national examiner of the material for the Neighbourhood Plan's resubmission to be formally accepted.

Meanwhile, of course, the MCNP continued its role of reviewing and commenting on planning matters within its area. Two of our parish councillors, Amanda Carpenter and Nick Fry have now joined the Forum and the Executive of the MCNP, whereas Christine Marsh, David Richardson and I have been members of the Forum for much longer.

The huge issue now is that the whole area is threatened by several quite different developments, which in total would cause a great change to the area with very significant stress on current local infrastructure. Dorchester Living put forward a large increase of Heyford Park to be one of the Government's 'new towns', but this has not figured on the Government's short list. As well as that, several other developments, are all currently coming forward for planning, including housing, warehousing and tourist resorts. Altogether this is a huge combined threat, and the MCNP has set up two working committees, one on the Environment, on which Christine Marsh and Amanda Carpenter sit and one on Traffic on which Nick Fry sits. These have only recently been set up, but meetings of these working committees have started.