

- 5.3.9 The primary school will be provided next to the local centre. This means that a variety of uses are clustered together to ensure the local centre is busy, vibrant and economically viable. Living above the shop will be encouraged to provide natural surveillance.
- 5.3.10 The local centre will be located at the intersection of the three primary roads through the development so the facilities can benefit from capturing the potential of ‘passing trade’ from people travelling by car and bus. It will also be highly accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, with its location within 5 minutes’ walk of the majority of the development.
- 5.3.11 Siting the local centre in this location avoids significant overlap with the walking catchments of other local shops, including those at Shakespeare Drive, Kings Croft and in the town centre. The design encourages easy links to the surrounding areas to improve the accessibility and integration of the new quarter into the rest of the town.

Employment

- 5.3.12 In order to create a balanced and sustainable community, 2 hectares of employment land is provided as part of the overall planning application. This is located immediately to the west of the A41 so that it can better relate to the new residential development and helps provide a variety of employment opportunities for the residents of the new community. It also allows for the creation of a positive and attractive ‘commercial gateway’ to Bicester when arriving from the south, as land immediately east of the A41 is also identified for employment uses. This location allows these bigger buildings to shield the remainder of the development from traffic noise from the A41.

Health village

- 5.3.13 A health village complex, comprising a number of different health uses, such as a GP surgery and medical centre, a community hospital, a diagnostic clinic, a nursing home and possibly complementary medical services, will be located in the north-east part of the site. Its exact make-up will be considered in more detail at a later stage in the planning process. For further details on this element of the scheme, please see the planning statement that accompanies the outline planning application.

Education

- 5.3.14 A primary school of up to 2.47 hectares will be provided as part of the local centre, as shown on the master plan. In addition, approximately 1.31 hectares of land will be reserved for a second primary school, if required.
- 5.3.15 Land will be reserved for a secondary school. The secondary school will share the sports pitches and facilities on the formal open space. This will be to the south-east of the local centre, extending towards Whitelands Farm. The site identified for the schools buildings, parking and hardstanding is 3.14 hectares in extent and provides sufficient land for a 850-pupil school, with associated facilities.
- 5.3.16 The secondary school will take children from other developments, such as Upper Heyford and future developments in Bicester, as well as the new south-west Bicester quarter. Both schools will be readily accessible from the residential areas of the development and from the town, allowing pupils to walk and cycle to school. The proposals also seek to ensure that the schools provided on the site are accessible by public transport.
- 5.3.17 The rationale for the location of the secondary school is that:
- It does not sit well close to a neighbourhood centre as it requires a large area of land, and this can frustrate pedestrian movement
 - It can be efficiently co-located with the formal sports pitches to provide a single site solution
 - Most of the pupils for the new school will come from Bicester and Upper Heyford, not from within the site, and so it needs to be easily accessible to the wider community, making a location close to the perimeter road and the A41 suitable
 - It is adjacent to footpaths, cycleways and the main bus route through the site
 - The green space associated with the school will help soften the edge of the development

Density plan

- Application boundary
- Other land in applicant's ownership
- 40 - 45 units per ha
- 35 - 40 units per ha
- 30 - 35 units per ha

Building Heights plan

- Application boundary
- Other land in applicant's ownership
- Upto 4 storeys = maximum 14.5m high
- upto 3.5 storeys = maximum 11.5m high
- upto 2.5 storeys = maximum 9m high
- Primary school (building maximum 9m high)
- Secondary school (building maximum 11.5m high)
- Pavillon (building maximum 7m high)

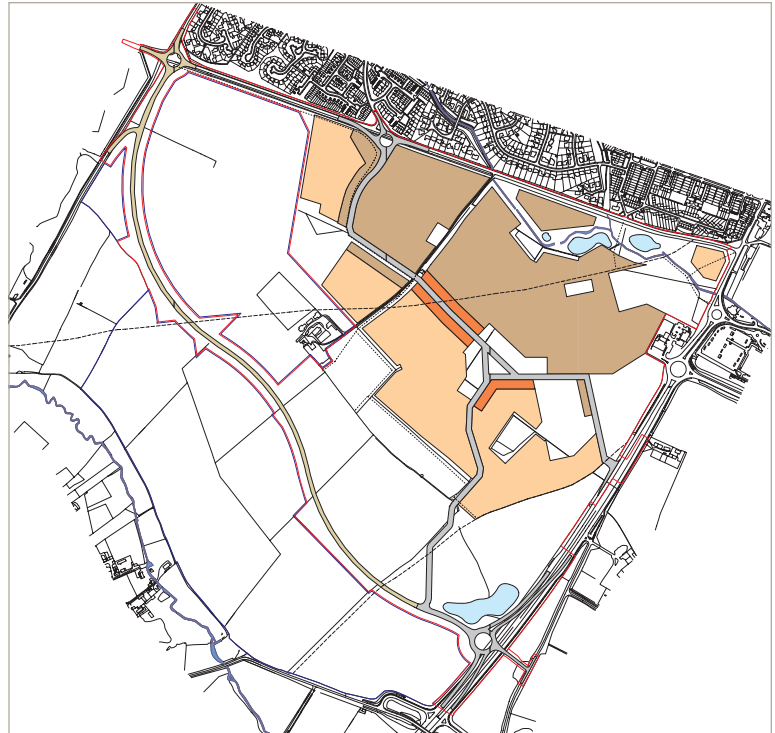


Figure 5.6 Density plan



Figure 5.7 Building heights plan

Hotel

- 5.3.18 Up to 1 hectare of land will be reserved for a hotel. The hotel is shown on the northern side of the key entry road from the A41, next to the employment area. The use and location make the most of this landmark opportunity and will complement the employment uses adjacent to the site.

Formal open space

- 5.3.19 The master plan shows 17.29 hectares of formal open space including existing and proposed planting. Six hectares required to meet the needs of the residents of this new quarter will be provided south-east of the village centre and will consist of formal sports facilities provision, as well as pitches with lighting. This is the best location for these particular uses as the lit pitches will sit alongside the A41, which is already lit, and therefore it will have the least impact on existing residents of Bicester and Chesterton, as well residents of the proposal.
- 5.3.20 The additional 10 hectares of formal open space will be located to the south west of the proposed secondary school. The sports pitches for the secondary school form part of the overall pitch provision.

Informal open space

- 5.3.21 In addition to the formal open space, the master plan shows 14.88 hectares of informal open space including existing and proposed planting which link together throughout the site. This open space will contribute to the existing spaces in the town. The proposed layout of informal open spaces continues the ribbon of connected spaces in Bicester and integrates the built environment with the landscape. It will provide areas for a wide variety of informal recreation activities and enhance the character and appearance of the new quarter.



- 5.3.22 Pingle Brook is retained as part of this open space strategy, and will be improved and enhanced to create an ecological and recreational asset for all. The existing access track to Whitelands Farm will be enhanced and planted to create a greenway, linking Middleton Stoney Road to the southern edge of the site. Along with the land that will create the setting for Whitelands Farm, this will allow easy access to the secondary school.
- 5.3.23 Hedgerows, trees and woodlands are to be retained wherever possible. Combined with the variety of open space areas, the introduction of ponds as part of the sustainable urban drainage for the site and new landscape areas sympathetically located and planted throughout the development, this will significantly improve the biodiversity of the area from that of a commercial farm.
- 5.3.24 The existing planting on and off site will be strengthened where necessary, as shown on the master plan, to minimise the visual impact of the development for residents of Bicester, Chesterton and the new quarter.

Children's play space

- 5.3.25 Children's play space will be provided within the development and/or on the informal open space. This provision will include equipped play areas. The neighbourhood and local equipped play areas (NEAPs and LEAPs) are shown on Figure 5.8 overleaf. Toddler play areas (local areas of play, LAPs) will be considered at a more detailed planning stage.



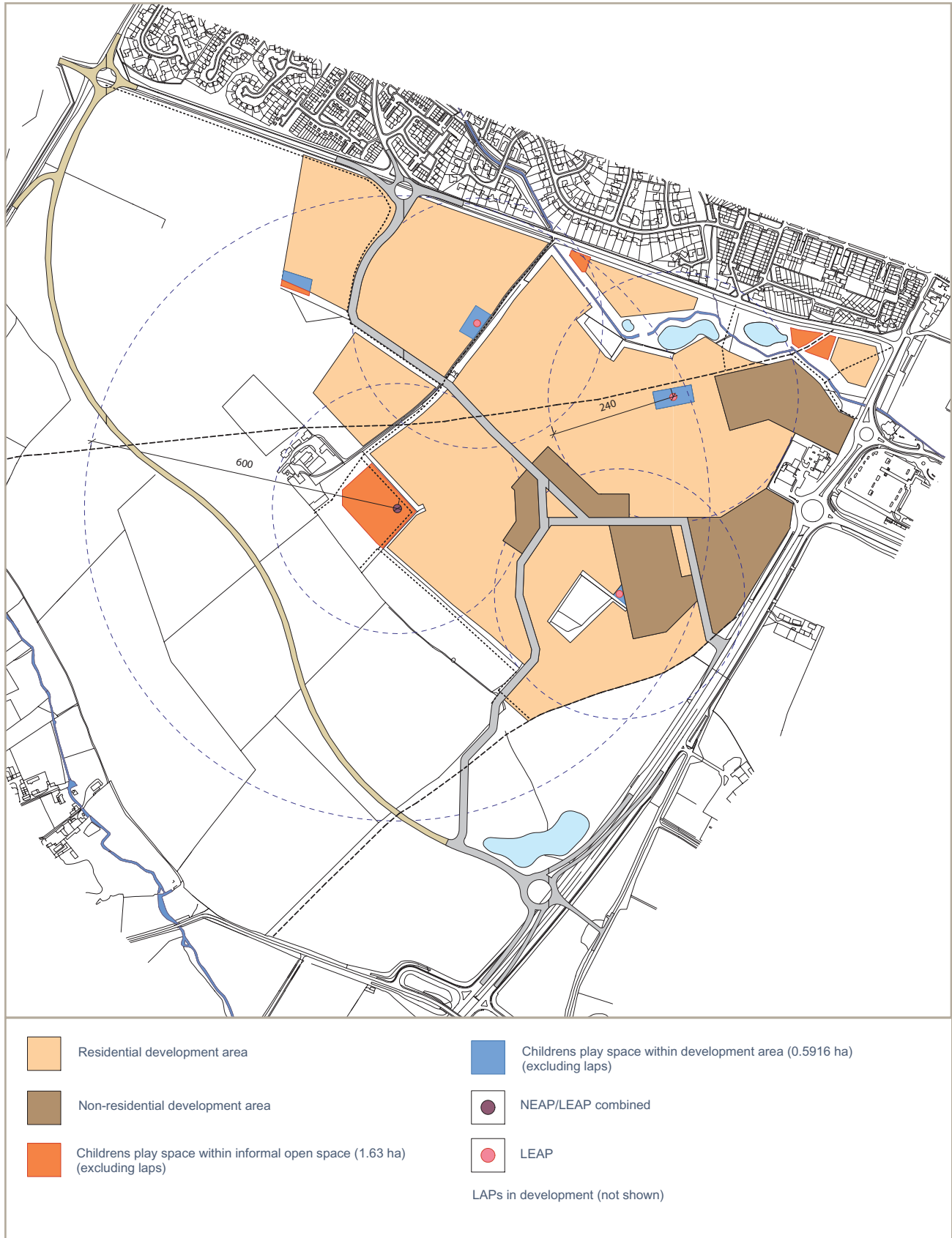


Figure 5.8 Children's play areas

5.4 Layout

The following section outlines the structuring elements that make up the development, including the urban grain, views and landmarks, landscape structure, movement network and access.

Tree-lined avenue approach from Middleton Stoney Road.

Land reserved for a second primary school.

Whitelands Farm buildings retained as a working farm.

Opportunity for equipped play area for children

Formal sports pitches, laid out according to the best practice guidelines for orientation and alignment.

Gagle Brook

Agricultural land

This sketch master plan gives an idea about the sense of place that can be created and gives a feel for type of quality mixed-use quarter that can be delivered by the master plan. It adds a layers of informal detail over a base provided by the EIA master plan to give a better understanding about what the master plan is capable of in terms of place-making. Planning permission is not sought for this sketch master plan and it has not been subject to EIA.



Figure 5.9 Sketch master plan



Pond created for recreational opportunity and as part of the sustainability drainage strategy.



Urban grain (blocks and frontages)

- 5.4.8 The development blocks establish a well-connected place that is convenient to move through. Blocks have been designed to be of a size that can accommodate a suitable scale of development, together with the necessary public and private open space and car parking, but are not so large as to become an obstacle to movement (ie requiring residents and visitors to take circuitous routes in order to move around). This diagram shows a high-level block structure. A more detailed level is shown in the sketch master plan.
- 5.4.9 The proposed block structure allows different edges to be given greater or lesser importance in the overall development. Edges that are immediately adjacent to the spine streets and public spaces will have a more continuous and even building line, creating a stronger sense of enclosure. They will also have a greater height than surrounding buildings, even if this is only a subtle difference, to allow for an attractive wide street, which can accommodate tree planting. Residential streets can have a more discontinuous frontage, with detached and semi-detached properties and sides of properties fronting the street on occasion.

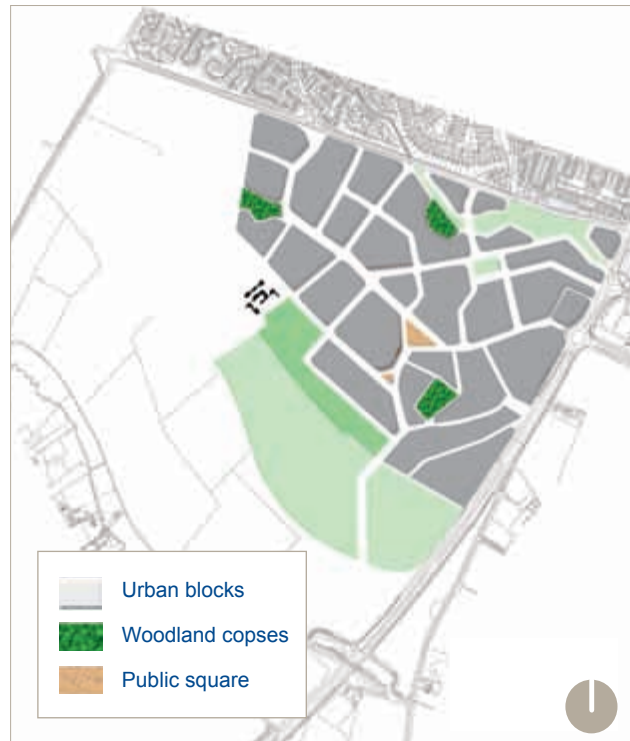


Figure 5.10 **Block structure**

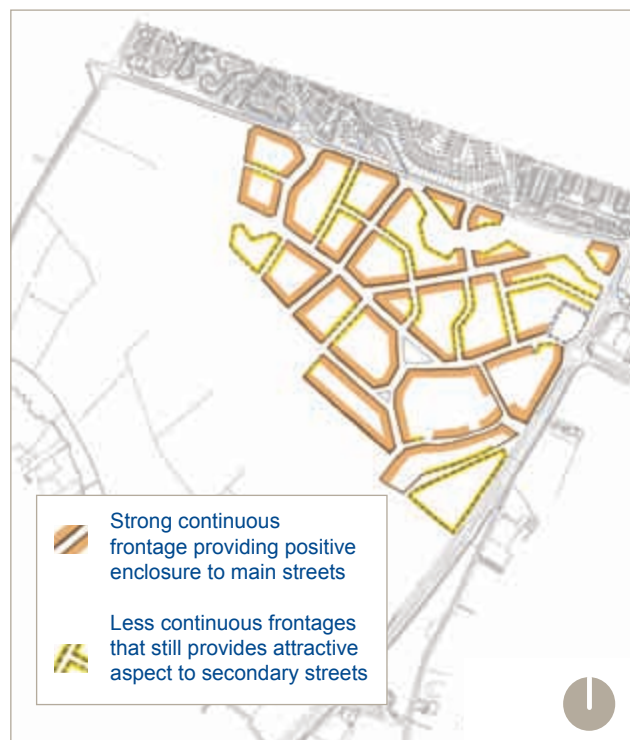


Figure 5.11 **Development edges**

Views and landmarks

To aid with legibility, the master plan has been designed to create a series of landmark spaces and buildings throughout the public realm. These landmarks are celebrated by structuring the layout to allow views and vistas from within the development and surrounding areas. Importantly, existing landmarks, most noticeable the churches at Bicester and Chesterton and Whitelands Farm, have remain important prominent features in views. The gateways into the development have also been carefully designed to create a strong sense of arrival and a clear transition from rural to urban. Figure 5.12 below illustrates the key gateways, landmarks and views.



Figure 5.12 Views and landmarks

5.5 Landscape structure

- 5.5.1 The landscape strategy for the new quarter has evolved from detailed landscape analysis of the site and its context, and through information gathered as part of extensive consultation with the local authority, local groups and stakeholders.
- 5.5.2 While the site is relatively flat when viewed from the edges or the centre, there are subtle changes in level that the master plan has responded to. The site falls gently from north west to south east, with a more significant drop towards the Gagle Brook valley near Chesterton. There is a 'shoulder of land' between the Gagle Brook and the area of proposed development. There are three plateau areas and a gentle valley that runs from the A41 Oxford Road towards the Whitelands Farm buildings. This valley plays a major part in providing the farm complex with an attractive setting and the master plan has strived to preserve this important feature.

- 5.5.3 The proposed landscape structure works with the existing features to create a framework that will effectively accommodate the development within a wider landscape setting. The landscape structure is also an integral part of the other elements of the master plan, such as the block structure, the access and movement patterns and character areas. Key streets will be tree-lined to emphasise their importance, the copses will be retained and embedded within the block structure and the development edges will positively address the wider landscape. Additional structural landscape works will help assimilate the perimeter road into the landscape.



Figure 5.12 Landscape structure

5.5.4 The key objectives of the landscape strategy are to:

- Ensure that the new south-west quarter for Bicester is successfully integrated into the landscape, being both sensitive, and responsive to, the landscape character and its setting
- Provide strategic new areas of formal and informal open space that is successfully connected with Bicester to ensure that both the existing and new community benefit from this major new recreation resource
- Protect the setting of Chesterton and Whitelands Farm
- Protect existing landscape and ecological interest on the site, and where possible, achieve significant enhancement
- Provide a network of green spaces, including linear spaces such as footpaths and tree-lined avenues
- Ensure that a landscape and management framework is established that will deliver a major recreation asset for future generations



Figure 5.12 **Landscape structure**

- 5.5.5 The development of the site affords the potential to extend and enhance the existing strategic open space network of Bicester. This has been an important consideration in determining the structure of landscape proposals for this site. The open space strategy incorporates Pingle Brook, extends the strategic network of spaces into the site, then continues southwards along the greenway to the informal and formal open space and secondary school at the south of the site.
- 5.5.6 The new formal recreational area comprises 16 hectares. This will be jointly used by the secondary school. Recreational uses that require lighting will be located along the eastern edge, next to the A41. In addition to the formal recreation, the two large fields immediately east of the farmhouse will be turned into a large public park including informal open space and children's play areas. As at the villages of Kirtlington and Bletchington, this recreational open space will provide a significant green area between the development and agricultural land.

- 5.5.7 The two existing public rights of way have been incorporated within the development structure and additional footpaths and cycleways are proposed to provide a comprehensive network through the development and the open space.
- 5.5.8 The three copses and majority of the hedgerows are retained. The existing landscape network has been the basis for the new planting. Importantly, the primary objective of mitigation planting has been not to screen the development, but rather to establish an enhanced landscape structure that allows framed views of the development edge.



Figure 5.13 Pingle Brook (before and after)

5.6 Access and movement

- 5.6.1 The site is well-positioned for pedestrian accessibility to Bicester’s centrally located facilities. It is also close to the large Tesco superstore and multiple retailers at Bicester Village Retail Park. Safe and easy pedestrian access from the new quarter to both facilities will be achieved through new pedestrian-friendly crossings on the A41.
- 5.6.2 For the remainder of the site, pedestrian access is a core design principle, reflected for instance in the retention and incorporation of the existing footpaths across the site. These are incorporated into the layout without the need for realignment.
- 5.6.3 The development is served by three main access points, two from the A41 and one from Middleton Stoney Road. The larger of the two on the A41 will join with an outer perimeter road that will help connections in the south-western quadrant of the town. A new secondary access off Middleton Stoney Road will serve the dwellings north of Pingle Brook. A further access from Middleton Stoney Road will serve the nursing home element of the health village, as it will generate lower traffic levels.

- 5.6.4 The existing track to Whitelands Farm will be closed to vehicular traffic but will provide pedestrian and cycle access to the site.
- 5.6.5 The access and movement proposals seek to reduce the amount of through traffic using Middleton Stoney Road and Queens Avenue through the town centre. This will assist in encouraging walking and cycling between the new and existing communities. A hierarchy of streets will be designed to accommodate different types of vehicular movement. Streets will be designed for slow traffic speeds.
- 5.6.6 As well as providing quick and direct links to the M40 and Oxford, the A41 creates problems of noise and severance. Noise from the road must be addressed, and this is done through a combination of a landscape works that are integral to the whole development and the use of boundary buildings that can protect the rest of the new quarter from traffic noise. The commercial part of the new quarter has been designed with this in mind.



Figure 5.14 Access and movement strategy

Public transport, footpaths and cycleways

- 5.6.7 The development will link into the existing networks and create new routes of its own. Positive links for buses, bicycles and pedestrians will be promoted throughout the development, concentrated along the main spines, offering access to the railway station, local and town centres and to the A41.
- 5.6.8 The development will retain the existing public footpaths that cross the site. This will be done in a positive way, with development designed to overlook the route as much as possible. The development will also open up new 'green routes' that link open spaces, watercourses and woodland areas. These will provide attractive leisure routes through the areas and will complement the street network.

Chesterton rat-running

- 5.6.9 The proposals take into account the residents of Chesterton. It is known that commuters drive through Chesterton as part of a rat-run and the application proposals seek to limit this in the future. The new roundabout at the junction of the A4095, Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane will not link directly to the A4095, but will send traffic down the new perimeter road. As the perimeter road will provide a quicker and more direct route to the A41, this will help reduce rat-running through the village.



Figure 5.15 Main Street passing through South West Bicester



Figure 5.16 New green route

Perimeter road

5.6.10 As part of the proposed development, a western perimeter road is proposed linking the A41 with the A4095. The perimeter road will be a 50mph single carriageway with no lighting except at junctions. The development of 1,585 dwellings does not, in itself, justify the provision of this road. However, the county council has insisted on its provision with this planning application.

5.6.11 The main purpose of the road is to remove through-traffic from the town centre and re-route it around the west of the town. It will also provide access to the strategic employment area east of the A41 and to the secondary school for traffic from outside Bicester. The alignment and design of the perimeter road has been carefully selected so that it:

- Avoids long straight sections of road that encourage overtaking
- Closely follows the topography of the site to help assimilate it with the landform
- Takes account of sensitive views in and around Chesterton and Whitelands Farm
- Aligns with existing hedgerows, copses and trees to fit within the landscape
- Minimises potential noise and light pollution.

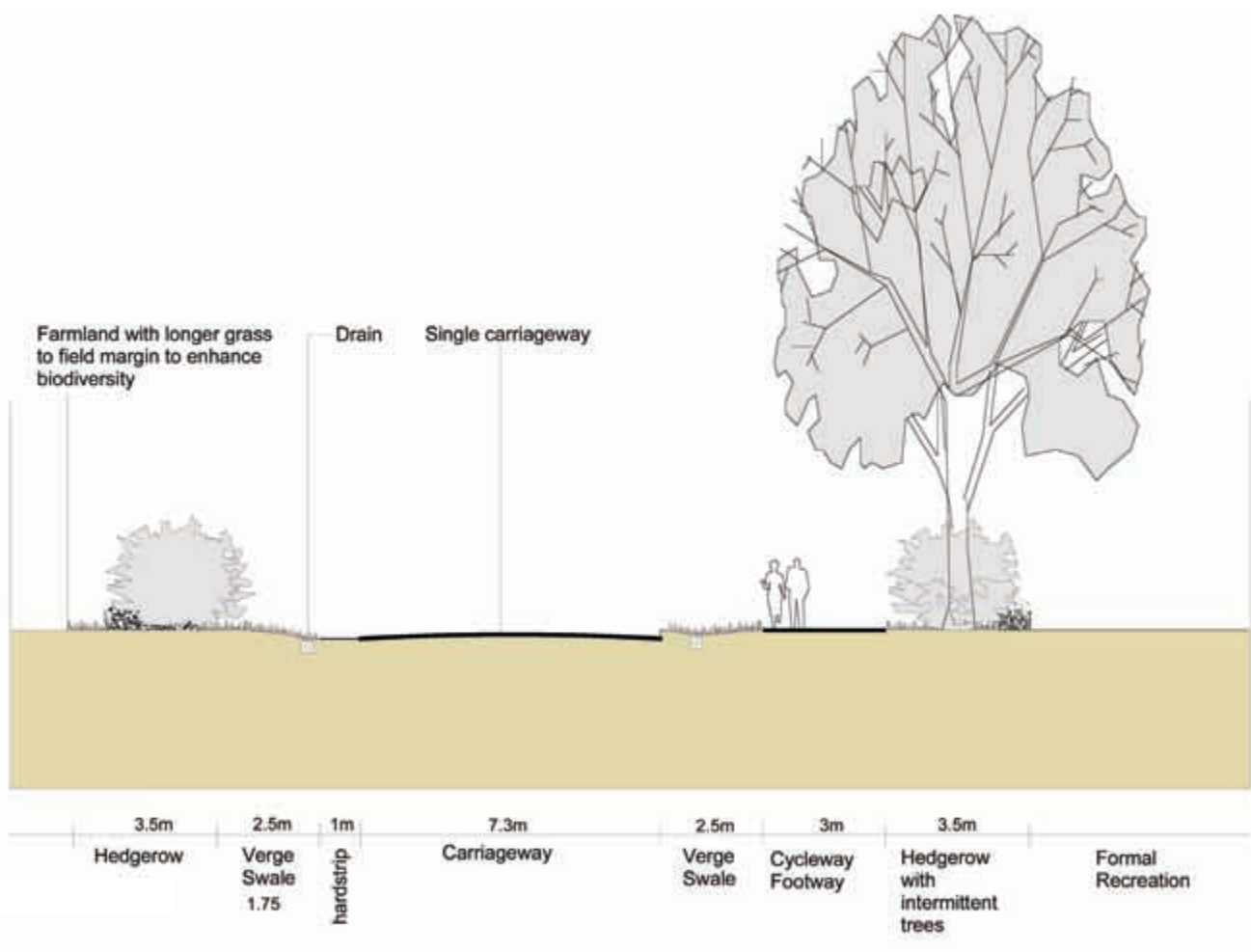
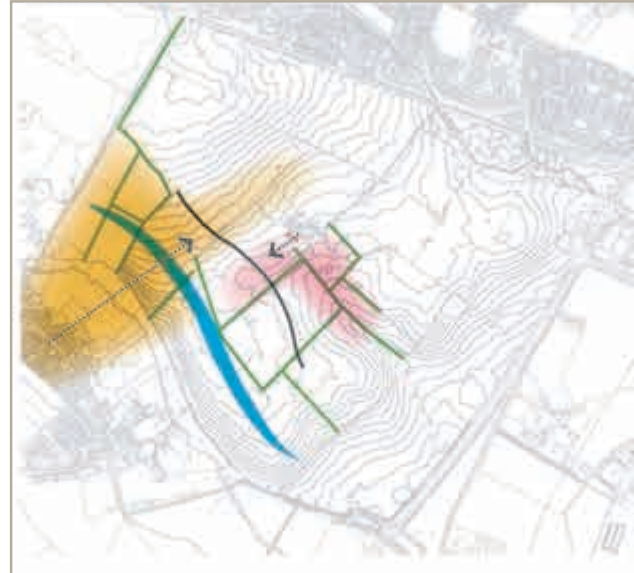


Figure 5.16 Typical cross section of the perimeter road



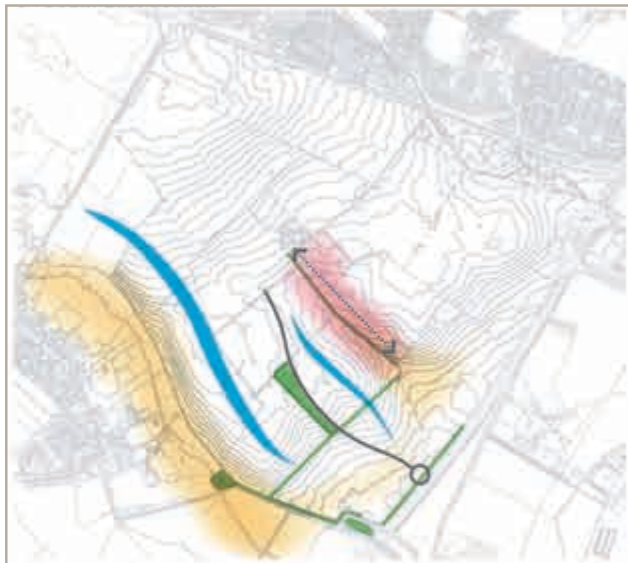
North west section

- push road away from areas which can be viewed from the properties along Middleton Stoney Road
- avoid crossing the open plateau
- align road to follow existing vegetation



Central section

- push road away from Chesterton and over the ridge
- respects the setting of Whitelands Farm
- align the road to follow the topography
- align road in centre of main field to retain useable fields on either side



South eastern section

- push road away from central valley to avoid degrading the intimate landscape
- align road between the two ridges and next to the existing hedgerow to reduce its visibility from the north and south



Overall proposed alignment

- the alignment of the road closely follows the profile of Gagle Brook and the general topography of the site

Figure 5.17 Rationale for perimeter road

5.6.12 The alignment of the road was established through detailed landscape analysis of the site and its context. A series of diagrams explain the landscape and visual factors that were considered and the rationale for its alignment.

5.6.13 Tree planting along the road is limited so as not to accentuate the road within the landscape. Instead, the existing hedgerow network has been enhanced with new copse and tree planting, which combine to provide a strong landscape structure either side of the perimeter road. For the most part, the road will be at grade or in cutting.

5.6.14 The network of streets, roads and footpaths has been designed so that the new quarter is a place that is easy to move around. The predominant movement patterns are from north-west to south-east (movement from the west of Bicester towards the A41 Oxford Road) and from south-west to north-east (movement from within the development towards the town centre). The street patterns allow for ease of movement in these directions and provide safe residential environments. The two public footpaths that currently cross the site have been incorporated without need for diversions.