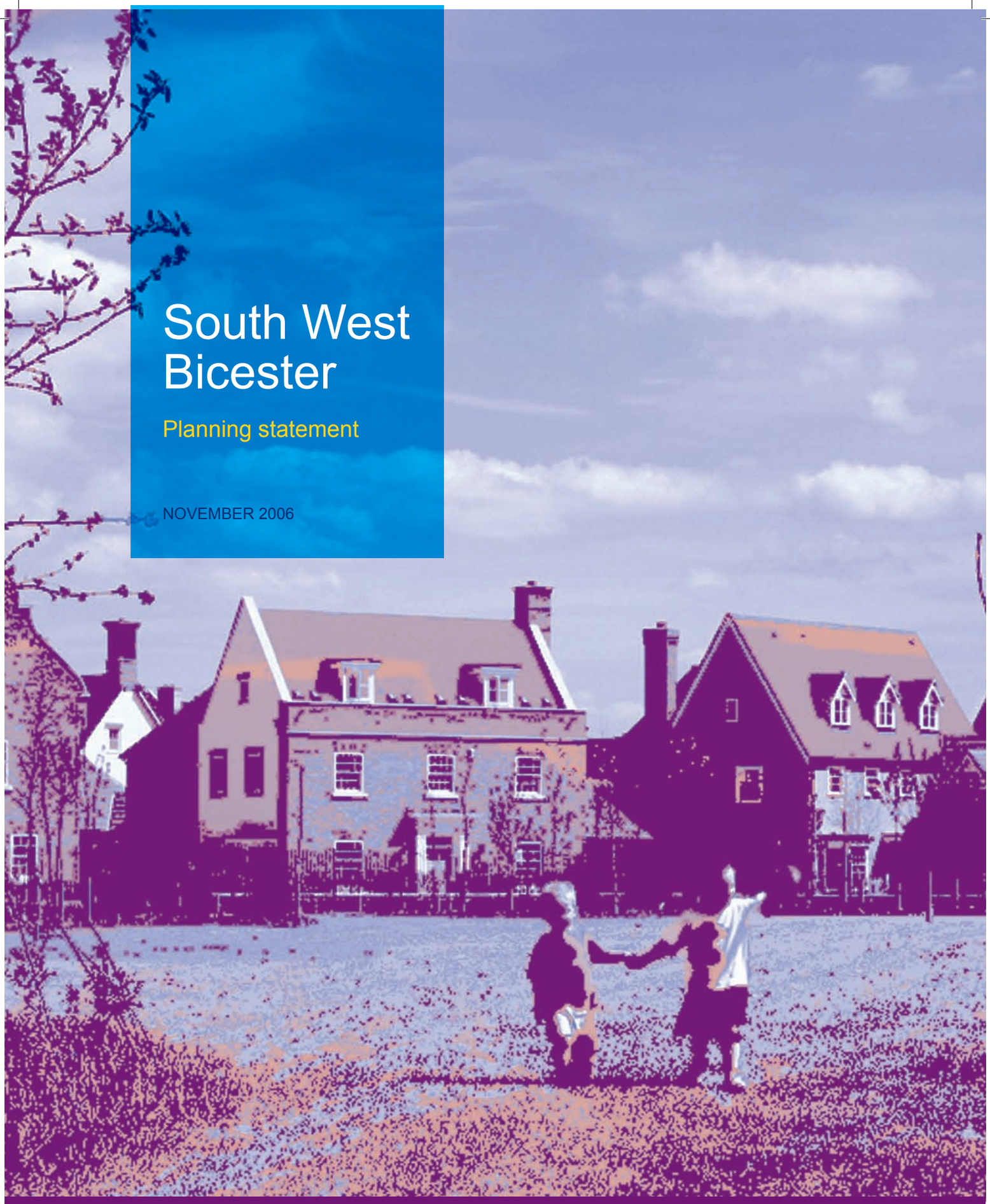
South West Bicester

Planning statement

NOVEMBER 2006



Terence O'Rourke

Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd

South West Bicester

Outline planning application for
a sustainable new quarter for Bicester
by Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd

Produced on their behalf by Terence O'Rourke Ltd
in association with WSP

NOVEMBER 2006

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Executive summary

The proposals for development south west of Bicester have been developed through a series of studies and opportunities for community involvement leading to adoption of the Design and Development Framework for the site, and through discussions with officers from Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. The proposals aim to create a balanced and sustainable community that will have its own identity, while integrating into the existing settlement pattern of Bicester and forming a new quarter of the town.

The following is a brief description of the main components of the master plan for the proposed development.

The main components of the proposed development are:

- Housing: The master plan provides for the development of up to 1585 dwellings of various types and sizes at an average density of approximately 34 dwellings per hectare. Within this will be higher densities at more sustainable locations at the centre of the new quarter and lower in more sensitive areas towards the southern boundary. 30% will be affordable housing distributed through the development.

- Local centre: The local centre located at the intersection of the three primary roads through the development will provide a range of facilities to support the local neighbourhood, helping to reduce reliance on the private car by providing day-to-day facilities within easy walking distance of homes. The centre will combine facilities such as shops, a community centre, a public house/restaurant, children's day nursery and offices, parking and flats above the units.

- Health village: The proposals will provide land that will be made available for public and private health and employment uses. This land could be used for such uses as a GP surgery and medical centre, a community hospital, a diagnostic clinic, a nursing home and possibly complementary medical services.

- Employment: The master plan includes two hectares of employment to the west of the A41. This will provide a variety of employment opportunities for the residents of the new community and the town, and make it easier to live and work within this part of Bicester.

- Education: A primary school will be provided within the local centre. In addition, land will be reserved for a second primary school, at the western end of the site, and made available if Oxfordshire County Council justifies the requirement. Land will be reserved for a secondary school to the south west of the local centre, sufficient to provide for a 850 pupil school, with associated facilities. The secondary school will share the sports pitches and facilities on the formal open space.

- Hotel: Up to 1 hectare of land will be reserved within the residential area for an hotel. Its precise size and type is not yet known. Its location is shown on the master plan.

- Open space: The master plan shows more than 16 hectares of formal open space. Of this, six hectares to the south east of the local centre is required to provide for the needs of the residents of the new quarter. It includes areas for formal lit and artificial sports facilities, as well as grass pitches. A pavilion with changing rooms is proposed. The other ten hectares will make up the existing deficiency of pitches in Bicester and meet the needs for the planned growth of the town up to 2011. In addition to the formal open space, a large area of informal open space links throughout the site. This continues the series of linked linear spaces running through Bicester and integrates the built environment with the landscape.

- Play areas: Children's play space, including equipped play areas, will be provided within the development and/or on the informal open space.

- Roads and access: A new perimeter road will link the A41 with the A4095, at its junction with Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane. The main access points into the new quarter will be from this new road, from a new signalised junction off the A41, and a new access off Middleton Stoney Road. Links for buses, bicycles and pedestrians will be promoted throughout the development concentrated along the main spines of the development. The routes for cyclists and pedestrians have been carefully considered in relation to the distribution of uses proposed, and to likely desire lines.

- These proposals bring together a number of land uses that will help create a socially cohesive, inclusive, safe and healthy environment within which a new community can grow and flourish.

1 Introduction

1.1 This planning supporting statement accompanies an outline planning application submitted by Countryside Properties (Bicester) Limited (Countryside) for the mixed use development of land at Bicester. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Other documents support the outline planning application, and should be referred to alongside this planning statement. These documents are the Environmental Statement (ES) and its technical appendices, a Transport Assessment (TA) (in accordance with Policy TR3 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan), a Sustainability Assessment and a Design and Access Statement (in accordance with Policy D2 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan).

1.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken by a team of consultants appointed by Countryside. The scope of the EIA was agreed with Cherwell District Council through the submission of a formal request for a scoping opinion.

1.4 This statement provides the following information about the application:

- It describes the development proposals
- It describes the design principles that have informed the formulation of the master plan and layout
- It provides an overview of the policy context and related documents that have provided the background and technical detail associated with the application
- It describes how the proposals meet Cherwell District Council's unadopted policy for this site, the approved Design and Development Framework, Government planning policy and the Sustainable Communities agenda
- It provides details of community involvement in the development of this application
- It details transportation and servicing requirements for the development.

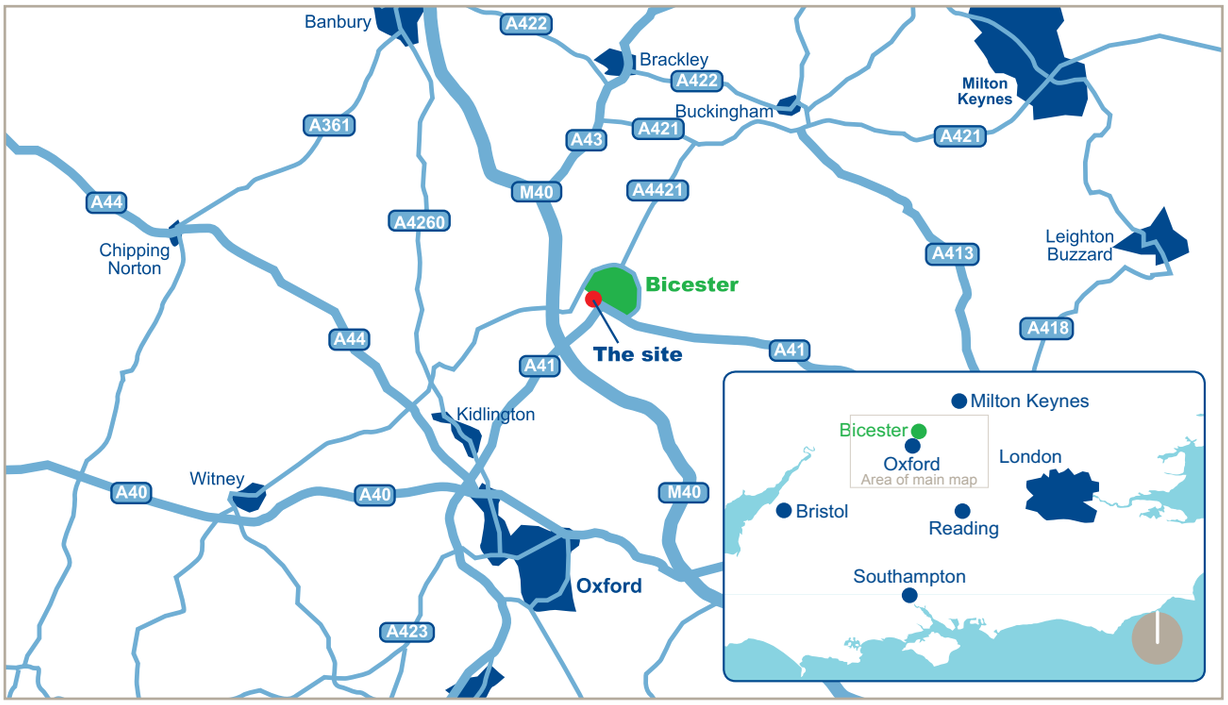

Figure 1.1 **Location of the site**

2 The site and its surroundings

Introduction

2.1 This section describes the site and its immediate surroundings, identifying the key characteristics of the land.

The site

2.2 The site is located to the south west of Bicester. It is bounded to the east by the A41 (Oxford Road), to the north by the B4030 (Middleton Stoney Road) and to the west by the A4095. The northern boundary and part of the eastern boundary abut the built-up edge of Bicester. The southern boundary of the site is open fields that abut Gagle Brook to the north of Chesterton Village.

2.3 The application site covers approximately 117.6 hectares of land. It is primarily agricultural land (Grade 3), with a mix of arable land farmed under rotation and pasture land mostly grazed by cattle and sheep. This land is currently divided by native hedgerows with Whitelands Farm and cottages at the centre of the site. The site forms part of the landholding of Whitelands Farm.

2.4 The site also includes a few small areas of plantation woodland, including some mature native trees. Of the several copses, the most significant is Foxey Leys Copse.

2.5 Pingle Brook lies in the north-east corner of the site where several drainage ditches cross the site following field boundaries. Gagle Brook flows north west to south east on the southern boundary.

2.6 Two footpaths cross the site, the first linking the A4095 at Bignell House with the centre of Bicester, whilst the second crosses the south-eastern corner of the site.

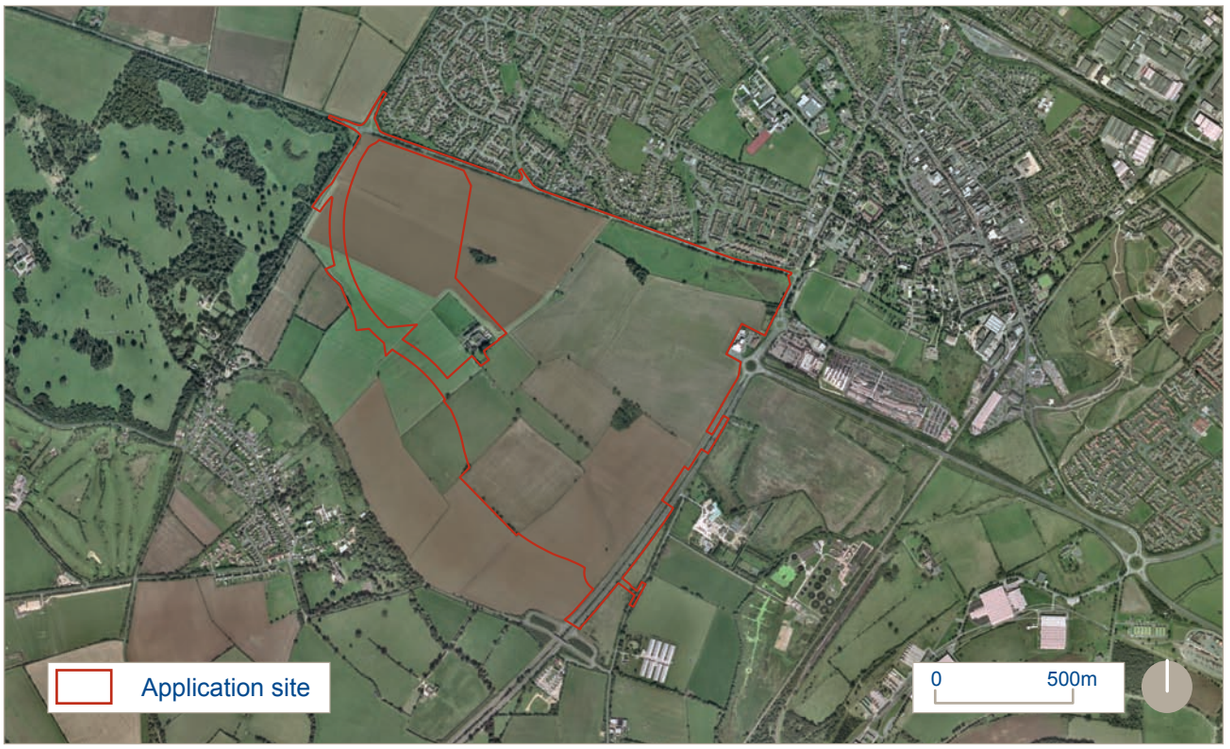

Figure 2.1 **Aerial photograph of the site**