

Schedule of development

3.10 The proposals accord with the provisions of national planning policy, as set out in section 5 of this statement, as well as the policies in the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan.

3.11 The proposals comprise:

- up to 1,585 residential dwellings, at an average of approximately 34 dwellings per hectare ranging from 30-45 dwellings per hectare and 30% of which will be affordable
- up to 1.6 hectares of land reserved for shops, a pub/restaurant, children’s day nursery and offices, parking and flats above shops in a local centre
- a community centre within the local centre
- a health village to include health and employment uses, including a site reserved for a community hospital and a GP surgery and a nursing home for the elderly.
- 2 hectares of employment land to be located along the A41 (containing B1 uses (offices, research and development, studios and high-tech facilities) and limited B2 uses (urban ‘hive’ units for general industrial uses)
- 6.5 hectares of land reserved for a secondary school, with joint use of the outdoor playing space
- a primary school on up to 2.47 hectares
- 1.31 hectares of land reserved for a second primary school, to be made available if required
- 1 hectare of land reserved for an hotel located north of the main access to the site from the A41 adjacent to the employment area.
- up to 17.29 hectares of formal outdoor sports provision and a sports pavilion (including existing and proposed planting) which allows for 16 hectares of useable space.
- up to 14.88 hectares of informal open space (including existing and proposed planting), land around Pingle Brook, a greenway through the site, existing woodlands and tree belts to provide a variety of less formal leisure and recreation opportunities throughout the site, create an appropriate setting for the retained Whitelands Farm and provide an opportunity to increase the biodiversity of the site
- children’s play areas within or near the residential development (in the open space areas) in accordance with NPFA and Sports England standards. The location of the neighbourhood (NEAP) and local (LEAP) equipped areas of play are shown in figure 5.8 of the Design and Access Statement
- the retention and improvement of Pingle Brook as an ecological and recreational asset for all
- the creation of balancing ponds to contribute to the sustainable drainage of the site, its biodiversity and amenity
- the retention of existing footpaths
- additional footpaths and cycleways to provide good alternatives to using the car
- the retention of existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows wherever possible
- the strengthening of existing planting to minimise the visual impact of the development
- a perimeter road linking the A41 to the B4030 at its junction with the B4095 and the requisite junction improvements
- improvements to the approaches to Chesterton to reduce rat-running through the village.

- 3.12 Policy H13 (xvi) of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan specifies that a transport interchange facility should be provided adjacent to and with access from A41. However, discussions with the County Council have indicated that the facility it is seeking is a park and ride to serve Oxford. This has been identified as a strategic need for commuters coming through Bicester from the north and east to Oxford. However, Policy TR7 of the Cherwell Local Plan states,

“The Council will not permit further Oxford-based park and ride sites in Cherwell District.”

- 3.13 However a site of up to 2ha for a possible future park and ride is identified with Countryside’s land ownership but it is not part of this application, nor does the Transport Assessment include assessment of a park and ride facility. Oxford County Council has not provided any justification for this proposal but if it were to do so Countryside would be willing to provide the site within the terms of a legal agreement.

Residential development

Number, mix and density of development

- 3.14 The master plan provides for the development of up to 1585 dwellings on the site. In order to comply with the objectives of sustainable development, and promote the efficient use of the land, an average density of approximately 34 dwellings per hectare will be achieved across the site (using the calculation set out in Annex C of PPG3). This is in accordance with unadopted Policy H3.
- 3.15 The density of development will, however, vary across the site with higher densities provided in more sustainable locations, such as adjacent to the local centre, along main public transport spines and close to the town centre. Within these areas densities will be 35-45 dwellings per hectare. Medium and lower densities of development will be provided in more sensitive areas, including towards the open edges of the site. Within these locations average densities of 30-40 dwellings per hectare will be achieved. This is in accordance with densities set out in PPG3 and Annex C of draft PPS3. This is illustrated in the density plan shown at Figure 3.2.



Housing by stream

3.16 Land in the north east corner of the site will comprise residential development. The area will be accessed from Middleton Stoney Road via its own restricted access. The site will have a maximum of no more than 20 units and will be no more than 2.5 storeys (9 metres) high, as shown on the heights plan at Figure 3.3. This land use and its restricted height will ensure less mass in this corner of the site, whilst also providing some development to anchor the site to the town at this important junction. A pedestrian and cycle access has been proposed through this part of the site to optimise permeability to the town and for visitors to Pingle Brook. The site will be designed in more detail within these parameters, at the reserved matters

stage, to optimise views of Bicester church spire. The copse south of this site, adjacent to Pingle Brook is retained despite being of low quality.

3.17 In accordance with unadopted policy H4, a range of dwelling types and sizes will be provided across the site to ensure that a mixed community is developed. This will include apartments of various sizes, houses, ranging from two-bed to five-bed, and an element of housing for people with disabilities and older people, in accordance with unadopted Policy H5.

3.18 Land to the west of the proposed residential development, north of the proposed perimeter road will remain in agricultural use at this time. However, Countryside is concerned with planning

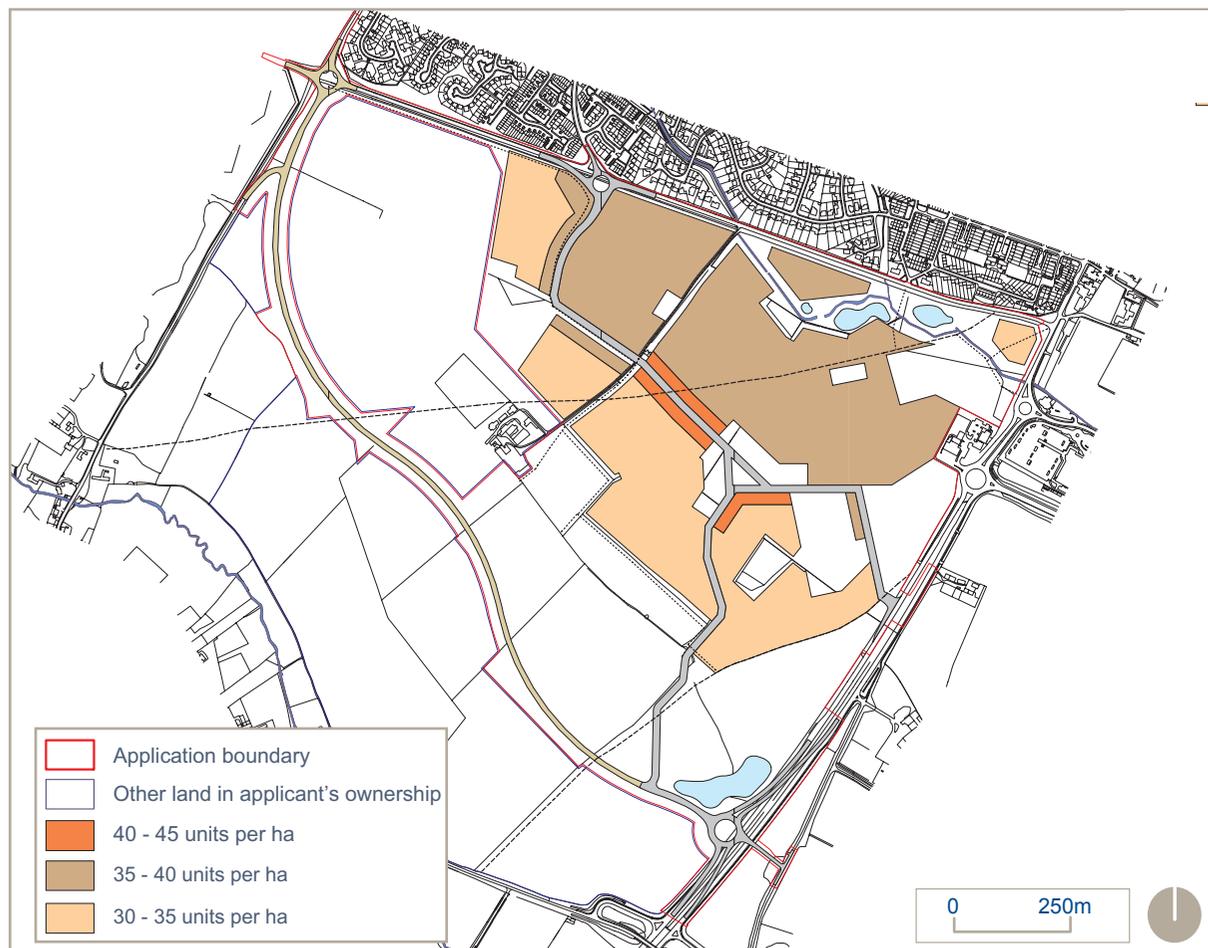


Figure 3.2 Building density plan

sensitively for the longer-term. As such, land to the west of the current planning application and north of the proposed perimeter road is likely to be promoted for further residential development through the planning policy system (i.e. Cherwell's Local Development Framework). This will optimise the use of the proposed investment in social and physical infrastructure currently envisaged as part of this application, and add to the sustainability credentials of this new community. Land south of the proposed perimeter road will remain as open countryside, and possibly used as a country park in the longer term, providing the long-term limits of Bicester and a permanent buffer between the town and Chesterton.

Affordable housing

- 3.19 Affordable housing is a particular issue in Cherwell district, with it being recently reported that there are 4,000 families in need of housing on the Council's waiting list. Affordable housing will be provided as an integral part of the residential development. A range of housing types and sizes will be required to meet identified local needs and to comply with unadopted policies H4, H7 and H13.
- 3.20 Countryside has an agreement with Bromford and Paradigm Housing Associations to provide 30% affordable units, split equally between the associations on the basis that 70% will be social for rent, 20% for shared ownership, including key workers and 10% will be for intermediate rent (i.e.



Figure 3.3 Building heights plan

a rent between social and market rent values, primarily for key workers). This will provide 475 homes for local people. The size and location of the affordable units will be agreed in due course. These units will be coarsely pepper potted (e.g. scattered, rather than grouped) across the development, in accordance with guidance contained within the Design and Development Framework.

3.21 The Housing Associations have stated, *“The Registered Social Landlords, Bromford Housing Group and Paradigm Group, are pleased to be the affordable housing providers for the south west Bicester development. The partnership with Countryside Properties will create a sustainable place where people want to live and stay whilst being a part of the existing Bicester community. With the support of the Local Authority we have received an allocation of Social Housing Grant funding for the first phase of the affordable housing. This vote of confidence will hopefully lead to further investment of Government funding in the affordable homes for rent and shared ownership of circa 23 million pounds over the next 6 or 7 years.”*

Local centre

3.22 The mixed-use local centre is an integral part of the development proposals and complies with the requirements set out within Policies H13 and D5 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan. This centre

will provide local facilities for the residents of south west Bicester and will not be in competition with the retail and other facilities offered within the town centre.

3.23 A range of facilities will be provided to support the local neighbourhood, providing an opportunity to reduce residents’ reliance on the private car by providing day-to-day facilities within easy walking distance. This 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.

3.24 Countryside will provide the community centre, in accordance with unadopted Policy R11. It will be multi-functional, acting as a youth centre and a main community facility. This building will be provided within the local centre, thereby providing an accessible facility within the heart of the new development, within easy access to its residents. Its exact size, specification and the timing of its provision will be considered as part of the negotiations on the legal agreement. Its location within the local centre will be determined at a more detailed stage of the planning process. Land will be reserved for the other elements of the local centre, which will then be marketed. The arrangements for this will also be the subject of negotiations on the legal agreement.



Local centre

- 3.25 The primary school site forms part of the local centre and accommodates the Bronze Age barrows found on site (see Archaeology chapter of ES for more detail), and addresses other issues raised by the County Council. The location will ensure that a variety of uses are clustered together to encourage a local centre that is busy, vibrant and economically viable. The site provides a regular shaped site for the school thereby allowing flexibility for the education authority in terms of the detailed layout. The design of this area creates a strong entrance space into the site from the A41, fronted by residential development and the hotel. The layout also creates a second public square between the primary school and Foxey Leys Copse. The copse will be overlooked by housing on all sides.

- 3.26 The community building is in the local centre. The adjacent public square will provide additional parking for parents, evening events at the school, and act as a drop-off area for the primary school. The LEAP has been located next to the square and a strategic footpath/cycleway that links the housing areas north and south. This is illustrated in more detail in the illustrative school proving layout in figure 5.13 of the Design and Access Statement.

- 3.27 The local centre will be located at the intersection of the three primary roads at the heart of this new quarter. It will therefore be highly accessible by

pedestrians and cyclists (within a 5-minute walk of the majority of the development) and should also benefit the potential of 'passing trade' from people travelling by car and bus. It will also be highly accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.

- 3.28 The location of the local centre avoids significant overlap with the walking catchments of other local shops in the locality, including those at Shakespeare Drive, Kings Croft and in the town centre. These existing shops will benefit from a new neighbourhood nearby, if walking between them is convenient, safe and attractive. The design of the proposals encourages easy links to the surrounding areas to improve the accessibility and integration of the new quarter into the rest of the town. Existing shops, particularly those in the town centre, will also benefit from the increase in customers arising from the development of this site.

Health village

- 3.29 Countryside considers it important for the town and residents to have health provision as part of this new quarter. It anticipates that the health village will comprise of a number of different health uses, such as a GP surgery and medical centre, (to accord with unadopted Policy OA6), a community hospital, a diagnostic clinic, a nursing home and possibly complementary medical services. The exact make-up of the site will be considered in



Community centre

more detail at a later stage in the planning process, and through the legal agreement.

- 3.30 Countryside will reserve a site for the community hospital and GP surgery as part of this application, in order to try and enable a better solution for the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in the longer term. The time period for the land reservation will be subject to negotiations with the PCT and Cherwell District Council on the legal agreement. It is conceivable, within this time period, that other funding mechanisms may come forward to realise the town's ambition for a hospital. Countryside will pursue this with the PCT. If the hospital site is not taken up, the site will revert to employment uses. In the event that accident and emergency accommodation is required, a blue light emergency access to the site can be achieved directly off the A41 or King's End.

Employment

- 3.31 In order to create a balanced and sustainable community to reflect government policy, Countryside is proposing two hectares of employment as part of the overall planning application. Located on the west of the A41, this use can better relate to the new residential development, and help provide a variety of local employment opportunities for the residents of the new community, making it easier to live and work within the new quarter. This is in accordance with paragraph 6.9 of the approved Design and Development Framework document. This will not prejudice the employment allocation to the east of the A41 coming forward in the future, and fulfilling its more strategic need independently of the development at Whitelands Farm.

Education

Primary and secondary schools

- 3.32 A primary school of up to 2.47 hectares will be provided centrally on the site forming part of the local centre in accordance with the Design and Development Framework and unadopted Policies OA1 and OA2. This is larger than the required site of 2.22 hectares. The timing of the provision, and any financial contributions, will be the subject of negotiations of the legal agreement. In addition,

approximately 1.31ha of 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.

- 3.33 In accordance with policy H13 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan, land will be reserved for a secondary school. In response to comments from Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, the secondary school site has been located closer to the development so that it is assimilated more closely with the proposed development and the town and allows the formal open space to be located in one area. It will be highly accessible on foot and cycle by the site's residents, as the existing footpath runs along one of the main boundaries to the site. The site is also accessible by existing and proposed public transport from Bicester, and can easily be accessed from the perimeter road. The area for the built elements of the school and associated hardstanding will accommodate 850 pupils to reflect the County Council's latest requirements. The location of the school site also addresses the issues raised in the Council's landscape consultant's report regarding a previous location site. The land reservation time period and financial contributions will be discussed as part of the negotiations on the legal agreement.
- 3.34 The secondary school will primarily provide for children from other developments, such as Upper Heyford and future developments in Bicester, as well as the new south west Bicester quarter. The site location is sustainable for all pupils from the development town and elsewhere.
- 3.35 The location of the school has been chosen for a number of reasons:
- to be in accordance with paragraph 3.111 of the unadopted local plan
 - it will help soften the edge of the built-up area
 - to be located adjacent to the formal open space requirement for the site (and the significant additional amount of open space required to make up a shortfall in Bicester), in order that the council's requirement for a single site solution for sports pitches can be complied with, and its ambition for a "sports village" fulfilled

- most of the pupils of the new school will come from the town and Upper Heyford, not from within the site; it therefore needs to be easily accessible by coach, bus and car for students to attend from some distance away and from all approaches; so it needs to be near the perimeter road and A41
- it is on the bus route through the site and has footpaths and cycleways to it to encourage children to travel from the new development in other ways than by private car
- it requires a large site that does not sit well within urban areas
- a secondary school is not a good neighbour for people living immediately next to it; it has therefore been located a short distance away from the new residential development, separated by a landscape avenue that forms the setting to the farm, which will help provide a pleasant link from the development to the school

Hotel

- 3.36 Up to 1 hectare of land will be reserved for an hotel as required by Policy H13. The hotel is shown on the master plan located to the north of the main access off the A41. Its precise size and type is not yet known, and will be determined by the market through negotiations with Countryside and the Council. This will be a matter for the more detailed planning stage.

Open space and amenity provision

Formal open space

- 3.37 The master plan shows 17.29 hectares of formal open space – the equivalent to 11 full-sized football pitches. The 6 hectares that is required for the needs of the residents of this new quarter will be provided to the south east of the village centre and will include formal lit and artificial sports facilities, as well as grass pitches. It is considered that this is the best location for these particular uses as the lighting will sit alongside the A41 which is already lit, and will minimise impact on existing residents of Bicester and Chesterton, as well as residents of the proposal. Changing facilities for the site

could be provided as part of the secondary school. In response to comments from Cherwell District Council, the sports pavilion is west of the spine road, and is shown by area on the master plan (this area also covers land for associated hardstanding and car parking). The pavilion will be no more than 7 metres in height. The location of the pavilion is well placed to serve the sport pitches.

- 3.38 The additional 10 hectares of formal open space will make up the existing deficiency in Bicester and meet the needs for the planned growth of Bicester up to 2011. This land is to the west of the proposed secondary school. Cherwell District Council has confirmed that the sports pitches for the secondary school will form part of the overall quantum of pitch provision (letter dated 23 December 2005 refers).

- 3.39 The formal open space has been located to provide the best land use, urban design and landscape solution for the development in accordance with unadopted Policies R6 R12 EN6 and EN7. It will also provide Cherwell District Council with the “single site solution” as required by its letter dated 23 December 2005 and will enable the Council to fulfil its concept of a “sports village” for the town and surrounding villages, as set out in that letter. To date, Cherwell has not indicated what sort of pitches and facilities this formal open space will provide. It is understood, however, that this will be a matter of public consultation later in 2006.

Informal open space

- 3.40 In addition to the formal open space, the master plan shows a large area of informal open space continuously linked throughout the site. This open space (14.88 hectares) will contribute to the existing spaces in the town, which are made up of a series of linked linear spaces running through Bicester. The proposed layout of informal open spaces throughout the new quarter continues this ribbon of spaces 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. This is in accordance with unadopted Policy R3.

3.41 Pingle Brook will be retained as part of this open space strategy, and will be improved and enhanced to create an ecological and recreational asset for all, in accordance with unadopted Policies EN13, EN27 and EN36. The proposed realignment of the brook is shown in figure 5.13 of the Design and Access Statement. The existing access to Whitelands Farm will be enhanced and planted to create a greenway, linking Middleton Stoney Road to the southern edge of the site. All three of these landscape elements were considered to be very important by the participants of the community events, and were included in the final composite master plan of the events.

3.42 Hedgerows, trees and woodlands are to be retained wherever possible to accord with unadopted Policy EN35. Combined with the variety of open space areas, the introduction of ponds as part of the sustainable urban drainage for the site (in accordance with unadopted Policies EN14 and EN15), will significantly improve the biodiversity of the area from that of a commercial farm, in accordance with unadopted Policy EN22.

3.43 The existing planting on site 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

3.44 Children's play space will be provided within the development and/or on the informal open space as shown (in part) in figure 5.8 of the Design and Access Statement. This is in accordance with Policy R8 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan, the Council's Guidance Note on Recreation and Amenity Open Space Provision, 2004 and the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standards. This provision will include equipped play areas, but the type and size are to be agreed as part of the negotiations on the legal agreement and through the detailed planning stages.

Roads and access

3.45 Additional infrastructure is required under unadopted Policy H13, the most significant of which will be a new road linking the A41 with the A4095, at its junction with Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane. The overall vehicular access strategy is shown on Figure 3.4, which shows both the proposed perimeter road and the main access roads into the site.

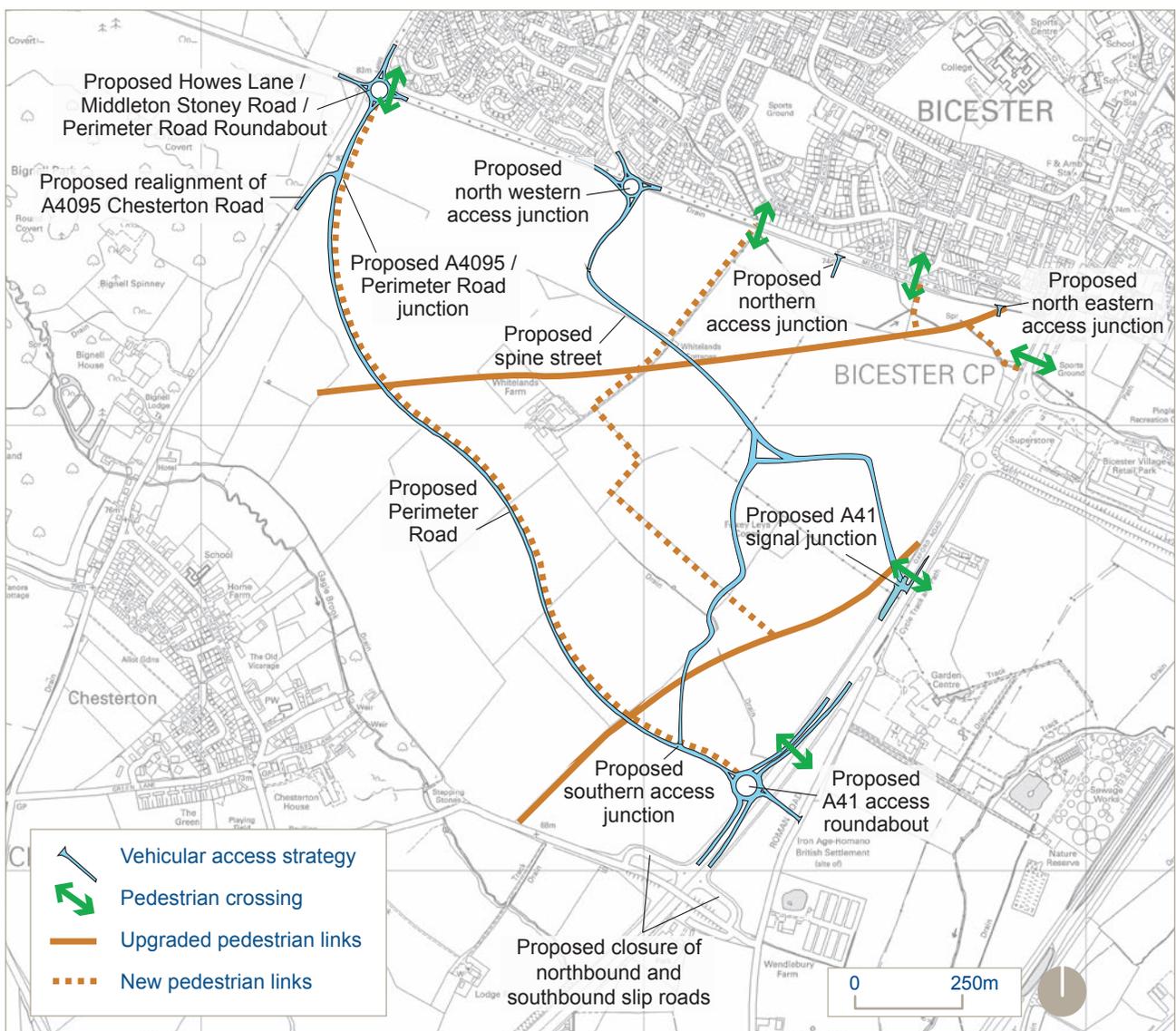


Figure 3.4 Access strategy

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Perimeter road

- 3.46 In line with Policies H13, TR26(iii) and TR27(i) of the unadopted Local Plan, a perimeter road will be provided linking the A41 to the A4095, at its junction with Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane. The development of 1585 dwellings does not, in itself, justify the provision of the road. However, the County Council has insisted on its provision with this planning application. The main purpose of the road is to remove traffic from the town centre and to distribute traffic to and from the strategic employment area to the east of the A41 and the secondary school.
- 3.47 The road alignment is different from the Council's suggested alignment, as shown on the local plan proposals map, and on page 14 of the draft Design and Development Framework document, but fulfils the requirements set out in unadopted Policies TR5 and EN7 and paragraph 7.6 of the Framework document. 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, Whitelands Farm and the new development
 - aligns with existing hedgerows, copses and trees to fit within the landscape
 - minimises potential noise and visual impacts associated with the road.
- 3.48 The alignment of the road was established through detailed landscape analysis of the site and its context. Figure 3.3 overleaf summarises the landscape and visual factors that were considered, and the rationale for its alignment. The majority of the road will be planted with hedgerows, but tree planting along the road is limited so as not to accentuate the road in the landscape. Instead, the existing hedgerow network has been enhanced with new copse and tree planting, which when combined, provides a strong landscape structure either side of the perimeter road. For the most part the road will be at grade or in cutting.

Key roads and access

- 3.49 The main access points into the new quarter will be from the proposed perimeter road, a new signalised junction off the A41, and from a new access off Middleton Stoney Road.
- 3.50 A new secondary access off Middleton Stoney Road will serve the dwellings located north of Pingle Brook. Links between this and the rest of the site will be designed to be at the lower end of the road hierarchy with the emphasis on the use of other primary access points. A further access from Middleton Stoney Road will serve no more than 20 houses located in the north east corner of the site. The existing lane to Whitelands Farm will be closed to vehicular traffic (except farm traffic) from Middleton Stoney Road and the new spine road but will provide pedestrian and cycle access to the site.
- 3.51 The proposals seek to reduce the amount of through traffic using the 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 to discourage speeding traffic and seek to accommodate the car, rather than encourage its use. This is in accordance with unadopted Policy TR19.

Public transport, footpaths and cycle ways

- 3.52 Efficient public transport is essential to the creation of this sustainable new quarter if the use of the car is to be discouraged. The development will both 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 of the development, offering access to the railway station, local and town centres and to the A41 (providing links to existing bus routes) in accordance with unadopted Policy TR6.

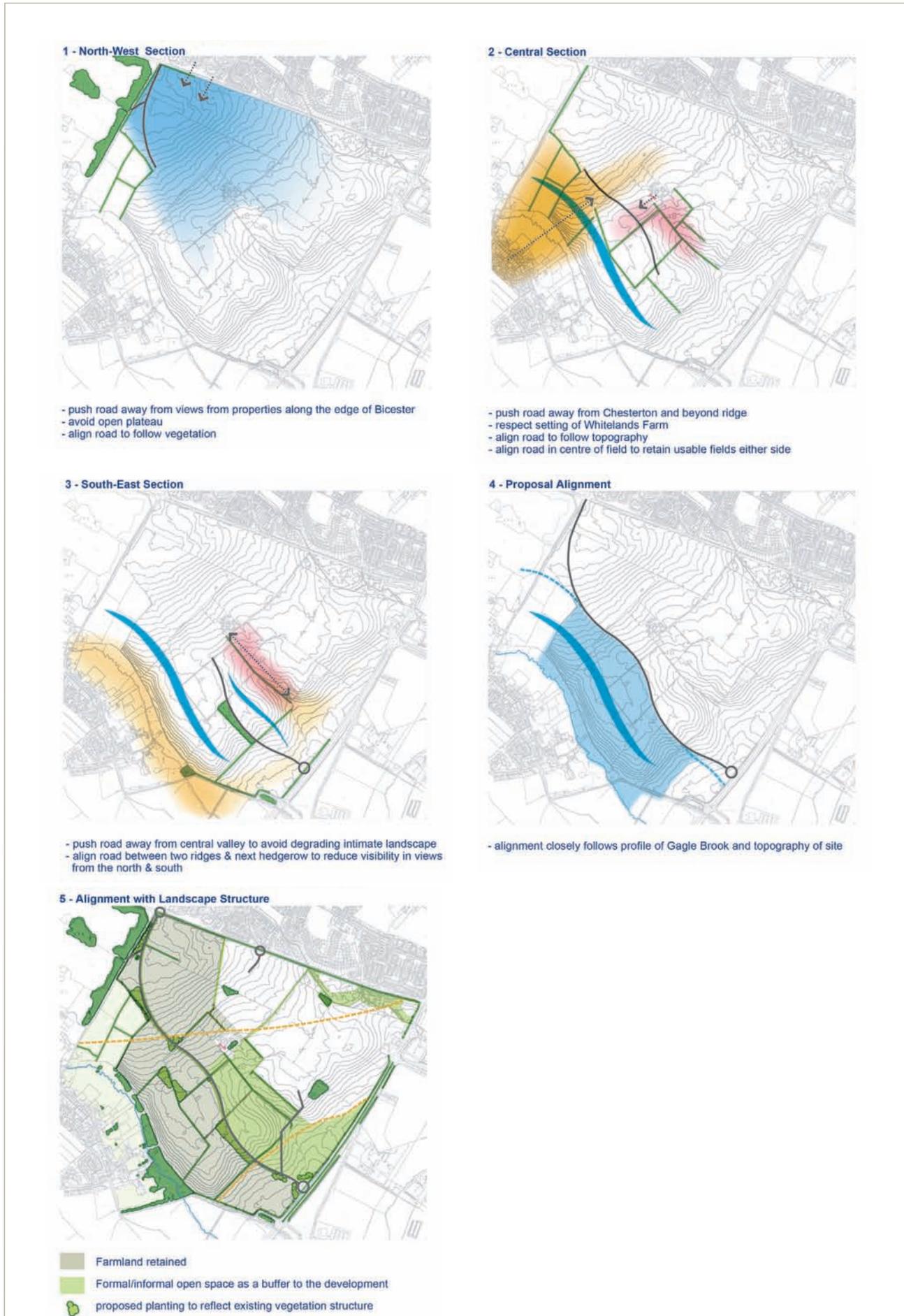


Figure 3.5 Rationale for perimeter road alignment

3.53 The proposed strategy for buses involves the diversion of the 22/23 services through the site, passing through the local centre to the A41 Oxford Road. Bus stops will be provided at appropriate points, including the local centre.

3.54 Easy cycle and pedestrian movement through the site is key to achieving a more sustainable form development. The routes for cyclist and pedestrians have been carefully considered in relation to the distribution of uses proposed, and to likely desire lines.

3.55 The development will retain the existing public footpaths that cross the site in accordance with unadopted Policy R4. This will be done in a positive way, with development designed to overlook the route as much as possible, thereby ensuring security by design. The development will also open up new 'green routes' that link open spaces, watercourses and woodland areas. This will provide attractive leisure routes through the areas and will complement the street network, but not replace it.

3.56 Secure cycle parking, in accordance with unadopted Policy TR9, will be incorporated in a convenient location within the development to encourage people to cycle rather than drive. Cycle lanes will be provided on busier streets along key desire lines. Segregated cycle routes will also be provided for leisure use.

3.57 Parking for vehicles will be provided in accordance with Policy TR11. In respect of the affordable housing, reduced parking may be provided, in light of studies that show that car ownership of occupiers is generally lower than that for privately-owned dwellings. Lower parking provision may also be appropriate in areas that lie close to public transport routes. A flexible approach is therefore likely to be appropriate when detailed proposals are brought forward.

Beyond the site

3.58 The transport proposals and access strategy have taken great care to limit the impact on local residents in Bicester and Chesterton. It is known that commuters drive through Chesterton as part of a rat-run, but the application proposals seek to limit future rat-running as follows:

- The new roundabout at the junction of the A4095, Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane will not have a direct link to the A4095, but will direct traffic down the new link road. As the link road will provide a quicker and more direct route, it is considered that this will help reduce rat-running through the village
- The slip roads on and off the A41 to the village will be removed. Access to Chesterton will be off the new roundabout westwards via the link road or eastwards via the Roman Road and the over-bridge. Again, as the new link road will be quicker and more direct, it is considered this will help reduce rat-running through the village
- Countryside is willing, through the provisions of the legal agreement, to monitor traffic in Chesterton for a negotiated period of time to evaluate whether the new measures have reduced rat-running. If there has not been a reduction, Countryside will contribute to additional measures, that will be agreed and discussed with the Parish Council and the highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- 3.59 Extensive archaeological site investigation has taken place on this site with the full agreement of the County Archaeologist. Two Bronze Age barrows have been found on site, and it has been agreed with the County Archaeologist that these barrows should remain intact and undisturbed with a 50 metre no-build protection zone around them. These barrows have been incorporated within the playing fields area of the proposed primary school with the agreement of the County Archaeologist.
- 3.60 Chapter 5 and appendix 2 of the ES set out the full archaeological site investigation results and the agreed mitigation strategy.

Ecology and natural heritage

- 3.61 The site is not affected by any statutory nature conservation designations, although there are records of a small number of protected species, including common pipistrelle bats and badgers using the site. Fields surveys of the site suggest that the majority of the site is of limited interest.
- 3.62 There is evidence to suggest that parts of the site, including the farm land and some of the mature trees, may be used by bats. Great crested newts are known to inhabit breeding ponds around Bicester. There are no breeding ponds on site and no great crested newts have been found on the site. There is some evidence of badger activity on the site although no setts have been found within the site. There is no evidence of current water vole activity along Pingle Brook.
- 3.63 Proposed mitigation measures for natural heritage meet the legal requirements for protected species and seek to support the relevant policies within the Cherwell Local Plan and objectives of the Oxfordshire BAP and Cherwell BAP. The main areas for mitigation or ecology enhancement are proposed within informal open space areas. These are situated in the north-east of the site along Pingle Brook, south-east of Whitelands Farm and on the eastern boundary around the larger balancing pond.

- 3.64 The following specific mitigation measures are proposed:
 - water vole habitat created along Pingle Brook and balancing ponds
 - common reptiles to be translocated if necessary and habitat improvement in informal open space
 - small blue butterfly habitat created on translocated calcareous grassland
 - a net increase in foraging habitat and potential roosts for bats
 - an increase in foraging and nesting habitat for farmland birds (song thrush, bullfinch, reed bunting).
 - net increase in the amount of hedgerow within the site

3.65 There will be a small number of adverse effects all of moderate or slight significance. These include some loss of established species-rich hedges, the loss of some foraging habitat for badgers and a slightly increased risk of road casualties together with the loss of foraging and nesting habitat of farmland birds (yellowhammer and skylark).



Land outside the application boundary

- 3.66 Approximately 74 hectares of land remaining within the ownership of Countryside is outside the application boundary. This land is notated by a blue line on the master plan, and includes Whitelands Farm. This land will remain in agricultural use, in accordance with paragraph 6.10 of the approved Design and Development Framework document. An agricultural viability report has been submitted in support of these proposals to show a farm of this size, which is larger than the average UK farm, is viable.
- 3.67 Access to Whitelands Farm house and building complex will continue along the existing access from Middleton Stoney Road, until the spine road through the development is constructed. At that point, access to the building complex will be via the spine road from Middleton Stoney Road and then down the existing access. The detail of how this will be accommodated will be considered as a reserved matter as part of the design of the greenway.
- 3.68 Access to the remaining agricultural land to the north of the proposed perimeter road will be directly from Whitelands Farm, as it is at present. Access to agricultural land south of the proposed perimeter road will be from the existing farm access on Chesterton Road and a new proposed access off the perimeter road indicated on the master plan near the northern public right of way, entitled on the key as 'new access to existing agricultural land'. The detail of this is reserved for future consideration.
- 3.69 The land to the south of the proposed perimeter road forms part of an important area of open land. This land, along with the proposed open space to the north of the perimeter road, will provide a significant buffer between Chesterton and the new development. With the exception of the perimeter road, the main built development will be further away, at least 0.8km or half a mile, from Chesterton than proposed by Cherwell District Council in its unadopted local plan. A comparison between the two plans is set out in Section 5.

- 3.70 The open land to the south of the proposed road will help preserve the setting of Chesterton village and its conservation area, and limit views of the proposed development. This is in accordance with unadopted policies EN32, EN34 and D3.
- 3.71 If the park and ride can be justified by Oxfordshire County Council, a small area of land adjacent to the A41 will be provided for this use, under the terms of a legal agreement which is yet to be negotiated. It will be for Oxfordshire County Council to design an appropriate proposal for this use, and for Cherwell District Council to assess its environmental impacts through a planning application.

Phasing of housing development

- 3.72 A phasing programme has been developed to set out the estimated build rates for the residential development. It has been assumed that construction will commence in 2007 and extend until 2014 as set out below.
- 3.73 Construction will begin for the initial residential area off Middleton Stoney Road and off the new access off the A41 and will continue in phases as shown in the phasing plan at Figure 3.6.

Year	Number of units delivered by March of that year
2006	Outline consent granted
2007	Pre-commencement conditions discharged and submission of first phase reserved matters. Infrastructure and house building commenced
2008	100 units
2009	275 units
2010	525 units
2011	775 units
2012	1025 units
2013	1300 units
2014	1585 units