

Planning obligation contributions

3.74 Discussions have begun between Countryside and Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to determine the contributions that will be required as a result of the south west Bicester development.

3.75 Policy H13 of the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan outlines a number of required contributions for the whole of the urban extension, including over 16 hectares of employment land to the east of the A41.

3.76 Countryside is willing to enter into relevant legal agreements to provide contributions for its part of the urban extension, provided that they satisfy the tests set out in Circular 05/2005, which are as follows:

- (i) relevant to planning
- (ii) necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- (iii) directly related to the proposed development
- (iv) fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- (v) reasonable in all other respects.

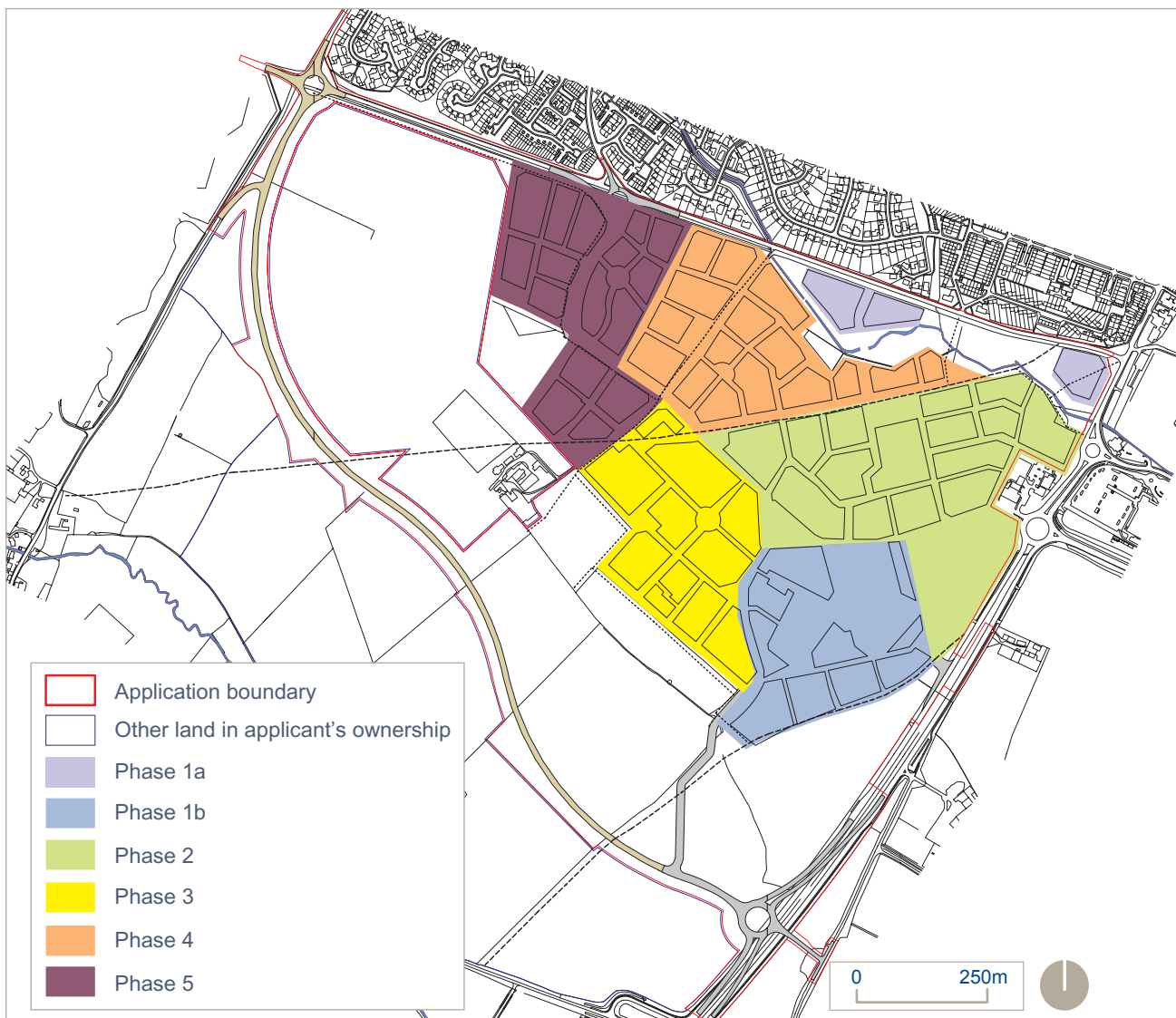


Figure 3.6 Phasing plan



4 General development principles

Sustainable development

- 4.1 Sustainable development is a key principle underpinning these proposals. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.
- 4.2 The government originally set out its four aims for sustainable development in its 1999 strategy. These are:
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
 - effective protection of the environment
 - the prudent use of natural resources
 - the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 4.3 For this development these aims are pursued in an integrated way to create an innovative and sustainable community that promotes social inclusion, a just society and personal well being, in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise resource and energy use.

Inclusive community

- 4.4 The government is committed to developing inclusive communities that are strong, vibrant and generate community cohesion. PPS1 identifies a number of aspects that contribute to the creation of an inclusive community. New development must ensure that the impact on the social fabric of existing communities is fully considered and taken into account. Countryside has carefully considered the impact of the development on residents on Middleton Stoney Road, the rest of Bicester and in Chesterton. The proposals will:
- provide a perimeter road that will complete the ring road around Bicester, helping to ease traffic congestion by the Retail Outlet Village and Tesco, and in the town centre

- reduce the traffic flow along Middleton Stoney Road
 - have a minimal impact on residents of Chesterton, as the development is some distance north of the village. The road and development have been carefully located within the landscape and in relation to sensitive views from the village. Additional landscaping is proposed beyond the area of the planning application whilst within the proposed development, landscaping and building heights will be controlled to respond to the rural edge
 - preserve Chesterton's conservation area with the safeguarding of agricultural land to the north, the location of the perimeter road within the landscape and the provision of open space further north
 - reduce rat-running through Chesterton, as the roads have been deliberately designed to make it more difficult for commuters to travel through the village
- 4.5 Communities need to be safe, healthy, attractive and have a good sense of place. Countryside has designed this proposal to address and encompass these attributes, although much of it will come through in the detail of reserved matters.

Public involvement

- 4.6 Enabling communities to engage in decisions that affect them promotes stewardship, a sense of ownership and develops community cohesion.
- a series of community involvement events took place in the summer 2005, culminating in the production of the Design and Development Framework document. See Section 6 of this statement for more information
 - further consultation will also take place within the planning application consultation period through public exhibitions, leaflets and contact with stakeholder groups.

Meeting housing need

- 4.7 The residential development of 1,585 homes will provide:
- much needed market and affordable homes in Bicester; to help Cherwell District Council fulfil its structure plan housing allocation requirements
 - a mix of homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes - from flats and small homes for first time buyers, family homes of various sizes, through to homes suitable for older or disabled people
 - 30% affordable units providing some homes for rent and some for shared ownership
 - A community that has a good social mix and will avoid the creation of housing areas of similar characteristics.
- 4.8 Such communities enhance sustainability by adding variety, diversity and richness, and strengthen sense of place, identity and community cohesion. The development will, importantly, comprise a mixture of affordable and open market dwellings at a variety of densities. As such, the development provides a significant opportunity for Cherwell District Council to meet its housing need, and provide affordable housing that gives all social groups an opportunity to live in a decent home.

Identity and character

- 4.9 The site provides an opportunity to create a development with a unique identity and sense of place that respects the past, whilst creating a high quality scheme for future generations. This relation of the development with the past was an important aspect that resulted from the public consultation undertaken in summer 2005 for the Design and Development Framework. Consultees felt it was important to retain the farm buildings, provide a landscaped avenue to the east and move the perimeter road away from the buildings to provide a proper setting from the south. The proposals reflect these concerns and will:
- maintain links with the rural past by respecting and enhancing the existing farmhouse and farm complex, at Whitelands Farm
 - provide a landscaped avenue approach to the east of the buildings

- provide a landscape setting to the south by locating the perimeter road further south
- limit the impact of the perimeter road on the farm buildings by locating it within the landscape, and reducing the speed of the road.

- 4.10 In order to create a coherent and sensitive development, the colour and type of materials utilised in the buildings and street surfaces will be controlled appropriately. This will be stipulated later on in the planning process when the details are considered.

Accessibility

- 4.11 Enabling safe access for all people to facilities and services is a vital part of achieving a sustainable and inclusive community. Generating access for the mobility-impaired is integral to the accessibility strategy for the site. It is proposed that:
- there will be a well-connected layout that will encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport
 - all houses will be within 400m (five minutes' walk) of a bus route. This philosophy will be continued into the detailed proposals later on in the process.

Supporting an ageing population

- 4.12 Demographic changes indicate that developments need to take account of an ageing population. People are living longer and are remaining healthier, but this will present a growing demand for additional health and social support in the future. As many pensioners live alone and remain single, the scheme will:
- provide a number of suitably-sized units that will be adaptable, on request, to cater for the needs of the elderly and the mobility-impaired
 - provide a nursing home in the north-east corner of the site.

Climate change

- 4.13 Climate change is high on the political agenda. Drafted in Kyoto, Japan in 1997 and international law since 2002, the Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement which legally binds all countries that sign up to it to reduce man-made emissions. As part of the agreement, the UK is committed to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases by 12.5% by 2012. The government's response to Kyoto and climate change is underpinned by the Energy White Paper, which contains the ambitious goal of reducing the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. It aims to promote energy efficiency and a growth in the use of renewable energy.
- 4.14 The housing development sector is a significant contributor of carbon emissions, and the government welcomes action by businesses to implement cost effective measures that will cut greenhouse gas emissions as part of a lower carbon economy. Countryside has a good environmental record and will aim to reduce carbon emissions whilst ensuring that a healthy and competitive business base can be maintained.

Energy efficiency

- 4.15 Sustainable building is an important part of creating a sustainable development. Careful design and materials selection can improve the sustainability of the built development. Sustainable buildings are attractive, usable and durable and have a low environmental impact.
- 4.16 Where possible, buildings will be orientated to maximise passive solar gain and natural ventilation. Individual dwellings will achieve a significant improvement on the England and Wales 2002 Building Regulations regarding energy efficiency, in

accordance with Building Research Establishment (BRE) good practice. This philosophy will be continued into the detail, at the reserved matters stage.

Adaptability and durability

- 4.17 Creating buildings that can meet different needs over time and that minimise the use of resources improves sustainability by enhancing the longevity of the scheme. The proposed development will provide some housing which can meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, for example by ensuring that walls and ceilings allow for supports/lifts to be added into designated properties on request. Residential units will be adaptable to accommodate retrofitting of technology. Dwellings will be easily capable of routine inspection, repair, maintenance and renewal. These aspects will be continued at the reserved matters stage.

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)

- 4.18 The government encourages the use of SUDS within new development and drainage strategies that take into account flood risk as a result of climate change. A SUDS approach has the benefit of recharging groundwater on site, rather than draining water away in pipes and potentially creating a flood risk elsewhere.
- 4.19 Sustainable urban drainage systems will be applied over the development area where it is practicable to do so. Attenuation will be provided through ponds located next to Pingle Brook and to the south of the site. The rate of discharge will be agreed with the Environment Agency to ensure no increase in run-off from current levels. Greater ecological interest and biodiversity will result from this approach.



Balancing pond



Place making

- 4.20 The concept of the master plan, shown in Figure 3.1, is to create a high quality sustainable environment set within, and relating to, its rural landscape, which will provide a balance of homes, jobs, community and leisure facilities, and be well linked to Bicester. This will be achieved through:
- locating the various uses sensitively in relation to the surrounding environment
 - the careful location and juxtaposition of different uses
 - the siting, scale and massing of buildings
 - optimising connections to the town
 - the protection of watercourses, woodlands, hedgerows and trees
 - the creation of new green spaces to encourage biodiversity.
- 4.21 The general layout ensures that the urban form is compact, of a density that makes the most efficient use of the site and will optimise quality of life for local people. A well connected layout is proposed that will encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Making the best use of land

- 4.22 PPG3 seeks the prudent use of resources by ensuring that housing sites are developed efficiently, in a way that respects future generations. Not all development can be built on previously developed land, but urban extensions that relate well to the town provide the next best option.

- 4.23 The concept of the master plan, shown in Figure 3.1, is to make the best use of the land, whilst protecting the sensitive landscape and ecological elements of the site, and making good connections to Bicester. The proposal will deliver a development of sufficient size, scale and density with the right layout to support the amenities required within the neighbourhood and minimises the use of resources, including land.

- 4.24 Densities will vary across the site, with higher densities around the local centre and the main bus route, and lower densities on those parts of the site adjoining the countryside. The densities will comply with existing and emerging government guidance. This will help provide a critical mass of people to support local facilities, and will enable the best use of previously developed land, whilst ensuring that the environmental capacity of the site is not breached.

Sustainable urban form

- 4.25 PPS1 considers that good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places that contribute positively to making places better for people. The proposed development will be designed appropriate to its context, creating a local character of its own, whilst relating to its surroundings.
- 4.26 The development will be designed to provide different character areas. Each will create different urban experiences for those who live, work and visit the development. This will be a matter for the more detailed reserved matters planning process.
- 4.27 A key focal point will be provided in the centre of the site. The local centre will be a busy and vibrant and will act as the hub of the development and will provide services and facilities for the new and existing community.

Range of amenities

- 4.28 The local centre will occupy approximately 1.6 hectares. This area will include shops and local business opportunities, for such uses as newsagents, food takeaways, florists, dentist, chiropractor and hairdressers. The form and number of these units will be determined by the market and will be subject to reserved matters. The emphasis will be on high quality and providing for the needs of residents.
- 4.29 Provision has also been made for a community centre, a pub/restaurant and a children’s day nursery. Living over the shop/office will be encouraged to promote natural surveillance and to give the area some vibrancy outside shopping hours. The design of this area will pay particular attention to designing out crime.
- 4.30 The proposal will also provide a wide variety of other uses as set out in Section 3 of this statement.

Integrating communities

- 4.31 New and existing residents will benefit from the provision of a range of market and affordable housing, a possible new hospital, new jobs, new schools, community buildings, local services and facilities and a large amount of sports provision within the new development.

Enterprise and education

- 4.32 PPS1 promotes a strong, stable and productive economy that brings jobs and prosperity to all. Residential developments should therefore ensure they provide infrastructure and services which are conducive to stimulating enterprise and life long learning.
- 4.33 The proposal offers many different types of enterprise and education opportunities within the site, with the provision of new offices, industrial units and the school sites. The site is also well linked to Bicester town centre and the strategic employment area to the east of the A41.

Employment opportunities

- 4.34 The proposed development will provide a significant number and large variety of jobs on site that will help create a balanced and sustainable community, as shown in the table below. In addition there will be a number of other jobs created such as childminders, window cleaners, domestic cleaners and gardeners.
- 4.35 There are and will be many different employment opportunities within easy walking and cycling distance of the proposed development, at the proposed strategic employment site to the east of the A41, Bicester Village Retail Park and Tesco situated immediately to the north east of the site, as well as all the opportunities the town centre has to offer. Employment opportunities further afield can be accessed to the north east of the site from the railway station, which provides rail services to the regional hub of Oxford.

Education

- 4.36 Land has been reserved for a secondary school. The development of 1585 dwellings alone does not generate enough demand for a secondary school. The usual threshold is at least 6000 homes. However, the County Council has said that a secondary school is required for the children generated from this development, Upper Heyford and future development in Bicester. Countryside has considered it prudent, at this stage, to safeguard a site for a secondary school.
- 4.37 The proposed development generates the need for a primary school, and this will be provided next to the local centre. Oxfordshire County Council has also requested that a site for a second smaller primary school be provided. Countryside has, again, considered it prudent, at this stage, to safeguard a site for a second primary school.



Transport and movement

4.38 The site already benefits from excellent road, public transport, cyclist and pedestrian access to the existing employment, retail, educational and leisure facilities in Bicester.

Car use

4.39 The proposed transport infrastructure within the development will be designed to benefit journeys made by travel modes other than the private car. The proposals will ensure convenience for pedestrians and cyclists and will be designed to encourage use of public transport use. Both measures should restrain car traffic generated by this development.

Buses

4.40 The area surrounding the site is currently well served by bus routes. The proposed development will enhance bus services to future residents by delivering a road network capable of accommodating bus routes through the site, allowing residents good public transport links to Bicester and Oxford. The objective is for all dwellings to be located within 400 metres of a bus route.

Rail

4.41 The railway station provides many opportunities for the site in terms of promoting the use of public transport and reducing the need to travel by car. The station is located only a short distance away, and will be accessible by walking or cycling, through integration of new footpaths and cyclepaths.

Footways and cyclepaths

4.42 A network of footways and cyclepaths will be provided through the developed area and the open space to allow safe and convenient pedestrian movements both within the site and linking to the wider network for new and existing residents. A green corridor approach through the site will be provided for pedestrians and cyclists.



Public transport

Environmental impact

4.43 As the site has been farmed for many years, there is little biodiversity on site. The main area of interest is around Pingle Brook. The mosaic of linked green spaces that will be created throughout the proposal will provide a variety of habitats, which will support a greater number of species, increasing the area's biodiversity.

Environmental impact assessment

4.44 The proposal has been subject to EIA and an environmental statement has been submitted in support of the proposals. The environmental statement should be read in conjunction with this statement. The non-technical summary sets out the key aspects of the assessment work and the mitigation proposals. It reviews the impact of the proposal on cultural heritage; hydrology and water quality; land use; landscape and visual effects; noise and vibration; social and community effects; traffic and transport; air quality; ground conditions and contamination; natural heritage and waste. The proposal includes mitigation measures to ensure that the development will not have any significant adverse effect on the environment.

EcoHomes

4.45 Building quality is an important component of creating a sustainable development. EcoHomes is a set of criteria created by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) for assessing the environmental quality of housing developments. EcoHomes balances environmental performance with the need for a high quality of life, and a safe and healthy internal environment. Seven issues are addressed: energy, water, pollution, materials, transport, ecology and land use. Countryside will seek to achieve at least EcoHomes 'good' with an aspiration over the life of the development to achieve 'very good'.

Recycling

4.46 Recycling is an important way for renewing our supply of natural resources. The proposed scheme will encourage a community committed to recycling. This will be considered at the more detailed planning stage.



A Countryside housing scheme

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Design principles

4.47 The Design and Development Framework has been approved by Cherwell District Council and is a 'framework for the development of land south west of Bicester at Whitelands Farm'. It takes forward the policy objectives set out in the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan.

4.48 It is considered that these proposals for the new quarter of Bicester meets the vision set out in the Framework by creating a place that will be:

- distinctive
- connected
- sensitive
- democratic
- balanced
- timeless

4.49 The Design and Access Statement, accompanying this application, takes forward the Framework and sets out how the master plan has been formulated.

4



Public open space

Land use	Standard/assumption	Ratio of jobs to floorspace	Total no. of jobs (full-time equivalent)
Local centre	Retail – 930 sq gross food store - 5 units of 153 sqm = 765sqm		unknown
	Nursery – 175 sqm gross		unknown
	Pub – 400 sqm gross		unknown
Schools - Primary	1 of 2.22 ha } 630 pupils)		57 ¹
- Secondary	1 of 1.31 ha } 650 students		58 ¹
Health village	Community hospital 3 GP Surgery Medical centre (680 sqm) Diagnostic clinic (390 sqm) 80 bed nursing home		unknown 8.5 ² 26 ² 15 ² 80 ²
Hotel	100 bed (3*)	1 per 2 bedrooms	50 ³
Employment – a variety of opportunities	1000sqm gross of B1 offices in local centre	1 per 19 sqm	52 ³
2 hectares of B1 and B2	15000 sqm B1 (offices, R&D, studios)	1 per 19 sqm	790 ³
	5000 sqm of B2, general industrial units, including urban hives	1 per 36 sqm	139 ³
Construction of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 on perimeter road • 200 residential construction • 45 for each non-residential building • 50 skilled or semi skilled per developer 		320 ⁴
TOTAL			1595.5

Sources:

- 1 Education consultant
- 2 Medical centre developers
- 3 Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note, Dec 2004, ODPM
- 4 Countryside Properties, from experience on other sites

