

## 5 Planning policy

### Introduction

5.1 The development proposals have been developed in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance. This section demonstrates how the proposed development complies with relevant policy and guidance, in particular, policies contained in the development plan.

### National planning policy

#### *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering sustainable communities*

5.2 PPS1 sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Policies of PPS1 must be taken into account in the preparation of plans forming part of the development plan and may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

5.3 PPS1 begins by discussing the importance of sustainable development:

*‘Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations...’ (para 3)*

5.4 Planning is expected to facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- *“making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives;*
- *contributing to sustainable economic development;*

- *protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;*
- *ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and*
- *ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.” (para 5)*

5.5 In line with this PPS1 promotes a plan-led system which seeks to encourage integrated, mixed-use communities (paragraphs 14-16 and 27ii) with access to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure, community facilities, open space, sport and recreation (paragraph 27v), whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. The proposals take account of these requirements, providing for a variety of uses on site that are integrated into their surroundings, facilitate development of the rest of the urban extension and minimise impacts on the environment.

5.6 In order to facilitate the creation of such communities, planning authorities are expected to bring forward sufficient land in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing and other types of development. New development must be in locations that ensure that everyone can have access to facilities by a variety of means of transport, other than the car. The allocation of South West Bicester in the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan (NSCLP) as part of the urban extension is intended to meet the needs of Bicester over the next decade. This application is intended to bring this to fruition, in a sustainable way.

5.7 PPS1 recognises the importance of good design in the achievement of sustainable development and good planning. Paragraphs 33 and 35 state that:

*“Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.”*

*“Good design should:*

- *Address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;*
- *Be integrated into existing urban form and the natural and built environments;*
- *Be an integral part of the process ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;*
- *Create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and,*
- *Consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.”*

5.8 Due to the size of this site and its potential to act as a gateway to Bicester, particular attention has been paid to design and the master planning of the development at this outline stage. This is reflected in the Design and Development Framework and the Design and Access Statement accompanying this application.

5.9 PPS1 introduces great emphasis on community involvement in planning. The development of the proposals for the South West Bicester site has been the subject of a series of public consultation exercises, outlined in Section 6 of this document.

***Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing***

5.10 PPG3 confirms that local planning authorities should plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, providing sufficient housing land and creating more sustainable patterns of development. The government’s objective set out in PPG3 is primarily that everyone has the right to a decent home.

5.11 Paragraph 21 establishes the need to adopt a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing development, with priority given to the re-use of previously developed land in urban areas. PPG3 does, however, recognise that planned extensions to urban areas are likely to prove the next most sustainable option, especially where it is possible to utilise existing physical and social infrastructure, there is good access to public transport (or where good public transport provision can be planned into the development), and there is good access to jobs, schools, shopping and leisure facilities.

5.12 As part of a wider urban extension, the South West Bicester site complies with this forward thinking approach. It creates an opportunity to accommodate development at Bicester that cannot be accommodated within the town itself, in a sustainable manner and in compliance with national policy. As a new quarter to the town with good links to the existing urban area, providing facilities and services to support residential development, it is the most sustainable means of providing additional development in this area, as recognised by the non-statutory local plan.

- 5.13 PPG 3 continues to emphasise the need to create more sustainable environments which:
- are linked to public transport
  - provide mixed-use development
  - provide a greener residential environment
  - have a greater emphasis on quality and designing places for people
  - make the most efficient use of land.

These key principles have been taken into account in developing these proposals. Their application is outlined in this supporting statement.

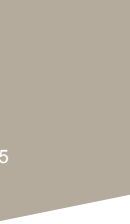
- 5.14 PPG3 recognises the importance of achieving good design and layout within new residential developments. Paragraphs 54 to 56 stress the importance of not viewing new housing developments in isolation; consideration of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. This is supported by paragraphs 52 and 53 noting that well designed layouts can not only contribute to the greening of residential areas, but towards the energy efficiency of new developments.
- 5.15 This issue has been an important consideration throughout the development of proposals and is reflected within the design analysis and final proposals, where the site’s wider context and landscape have influenced the final master plan. A sensitive, integrated scheme has been developed considering all constraints and opportunities, so as to enhance, not detract from the quality of the local environment.

**Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing**

- 5.16 A draft version of PPS3 was published during December 2005 for consultation. This document builds upon much of the information set out above, however, in relation to this project, brings in two additional considerations. The first is set out in paragraph 41 below.

*“When considering planning applications for housing which are received in advance of the relevant development plan document being reviewed (particularly the first development plan document), local planning authorities should take into account the policies in this statement as material considerations, as they may carry greater weight than the relevant policies in the development plan. In these circumstances or for sites not allocated in the development plan, local planning authorities should consider favourably planning applications for housing development:*

- (a) *where there is evidence of an imbalance between housing demand and supply, having regard to affordability issues and housing market conditions;*
- (b) *if the site is suitable for housing development (including land allocated or previously used for industrial or commercial use, which is no longer needed for that use 14); and*
- (c) *the planning proposal makes an efficient use of land, offers a good housing mix, is of high quality design and does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment.”*



5.17 This paragraph sets out criteria with which development proposals on the South West Bicester site should conform. PPS3 should be taken into account when determining planning applications where there is no adopted plan in place. Secondly, paragraph 42 states that applications should not be refused on the grounds that they may prejudice preparation of development plans.

*“Local planning authorities should not refuse applications for planning permission simply on the grounds that the preparation or review of site allocation development plan documents would be prejudiced. However, local planning authorities should not grant applications for planning permission where it can be shown that to do so would clearly discourage the development of allocated developable brownfield sites.”*

**Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and geological conservation**

5.18 PPS 9 seeks to promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced and the diversity of England’s wildlife and geology is conserved, enhanced and restored. Development should contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance by enhancing biodiversity (predominantly within green spaces) and ensuring that it takes account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

5.19 To date no protected species have been identified on the site despite significant survey work. There are no nature conservation designations or areas of significance. However, a number of sensitive areas have been identified on the site (including copses, hedgerows and streams) and the master plan has sought to accommodate and incorporate these, minimising conflicts and enhancing existing assets through increased access and management, and providing increased opportunities for biodiversity.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport**

5.20 The objectives of PPG13 are: *“to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to:*

- *Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;*
- *Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and,*
- *Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.”* (para. 4)

5.21 PPG13 re-emphasises the aim of PPG3 to provide housing in sustainable locations, where there are opportunities to exploit and deliver accessibility to jobs, services and leisure facilities, by means other than the private car. Paragraph 20 advocates the location of day-to-day facilities such as primary schools, health centres and convenience shops near to the people that they serve. The creation of mixed-use development, including housing, is further encouraged at paragraph 30, which acknowledges that such developments can provide *“very significant benefits”* in terms of promoting vitality and diversity and in promoting walking as a primary mode of travel.

5.22 The South West Bicester development proposals have been designed to optimise non-car uses and integrate a variety of means of transport, other than the private car. It will provide access to public transport through bus stops in the neighbourhood centre and along the principal routes that link to key destinations within the town. Walking and cycling will also be important forms of transport to a range of ‘day to day’ facilities provided on site, together with links to the town centre and adjacent areas. Facilities will be located on a main bus route providing easy access from both within and outside the development by a variety of transport modes.

5.23 A detailed Transport Assessment has been undertaken (as required in paragraph 29) aiding the development of appropriate and successful proposals for the road network running through the site and linking to the existing network. This information is detailed in Section 7.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 16:  
Archaeology and planning**

- 5.24 PPG16 states that archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource. Accordingly, where they exist appropriate management is essential to ensure that they survive in good condition. Early consideration of archaeological issues is encouraged to reduce the potential for conflict, with an initial assessment undertaken before a planning application is made.
- 5.25 Countryside is aware of the potential of this site for archaeological remains from earlier work; and considered this aspect very early in the process, in liaison with the County Archaeologist. Site investigation work has been carried out and is reported in full in the ES. The findings to date indicate that the risk from the proposed development would come from the possible damage to any unknown, below ground, archaeological features caused by the construction process.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation**

- 5.26 Where planning permission is granted for new development PPG17 states that local authorities should ensure that provision is made for local sports and recreational facilities, including public open space. The master plan accommodates not only the requisite amount of open space for the proposed development, but also a substantial area of land to address a residual shortfall in Bicester.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 24: Noise**

- 5.27 PPG 24 gives guidance to local authorities on how to use their planning powers to minimise the impacts of noise on new residential development. This guidance introduces the concept of defining potential residential development sites in terms of ‘noise exposure categories’ (NEC).

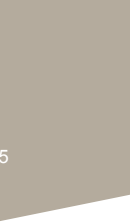
- 5.28 In recognition of the potential impacts of noise as a result of the proposals, a noise assessment has been undertaken and forms part of the ES. This confirms that the site is suitable for residential development, provided that certain mitigation measures are provided during construction. The only permanent noise impact of the proposals is beneficial, as a result of reduced road traffic noise on the A4095. Details of these are contained in the environmental statement.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 25:  
Development and flood risk**

- 5.29 PPG 25 aims to: “reduce the vulnerability of the country to the dangers and damage caused by unmanaged floods contributing to the achievement of a better quality of life and the objectives of sustainable development” (para. 8). It is primarily concerned with reducing the risk of flooding to existing and new development but also recognises that flooding can be affected by increased run-off.
- 5.30 Changes of land use alone can cause adverse effects as a result of increased run-off resulting from an increase in hard surfacing, as outlined in paragraph 40. This application acknowledges the potential impacts of the development of this greenfield site, and seeks to mitigate them, as recommended in paragraph 41 of PPG25. Further details of measures to achieve this are included within the ES.

**Draft Planning Policy Statement 25:  
Development and flood risk and  
flooding direction**

- 5.31 This consultation draft maintains the principles outlined within the existing PPG25 to ensure that development takes account of future possibilities of flooding, taking opportunities to reduce flood risk to communities. This PPS also seeks to ensure that applications in flood risk areas are subject to thorough scrutiny, enabling appropriate, sustainable development to continue.



### The development plan

5.32 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the content of the ‘development plan’ has changed significantly. It now comprises the regional spatial strategy and the local development framework. Neither document has been adopted yet. Transitional arrangements mean that for a period of around three years existing regional planning guidance, structure plans and local plans continue to form part of the development plan. In the context of this planning application the development plan comprises:

- Adopted Regional Planning Guidance 9, March 2001
- Adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, October 2005
- Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 – 2001, November 1996

#### *Regional Planning Guidance 9 – March 2001 with amended chapters 9, 10, 12 and 14*

5.33 RPG 9, adopted 2001, covers the period to 2016. It will be replaced by Regional Spatial Strategy 9 (RSS9) once that is formally adopted by the government (due to be submitted for approval Spring 2006).

5.34 Policy Q1 sets out the guiding principles that should govern urban development or redevelopment, focusing on suitable use of land (having regard to PPG3), design of the urban fabric and protection of the green belt. This is supported by Policy Q2 which emphasises the importance of achieving high quality forms and design within the urban fabric to improve quality of life. The South West Bicester development has been carefully considered in terms of its form and design complying with guidance set out within the Design and Development Framework document.

5.35 Housing policy H2 states that an annual average of 2,430 dwellings will be developed within Oxfordshire up to 2016. Policy H3 goes on to say that the adequacy of this housing provision and distribution will be reviewed regularly in accordance with guidance set out in PPG3 (Housing) and PPG11 (Regional Guidance). This is roughly in accordance with the adopted Structure Plan target however, a more accurate figure may be provided within RSS9 when adopted.

5.36 RPG9 states the government’s intention that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. It states within Policy H4 that this can partly be achieved through the provision of a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of the whole community. The South West Bicester development makes provision for a large mix of dwellings, distributed throughout the development and will incorporate both market and affordable units.

5.37 Policy H5, regarding development on previously developed land, states that when allocating land for development a sequential testing approach should be adopted. The South West Bicester site scores well within this approach; although it is not previously developed land, sustainable urban extensions are the next most appropriate sites for large-scale residential development.

5.38 Policy E5 outlines the importance of protecting existing areas of woodland and the potential to increase these and other areas of potential or established nature conservation areas. The South West Bicester proposal seeks to conserve and develop areas of existing valued landscape and proposes further areas of planting to complement these and enhance the site as a whole. Further information regarding these strategies is contained within the Landscape Strategy and Environmental Statement.

5.39 Policies INF4 and INF6 seek to encourage high standards of energy efficiency in all development and the achievement of the minimum targets for renewable energy. Standards of energy efficiency, subject to economic viability, can be achieved through design, layout and orientation of buildings. Both aspirations have been a consideration when developing proposals for the South West Bicester site and their potential achievement will therefore be as a result of careful design.

5.40 The transport strategy for the region aims to achieve a transport system which progressively reaches standards of the best in north west Europe. The three key methods of achieving this are: promoting management of and investment in the system; rebalancing the structure and use of the transport system in favour of more sustainable modes; and supporting the regional spatial strategy, particularly managing and investing in inter-regional corridors and delivering urban renaissance and sub-regional objectives.

5.41 The South West Bicester development not only provides increased opportunities to reduce the use of the private car, and increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycling, but also invests in the local and regional network surrounding the site, providing infrastructure such as the perimeter road.

***Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016***

5.42 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan was adopted in October 2005. It sets out the County Council's strategy for development and use of land in Oxfordshire to 2016. The plan seeks to concentrate development on the main urban areas, and identifies Bicester as a town where a large number of houses and other development are already planned.

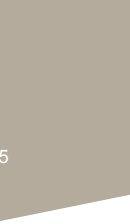
5.43 The general strategy of the Structure Plan is to: *“provide a framework for development to sustain economic prosperity, meet housing and other requirements and guide the investment decisions of a range of organisations for the period to 2016.”* Policy G1 goes on to state that development will be concentrated in areas where a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided, and where the need to travel by private car can be reduced and walking, cycling and use of public transport can be encouraged.

5.44 Policy G1 encourages development to be focused in and around the main urban areas. The creation of the South West Bicester urban extension is therefore in line with the aspirations for development outlined within the plan. Policy G2 seeks to improve the quality and design of development, through consideration of issues such as scale and type of development, layout, design and landscaping, reducing the need to travel and encouraging non-car modes of transport.

5.45 Policy HI, addressing housing distribution, states;

*“Provision will be made for about 37,300 additional dwellings (net) between 1 April 2001 and 31 March 2016. The provision will be distributed as follows:*

<i>Cherwell</i>	<i>9,350</i>
<i>Oxford</i>	<i>6,500</i>
<i>South Oxfordshire</i>	<i>7,500</i>
<i>Vale of White Horse</i>	<i>7,150</i>
<i>West Oxfordshire</i>	<i>6,800</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>37,300”</i>



- 5.46 Bicester is highlighted as one of the main locations for new housing, with about 3,300 dwellings to be provided during the plan period. A countywide assessment of the potential to accommodate housing on previously developed land has been carried out. This resulted in a target that at least 55% of new housing should be built on brownfield sites within urban areas, with the remaining 45% built on other land, including greenfield sites. Policy H2 identifies RAF Heyford as a new settlement providing 1,000 dwellings.
- 5.47 Policy H3 highlights the importance of the design, quality and density of residential developments. It seeks a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare on housing developments, but offers the flexibility to achieve higher densities in areas where it is more appropriate to do so, such as in close proximity to local centres and services hubs, and lower densities in more sensitive locations. The South West Bicester proposals offer this flexibility with the more sensitive southern parts of the site at lower densities (30-35 dwellings per hectare) and higher densities (40-50 dwellings per hectare) around the local centre and closer to the town centre. Average density across the site accords with Policy H3.
- 5.48 Design has become an increasingly important aspect of new developments and Policy H3 requires a high quality of design to be achieved, taking into account of the local character, and the variety of dwellings being offered. The Design and Access Statement details the design quality of the development and the rationale behind design and structure proposed.
- 5.49 The need for affordable housing in the county is an important issue. Policy H4 seeks to ensure that affordable housing is sought through local plans or LDFs, at a level commensurate with the identified need for housing in the district.
- 5.50 In respect of sustainable travel, Policy T1 emphasises meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport whilst balancing demands for ease of traffic movement. Objectives for securing a convenient, reliable and high quality public transport network are set out in Policy T3, whilst those for safe and desirable pedestrian cycle networks are identified in Policy T5. Policy T6 advocates the need to promote and manage principal transport hubs, corridors and projects related to the plan's overall development strategy and regional context, which include the Oxford to Bicester corridor. The location of further park and ride facilities along principal transport corridors to serve Oxford is identified at paragraph 4.13. These schemes are to be investigated in more detail and supported where appropriate.
- 5.51 The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment continues to be a priority in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, with policies concerning landscape character (EN1), biodiversity (EN2), archaeology (EN6), flood risk and surface water drainage (EN9).
- 5.52 Policy R1 encourages local authorities to ensure that where there are opportunities to create new outdoor facilities for countryside recreation, such facilities are appropriate in scale and sensitive to rural locations. Policy R2 goes on to encourage increased and improved access to the countryside, through maintenance and improvement of existing rights of way.



***Cherwell Adopted Local Plan 1996 - 2001***

- 5.53 This plan, although it has now reached the end of its plan period, remains the only statutory adopted plan for Cherwell district. It is out of date and does not accord with some aspects of current government policy, and does not respond to the 1998 or 2005 adopted Structure Plans.
- 5.54 A number of allocations for residential development are identified in the plan (Policy H1 and H8), all of which are virtually complete. These do not include land south west of Bicester.
- 5.55 Policy H5 states that an element of affordable housing will be sought where there is demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local need, where it is economically viable and to meet longer term local needs. Supporting text proposes a target in Bicester of 15% of new dwellings on sites over 1 hectare.
- 5.56 The adopted proposals map shows the north east corner of the South West Bicester site designated for hotel and associated tourism, recreation or leisure-based development. This site is also associated with Policy T4 seeking to facilitate the provision and operation of an efficient public transport system.
- 5.57 Policies TR1, TR2 and TR3 seek to ensure that all new developments make adequate improvements or contributions to improvements to local road networks which are impacted as a result of the proposed development. They seek to minimise conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, with Policy TR4 seeking the provision of effective public transport systems as a genuine alternative to use of the private car.
- 5.58 The plan identifies a deficiency in the provision of formal open space in Bicester but an adequate provision of informal open space. Accordingly Policy R12 normally requires that all new housing developments provide a minimum of 2.43 hectares of public open space per 1000 population, to be provided as amenity open space, children’s play space and sports grounds. Policy R10 provides support for proposals for new or extended sporting and recreation facilities subject to other policies in the plan.
- 5.59 The plan contains a range of environmental policies of relevance to this application in particular Policy C7 (landscape conservation), Policy C14 (trees and landscaping), Policy C26 (archaeology), Policies C30 and C31 (design considerations), ENV3 (noise) and ENV9 (surface water run-off). These have been taken into account in bringing forward these proposals.
- 5.60 Most of these policies, and others, have been taken forward into the unadopted plan. This statement considers the proposals against the unadopted policies as they are more up-to-date, although they do not attract the same amount of weight.

**Other material considerations**

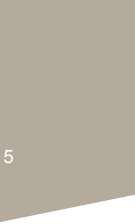
- 5.61 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning application shall be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following section sets out what other documents comprise other material considerations.
- 5.62 Following the introduction of the planning reform through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning authorities are currently undertaking the drafting of a new set of documents: regional spatial strategies (RSS) and local development frameworks (LDF). The South East England Agency (SEERA) has published the Draft South East Plan Part 1, which forms part of the RSS, and is a material consideration in regard to this proposal. Cherwell District Council has yet to start to publish the local development documents that will form the LDF.

***Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East – The Draft South East Plan***

- 5.63 The South East Plan will supersede the structure plan as the strategic planning framework for Cherwell District. The plan is split into two parts, Part 1: Core Regional Policies and Part 2: Sub-regional Details, together representing the vision through to 2026.
- 5.64 The draft RSS was submitted to the Government on 31 March 2006, and published for public consultation.

- 5.65 The draft RSS sets out at Table C3 the proposed annual rates of provision of housing for sub-regions, including counties, within the south east. In respect of Oxfordshire, the rate is 1700 dwellings per annum. It is acknowledged that these figures are provisional, pending the conclusion of work at the sub-regional level and public consultation on district housing figures.
- 5.66 The strategy for the sub-region within which Bicester is located (central Oxfordshire) seeks to capitalise on the sub-region’s dynamic economy, whilst taking account of green belt constraints, as well as improving housing availability and affordability.
- 5.67 Policy CC8 seeks to ensure the developments in and around urban areas, including new urban extensions, are well designed and consistent with the principles of urban renaissance and sustainable development.
- 5.68 Whilst district housing figures are not currently available, Policy H3 gives guidance in respect of the location of housing. It states:  
  
*“In meeting the requirements set out in Policy H1 (District Housing Requirements), creative use should be made of opportunities for housing development within the region’s cities and towns, while recognising the need to provide for other community needs that contribute to the quality of life. Local planning authorities should encourage mixed-use developments where appropriate.”*

- 5.69 This policy draws on principles laid down by PPG3 and further supports the principles behind the South West Bicester proposals. The idea of using urban extensions as a sustainable form of development, will be used to provide for Bicester’s housing need over the plan period. This development will be mixed-use, avoiding a single-tenure neighbourhood and contributing towards community needs in line with Policy H3.
- 5.70 Paragraph 3.1 states that *“the delivery of agreed housing allocations for each district and unitary authority in Policy H1 is essential to the achievement of the overall spatial strategy in the South East Plan”*. Clearly the delivery of the South West Bicester development will assist with this.
- 5.71 Policy H3 follows the sequential approach to the location of housing, but acknowledges that new housing needed to meet district requirements, whether on brownfield or greenfield land, should be in sustainable locations where there is the necessary infrastructure, services and community provision, or it can be provided. It goes on to state that housing developments should be in locations that are served by a range of modes of transport. The South West Bicester proposals provide Bicester with a sustainable quarter that seeks to provide all of the facilities required to form an extended community, integrated with the existing town.
- 5.72 The south east is acknowledged as an area where affordability of housing is a key issue. Accordingly, policy H4 requires LDD to contain policies that deliver a substantial increase in affordable housing.
- 5.73 Housing design and density is also considered important with a regional density target of 40 dwellings per hectare, subject to local variations. In order to make efficient use of land, the site will be developed at an average net density of 35 dwellings per hectare, with higher density (e.g. 40-50 dwellings per hectare) applied where appropriate, such as adjacent to the local centre, along the main public transport spines and close to the town centre. This will allow for areas of lower densities (e.g. 30-35 dwellings per hectare) in out lying areas along the new edge of Bicester.
- 5.74 There are a number of other policies and issues that require consideration. Bicester is within the Flood Zone 3 (PPG25) as shown on Map NRM2 of the RSS. Paragraph 5.7 dealing with flooding and surface water management highlights a number of measures to be implemented as a means of reducing the probability and impact of flooding. The South West Bicester proposals include the implementation of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), which should be considered under Policy NRM1 (Sustainable water resources, ground water and river water quality management).
- 5.75 Policy NRM8 on noise states that measures should be developed at regional and local level to address and reduce noise pollution. One criterion for achieving this is locating new residential developments away from significant sources of noise. The South West Bicester site is well positioned and has no significant noise issues. The main generator of noise is the A41 Oxford Road; residential development will be located away from this boundary with a buffer to shield a significant amount of the noise.



- 5.76 The draft RSS seeks to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy through Policy EN1. This may include LPAs preparing development briefs and/or supplementary planning documents to promote these issues in development design.
- 5.77 Under Policy C4, countryside access and rights of way management, local authorities are encouraged to enhance and promote public rights of way networks, seeking to reduce the use of the private car. The South West Bicester proposals include plans to maintain and enhance access routes for both pedestrian and cyclists within the site and linking the site to the wider area. Together with the layout of the development, this will potentially reduce the use of the private car, increasing the amount of trips taken on foot or bicycle.
- 5.78 Policy BE1, management for an urban renaissance, states that the concentration of development in the region's urban areas will require significant improvements to the urban environment of many areas, thus making them more attractive places to live, work, shop and spend leisure time. This policy requires local authorities and their partners to establish a shared vision, initiate active management programmes and, promote and support built excellence.
- 5.79 As outlined within the Design and Access Statement, a high standard of built form will be developed on the South West Bicester site. In line with policy, a mixed-use development will be achieved providing opportunities for high density residential development where appropriate.
- 5.80 As part of the work being carried out to aid the production of the RSS, Oxfordshire County Council has undertaken a period of consultation on where the 21,000 new homes (2016 to 2026) should go. Most of the housing development will be focused in central Oxfordshire, with around 8,000 homes needing to be built on greenfield land. Both options presented as a part of this consultation include greenfield development in Bicester (either 4,000 in option 1 and 2,000 in option 2).

#### *Unadopted Cherwell District Local Plan*

- 5.81 Cherwell District Council began a review of its adopted local plan in 1998. However, due to the introduction of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations, which come into force in July 2006, the council decided not to proceed with the local plan once it had reached pre-inquiry changes as it would not be able to fulfil the requirements of the SEA Regulations.
- 5.82 Cherwell District Council resolved on 13 December 2004 not to proceed with the local plan, but to approve it for the purposes of development control. The Cherwell Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft incorporating pre-inquiry changes (June 2004), known as the non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan (NSCLP), is the most up to date local plan document, but does not form part of the development plan, as it is not adopted. As this plan did not proceed to inquiry or beyond, it carries little weight, however, it is a material consideration.
- 5.83 The Local Development Framework has not reached a stage where the Council has either formulated new policies or identified which existing policies it intends to take forward. The Core Strategy is expected to be published for public consultation in November 2006 and adopted in 2008. The Bicester and Central Oxfordshire Site Allocations document is programmed for public consultation in August/September 2007 and is expected to be adopted in October 2009.
- 5.84 The unadopted plan acknowledges that there is a need to provide 4,200 new houses between 1996 and 2011 to meet the Oxfordshire Structure Plan requirement, as set out in the 1998 adopted plan, upon which the local plan is based. This is mainly to be achieved through existing allocations at Slade Farm and Bicester Fields Farm, through redevelopment of brownfield sites within the town and the allocation of land to the south west of Bicester as an urban extension. The latter replaces the RAF Bicester site allocated in the adopted local plan.