

South West Bicester

Sustainability assessment

NOVEMBER 2006

Terence O'Rourke


Countryside
Properties
(Bicester) Ltd



South West Bicester

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

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

NOVEMBER 2006

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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd (Countryside) is proposing to develop an area of agricultural land to provide a high quality urban extension to south-west Bicester. The development will include a local centre together with a range of employment, leisure, recreation and education facilities. This represents a significant opportunity to improve the setting of South West Bicester, creating a sustainable community by meeting the objectives of the government's Sustainable Communities Plan. Countryside has submitted an outline planning application to enable the delivery of this new community.
- 1.2 There is a growing realisation that development projects need to be sustainable. In *Best Practice Guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications*, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) recommends that local planning authorities should request a sustainability statement be submitted in support of all planning applications. This should outline the elements of the scheme that address sustainable development issues. In response to this guidance, Terence O'Rourke has been appointed to undertake a Sustainability Assessment of the development proposals. This sustainability report provides a valuable means of demonstrating to the decision-making authority that the scheme itself has been tested against a systematic framework for evaluating sustainability.

Site context & development proposals

- 1.3 The site covers an area of approximately 117.6 ha and consists principally of agricultural land, primarily a mixture of arable land and pasture that is mostly grazed by cattle. The site is located to the south-west of Bicester and is contiguous with the built up residential area. The site is delineated by the Oxford Road (A41) to the east, Middleton Stoney Road (B4030) to the north and the A4095 to the west. The village of Chesterton is located to the south of the site across Gagle Brook (see figure 1).
- 1.4 Whitelands Farm, which includes the farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings, is located to the west of the proposed development area. Whitelands cottages are situated further to the north along a driveway and are in residential use. The site also includes a few small areas of plantation woodland and a number of hedgerows around and on the boundary of the site. There are no sensitive nature conservation or landscape designations on the site.
- 1.5 The residential development immediately to the north is known as Highfields Estate. Further north are a number of neighbourhood centres which provide local retail facilities for local residents. These facilities are located within 400m of the northern area of the site. There are also a number of high quality facilities immediately to the north-east of the site. These include a petrol garage, roadside restaurant, Tesco superstore and the Bicester Village Retail Park further east. Bicester town centre is located approximately 1km to the north-east of the site, offering a range of goods and services.

1.6 Extensive consultation with the planning authorities and local stakeholders has generated a joint vision to develop a vibrant and integrated extension to South West Bicester. The vision is set out in the approved Design and Development Framework document, and Countryside has taken the development forward in this regard, alongside national planning policy. The scheme comprises a number of elements as illustrated in Table 1.1 and illustrated in the master plan (figure 2).

Up to 1,585 dwellings, 30% of which will be affordable
2 ha of employment land to be located in the north east of the site with an additional 1000 sqm of employment space within the local centre
Outdoor playing space including formal outdoor sports, clubhouse and changing facilities, children’s play areas and informal open space
A primary school and land for a second primary school
Land for a secondary school
A local centre including a community centre and land reserved for a children’s day nursery, retail area, a family friendly pub and office space
Land for a health village, which could include a community hospital, GP surgery and a nursing home, and will revert to employment unless taken up
A perimeter road and junction improvements
Access to a potential site for a park and ride (potential site outside application boundary)
Land reserved for a hotel

Table 1.1 The development proposals

Sustainable development

1.7 At the Rio summit in 1992, governments around the world committed to sustainable development. The UK government was the first to produce its national strategy in 1994, with a delivery plan following in 1999 under the title *A Better Quality of Life*. The four central aims of the 1999 strategy were: social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources, and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. A revised strategy for achieving sustainable development, titled *Securing our Future*, was published in March 2005. In addition to identifying the progress that had been achieved to date, and the range of challenges to be addressed in the future, it also set out five guiding principles for the achievement of sustainable development:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- using sound science responsibly.

1.8 Four priorities for action have been identified in order to respond to these objectives, including sustainable consumption and production, natural resource protection and environmental, climate change and energy, and sustainable communities. The Sustainable Communities objective responds to the agenda set out in *Sustainable Communities – building for the future* (ODPM, 2003), and the principles have been reinforced more

recently through *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development* (ODPM, 2005). This document identifies how planning has a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities: communities that will stand the test of time, where people want to live, and which will enable people to meet their aspirations and potential (see Table 1.2).

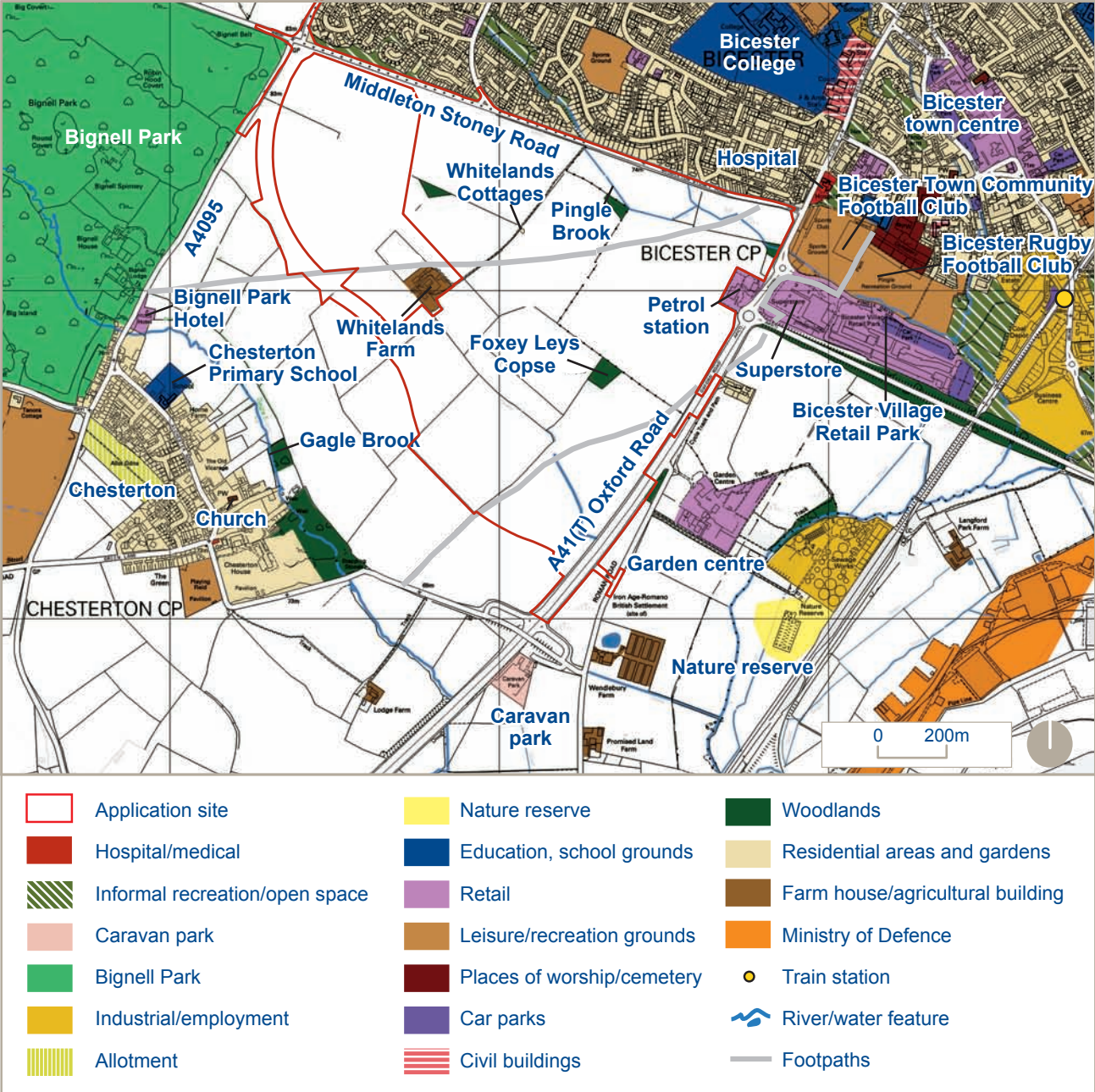


Figure 1 Site characteristics and context

ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities
WELL RUN With effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE Providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment
WELL DESIGNED AND BUILT Featuring a quality built and natural environment
WELL CONNECTED With good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
THRIVING With a flourishing and diverse local economy
WELL SERVED With public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all
FAIR FOR EVERYONE Including those in other communities, now and in the future

Table 1.2 Creating a sustainable community

- 1.9 Recent changes to the legislation of the planning system have placed a duty on regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to ensure the principles of sustainable development are furthered by their respective Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF). To guarantee this, and to accord with the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), planning authorities are required to undertake a sustainability appraisal/assessment of their respective plans.
- 1.10 While applications for development are required to respond, and be in accordance with the policies of these plans, the government is keen to ensure the opportunities for delivering sustainable development are achieved at the local level. As such, applicants are now required, as indicated above, to provide an assessment of how 'sustainable' their scheme is.
- 1.11 No single framework has been developed to assist with this task, although best practice guidance is expected shortly. Some authorities have developed their own "checklists", whilst the Building Research Establishment (BRE) has also created a series of methodologies for assessing certain types of development (e.g. the EcoHomes Assessment for residential-based developments).

- 1.12 To allow for the South West Bicester scheme to be assessed comprehensively, a specific framework has been developed which draws from the policy objectives of the appropriate development plan. The documents comprising the development plan are a primary objective source, due to their statutory status afforded under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The sources of particular objectives are referenced where appropriate, and the relationship between each objective and all relevant development plan documents are summarised at the end of each section. A full schedule of relevant policy is provided in the Appendix. Sustainability objectives rooted in statutory policy must be achieved, but should also be improved upon, where appropriate, to enhance the sustainability of the scheme. The predicted effects of sustainability objectives are assessed against standard sustainability assessment indicators, as follows:
- significant positive effect (++)
 - positive effect (+)
 - neutral (0)
 - negative effect (-)
 - significant negative effect (--)
 - uncertain (?).
- 1.13 Under the new Act, the content of the development plan has changed significantly. It now comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Local Development Framework (LDF). Transitional arrangements mean that, for a period of around three years, existing Structure Plans and Local Plans continue to form part of the development plan. Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) will perform the function of the RSS until The Draft South East Plan is adopted. Therefore, in the context of this planning application the development plan comprises:
- Regional Planning Guidance 9
 - Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016
 - Cherwell Adopted Local Plan 1996 – 2001.
- 1.14 Although the adopted Cherwell Local has reached the end of the plan period, it remains the only statutory adopted plan for the Cherwell district. Cherwell District Council began a review of the adopted Local Plan, but the Council decided not to proceed with the Local Plan once it had reached pre-inquiry changes, in favour of developing the LDF. The application site is allocated for development under Policy H13. However, as this Plan did not proceed to inquiry, it carries little weight but remains a material consideration.
- 1.15 The South East Plan will replace RPG9 and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan as the strategic planning framework for Cherwell District and is a material consideration with regard to this proposal. 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. A draft version of Part 1 was submitted to Government in July 2005. A draft version of Part 2 is expected in spring 2006.

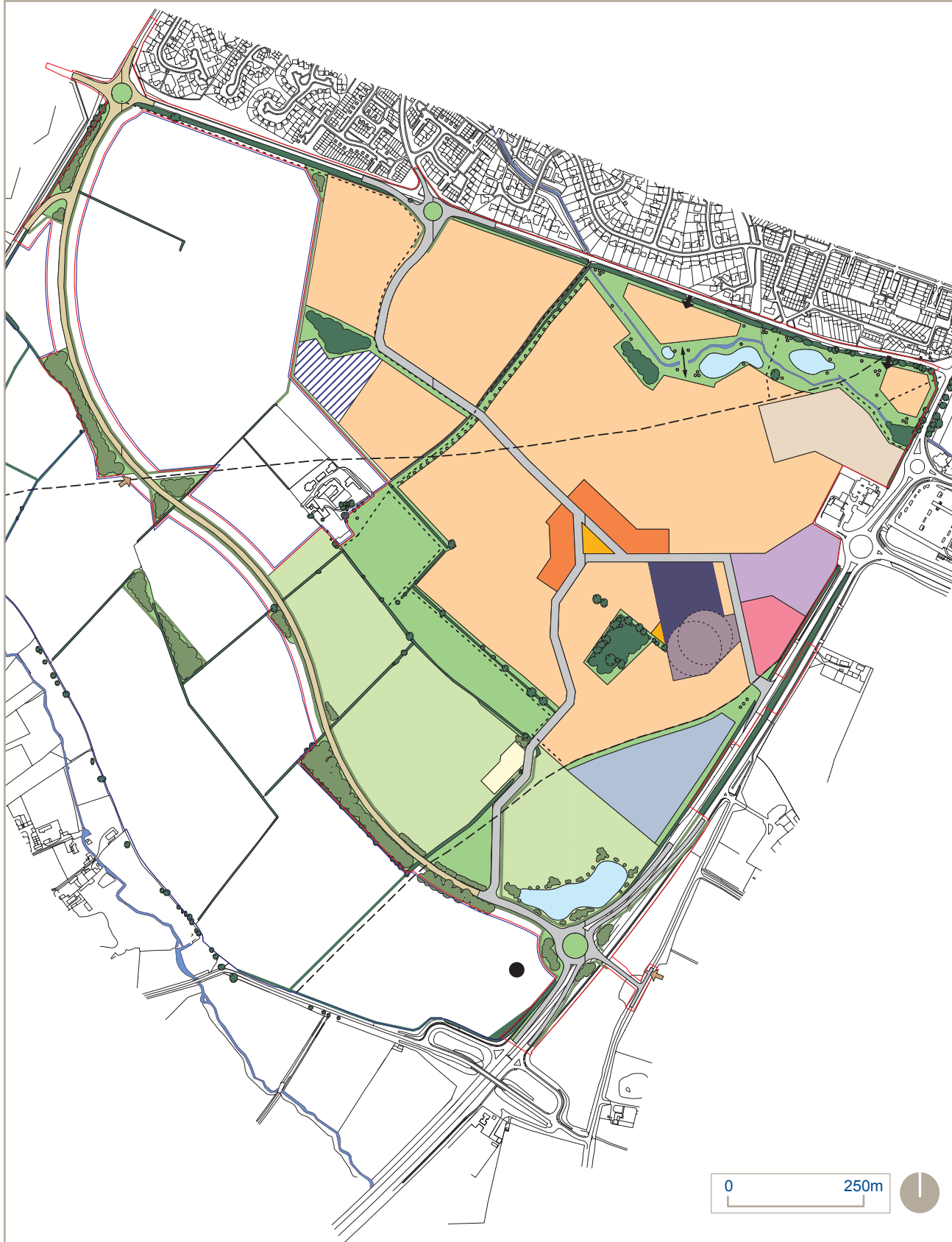
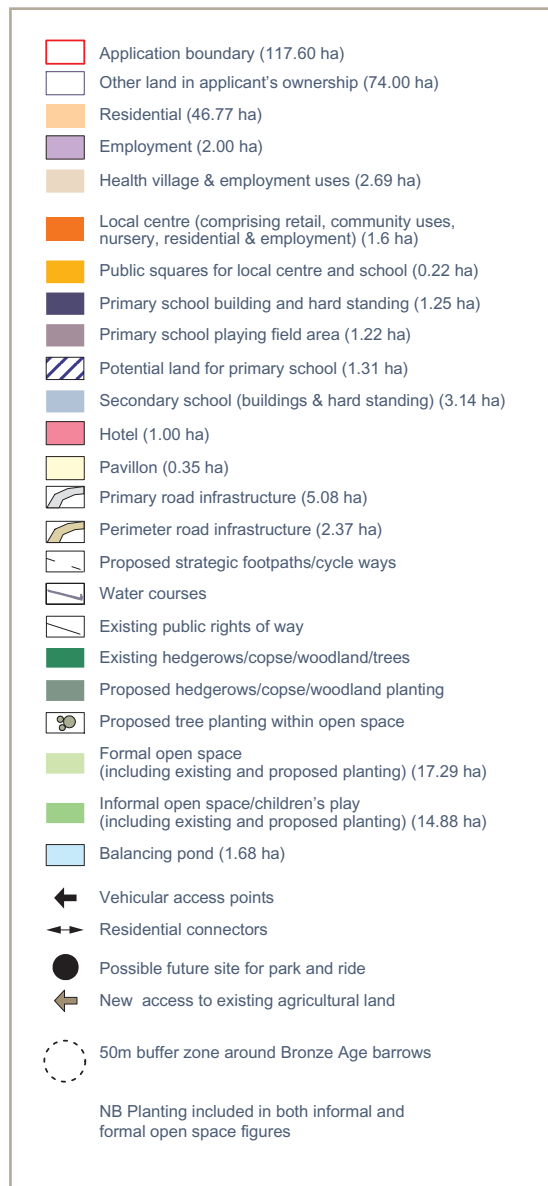


Figure 2 Master plan

BREEAM and EcoHomes

1.16 The EcoHomes Assessment is a subset of BREEAM (the Building Research Establishment Assessment Method) and assesses the quality of housing developments. It sets out a series of criteria against which new homes can be measured. EcoHomes essentially balances environmental performance with the need for a high quality of life and a safe and healthy environment. Seven themes are addressed and include, energy, water, pollution, materials, transport, ecology and land use. These themes are reflected in the planning and design of the scheme and illustrated in this report, where appropriate.



Construction and sustainability

- 1.17 Construction activities will always have an impact on the surrounding environment and neighbours. In particular, the Environment Agency estimates the UK construction industry generates more than 90 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste – excluding excavation spoil. Per person, this amounts to four times the amount of household waste generated.
- 1.18 The UK strategy for more sustainable construction, *Building a Better Quality of Life*, highlights key themes for action for the construction industry. These include, lean construction methods, minimising waste, minimising energy in construction, reducing pollution, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, conserving water resources, and respecting people and the environment. The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) *Environmental Good Practice Site Guide* (2005) also provides good advice on effective environmentally friendly and socially just construction practice.
- 1.19 Whilst construction impacts can only be addressed comprehensively at the detailed stage, the most pertinent construction issues are raised and assessed, where appropriate, in this report.

Report structure

1.20 Sustainability objectives are grouped together, analysed and assessed under seven sustainability themes for the purposes of this SA, as illustrated in Table 1.3.

A	Inclusive community
B	Place-making
C	Climate change & future proofing
D	Enterprise and education
E	Transport and movement
F	Natural environment
G	Cultural heritage

Table 1.3 Sustainability characteristics



2 A: Inclusive Community

- 2.1 The government is committed to developing inclusive communities that are strong, vibrant and generate community cohesion. *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development* (PPS1) identifies a number of aspects that contribute to the creation of an inclusive community.
- 2.2 The opportunity for everyone to live in a good quality home is a vital part of the government's sustainability agenda. New developments must be healthy, safe, and crime free, whilst respecting the diverse needs of communities and the special needs of particular sections of the community, including the elderly.
- 2.3 Planning for new development must operate in the public interest to ensure new schemes result in better places to live. The outputs of the planning system affect everyone, and everyone must therefore have the opportunity to play a role in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Community involvement is vitally important to the achievement of sustainable development.

Sustainability characteristics

- 2.4 The following sustainability characteristics are identified:
- providing housing for all
 - public involvement
 - safe and healthy community
 - supporting an ageing population.

Providing housing for all

- 2.5 The Government promotes mixed and inclusive communities, which have a good social mix and avoid the creation of large housing areas of similar characteristics. Such communities enhance sustainability by adding variety, diversity and richness, thereby strengthening sense of identity and community cohesion.
- 2.6 The proposed development provides an opportunity for Cherwell District Council to meet its housing need and to provide affordable housing that gives all social groups the opportunity to live in a decent home. The proposed development will create a new quarter with a variety of dwelling sizes and dwelling types.
- 2.7 The site is a housing allocation in the non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan Review, and has been identified as a suitable site for an urban extension. Whilst this is not part of the development plan, the proposed site is considered suitable to meet future housing targets in the district. The completion of the development will potentially increase the population of Bicester by approximately 3,804 over the intended dwelling completion period.

Sustainability objectives

2.8 The sustainability objectives identified for 'providing housing for all' are:

IC1	To maximise affordable housing to meet local needs. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (H5)
IC2	Provide a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local need. Source: RPG9 (H4)

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective IC1: Affordable housing

2.9 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 rented, 20% will be available for shared ownership and 10% will be for rent by key workers. The affordable housing will be delivered to a consistent and high quality and will be integrated throughout the development. As such, there will be no significant distinction between affordable and market units within the development.

2.10 The scheme has achieved the objective fully, having a significant positive sustainability benefit.

Objective IC2: Providing a sustainable dwelling mix

2.11 1,585 dwellings will be provided through a range of housing types and sizes, which will help to ensure that a sustainable mixed-use community is delivered. The mix will include one and two bed apartments, as well as two, three, four and five bedroom houses. Flexible building types will be provided, where appropriate, to allow the neighbourhood to change and adapt to social and economic pressures over time. The housing mix will help create a mixed, vibrant and sustainable community, in accordance with development plan and national policy. The development will ensure a significant long-term sustainability benefit, due to the number and range of residential mix provided.

Public involvement

2.12 The proposed development will positively affect every person who interacts with the site, including existing Bicester and Chesterton residents. Each person should therefore be able to play a role in delivering an effective and inclusive scheme. The development of the proposed site represents an opportunity to include the community and key stakeholders in developing the vision for the scheme. In accordance with PPS1, the community should be consulted from the outset to offer ideas about what the vision should be and how it can be achieved. This enables a joint vision to be developed for the site and to discuss the ways in which it can be achieved.

Sustainability objectives

2.13 The sustainability objective identified for 'public involvement' is:

IC3	Set out a strategy for enhancing quality of life, which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities. Source: RPG9 (Q2a (i))
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective IC3: Community involvement

2.14 Community engagement has been an important element in developing the proposals. The scheme has been prepared with the involvement and participation of the local community, including members and officers of the local authorities, representatives of local interest groups and the wider public. This has helped to lay the basis for the creation of an integrated and successful community that can benefit both new and existing residents.

- 2.15 A series of community workshops were held during summer 2005 to explore issues arising from the growth of Bicester to date and potential options for further growth, focussing in particular on the implications of and planning for growth south-west of the town. The community was engaged through a series of six events, summarised in Table 2.1.
- 2.16 A joint vision for the site was generated, with this prioritising and investing in design, visual amenity, accessibility, local services and enhancing the historic local environment. The outcome of the events was tested and the master plan has taken forward the proposals. In addition, community involvement will be continued through public consultation on the application with leaflets and a public exhibition. Achieving this objective has a positive sustainability effect.

Date	Event	Event description
17,06,2005	“Structuring Settlements”	Workshop with local authority officers about place-making techniques
29,06,2005 (Daytime)	“Growth of Bicester”	Workshop with local authority officers, members and representatives of interest groups, involving a site visit, a scenario-planning exercise and a design session examining the strengths and weaknesses of various aspects of the town
29,06,2005 (Evening)	“Growth of Bicester”	Open door event at which attendees could view the outputs from earlier in the day and add their comments and ideas
29,07,2005	Workshop with the Bicester Chamber of Commerce	Members identified key issues of concern, including business life, traffic, identity and image, location and strategic importance and growth expansion
29,07,2005 (Daytime)	“Growing Bicester”	Design workshop allowing participants to help bring together a draft design for the site
29,07,2005 (Evening)	“Growing Bicester”	Open door event at which attendees could view the outputs from earlier in the day and add their comments and ideas

Table 2.1. Stakeholder events

Safe and healthy community

2.17 The delivery of safe, healthy and attractive places to live is a Government priority in the delivery of sustainable development. In terms of delivery, the Government gives particular emphasis to the role that the built environment has in addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion through good strategic decisions and design.

Sustainability objectives

2.18 The sustainability objectives identified for 'safe and healthy community' are:

IC4	To create a safe and healthy community through the range of facilities provided on site. Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (D1)
IC5	To ensure safe play areas by ensuring natural surveillance. Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (D5 (xii))

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective IC4: Safe and healthy community

2.19 A safe and healthy community will be achieved through a comprehensive range of design and environmental initiatives, meeting development plan and national policy. A healthy community is promoted directly through the provision of land for a health village, which could include a community hospital, GP surgery and a nursing home. It is important for the town and residents to have a community hospital and this site will be safeguarded for a number of years. Countryside Properties will liaise with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in this regard.

2.20 A healthy community is also promoted through the provision of formal and informal recreation opportunities on site for new residents and to provide for an existing need in the town. Excellent links to Bicester town centre also encourages walking and cycling as a healthy and sustainable transport choice.

2.21 Safe access to the range of facilities on site will be ensured. A network of dedicated footways and cyclepaths will be provided through the developed area. These internal links will provide a well-lit (with careful consideration of protection of the night sky) and safe access to the local centre, employment areas schools and open spaces. They will be open, ensuring ample natural surveillance to increase pedestrian safety and feeling of security. 'Designing out' crime will be an important feature of the detailed design. Good practice design identifies the need for natural surveillance, defensible space, unobstructed views, good lighting and no dead ends. These principles will be worked up as the details (or reserved matters) of the development are brought forward, with the intention that crime across South West Bicester will be minimised.

2.22 The proposed scheme will therefore maintain and enhance human health and reduce/prevent crime and fear of crime, and will have a positive effect in sustainability terms.

Objective IC5: Safe play areas

2.23 All play areas on the site will be safe and benefit from natural surveillance, ensuring the objective is met fully. The development will include 16ha of formal sports provision in the southern area of the site. The exact nature of the formal open space provision will be determined at a later stage by Cherwell District Council through public consultation. All formal open space is provided for joint use by the secondary school and the general public.

2.24 The informal open space, located to the north and south of the residential development area will front onto dwellings, enabling natural surveillance to be maximised. This will create an open semi natural environment that will reduce fear of crime in these areas. They will also provide a pleasant, aesthetically pleasing environment that will enhance quality of life for new and existing local residents. Meeting this objective has a positive effect in sustainability terms.

Supporting an ageing population

2.25 Available projections suggest that the South East will have the third largest number of people over the age 65 of all the English regions. The South East already has some of the greatest concentrations of those aged over 75 in the country, particularly along the South Coast. More older people will be living in the southern part of England in the next 20 years due to migration at retirement and higher life expectancies. The proposed development provides an opportunity to ensure that it caters for the elderly and mobility impaired in terms through sustainable transport measures and in the design of housing units.

Sustainability objectives

2.26 The sustainability objectives for 'supporting an ageing population' are:

IC6	Provide flexible housing units that can accommodate the elderly and the mobility impaired. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (H4)
IC7	Ensure convenient accessibility to shop, community facilities and public transport for the elderly and the mobility impaired. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (H4)

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective IC6: Flexible accommodation for the elderly and mobility impaired

2.27 A safeguarded site for a health village will be provided. This will potentially include a nursing home. An element of the dwellings on site will also be available for adaptation for the elderly or the mobility impaired, on request. In addition, all community buildings and residential dwellings will be designed to consider the needs of individuals with limited mobility, such as the elderly, the disabled and people with young children. This objective will be met at the detailed stage, having a positive sustainability benefit. The actual designs of the buildings will form part of the detailed proposals to be submitted as part of the reserved matters.

Objective IC7: Accessibility to mobility impaired

2.28 All community services will be located centrally in the village centre, to maximise accessibility for every individual. A primary school is also located adjacent to the local centre to enable good accessibility for parents with young children. The local centre is within 500 metres walking distance from all dwellings, regarded by the EcoHomes Assessment as a sustainable walking distance. The local centre will be linked to the areas of housing, recreation and leisure facilities by a network of footpaths, cycleways and internal roads to ensure accessibility is maximised and a positive sustainability effect achieved.

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
IC1	To maximise affordable housing to meet local needs	++
IC2	Provide a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs	++
IC3	Set out a strategy for enhancing quality of life, which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities	+
IC4	To create safe access to the range of facilities provided on site	+
IC5	To ensure safe play areas by ensuring natural surveillance	+
IC6	Provide flexible housing units that can accommodate the elderly and the mobility impaired	+
IC7	Ensure convenient accessibility to shop, community facilities and public transport for the elderly and the mobility impaired	+

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective			Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations
Inclusive community	IC1	To maximise affordable housing to meet local needs	RPG9: Policy H4	The Draft South East Plan: Policies H3 and H4
	IC2	Provide a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local need	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy H4 Cherwell Local Plan: Policy H5	Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policies H4 and H7
	IC3	Set out a strategy for enhancing quality of life, which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities	RPG9: Policy Q2a (i)	The Draft South East Plan: Policy BE1 (i)
	IC4	To create a safe and healthy community through the range of facilities provided on site	N/A	Cherwell Local Plan: Policies D1 and D5 (xii)
	IC5	To ensure safe play areas by ensuring natural surveillance		
	IC6	Provide flexible housing units that can accommodate the elderly and the mobility impaired	Cherwell Local Plan: Policy H4	The Draft South East Plan: Policy CC11
	IC7	Ensure convenient accessibility to shop, community facilities and public transport for the elderly and the mobility impaired		Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policy H5



3 B: Climate change & energy efficiency

- 3.1 The most significant man-made emissions of the 'greenhouse gases' that contribute towards climate change are carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuel (such as coal and gas), methane from agriculture, waste disposal and fossil fuel production, nitrous oxide from agriculture and industry, and halocarbons (CFCs etc).
- 3.2 For the UK climate change means warmer temperatures, wetter winters, drier summers and higher sea levels leading to flooding of coastal areas. The social, environmental and economic costs of climate change are potentially very significant. As such, climate change is high on the political agenda. Drafted in Japan in 1997 and incorporated into international law since 2002, the Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement which legally binds all signatory countries to reduce man-made emissions. As part of the agreement, the UK must reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases by 12.5% by 2012. The government's response to Kyoto is underpinned by the Energy White Paper (DTI, 2003), which contains the ambitious goal of reducing the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. To achieve this it aims to promote energy efficiency and a growth in the use of renewable energy.
- 3.3 The government welcomes action by the development industry to implement cost effective measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions as part of a lower carbon economy. These include, a sequential approach to master planning, passive design measures, and the design of homes in accordance with BREEAM EcoHomes; whereby credits can be achieved by improving the energy performance of appliances, seeking savings in water efficiency, selecting materials and reducing waste.
- 3.4 The intention is to tackle climate change whilst ensuring a healthy and competitive business base is maintained and where possible improved. Improving energy efficiency and reducing consumption of non-renewable resources is vital to reducing impacts on climate change.

Sustainability characteristics

- emissions and energy efficiency
- water efficiency
- materials
- waste generation
- adaptability and durability.

Emissions and energy efficiency

- 3.5 Energy used in the home (e.g. gas and electricity) is responsible for approximately 25% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas produced when electricity is generated or gas is burned, is a major contributor to climate change and global warming. Improved energy efficiency is therefore a key element of sustainable development. The proposed development provides an opportunity for individual building's fabric to be sustainable (measured against EcoHomes in order to ensure transparency of the design and specification), and also fitted with modern energy efficiency technologies and appliances, minimising the environmental impact of the scheme.

Sustainability objectives

- 3.6 The sustainability objective identified for 'emissions and energy efficiency' is:

CC1	Ensure the scheme promotes good practice in energy conservation in accordance with BREEAM / EcoHomes for all residential units. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G6)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CC1: Energy efficiency in buildings

- 3.7 As part of the commitment to achieve a very good EcoHomes rating, the building envelope design for all units will make an improvement in energy efficiency on the England and Wales 2006 Building Regulations in accordance with the highest scoring threshold in the EcoHomes rating system.

- 3.8 The energy performance of individual units will be considered further in the detailed design of the scheme, implemented by legal agreements and/or conditions.
- 3.9 House-builder partners will be encouraged to supply white goods in accordance with the highest EcoHomes standard (i.e. fridges and freezers with an A rating), or provide information on Eco-labelling if no white goods are to be provided.
- 3.10 Similarly, house builder partners will also be advised that lighting should also be designed to minimise energy use, in accordance with EcoHomes best practice guidance. For example, with regard to space lighting, the guidance identifies the need for developers to provide compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) or fluorescent strip lighting. With respect to security lighting, the EcoHomes guidance provides a limit to the maximum output of intruder lighting (150 watts) and states how it should incorporate PIR and daylight sensors. All other types of security lighting are required to be CFLs or fluorescent strips, fitted with dawn to dusk sensors or timers.
- 3.11 The proposed scheme aims to reduce pollution in a number of ways. In particular, reducing carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides are a key component of the EcoHomes assessment. Transport movements are a significant contributor of carbon dioxide, and the scheme aims to reduce transport movements by reducing the need to travel (see Section 6 for further details).
- 3.12 In accordance with EcoHomes good practice, house-builders will also be encouraged to ensure that all the dwellings throughout the development are served by heating and hot water systems with a low average NOx emission rate. As such it is anticipated that dwellings will be fitted with low NOx emission boilers. It is considered the scheme will have a neutral effect on sustainability regarding energy efficiency.

Water efficiency

- 3.13 Water is an essential natural resource vital for public health and the environment. Although it is a renewable resource, there are bounds to freshwater availability, both on a regional and national basis. Safeguarding water resources is therefore an important contributor to sustainable development. The proposed development presents an opportunity to introduce modern sustainable water consumption technologies within individual buildings to minimise the environmental sustainability impact of the scheme.
- 3.14 The Government encourages the use of SUDS within new development and that drainage strategies take into account flood risk as a result of climate change.

Sustainability objectives

- 3.15 The sustainability objectives identified for 'water efficiency' are:

CC2	Utilise sustainable drainage systems to regulate run-off as part of the development proposals. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (EN9), RPG9 (INF2)
CC3	Incorporate measures to achieve best practice internal water use efficiency, and reflect current BREEAM standards. Source: Draft South East Plan (NRM1(iii))

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CC2: SUDS

- 3.16 The Environment Agency has confirmed that the 1 in 100 year floodplain of Pingle Brook extends to the north-east corner of the site.

- 3.17 A formal sustainable drainage system (SUDS) is proposed for the surface water discharge for the site, ensuring flood potential is minimised. A series of measures will be adopted, ranging from local source control through area measures such as swales, to outfall attenuation features such as ponds. These measures aim to provide water quality improvements as well as maintain the natural greenfield run-off regime.
- 3.18 Four wet ponds are proposed. Three of these ponds are located in the north-west of the site near Middleton Stoney Road, discharging to Pingle Brook and one in the south-east corner of the site, adjacent to the A41 and east of Whitelands Farm. This will discharge into an unnamed watercourse. The ponds have a multi-function and will also add to the biodiversity and amenity value of the area.
- 3.19 The impermeable site areas will be drained to the balancing ponds and these will in turn drain via ditch watercourses to the relevant outfall watercourses. In addition to the ponds, permeable pavements with associated sub-surface storage and infiltration layers to attenuate flows from hard landscaped areas will be considered for certain areas of the site.
- 3.20 Whilst the development proposals will increase the level of run-off, compared to baseline conditions, incorporating a SUDS approach will have an overall positive effect on the sustainability of the site.

Objective CC3: Internal water use efficiency

- 3.21 The internal water use of all residential units will comply with the EcoHomes ratings. A range of water saving measures will be encouraged to help reduce water consumption, which house builders will be required to investigate when detailed matters are brought forward.
- 3.22 A range of water saving measures will also be encouraged to help reduce water consumption. These may include rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, dual flush toilets, aerated taps, water efficient appliances, and supplying households with information packs offering water saving advice. Achieving this objective will have a positive sustainability effect.

Materials

- 3.23 Materials will be carefully selected to achieve the sustainable objectives of the development. In selecting materials the design team will aim for good practice in materials choice, using available references like BRE'S *Green Guide to Specification* as basic guideline to ensure the transparency of the specification.

Sustainability objectives

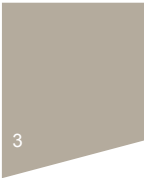
The sustainability objectives identified for 'materials' are:

CC4	Encourage the use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates, minimising the production of waste. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G6)
CC5	Encourage the supply of residential units with materials recognised by the BRE's Green Guide to Specification. Source: Draft South East Plan (EN1)

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CC4: Recycled and secondary materials

- 3.24 As a statutory document of the development plan, the policies in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan must be met under the provisions of the Planning Act. As such, house-builder partners will be encouraged to take necessary measures to maximise the use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates, in line with EcoHomes best practice, having a positive sustainability effect.



Objective CC5: Maximise green specification materials

3.25 In accordance with the EcoHomes ratings, house builder partners will be encouraged to supply residential units with materials recognised by the BRE'S *Green Guide to Specification* for the following elements.

- roof
- external walls
- internal walls (party walls and internal partitions)
- floors
- windows
- external surfacing
- boundary protection.

3.26 Insulating materials will be specified to reduce the potential for long-term damage to the earth's stratospheric ozone layer and the potential for increased global warming from substances used in manufacture and composition of insulating materials. In accordance with EcoHomes, this will include:

- roof (including loft hatch)
- wall (internal and external, including doors and window lintels)
- floor (including foundations)
- hot water cylinder (including pipeline insulation and other thermal store).

3.27 At the detailed stage, specifications will state the insulations used, locations, and details sufficient to meet the EcoHomes requirements. Insulation materials which have an ozone depleting potential (ODP) of zero and a global warming potential (GWP) of less than 5 is sufficient to meet the standard.

It is anticipated the scheme will have a positive sustainability effect in this regard.

Waste generation

3.28 The Environment Agency estimates that the UK construction industry generates more than 90 million tonnes of waste, excluding excavation spoil. Per person, this amounts to four times the amount of household waste generated. There are environmental and social impacts of dealing with these wastes, including indirect impacts such as noise and traffic emissions that would not arise if large volumes of waste were not produced.

3.29 Whilst secondary to construction waste, households are major producers of waste. Although waste streams cannot be eliminated, preventing waste wherever possible can reduce environmental effects and impacts on sustainability. The proposed development has a significant opportunity to incorporate sustainable waste techniques into the scheme.

Sustainability objectives

3.30 The sustainability objective identified for 'waste generation' is:

CC6	Provide waste separation and recycling facilities to minimise the production of waste. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G6), Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (D9)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CC6: Waste and recycling

- 3.31 Countryside is committed to sustainable waste management. Waste management plans will be developed to include the investigation of opportunities to add-value through lean design and specification to reclaim, reuse and recycle, such as the reuse of soil from the development in areas of landscape works.
- 3.32 Housing builder partners and principal contractors will be expected to prepare similar waste management plans to ensure waste and recycling practices are followed. On completion, the proposed development will provide each home with suitable storage containers for recyclable household waste. This will enable the site to form part of Cherwell District Council’s alternate week recycling scheme. This involves collection of recyclable waste one week and normal waste the following week. The proposed development will therefore continue, and contribute to, Cherwell District’s current strong recycling rate.
- 3.33 Compost bins will be provided at strategic locations for home and business users to reduce the amount of organic waste going to landfill. This aspect will be pursued further at the detailed stage. It is anticipated the scheme will have a positive sustainability effect in this regard.

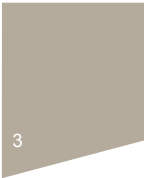
Adaptability and durability

- 3.34 The potential for buildings to be adaptable for alternative uses is an important aspect of sustainable development. Creating adaptable and durable buildings improves sustainability by enhancing the longevity of the scheme.

Sustainability objectives

- 3.35 The sustainability objective identified for ‘adaptability and durability’ is:

CC7	Ensure units can be adapted to meet changes in future accommodation needs. Source: Draft South East Plan (Policy H5)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CC7: Adaptable units

- 3.36 All units will be designed for potential adaptation, catering for changes in future technology. An element of the housing units will also be flexible to meet the needs of all people, including the mobility impaired, such as people with disabilities and the elderly, on request. This will have a positive sustainability effect.

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
CC1	Ensure the scheme promotes good practice in energy conservation, in accordance with BREEAM / EcoHomes for all residential units	0
CC2	Utilise sustainable drainage systems to regulate run-off as part of the development proposals	+
CC3	Incorporate measures to reduce internal water use efficiency, and reflect current BREEAM / EcoHomes standards	+
CC4	Encourage the use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates, minimising the production of waste	+
CC5	Encourage the supply of residential units with materials recognised by the BRE'S Green Guide to Specification	+
CC6	Provide waste separation and recycling facilities to minimise the production of waste	+
CC7	Ensure units can be adapted for future users needs	+

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective		Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations	
Climate change and energy efficiency	CC1	Ensure the scheme promotes good practice in energy conservation in accordance with BREEAM / EcoHomes for all residential units	RPG9: Policy INF4 Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy G6	The Draft South East Plan: Policies EN1 (i)(iii) and CC4 (ii)
	CC2	Utilise sustainable drainage systems to regulate run-off as part of the development proposals	RPG9: INF2 Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy EN9	The Draft South East Plan: Policy NRM3 (ii)
	CC3	Incorporate measures to reduce internal water-use, and reflect current BREEAM / EcoHomes standards	N/A	The Draft South East Plan: Policy NRM1 (iii)
	CC4	Encourage the use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates, minimising the production of waste	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy G6	N/A
	CC5	Encourage the supply of residential units with materials recognised by the BRE'S Green Guide to Specification	N/A	The Draft South East Plan: Policy EN1
	CC6	Provide waste separation and recycling facilities to minimise the production of waste	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy G6	Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policy D9
	CC7	Ensure units can be adapted for future users needs	N/A	The Draft South East Plan: Policy H5



4 C: Place making

- 4.1 The redevelopment of the site to provide a new quarter to South West Bicester will create a new place on a site formally used for agricultural purposes.
- 4.2 Countryside proposes to redevelop the site with a high quality residential scheme, including a development mix of up to 1585 dwellings, land for employment, formal sports provision, children's play space and public open space, a local centre, two primary schools and a secondary school. The proposed development will, therefore, significantly alter the land use and character of the site.
- 4.3 The site forms a distinct, open area of agricultural land with three small copses and a number of hedgerows, dividing the built up area of Bicester from the village of Chesterton to the south. The site's topography is undulating and gently slopes in an easterly direction. The southern section of the site falls more noticeably down to Gagle Brook. This creates a shoulder in the land preventing views north across the site from the southern boundary.
- 4.4 The site is contiguous with the built up residential area of south-west Bicester. Within the residential area to the north are a number of neighbourhood centres, which provide local retail facilities for existing local residents. These facilities are located within 400 metres from the site. There are also a number of high quality facilities immediately to the north-east area of the site. These include a petrol garage, public house, Tesco superstore and the Bicester Village Retail Park further east. Bicester town centre is located approximately 800m, or a 10 minute walk, from the north-east part of the site.
- 4.5 The historical use of the site as a farm increases the likelihood of ground contamination. Material in the areas around any silage, animal waste and fuel storage tanks are potentially hazardous. In creating a new place, remediation is potentially required to secure the site in sustainability terms.

Sustainability characteristics

- 4.6 The following sustainability characteristics are identified in the accompanying Planning Statement and Environmental Statement:
- efficient use of land
 - contaminated land
 - landscape character and natural features
 - open space
 - local amenities
 - sustainable design.

Efficient use of land

- 4.7 Government policy on the sustainable planning of housing developments seeks the prudent use of resources by ensuring that they are used wisely and efficiently, in a way that respects future generations. The broad aim is to ensure that outputs are maximised whilst resources used are minimised.
- 4.8 The principal aims of the Government are to build higher densities on previously developed land. Whilst the proposed site is greenfield land, the development presents an opportunity to maximise the land resource by building housing at a density in accordance with best practice.

Sustainability objectives

- 4.9 The sustainability objective identified for 'efficient use of land' is:

PM1	To achieve an average density 50 dwellings per hectare net to make more efficient the use of land in a location that can be well served by public transport. Source: RPG9 (Q3a (ii & iii)), Oxfordshire Structure Plan (H3)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM1: Housing density and efficient use of land

- 4.10 Densities will vary throughout the development, with higher density (e.g. between 40 – 50 dwellings per hectare) applied where appropriate. Appropriate high density locations include areas adjacent to the local centre, along the main public transport spines and close to the town centre.
- 4.11 The scheme does not meet the targets set by RPG9 and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan fully, but it does comply with the density ranges as set out in draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing. Further, the proposed lower densities (e.g. 30-35 dwellings per hectare) on the outlying areas and the countryside edge reflect the rural, low density, character of the surrounding countryside. It was considered necessary to reduce densities in these areas to protect the existing rural identity of the local area. It is therefore considered the scheme has an overall positive sustainability effect.
- 4.12 The scheme also makes the most efficient use of land through design measures. Significantly, the careful positioning of the proposed perimeter road, which will connect the A41 and the B4030, enables a viable agricultural holding to be retained to the north-west of Whitelands Farm. This retains the existing agricultural character of the area and also retains a significant local economic function.
- 4.13 The main development footprint also maximises efficiency of land take. By concentrating development in the south-east corner, a natural urban edge is created adjacent to the existing Bicester built-up area and the A41, whilst the rural aesthetic is retained further west and south. Furthermore, all land uses are located within the main residential footprint apart from the proposed secondary school, which requires a large amount of land, such as formal open space, and is not a good neighbour for housing.
- 4.14 The careful design of the scheme has maximised the use of land in a number of ways and therefore has a positive sustainability effect.

Contaminated land

- 4.15 Land contamination can pose both environmental and human health concerns. Both aspects therefore have direct relevance to the sustainable development agenda. Contaminated sites must be remediated to protect the environment effectively and to recognise the health and safety needs of future users.

Sustainability objectives

The sustainability objective identified for 'contaminated land' is:

PM2	Remove all threats of contamination to future occupiers of the site. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (ENV12)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM2: Remediating contaminated land

- 4.16 The majority of the site has been used for agriculture and there is no history of contaminative use on or adjacent to the site. However, a contamination assessment confirmed high naturally occurring arsenic and lead concentrations in the north-west corner of the site, generally within the ash fill. High naturally occurring arsenic levels were also encountered in a localised area centrally along the eastern boundary, which consists of made ground and contains some clinker-like material.
- 4.17 Topsoil contaminated by arsenic will be transported to a suitably licensed site, due to the arsenic levels encountered. Soft landscaped areas and domestic gardens may require excavation of contaminated material and replacement with clean cover from an approved source. Contaminated materials in areas that are to be hard landscaped or are to be covered with road pavement construction may be possibly left in place. Further survey work and assessment will be undertaken at the detailed stages. By ensuring the remediation of a contaminated site, the development will have a positive sustainability benefit.

Open space

4.18 As the site is greenfield, the proposed development has a significant opportunity to provide an extensive area of formal and informal open space in accordance with best practice. The scheme can also potentially provide a range of vistas and views within a green setting that will provide many opportunities to enhance the quality of life of new and existing residents.

Sustainability objectives

4.19 The sustainability objective identified for ‘open space’ is:

PM3	Provide in excess of 2.43 ha of public outdoor recreation playing space per 1,000 population, together with arrangements for its long-term management. Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (R8)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM3: Open space

4.20 The development will include 17.29 hectares of formal sports provision, to meet the needs of the local community and the secondary school. Ten hectares is to make up the existing deficiency in the town and to meet the needs of future development in the town. Six hectares provides for the development proposal. This provision is far in excess of the policy thresholds in the recent Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan. The scheme also makes optimum use of countryside recreation facilities and resources, in accordance with Policy R1 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan.

4.21 A mix of facilities will be provided and will be used jointly by the secondary school and the general public. Whilst this mix will be determined later by the Council, in consultation with the public, the mix will potentially include senior football pitches, senior rugby pitches, pitches for junior use, a cricket pitch, an athletics facility, a bowls facility and tennis provision. A recreation pavilion of high quality design will also be provided to the west of the secondary school, which will also act as a focal point at the southern access.

4.22 Informal open space and children’s play areas will be provided throughout the application site. The exact size, location and equipment will be determined later on in the planning process with the appropriate authorities. These play areas will accommodate a range of facilities and will be fenced, equipped and surfaced in accordance with current safety standards and local requirements. They will be located within a short walking distance of residential dwellings to accord with National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standards, and will be clearly visible from surrounding properties.

4.23 The proposed development will also provide a number of linked green spaces throughout the application site, as illustrated by the master plan. Overall the scheme will create a high quality environment that will encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance quality of life. Meeting this objective will have a significant positive sustainability effect.



Landscape character and natural features

4.24 The proposed development will alter the landscape character of the site and surrounds. Within the site, four small copses and a number of hedgerows set the framework for the landscape structure of the scheme. The development provides an opportunity to create a place that retains and enhances these features, using them in a positive manner by accommodating 'greenway' routes for pedestrians and cyclists where appropriate. Trees and hedgerows also provide the basis for green spaces and spaces within the development, which should run alongside and between housing areas to enhance permeability.

Sustainability objectives

The sustainability objective identified for 'landscape character and natural features' is:

PM4	Secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and create new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows. Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (EN36)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM4: Landscape character and natural features

4.25 The proposed scheme will alter the character and appearance of the existing rural landscape. The development will remove the existing rural character of South West Bicester, replacing it with an urban environment. However, the proposals aim to reduce effects associated with this 'urban character' change by retaining all existing hedgerows, copses, woodland and trees where possible. This will be enhanced by new planting to offer a net gain of vegetation cover, as illustrated by the master plan. Additionally, the new development will be contiguous with the existing urban edge of Bicester, and major new areas of informal and formal open space, together with retained agricultural land, will ensure a gradual and well-designed transition from urban edge to rural countryside. Overall, however, the proposed scheme has a negative sustainability effect in relation to landscape character of the site.

Local amenities

4.26 The Government promotes the creation of sustainable communities, which have a good mix of uses that avoid the creation of large housing areas of similar characteristics. This will enhance the sustainability of the site by adding variety, diversity and richness, and therefore strengthening sense of identity and community cohesion.

Sustainability objectives

4.27 The sustainability objectives identified for 'local amenities' are:

PM5	Promote a local neighbourhood centre and therefore a place where people can go for day-to-day shopping and other services. Source: RPG9 (Q2a (iii))
PM6	Concentrate the range of services in locations close to residential areas. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G1b, H3)

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM5: Local centre provision

- 4.28 A local centre is provided that will include shops, offices, children’s day nursery and a public house/restaurant. This is an integral part of the development proposals, and will enable the community to undertake day-to-day shopping tasks that reduce the need to travel off-site. The location of the centre at the intersection of the three primary roads maximises accessibility. The local centre will have a positive sustainability benefit.

Objective PM6: Access to facilities

- 4.29 The proposed development will maximise access to facilities on site in a number of ways. The scheme meets the criteria of the development plan and performs very well against the ‘local amenities’ criteria of the EcoHomes Assessment. EcoHomes requires 80% of dwellings are within 500 metres of a food shop and post box. It also requires 80% are within 1,000 metres of any five of the following: postal facility, bank/cash point, pharmacy, primary school, medical centre, leisure centre, community centre, public house, children’s play area, public park or village green.
- 4.30 Most dwellings are within 400 metres of the local centre, which will have a range of facilities and services. In addition, the majority of dwellings are located within 500 metres of the primary school adjacent to the local centre. However, should the potential land for a second primary school to the west be developed in the future, all dwellings will be located within 500 metres of a primary school.
- 4.31 The design of the scheme therefore maximises access to facilities, having a positive sustainability benefit.

Sustainable design

- 4.32 PPS1 considers that good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Accordingly, sustainable design should be appropriate to its context and should take opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. This requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources. The proposed development is an opportunity to create a scheme with a high quality design based on recognised principles of sustainable design.

Sustainability objectives

- 4.33 The sustainability objective identified for ‘sustainable design’ is:

PM7	Ensure the development is well designed and consistent with the overall strategy for urban renaissance and be of a scale and type appropriate to its site and surroundings and incorporate a high quality layout, design and landscaping. Source: RPG9 (Policy Q1a (ii)) and Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G2a)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective PM7: Promoting an urban renaissance

- 4.34 The proposed development will be of the highest quality, with the aim of building a conservation area for the future. The development will be provided through a range of different character areas. Each will contribute to the urban renaissance agenda by creating different urban experiences for those who live, work and visit the development.

4.35 The detailed design will consider and respond to a number of factors in determining the architectural design for the area, including:

- the origins of the site and the topography of the area, including surviving elements such as plot divisions, boundary treatments and relationships between buildings and spaces
- the archaeological significance and potential of the area
- the architecture and historic quality of the local area
- prevalent and historic building materials in the local area.

4.36 The layout of the proposed development considers the scale of character of both Chesterton and Bicester, particularly the variety and detail of built form in both places, including materials and boundary treatments. Bicester will reflect the best parts of these settlements. The scale of the scheme will generally be two and three storeys to reflect the landscape character and respect the skyline of the local area.

4.37 Delivering such a high quality scheme for South West Bicester will have a significant positive sustainability effect.

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
PM1	To achieve an average density 50 dwellings per hectare net to make more efficient the use of land in a location that can be well served by public transport	+
PM2	Remove all threats of contamination to future occupiers of the site	+
PM3	Provide in excess of 2.43 ha of public outdoor recreation playing space per 1,000 population, together with arrangements for its long-term management	++
PM4	Secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and create new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows	-
PM5	Promote a local neighbourhood centre and therefore a place where people can go for day-to-day shopping and other services	+
PM6	Concentrate the range of services in locations close to residential areas	+
PM7	Ensure the development is well designed and consistent with the overall strategy for urban renaissance and be of a scale and type appropriate to its site and surroundings and incorporate a high quality layout, design and landscaping	++

Policy summary table

Objective			Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations
Place making	PM1	To achieve an average density 50 dwellings per hectare net to make more efficient the use of land in a location that can be well served by public transport	RPG9: Policy Q3a (ii) (iii) Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy H3	The Draft South East Plan: Policy H5 Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policy H3
	PM2	Remove all threats of contaminants to future occupants of the site	Cherwell Local Plan: Policy ENV1	Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policy EN17 (i)
	PM3	Provide in excess of 2.43 ha of public outdoor recreation playing space per 1,000 population, together with arrangements for its long-term management	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy R1	Cherwell local Plan 2011: Policies R8, R9, R10a
	PM4	Secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and create new ones including the planting of woodlands/ trees and hedgerows	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy G2b Cherwell Local Plan: Policy C17	Cherwell Local Plan: Policy EN36
	PM5	Promote a local neighbourhood centre and therefore a place where people can go for day-to-day shopping and other services	RPG9: Policies Q1a (iii), Q2a (ii) Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policies G1b and H3	The South East Plan: Policies H3 and S4 Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policies H1a (ii) and D1 (vii)
	PM6	Concentrate the range of services in locations close to residential areas		
	PM7	Ensure the development is well designed and consistent with the overall strategy for urban renaissance and be of a scale and type appropriate to its site and surroundings and incorporate a high quality layout, design and landscaping	RPG9: Policy Q1a (ii) Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policies G2a and G2b	Cherwell Local Plan 2011: Policies D1, D4, D5 (ii)



5 D: Enterprise and education

- 5.1 The Government is committed to promoting a strong, stable, and productive economy that aims to bring jobs and prosperity for all. Developments should therefore ensure that they provide infrastructure and services which are conducive to stimulating enterprise and life long learning.
- 5.2 In order to create a balanced and sustainable community to reflect Government policy, the scheme will provide a significant level of employment within the site. Employment space for offices will be provided in the local centre, presenting employment opportunities in retail, community and other facilities and services. 2 hectares of offices (B1 use class, 15,000 sq ft) and general industrial (B2 use class, 5,000 sq ft) employment is provided within the site, adjacent to the A41. The hotel, community hospital, primary school, secondary school and further education centre will all be significant employment generators. There will also be other jobs created such as childminders, window cleaners, domestic cleaners and gardeners.
- 5.3 There are also employment opportunities in proximity to the scheme. Bicester town centre, the Tesco superstore and the Bicester Village Retail Centre are all within easy walking and cycling distance of the proposed development. Further afield, Oxford city centre is located approximately 12 miles to the south of the development.
- 5.4 The 2001 Census illustrates that the level of unemployment in the Cherwell district is 1.9% of all people aged between 16 and 74. Unemployment is therefore below the average for England and Wales, which is 3.4%. According to the 2001 census, of the people who were unemployed, 19.96% were aged 50 and over, 4.24% had never worked and 18.78% were long-term unemployed.
- 5.5 According to the index of deprivation survey of 2004, the South East is the least deprived region in the country. In the county rankings, Oxfordshire has relatively low levels of deprivation, coming 137th out of 149 counties (where 1 is the most deprived).
- 5.6 In the local authority index of deprivation rankings, Cherwell is ranked 274 out of 354 (where 1 is the most deprived). Bicester town itself is ranked between 20% and 50% in the index (with up to 10% being the most deprived and over 90% the least deprived). The areas to the north, west, east and south of Bicester are either between 50% and 90%, or over 90%. The site itself is currently ranked between 50% and 90% in the index of deprivation.

Sustainability characteristics

- 5.7 The following sustainability characteristics are identified:
- employment opportunities
 - education and training
 - home office provision.

Employment opportunities

5.8 The Government’s overarching economic goal is to grow an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all. The concept of sustainable economic growth is central to the achievement of other social and environmental objectives, as illustrated in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the South East. Whilst the generation of employment enhances the economy directly, it needs to be supported by a suitable supply of homes, a good environment, to ensure it’s labour force have a good quality of life and remain vibrant and healthy.

Sustainability objectives

5.9 The sustainability objective identified for ‘employment opportunities’ is:

EE1	Achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local labour force. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (E3a)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective EE1: Employment opportunities

The construction of South West Bicester will provide a significant local source of employment in the short-term, approximately 320 jobs. Once the scheme is completed there will be in the region of 1,600 employment opportunities, both full-time and part-time, created as part of the development.

5.10 The proposed development provides a number of employment opportunities on-site directly. The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan stipulates that a scheme for the site should provide land for B1 and B2 employment generating development to the east of the A41. However, to comply with more up to date national policy, Countryside considered it was important to provide employment opportunities to the west of the A41, to form a comprehensive development of the new quarter of Bicester. Whilst it is not possible to provide certainty that future residents will also secure employment at the site, offering such a diversity of land uses and employment opportunities increases the self-containment potential of the scheme. The floorspaces proposed for B1 and B2 uses are ideally suited for small and medium sized businesses, in accordance with policy E1 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. This development aims to meet the needs of smaller businesses, and ensure the balance between the number and type of jobs in Bicester is compatible with housing demand in Bicester. The B1 and B2 employment will secure at least 790 jobs on the site.

5.11 Many other employment opportunities will be also be provided directly in the local centre, primary and secondary schools, health village, and hotel, totalling around 1,600 jobs. As such, the provision of employment on the site promotes sustainability in a town with restricted provision currently.

5.12 The indirect effect of the proposed development to the local and sub-regional economy will be significant by virtue of providing housing in a location that is accessible to employment. In addition to local employers such as Tesco and the Bicester Village Retail Centre, residents will also be able to access the employment in the town centre and also Oxford City Centre.

5.13 The employment opportunities provided by the proposed development will have a significant positive sustainability benefit.

Education and training

5.14 Access to education and training is an important element in creating vibrant, cohesive and sustainable communities. The Government's sustainable development agenda highlights that planning should establish more meaningful connections between investment in learning, skills and regeneration, and sustainability. The challenge is to motivate people to take personal action to maximise their potential, thereby creating vibrant and cohesive communities. All aspects of life long learning should be fully engaged in the provision of effective education and training in planning for new development.

Sustainability objectives

5.15 The sustainability objective identified for 'education and training' is:

EE2	Provide facilities for education and training. Source: RPG9 (Q6a(iii))
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective EE2: Education and training

5.16 The scheme will provide facilities for education directly through the provision of a primary and land for a secondary school. The primary school will provide education for approximately 420 children, with the secondary school providing for around 850 pupils. Land for a second primary school may also be provided to meet future demands. The educational demands of the proposed development are thus met on site, which significantly reduces the need to travel off-site in this regard.

5.17 Countryside takes pride in providing construction training opportunities for the local community. Countryside will also explore potential community education partnership initiatives with Cherwell District Council. An example of a suitable initiative will be to set up and fund a local employer/manager post for a period of 5 years to coordinate the training of local people, assist new residents to find long-term employment, and to help new residents take advantage of life-long learning opportunities. This will help match the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local labour force. This aspect will be considered in greater detail at the detailed stage.

5.18 The proposed development has a significant positive sustainability effect for this objective.

Home office provision

5.19 Future residents will potentially commute to work in other urban centres, such as Oxford and London. However, the development also provides opportunities to reduce commuter trips that are made by the private car by enabling people to work from home on a frequent basis.

Sustainability objectives

5.20 The sustainability objective identified for 'home office provision' is:

EE3	Provide an ICT enabled site, with premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home based businesses. Source: Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (EMP5), Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (RE5)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective EE3: Home office provision

- 5.21 All residential units will be provided with space for a home office, in accordance with EcoHomes good practice. These units will be fitted with the necessary ICT infrastructure to enable users to complete necessary communication tasks, increasing the level of self-containment of the scheme.
- 5.22 Whilst this objective will be explored fully at detailed stage, its achievement will have a positive sustainability effect.

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
EE1	Achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local labour force	++
EE2	Provide facilities for education and training	++
EE3	Provide an ICT enabled site, with premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home based businesses	+

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective			Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations
Enterprise and Education	EE1	Achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local labour force	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policies G1, E1, E3a, E3b	The Draft South East Plan: Policy RE3
	EE2	Provide facilities for education and training	RPG9: Policy Q6a (iii)	The Draft South East Plan: Policies S5 and S6
	EE3	Provide an ICT enabled site, with premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home-based businesses	Cherwell Local Plan: Policy EMP5	Cherwell Local Plan 2001: Policy RE5



6 E: Transport and movement

- 6.1 The proposed development will allow for the creation of a sustainable urban extension at a site that site already benefits from excellent road, public transport, cyclist and pedestrian access to Bicester, Chesterton, and beyond. The majority of Bicester town centre is located within a radius of approximately 2km from the centre of the site, which is a distance identified by PPG13: Transport as being an appropriate journey by foot.
- 6.2 Middleton Stoney Road (B4030) is a well-lit and predominantly residential road. This area is very inward-looking, with most of the dwellings backing on to the B4030. To the east of the site is Oxford Road (A41), which is dual carriageway along this stretch. A significant point on this road is the junction adjacent to the service area (which includes petrol filling station) where traffic can continue straight ahead into the town or turn right onto the A4421 Bicester by-pass and skirt around the edge of the town to the east.
- 6.3 Currently, bus services principally operate along the A41 adjacent to the western side of the site. Further services operate within the Highfield residential estate to the north and along A4095 Middleton Stoney Road following the northern boundary of the site. Local bus services provide links to Bicester town centre. There is a bus stop at King's End on the A41, which has a 20 minute service and an approximate journey time of 10 minutes. Bus services to Oxford can be undertaken from Bicester with a 35 minute journey time.
- 6.4 There are two existing public footpaths that traverse the site. One footpath crosses through the north of the site through Whitelands Farm, and provides links from the north-east of the site to Bignell Park. The second footpath provides links from the east edge of the site to the south, near Chesterton. In addition, there are footways adjacent to the roads that surround the site, as well as a number of footpaths providing access towards Bicester town centre. To the east, pedestrian links to the Tesco superstore and Bicester Village Retail Park are provided along the A41.
- 6.5 Route 51 of the national cycle network links Old Place Yard with the garden centre on the A41 via Roman Road. A toucan crossing at the A41 roundabout and an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing at the A4421/Pingle Drive roundabout currently allow both pedestrians and cyclists to cross these junctions safely.
- 6.6 The town has two railway stations. Bicester North station is located 950 metres north of the town centre, while Bicester Town station is located 800 metres to the east of the site. Bicester North rail station offers passengers a good range of facilities, including coffee and snack shop, undercover (20 racks) and open air (10 racks) cycle storage and a fast ticket machine. Bicester North station provides services to London Marylebone, High Wycombe and Banbury. Bicester Town station is unmanned with the nearest staffed station being Oxford, which the station provides services to. Undercover cycle storage is available with four racks provided near the station entrance.
- 6.7 Countryside is willing to provide land for a possible park and ride facility (to the south and outside the application boundary) as part of negotiations on the legal agreement, providing the Council with a suitable site should a need be demonstrated in the future.

Sustainability characteristics

6.8 The following sustainability characteristics are identified:

- public transport
- walking and cycling
- sustainable car use.

Public transport

6.9 The availability and use of public transport is a very important ingredient in delivering sustainable developments. The aim should be to establish a high quality, safe, secure and reliable public transport service, which matches patterns of travel demand to maximise potential usage.

Sustainability objectives

6.10 The sustainability objectives identified for 'public transport' are:

TM1	Provide a convenient, reliable, secure and high standard bus service. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (T3)
TM2	Enhance access to Bicester North and Bicester Town rail stations to enable convenient and accessible interchange between them and bus services, cycling and walking and the private car. Source: RPG9 (T5(bii))

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective TM1: Provision of high quality bus service

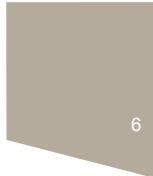
6.11 There are already a number of regular bus services operating within the vicinity of the proposed development. Journeys from Oxford to Bicester normally take around 35 minutes. Local services also provide links to Bicester town centre from the adjacent A41 corridor, and the town centre provides further links to a large employment area to the north-east of Bicester.

6.12 The existing level of bus services represents a very good baseline for the scheme. The proposed development however, will also provide new bus routes through the site and enhance the existing provision in the local area. Improved bus provision will facilitate alternative transport choice to the private car and enhance sustainability.

6.13 A public transport strategy has been devised for the proposed development that will enhance existing bus services in the local area. The proposed strategy involves the diversion of the existing Service 22 and 23 through the proposed development. This will enable a 20 minute frequency throughout the day, with the requirement for only one additional vehicle.

6.14 Bus access to the proposed development will be from Middleton Stoney Road, through the site via the local centre, to the A41 Oxford Road corridor. The scheme will pass via the local centre to maximise access for all residents. Importantly, the proposed strategy will ensure the majority of residents and occupiers at South West Bicester are located within a 400m of a high quality bus service. This performs well against the EcoHomes Assessment, which gives a maximum 'score' to schemes which achieve 80% of dwellings within 500m of a 15 minute peak and a half hourly off peak service. The exact locations of bus stops will be determined in the detailed design. All bus stops will have shelters, seating and will be well lit to ensure passenger convenience and cater for the mobility impaired.

6.15 Significantly, the layout of the internal road and footpath infrastructure will ensure that there will also be convenient access to the existing bus services that operate along the A41. This widens transport choice further, and adds significantly to the sustainability of the scheme.



6.16 In addition, Countryside will explore opportunities to further enhance bus services and encourage bus use in Bicester. Feasible opportunities include providing funding to enable a free bus pass to be offered in resident welfare packs, and entering negotiations with Cherwell District Council with a view to providing funding to help deliver a real time information system at bus stops and on board vehicles. This will enhance consumer confidence by creating certainty of when buses will arrive at their stop points. Such measures will be pursued in due course.

6.17 The development proposals have a significant positive sustainability effect for this objective.

Objective TM2: Improving access to existing railway stations

6.18 The rail stations are both located within 1km and therefore already offer very good accessibility for residents living in south west Bicester. The bus route serving the site will provide improved access to Bicester Town and Bicester North rail stations for future residents of the scheme. The route will stop adjacent to Bicester Town station and within a reasonable walking distance of Bicester North station (approximately 400 metres). Information packs illustrating the services offered by the rail stations will be provided to all residents on arrival to make residents more aware of rail as a sustainable transport option. The development proposals therefore have a positive effect in sustainability terms.

Walking and cycling

6.19 Walking is the most important mode of travel and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly under 2 kilometres. Walking also forms an often forgotten part of all longer journeys by public transport and the private car. As such, the Government outlines its objectives to prioritise walking in new developments in Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing. Sustainable developments offer good and safe conditions for pedestrians and encourage people to walk over other modes of travel. Accordingly developments should create more direct, safe and secure walking routes, particularly in local neighbourhoods, and to schools and public transport nodes.

6.20 Cycling also has potential to substitute for short car trips. PPG3 stipulates that journeys of less than 5 kilometres are suitable for journeys by cycling. Provision of cycling facilities can make a vital contribution to healthier and more sustainable communities.

6.21 In response to policy, the proposed development presents a number of opportunities to encourage greater access, including disabled access, to public open space, parkland and community facilities within the site and in the local area via footpaths and cycleways. This includes safe access to local schools for children. There are also opportunities to create new permeable links within the site and to create new and enhance existing links to Bicester town centre and the wider area.

Sustainability objectives

6.22 The sustainability objectives identified for 'walking and cycling' are:

TM3	Minimise conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and people with sensory and mobility impairments by providing a network of dedicated footpaths and cycleways within the development, which are segregated from internal roads. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (TR2)
TM4	Link footpaths and cycleways into the existing provision in the local area. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (T5)
TM5	Ensure sufficient cycle parking and secure cycle storage. Source: Draft South East Plan (T8 (vii))

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective TM3: Provision of safe footpaths and cycleways

6.23 A principal network of segregated footways and cycleways will be developed, some of which will be alongside roads or shared with vehicles. Traffic speeds within the development will be controlled accordingly in order to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The spine streets will be designed for 30mph and traffic calmed to 20mph. All other residential roads will be designed to 20mph except in the case of Homezones.

6.24 The master plan illustrates that the existing public right of way, which runs diagonally through the site east to west, provides good direct access to the north-east of the site and therefore Bicester town centre. A dedicated 'greenway' strategic footpath and cycleway dissects the site, running in a south-westerly towards Whitelands Farm. This footpath and cycleway then runs in a south-easterly direction alongside the proposed open space towards the secondary school. This strategic footpath and cycleway therefore provides safe, traffic-free access to the schools and all formal and informal open space areas on site, enhancing safety and quality of life on the site.

6.25 The routes for the strategic pedestrian and cycle network have been carefully considered in response to the deposition of land uses and identification of the key desire lines for movements within the proposed development.

6.26 High quality cycle and pedestrian networks are a key part of a sustainable transport strategy and were an important consideration from the early stages of the development proposals. The proposed development has a positive sustainability effect in this regard.

Objective TM4: Integrating footpaths and cycleways in the local area

6.27 The majority of Bicester town centre is located within a radius of approximately 2 km from the centre of the site, a distance identified by PPG13 Transport as being a reasonable journey by foot and on bicycle. A number of existing routes within the area of the site provide access to the town centre, the Tesco superstore and Bicester Village. In addition, Route 51 of the national cycle network links Old Place Yard with the garden centre of the A41 Oxford Road via Roman Road. The scheme links these areas effectively and therefore encourages people to cycle to these accessible areas rather than use the car, having a positive sustainability benefit.

Objective TM5: Cycle parking and storage

6.28 Secure cycle parking and storage facilities will be incorporated into all residential areas, the local centre and employment areas. Cycle storage is a key component of the EcoHomes Assessment. The scheme will aim to provide a high level of cycle storage to ensure the scheme achieves its EcoHomes aspirations. This will have a positive sustainability effect.

Sustainable car use

- 6.29 This chapter has identified that the development proposals provide a number of opportunities to meet sustainable transport objectives, which benefit journeys made by transport modes other than the private car.
- 6.30 However, the proposed development will generate more traffic in the local area and may contribute to a rise in commuting to Oxford and London, which are constraints that require mitigation in order to maximise the sustainability of the scheme. A robust transport strategy is therefore required to mitigate any adverse effects regarding traffic safety, congestion and pollution, so that the site is sustainable for current and future generations.

Sustainability objectives

- 6.31 The sustainability objectives identified for 'sustainable car use' are:

TM6	Reduce the need to travel to reduce unnecessary trips off site. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (G2c)
TM7	Adopt restrictive car parking standards to reduce reliance on the private car. Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (T2)
TM8	Provide a hierarchical system of internal roads, which is designed and constructed to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and bus operators, and to ensure a maximum speed 20mph on principal estate roads and 15 mph on all other roads. Source: Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996) (TR9), Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (TR19)

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective TM6: Reducing the need to travel

- 6.32 The proposed development reduces the need to travel by providing a mix of uses. The local centre ensures that day-to-day needs can be met on site. School journeys are major trip generators, and the scheme provides a primary school (including land for another) and a secondary school. This will have a positive effect on sustainability.

Objective TM7: Restricting car parking

- 6.33 The provision of parking within the development will ensure a balance is achieved between achieving a vibrant and commercially successful development without excessive parking provision, which could encourage unsustainable travel behaviour. Maximum car parking standards will be applied at the reserved matters stage, to comply with current standards.
- 6.34 The local centre will enjoy a high level of accessibility to encourage maximum self-containment. Therefore, the need for parking spaces will be balanced against the need to promote non-car usage. It is important that inadequate parking facilities do not inhibit the attractiveness of commercial opportunities to potential businesses. This will have a positive effect on sustainability.

Objective TM8: Sustainable road layout

- 6.35 The layout of the proposed development has been carefully designed to accommodate, but not encourage, the use of the private car. The internal road network will consist of vehicle routes, designed to accommodate the main vehicle movements. This network will have a conventional street pattern whereby motorists have a choice of routes. The roads will not dominate the area, however, as they will be supported by pedestrian crossings, traffic signals and frontage accesses. The roads will also provide appropriate access to the local centre and employment use and be able to accommodate buses and heavy goods vehicles. Buses will therefore be able to move with ease around the site and commercial uses will be served efficiently.
- 6.36 The road network will be supported by a secondary level of streets, which will link to the developed areas. Within the residential areas, the remaining vehicular movements will be accommodated by a series of minor streets, which will generally be designed as narrow roads with footways or shared surfaces. Movement on foot will therefore be encouraged.
- 6.37 The main road network will be subject to speed limits of 30mph, which may be reduced in certain areas such as around the local centre and schools. The secondary routes will have 20 mph speed limits.
- 6.38 The proposed internal perimeter road will reduce the level of traffic travelling through the centre of Bicester and along Middleton Stoney Road. This will have a positive effect on quality of life of people living in and visiting the centre of Bicester.
- 6.39 This transport strategy will have a positive sustainability effect.

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
TM1	Provide a convenient, reliable, secure and high standard bus service	++
TM2	Enhance access to Bicester North and Bicester Town rail stations to enable convenient and accessible interchange between them and bus services, cycling and walking and the private car	+
TM3	Minimise conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and people with sensory and mobility impairments by providing a network of dedicated footpaths and cycleways within the development, which are segregated from internal roads	+
TM4	Link footpaths and cycleways into the existing provision in the local area	+
TM5	Ensure sufficient cycle parking and secure cycle storage	+
TM6	Reduce the need to travel to reduce unnecessary trips off site	+
TM7	Adopt restrictive car parking standards to reduce reliance on the private car	+
TM8	Provide a hierarchical system of internal roads, which is designed and constructed to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and bus operators, and to ensure a maximum speed 20mph on principal estate roads and 15 mph on all other roads	+

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective		Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations	
Transport and movement	TM1	Provide a convenient, reliable, secure and high standard bus service	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policies T3, T5, T8 Cherwell Local Plan 1996: Policy TR4	TM1
	TM2	Enhance access to Bicester North and Bicester Town railway stations to enable convenient and accessible interchange between them and bus services, cycling, walking and the private car	RPG9: Policy T5 (bii)	TM1
	TM3	Minimise conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and people with sensory and mobility impairments by providing a network of dedicated footpaths and cycleways within the development which are segregated from internal roads	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy T5 Cherwell Local Plan 1996: Policy TR2	The Draft South East Plan: Policies T8 (vii) and C4 Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policies TR8 and TR9
	TM4	Link footpaths and cycleways into the existing provision in the local area		
	TM5	Ensure sufficient cycle parking and secure cycle storage		
	TM6	Reduce the need to travel to reduce unnecessary trips off the site	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy G2c	N/A
	TM7	Adopt restrictive car parking standards to reduce reliance on private car	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy T2	Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policy TR19
	TM8	Provide a hierarchical system of internal roads, which is designed and constructed to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and bus operators, and to ensure a maximum speed 20mph on principal estate roads and 15 mph on all other roads	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy TR9	Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policy TR19



7 F: Natural environment

- 7.1 The natural environment should be protected for its own sake and to improve and enhance the quality of life of people. There are no statutory sites of international or national nature conservation importance within the site or in the immediate vicinity. The site is a primarily arable fields divided by native hedgerows. Whilst these areas have some ecological value for providing foraging areas for badgers and other mammals and farmland birds, arable land is widespread in the local area and these habitats are considered to be of relatively low importance for wildlife. However, all important species on site should be protected to maximise sustainability.
- 7.2 Woodland cover on the site is relatively low. However, there are four copses within the site, the most significant being Foxey Leys Copse east of Whitelands Farm. Numerous mature trees are located on the site, the majority of which are native species. The copses are relatively old, having been in existence for over 100 years. The small size of the copses indicates that it is likely that they have a low botanical diversity.
- 7.3 Hedgerows are concentrated in the centre of the site and along the northern, western and southern boundaries, although none are considered important in ecological and sustainability terms. Whilst the semi-improved grassland on the site is more ecologically diverse, its loss in sustainability terms is considered negligible.
- 7.4 Pingle Brook flows through the north-eastern corner of the site. This watercourse then forms part of the eastern boundary of the site, where it flows along the edge of the sewage works and railway line. The Pingle Brook is currently of low ecological value status due to grazing and trampling of the banks by cattle. The interest of the brook mainly relates to its banks, for nest sites and forage.

Sustainability characteristics

- 7.5 The following sustainability characteristics are identified:
- Pingle Brook
 - important species
 - trees and hedgerows.

Pingle Brook

- 7.6 Pingle Brook flows through two fields of pasture in the north-east of the site. Pingle Brook will, potentially, be subject to increased visitor pressure as a direct result of the proposed development. However, the brook is currently in unfavourable status, and the development proposals present an opportunity to enhance the quality of the brook and its immediate surrounds.

Sustainability objectives

- 7.7 The sustainability objective identified for 'Pingle Brook' is:

NE1	Maintain and enhance the ecological value of Pingle Brook following consultation with an accredited expert. Source: RPG9 (E2)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective NE1: Pingle Brook

- 7.8 The mitigation works associated with Pingle Brook meet the legal requirements for protected species, such as water voles, and support the relevant policies in the development plan and objectives of the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. The fields around Pingle Brook also have ecological value for populations of reptiles, including grass snake, slow worm and common lizard.
- 7.9 Pingle Brook is currently heavily disturbed as a result of trampling by cattle. Whilst the brook will be realigned, the enhancement of the brook will secure its long-term management. The removal of cattle from this area and subsequent improvement of habitat will improve the baseline situation, as trampling by cattle is more damaging than trampling by people. The development proposals will have a neutral sustainability effect in this regard.

Important species

7.10 Farmland birds are breeding on the site, including linnet, yellowhammer, skylark, starling, house sparrow, bullfinch and reed bunting. There is evidence to suggest that parts of the site, including Whitelands Farm and some of the mature trees may be used by bats. Grass snake, common lizard and slow worm potentially occur on the site. Great Crested Newts are known to inhabit breeding ponds in Bicester, although there are no breeding ponds on site. There is some evidence of badger activity on the site, although no setts have been found within the site.

Sustainability objectives

7.11 The sustainability objective identified for 'important species' is:

NE2	Protect important species fully and seek to enhance the environment whenever possible. Source: RPG9 (NRM4)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective NE2: Important species

7.12 The mitigation strategy identified in the Environmental Statement meets the legal requirements for protected species. The strategy seeks to support the relevant policies in the development plan and the objectives of the Oxfordshire and Cherwell Biodiversity Action Plans. The site is currently heavily cultivated with sparse areas of suitable habitats for farmyard birds. The proposed development will provide new habitat opportunities for farmyard birds, for example, through the provision of informal open space areas. Viable agricultural landholdings are also being retained as part of the development proposals, and as such extensive areas of farmland habitat will remain. The strategy for protecting species on the site therefore has a neutral sustainability effect.

Trees and hedgerows

7.13 The existing woodland, trees and hedgerows onsite have nature value as foraging and feeding habitats for mammals and birds. The plantings also have landscape value for their local character and distinctiveness. The development proposals present opportunities to retain and enhance the four copses on the site, all mature trees, and hedgerows.

Sustainability objectives

7.14 The sustainability objective identified for 'trees and hedgerows' is:

NE3	Retain woodland, trees and hedgerows and, where appropriate, extend and create new woodland areas. Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) (EN35, EN36)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective NE3: Woodland, trees and hedgerows

7.15 The master plan illustrates the existing hedgerows, woodland and trees that will be retained. As such, new planting will compensate hedgerow loss, no existing copses or woodland will be lost, with new areas also being created. This will have a positive sustainability effect.

Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
NE1	Maintain and enhance the ecological value of Pingle Brook following consultation with an accredited expert	0
NE2	Protect important species fully and seek to enhance the environment whenever possible	0
NE3	Retain woodland, trees and hedgerows and, where appropriate, extend and create new woodland areas	+

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective		Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations
Natural Environment	NE1	Maintain and enhance the ecological value of Pingle Brook, following consultation with an accredited expert	RPG9: Policy E2 The Draft South East Plan: Policy NRMI (vi) Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policy EN12
	NE2	Protect important species fully and seek to enhance the environment wherever possible	RPG9: Policy NRM4 The Draft South East Plan: Policy E2 Cherwell Local Plan: Policy EM1
	NE3	Retain woodland, trees and hedgerows and, where appropriate, extend and create new woodland areas	RPG9: Policy E5 The Draft South East Plan: Policy NRM5 Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policies EN35 and EN36



8 G: Cultural heritage

- 8.1 The site lies in the vicinity of significant Romano-British archaeology. The results of previous archaeological evaluation in the north-eastern area of the site (as part of previous planning applications) has indicated the former existence of a contemporary farming settlement. A series of additional archaeological surveying, in the form of aerial photograph and geophysical survey, and targeted archaeological trench evaluation has been undertaken since the discovery of the settlement. The combined results and findings of the surveying have increased the existing archaeological record in this particular area.
- 8.2 The site contains the remains of two Bronze Age ring barrow burial monuments. The largest measures c.32m in external diameter, with a smaller example c.21.3m in diameter. They were present between 0.3m and 0.5m below the present ground level. However, both of the associated mounds constructed to house cremated burials have been entirely ploughed out. Only one definitive datable artefact was found and this was located in the larger ring barrow, suggesting an Early Bronze Age date for its construction.
- 8.3 In addition, further archaeological features of Iron Age/Romano-British date were uncovered in several areas across the site. There are also features datable to the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods indicating agricultural and possible industrial use of the land. All of the archaeological evidence uncovered to date indicates the utilisation of this site for several thousand years, with its most active period occurring during the Romano-British period.
- 8.4 The various schemes of archaeological evaluation across the site have informed the mitigation strategy for the future development of the site. The most significant area contains the below ground remains of the two Bronze Age ring barrow monuments. Even though their respective mounds have been entirely ploughed out, the extent and state of preservation of the below ground features is considered to be of national significance. These monuments will therefore be preserved in situ below the proposed playing field area for the primary school and an archaeological protection buffer will be imposed for each monument of 50m radii. Further archaeological excavation will be required in the areas identified as zones of archaeology. These works will need to be agreed with the county archaeologist prior to the commencement of works.
- 8.5 There are two conservation areas in the vicinity of the site, one to the north-east in Bicester old town and one to the south at Chesterton. There are a number of noteworthy listed buildings within and in the vicinity of these conservation areas. There are no registered battlefields, historic parks and gardens at or in the vicinity of the site.

Sustainability characteristics

- 8.6 The following sustainability characteristics are identified:
- archaeology
 - historic environment.

Archaeology

8.7 Archaeological remains are irreplaceable; they are a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. The research and understanding of archaeological remains, such as ancient settlements and field systems, underpins the sustainable management of the historic environment. Archaeological remains can contain irreplaceable information about our past and can potentially increase our future knowledge. They are part of our national identity and are valuable from a sustainability perspective both of their own sake and their role in creating education, leisure and tourism opportunities.

Sustainability objectives

8.8 The sustainability objectives identified for 'archaeology' are:

CH1	Preserve nationally important Bronze Age burial monuments in situ and establish an archaeological buffer zone to safeguard against below ground disturbance in the immediate vicinity. Agreed methods of further excavation to preserve by record the identified zones of archaeology across the site will be necessary prior to and in conjunction with initial site preparation and construction Source: Oxfordshire Structure Plan (EN6)
CH2	Promote sustainability by interpreting and presenting finds and any future discoveries at the site to the public in appropriate formats, such as publication of results and public exhibitions Source: Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (Revised Deposit) EN47

Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CH1: Preservation by record

8.9 Implementing the various elements of the development proposals will involve extensive groundworks, which will inevitably have an impact on all below ground archaeological remains, where these exist.

8.10 The areas identified as zones of archaeology during the site investigations will require excavation prior to the construction of each building element proposed in that location. In certain areas, such as the road alignment, this may take the form of open area excavation for the initial site preparation of the road. Appropriate excavation of the affected features along the route would then be excavated and recorded in line with the engineering levels and alignment only. From the recent evaluation undertaken by Wessex Archaeology, there are very specific locales where archaeology is present.

8.11 There are vast areas of the proposed residential development that will have little or no impact on below ground archaeological remains. Other areas contain archaeological features where significance is difficult to determine, for example, possible Romano-British quarry or borrow pits close to the A41 Roman road. In the other defined zones of archaeology, more detailed site construction details are needed before a preferred excavation methodology is defined. Close liaison between the respective design and build contractors, the site archaeological contractor and the county archaeologist will facilitate the process of implementing the appropriate preservation by record techniques to suit the known archaeology and the design of the proposed scheme.

8.12 Whilst it is acknowledged in local and national policy that preservation of archaeological remains should be considered as a first option, the proposed development works present a significant opportunity to advance our knowledge of the wider historic landscape and its complex evolution since prehistoric times. As such, the proposed development has a positive sustainability benefit.

Objective CH2: Presenting finds to the public

8.13 Countryside is committed to presenting any important discovered finds to the general public. This has a dual sustainability role in the form of advancing professional knowledge of our cultural heritage and community learning. This will have a positive sustainability benefit.

Historic environment

- 8.14 The historic environment is an important sustainability consideration. A number of historical areas and individual buildings in close proximity to the site are of sufficient historic value and architectural interest to have been designated at either national or local level. Conservation areas have been designated at the historic village of Chesterton to the south and at the centre of Bicester old town.
- 8.15 The conservation areas and Grade II and II* buildings in the vicinity of the site are considered to be of outstanding architectural or historic interest, are of high built heritage interest and contribute to the historic quality of Bicester and Chesterton. There is potential for the proposed development to alter the setting of the conservation areas and various listed buildings in the local area.

Sustainability objectives

- 8.16 The sustainability objective identified for 'historic environment' is:

CH3	Preserve the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas. Source: RPG9 (EN4)
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Evaluating objective achievement

Objective CH3: Listed buildings and conservation areas

- 8.17 The scheme will produce a significant benefit to the surrounding historic area, by reducing levels of traffic, noise and vibration through the Chesterton Conservation Area. This will be achieved as a result of the new route alignment to the north of the village that the scheme will provide, that will discourage rat-running.
- 8.18 The scheme may also be subject to a design code, which will be addressed further at the detailed stage. The strongest design elements of the surrounding area will be incorporated into the design for the new scheme.
- 8.19 The layout of the new development has considered the sensitive character of both Chesterton and Bicester conservation areas. Groups of buildings will be design to respect the skyline and long and short views. The variety and detail of built form will also be thoroughly considered, including materials and boundary treatments. Whilst inter-visibility between Chesterton conservation area and the new development is low, there may be a slight adverse impact on the setting the conservation area. However, it is considered the positive benefits derived from diverting existing traffic away from the conservation area will cause a neutral sustainability effect.



Objective summary table

Objective		Assessment of effect
CH1	Preserve nationally important Bronze Age burial monuments in situ and establish an archaeological buffer zone to safeguard against below ground disturbance in the immediate vicinity. Agreed methods of further excavation to preserve by record the identified zones of archaeology across the site will be necessary prior to and in conjunction with initial site preparation and construction	++
CH2	Promote sustainability by interpreting and presenting finds and any future discoveries at the site to the public in appropriate formats, such as publication of results and public exhibitions	+
CH3	Preserve the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas	0

Assessment of effect

++	Significant positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Significant negative
?	Uncertain

Policy summary table

Objective			Relationship with development plan policy	Other material considerations
Cultural heritage	CH1	Preserve nationally important Bronze Age burial monuments in situ and establish an archaeological buffer zone to safeguard against below ground disturbance in the immediate vicinity. Agreed methods of further excavation to preserve by record the identified zones of archaeology across the site will be necessary prior to and in conjunction with initial site preparation and construction	Oxfordshire Structure Plan: Policy EN6 Cherwell Local Plan: Policies C24 and C26	Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policy EN47
	CH2	Promote sustainability by interpreting and presenting finds and any future discoveries at the site to the public in appropriate formats, such as publication of results and public exhibitions	Cherwell Local Plan: Policy C24	Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policy EN47
	CH3	Preserve the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas	RPG9: Policies EN4 and EN5 Cherwell Local Plan: Policy C20	The Draft South East Plan: Policy BE7 Cherwell Local Plan 2010: Policies: EN40 and EN44



9 Conclusion

- 9.1. This report has provided a comprehensive assessment of the proposals for South West Bicester against a multitude of sustainability objectives. These objectives are reflective of the development plan and the Government's policies and guidance for sustainable development. The indicators forming the basis of the summary assessment at the end of each section are adapted from standard approaches for assessing sustainability.
- 9.2. The assessment has demonstrated the scheme performs extremely well when considering all three elements of sustainability - social, economic and environmental issues. This is a consequence of the characteristics and location of the site and the sound urban design principles that have been applied through the evolution of the master plan. The scheme makes efficient use of a site contiguous with the existing built area. The location of the site therefore encourages sustainable travel patterns, such as walking and cycling and is highly accessible to public transport. Whilst there are a number of existing facilities and services in the local area, the scheme will also enhance provision by delivering a range of uses on site.
- 9.3. Although the master plan proposes a predominantly residential scheme, it makes provision for a range of local services including employment (offices and light industrial), a local centre, a primary school and land for a second, land for a secondary school, land for a health village and hotel, and a range of outdoor recreational space. This will create a sustainable mixed-use community with a relatively high degree of self-containment.
- 9.4. The scheme proposes a multi-faceted high quality environment that will create a distinctive local environment that reflects the site's location, its constraints and opportunities and is respectful of the wider context and settlement forms in the area. This will create a place where people will want to live and work, as well as improving in the interests of both people and the biodiversity on site promoting high design standards to reflect the existing distinctive local environment. This will be supported by a design statement that will be produced at the detailed stage.
- 9.5. Furthermore, the public and other local stakeholders through their involvement in community engagement events have influenced the design of the scheme significantly. The scheme is very much a joint vision, which is a key part of the Government's sustainability agenda. This will be continued through public consultation on the application with leaflets and a public exhibition.
- 9.6. As indicated through the course of this report, Countryside has sought to investigate the ways in which the scheme can contribute towards achieving a more sustainable form. Certain aspects relate to the details of the scheme, which can only be agreed once the details of the development are brought forward, and therefore these are not discussed in detail at this stage. However, the ability to apply best practice in sustainable design and construction will be key factors considered by Countryside during the selection of house-builders for the construction of the scheme.



10 Appendix

Inclusive community

Providing housing for all

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy H4	A range of dwelling types and sizes should be provided, including alternative forms of tenure. Affordable housing should be provided to meet locally assessed need.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy H4	At least 50% of all new housing in Oxfordshire should be affordable, including housing for key workers. The amount and size of site where provision will be sought will be determined by local planning authorities and based on assessments of local need.
Cherwell Local Plan	Policy H5	Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the Council will negotiate with developers to secure an element of affordable housing in residential development schemes.

Other material considerations

The Draft South East Plan	Policy H3	Avoid the creation of large single-tenure neighbourhoods, and encourage mixed-use developments where appropriate.
	Policy H4	Provide affordable housing, with an overall regional target of 25% of all new housing to be socially rented accommodation and 10% other forms of affordable housing.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy H4	The Council will seek a variety of dwellings in terms of their size, type and affordability in order to meet the housing requirements of the whole community.
	Policy H7	Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the Council will negotiate with developers to secure an element of affordable housing in residential development schemes.

Public involvement

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy Q2a (i)	Set out an overall strategy for enhancing quality of life, which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities.
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Other material considerations

The Draft South East Plan	Policy BE1 (i)	Establish a shared vision, setting out an overall strategy for enhancing the quality of life which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities.
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Safe and healthy community

Relevant development plan policy

There are no policies specific to safety and crime in the adopted development plan.

Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy D1	Proposals for development should have public spaces that are attractive, safe and uncluttered.
	Policy D5 (xii)	Incorporate measures to minimise the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour including, maximising natural surveillance, allowing for social contact and providing adequate lighting.

Supporting an ageing population*Relevant development plan policy*

Cherwell Local Plan	Policy H4	The provision of housing schemes for the elderly and people with disabilities will be encouraged on sites within convenient reach of shops, community facilities and public transport.
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Other material considerations

The Draft South East Plan	Policy CC11	<p>(i) Adapt the existing housing stock and make provision in new housing developments to support older people.</p> <p>(ii) Provision of reasonable access to services, through the provision of public transport and the extension of communications and information technology.</p> <p>(iii) Provision of leisure, recreational and community facilities that help older people maintain healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>(iv) Facilitate access to training and development opportunities that support available employment for workers beyond the existing retirement age.</p>
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy H5	Inclusion of elements of housing, accessible to disabled people, within both private sector housing provision and affordable housing on proposals for residential development of 50 or more dwellings.

Climate change and energy

Emissions and energy efficiency

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	INF4	Priority should be given to energy conservation and to maximising the use of renewable energy sources as an alternative to fossil fuels.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	G6	All new developments should incorporate best practice in energy and resource conservation.

Other material considerations

RPG9 Draft South East Plan	Policy EN1 (iii)	Incorporate renewable energy sources including, in particular, passive solar gain, solar water heating, photovoltaics, ground source heat pumps and, in larger scale development, wind and biomass generated heating.
	EN1(i)	Encourage developers to submit an assessment of a development's energy demand from renewable sources for housing schemes of over 10 dwellings.
	CC4 (ii)	Design to increase the use of natural lighting, heat and ventilation.

Water efficiency

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	INF2	Promote the introduction of water conservation measures and sustainable urban drainage systems.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy EN9	The use of SuDS to regulate run-off will be required as part of the development proposals.

Other material considerations

The Draft South East Plan	Policy NRM1 (iii)	Require development that would use significant quantities of water to incorporate measures to achieve high levels of water efficiency, and reflect current best practice including BREEAM 'very good' and increasingly 'excellent' standards.
	Policy NRM3 (ii)	Require incorporation and management of SuDS, other water retention and flood storage measures to minimise direct surface run-off.

Materials*Relevant development plan policy*

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G6	Maximise the use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates and minimising the production of waste.
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Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy EN1	Encourage the use of energy efficient materials and technologies.
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Waste generation*Relevant development plan policy*

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G6	All new developments should minimise the production of waste.
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Other material considerations

Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan	Policy D9	Provide adequate accommodation for waste separation and recycling facilities.
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Adaptability and durability*Relevant development plan policy*

There are no policies relating to adaptability and durability in the adopted development plan.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy H5	Positive measures to raise the quality of new housing, reduce its environmental impact and facilitate future adaptation to meet changes in accommodation needs will be encouraged.
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Place making

Efficient use of land

Relevant statutory planning policy

RPG9	Policy Q3a (ii)	Encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare).
	Policy Q3a (iii)	Seek greater intensity of development in places with good public transport accessibility, such as town, district and local centres or at major nodes along good quality public transport corridors and major cities.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy H3	Housing density should be at least 30 dwellings per hectare. Higher density will be sought on sites within urban areas, close to town centres or where there is a good range of existing or planned services and facilities. Densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare will be required in locations, which are or can be well served by public transport. Major urban extensions should be planned as mixed communities.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy H5	Higher housing densities will be encouraged, with an overall regional target of 40 dwellings per hectare over the Plan period.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy H3	In order to make efficient use of land residential development must be built at an average net density of not less than 30 dwellings per hectare.

Contaminated land

Relevant development plan policy

Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy ENV12	Development on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated will only be permitted if adequate measures can be taken to remove any threat of contamination to future occupiers of the site.
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Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	EN17 (i)	Development on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated will only be permitted if adequate measures can be taken to remove any threat of contamination to future occupiers of the site.
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Open space*Relevant development plan policy*

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy R1	Make optimum use of existing countryside recreation facilities and resources. Opportunities to create new outdoor facilities which are appropriate in scale and sensitive to a rural location will be supported.
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Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy R8	The Council will require in connection with all new housing developments the minimum provision of 2.43 ha of public outdoor recreation playing space per 1,000 population, together with secure arrangements for its long-term management. The amount, type and form of outdoor playing space will be determined having regard to the nature and size of the development proposed and the community needs likely to be demonstrated by it.
	Policy R9	The Council will seek in connection with all new residential development of 10 or more dwellings the provision of new amenity areas.
	Policy R10a	Where new development will increase the need for provision of sport and recreation facilities, the Council will seek increased provision or enhancement of existing facilities.

Landscape character and natural features*Relevant development plan policy*

RPG9	Policy E8	Where appropriate, proposals should include new woodland, tree and hedgerow planting, and management proposals to conserve and enhance existing features.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G2b	All development should incorporate a high quality of layout, design and landscaping.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy C17	The Council will seek opportunities to secure the enhancement of the urban fringe through tree and woodland planting.

Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	EN36	The Council will seek opportunities to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
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Local amenities*Relevant development plan policy*

RPG9	Policy Q1a (iii)	Promote local neighbourhood centres as places where people can go for day-to-day shopping and other services.
	Policy Q2a (ii)	Encourage mixed use developments, for example by identifying opportunities for urban villages.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G1b	Concentrate development in locations where a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided.
	H3	Major urban extensions should be planned as mixed use communities and should provide the services and facilities needed to support them.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy H3	New housing should be in sustainable locations which have the necessary infrastructure, services and community provision, or where this provision is planned.
	Policy S4	Ensure provision of additional and reconfigured health and social care facilities to meet anticipated primary care needs of communities.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	H1a (ii)	New housing development will be considered against the location and accessibility of the proposal to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the private car, and the potential for improving such accessibility.
	D1 (vii)	Demonstrate diversity through inclusion of a mix of compatible land uses.

Sustainable design

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy Q1a (ii)	Ensure that new developments in and around urban areas are well designed and consistent with the overall strategy for urban renaissance and sustainable development.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	G2a	All development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and not cause harm to the character and amenities of the area.
	G2b	Incorporate a high quality layout, design and landscaping.

Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy D1	Proposals must demonstrate urban design objectives, such as local distinctiveness, continuity and enclosure, permeability and legibility and adaptability of building types.
	Policy D4	The Council will require high quality contemporary architecture that expresses its use and importance and possesses visual interest.
	D5 (ii)	Development proposals that impact on or extend the public realm should be planned as an integral part of the design process, and relate well to other open spaces in the vicinity.

Enterprise and education

Employment opportunities

Relevant development plan policies

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G1	The general strategy is to provide a framework for development to sustain economic prosperity.
	Policy E1	Development for employment purposes should include accommodate small businesses.
	Policy E3a	Achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local workforce.
	Policy E3b	Provide for the expansion and relocation of existing local firms and to accommodate firms which need to be located in the area.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy RE3	Employment and land provision should be provided on the following criteria: (i) that are accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply (ii) promotion of mixed use development where appropriate (iii) locations that promote the use of public transport.
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Education and training

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy Q6a (iii)	Enable the varied provision of facilities for education and training.
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Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy S5	Ensure adequate provision of pre-school, school and community learning facilities.
	Policy S6	Ensure higher and further education needs are addressed.

Home office provision

Relevant development plan policy

Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy EMP5	Proposals for requiring planning permission for the part use of residential properties for employment purposes will be assessed against other policies in the plan.
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Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy RE5	Local authorities will support and promote advances in ICT and changing working practices by positively promoting the development of ICT enabled sites, premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home based businesses.
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Traffic and transport

Public transport

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy T5(bii)	Proposals should be developed which improve the facilities for convenient and accessible interchange between the strategic inter-urban public transport network, local public transport and other modes.
Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy T2	Park and ride schemes will be supported where they support the functions of the principal transport corridors and where they form part of a wider transport strategy for the area.
	Policy T3	Increased use of public transport will be sought through the encouragement and promotion of convenient, reliable, secure and high standard public transport services.
	Policy T5	Public transport should be improved to enable it compete more effectively with the private car and to increase its share of total travel.
	Policy T8	Proposals for development should be permitted only if they provide adequate access and mitigation of adverse transport impacts.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy TR4	The Council will seek to facilitate the provision and operation of an effective public transport system as a genuine alternative to the use of private vehicles.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	T6	Seek to achieve a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of non-car modes, based on an integrated package of measures including, the allocation and management of highway space used by individual modes of travel and increase in bus priority.
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Walking and cycling

Relevant development plan policy

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy T5	Networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted and developed particularly within and linking urban areas, so as to improve the facilities for wider transport choice.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy TR2	Minimisation of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and people with sensory and mobility impairments by securing segregation provision, controlled crossings or other measures.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy T8 (vii)	Ensure the provision of sufficient cycle parking at new developments including secure cycle storage for new flats and houses which lack garages.
	Policy C4	Encourage access to the countryside by taking full advantage of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy TR8	Development that would prejudice pedestrian and cycle circulation or route provision will not be permitted.
	Policy TR9	All new development shall provide cycle parking to Oxfordshire County Council standards.

Sustainable car use*Relevant development plan policy*

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy G2c	All development should be designed to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport and telecommunications as alternatives to the private car.
	Policy T2	A comprehensive approach will be adopted for the provision and management of car parking space with the aim of promoting sustainable travel choices. Standards of parking provision will apply to development proposals.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy TR9	Vehicular access to new residential areas shall be provided as part of a hierarchical system of roads. Residential access roads will be designed to ensure low vehicles speeds, safety, adequate access for service and emergency vehicles, economy in the use of land and visual interest.

Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy TR11	Development likely to attract vehicular traffic will be required to accommodate the necessary highway safety requirements, reduce visual impact, comply with maximum parking standards, provide parking for people with disabilities and cycle parking.
	Policy TR19	Roads to serve new residential areas shall be designed and constructed to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and bus operators, and to ensure a maximum speed of 20 mph on principal estate roads and 15 mph on all other roads, mews courts and housing squares.

Natural environment

Pingle Brook

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy E2	The region's biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced with positive action to achieve the targets set in national and local biodiversity action plans through planning decisions and other measures.
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Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy NRM1 (vi)	Not permit development that presents a risk of pollution or where satisfactory pollution prevention measures are not provided in areas of high groundwater vulnerability.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy EN12	Development which will adversely affect to a material level the water quality of surface or underground water bodies will not be permitted.

Important species

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy NRM4	Avoid a net loss of biodiversity and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region.
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Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy E2	The region's biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced with positive action to achieve the targets set in national and local biodiversity action plans through planning decisions and other measures.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy EM1	The Council will take into account the likely impact of a proposal on the natural and built environment and will seek to enhance the environment whenever possible.

Trees and hedgerows

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy E5	Woodland habitats in the region should be increased whilst protecting the biodiversity and character of existing woodland resources and other areas of established or potential nature conservation value.
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Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy NRM5	Promote the effective management, and where appropriate, extension and creation of new woodland areas.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy EN35	The Council will seek to retain woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features which are important to the character or appearance of the local landscape as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value.
	Policy EN36	The Council will seek opportunities to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Cultural heritage

Archaeology

Relevant development plan policy

Oxfordshire Structure Plan	Policy EN6	Presumption in favour of physically preserving nationally and internationally important archaeological and geological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. Where development affecting other archaeological and geological remains is allowed it should include appropriate measures to secure preservation in situ or where it is not feasible, recording of archaeological features before development.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy C24	The Council will favourably consider development proposals that promote the educational, recreational, and tourist potential of archaeological sites.
	Policy C26	Before determining an application for development that may affect a known or potential site of archaeological interest and setting, applicants will be required to provide detailed information, and may be asked to provide an archaeological field evaluation.

Other material considerations

Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy EN47	The Council will promote sustainability of the historic environment through conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage and its interpretation and presentation to the public.
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Historic environment

Relevant development plan policy

RPG9	Policy EN4	The fabric and setting of listed buildings will be preserved and the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be preserved and or enhanced.
	Policy EN5	The conservation of Oxford's architectural and historic heritage, including its green spaces and its landscape setting, will take priority in considering proposals for development in and around the city.
Cherwell Local Plan 1996	Policy C20	Ensure that development situated within the setting of a listed building respects the architectural and historic character of the building and its setting.

Other material considerations

Draft South East Plan	Policy BE7	Support the conservation and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the historic environment and its contribution it makes to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Policy EN40	In an area that makes an important contribution to the setting of a conservation area, a new development should understand and respect the sense of place and architectural language of the existing but should seek to avoid pastiche development.
	Policy EN44	Ensure that development situated within the setting of a listed building respects the architectural and historic character of the building and its setting.



