

## **Non-technical summary**

### **Background**

- NTS.1 In May 2006 Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd (hereafter referred to as Countryside Properties) submitted an outline planning application for a mixed-use scheme (application number 06/00967/OUT) at South West Bicester (also known as Kingsmere). The location of the site is shown in figure NTS1. Outline planning consent for the scheme was granted in June 2008 for the master plan shown in figure NTS2.
- NTS.2 Countryside Properties subsequently submitted reserved matters applications for a number of the elements of the scheme including roads, strategic landscaping and services. Other developers have obtained approvals for development on a number of land parcels. A number of these elements have been built out or are currently under construction. Figure NTS3 shows the progression of the various elements of the scheme.
- NTS.3 During the consideration of the outline application for the mixed-use scheme, Cherwell District Council (CDC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) confirmed that a second primary school was not required (land previously shown as ‘potential land for a primary school’ or referred to as the reserved school site). This parcel of land was subject to an outline application for up to 46 units, application 11/01502/OUT, which was consented in July 2011.
- NTS.4 Following recent discussions with other developers on site and through advice from land agents, it was concluded that there was a market for more small housing units on the site. It was also considered that the delivery of the South West Bicester scheme could be speeded up with a greater variety of housing mix / smaller units. The overall density of the outline scheme was also revisited. It was concluded that an increase of up to 100 dwellings across the site was appropriate in terms of optimising land use, whilst remaining within the density parameters set out in the consented application 06/00967/OUT.
- NTS.5 This environmental impact assessment (EIA) was required for the section 73 planning application to vary condition 16 of consented application 06/00967/OUT, which limits the total number of dwellings to 1,585. It is required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (the EIA Regulations). An environmental statement (ES) has been prepared to report the findings, and its key elements are summarised in this non-technical summary.

### **The proposal**

- NTS.6 The proposal is to vary condition 16 of the consented outline application (06/00967/OUT). Condition 16 states:

***“That not more than 1,585 dwellings shall be accommodated on the site.***

*Reason – The environmental statement has assessed the impact of a development of up to 1,585 and demonstrates that a development of that scale will not have significant adverse effect. The development is therefore limited to the assessed development to ensure no impact occurs that has not been subject to assessment and to comply with Policy G2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016.”*

- NTS.7 This section 73 application will seek to increase the maximum number of dwellings by up to 100 units, which will be introduced to the residential areas that have not yet been subject to reserved matters or sold for development across the site (figure NTS4), bringing the total allowed under (06/00967/OUT) to up to 1,685.
- NTS.8 The proposed increase in dwelling numbers will be within the parameters set out in the 2006 outline application and associated ES, which allows for a range of building heights (figure NTS5): the majority of the site being up to 2.5 storeys (maximum height of 9 m) with a road frontage of up to 3.5 storeys (11.5 m), and maximum heights around the local centre of 4 storeys (14.5 m).
- NTS.9 The small increase in unit numbers will not alter the densities set out in the building density parameter plan which was assessed through the 2006 ES (reproduced in figure NTS6). This sets the density of the southern and western areas (and the far north east corner) as 30-35 units per hectare, with the majority of the remaining residential development with a density of 35-40 units per hectare, except residences close to the local centre, which will be at a density of 40-45 units per hectare.
- NTS.10 Proposals put forward in this application also remain within the parameters set within the approved Kingsmere Design Code (July 2008). The extent of the developable area for residential development also remains unchanged.

### **Assessment methodology**

- NTS.11 A screening request was prepared and submitted to CDC to ascertain if EIA was required for this section 73 application. CDC returned an opinion that EIA was necessary for this proposal, but acknowledged that some of the issues previously considered in the 2006 ES are unlikely to change with the additional development proposed. The council’s screening opinion specified that the following issues should be updated and re-assessed under a new ES:
- Air quality (related specifically to traffic)
  - Natural heritage
  - Social and community
  - Traffic and transport
  - Hydrology and water quality

NTS.12 This section 73 application will only come forward as part of the consented outline scheme and Countryside Properties is committed to building out all of the remaining elements of the 2006 outline scheme. As such, the current conditions (baseline) on the site are considered to be interim. Countryside Properties is also committed to building out the consented application for up to 46 dwellings on the reserved school site, and the site's future baseline therefore includes both the completed consented outline application and the additional 46 dwellings. The baseline scenarios examined in the assessments are summarised in more detail in the individual topic sections below.

NTS.13 Where appropriate, the assessment considers the cumulative effects of the proposals with other permitted developments in the Bicester area (as advised by CDC).

## **Environmental effects**

### ***Air quality***

NTS.14 The traffic-related pollutants nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter were the main focus of the air quality assessment, although construction dust was also addressed. Air quality in the vicinity of the site is generally good, with national air quality objectives being met for both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter.

NTS.15 As discussed above, the additional 100 dwellings will be distributed across the site within the consented development areas. The construction of the additional dwellings will therefore be covered by the construction environmental management plan currently being implemented for the consented South West Bicester development, which includes a range of measures to reduce the generation of dust. As a result, no significant effects are predicted from dust generation during construction.

NTS.16 The potential for effects on local air quality from increased traffic associated with the proposed development, both during and post-construction, was examined using computer modelling software. No significant increases in traffic-related air pollutants are predicted as a result of the proposed development, either during or post-construction, and national air quality objectives will continue to be met.

### ***Natural heritage***

NTS.17 The natural heritage assessment was based on that undertaken for the 2006 application, adjusted to reflect the changes that have occurred on site due to the implementation of the consented development. The assessment examined the potential for effects on habitats and a range of protected species, including bats, badgers, reptiles and water voles.

NTS.18 There have been changes to the ecology of the site since 2006 as a result of the implementation of the consented development, including the translocation of an area of grassland, new hedgerow planting, establishment of balancing ponds, the ceasing of farming, and the management of habitats on site under the approved ecological management plan.

NTS.19 The additional 100 dwellings will be constructed within the development areas identified in the 2006 application, and will not change the effects associated with the consented development. Therefore, the assessment concludes that there will not be any additional significant effects beyond those identified in the 2006 ES and no additional mitigation measures are required.

### ***Social and community effects***

NTS.20 The social and community assessment examined the potential effects of the proposed additional 100 dwellings both alone and cumulatively with the consented development at South West Bicester. The assessment considered demography, housing supply, employment, socio-cultural factors (such as crime and quality of life) and community facilities (including education, health services and recreation).

NTS.21 The existing social and community baseline in Bicester was reviewed. There is relatively low unemployment in the town and a low crime rate. There is a range of local shops and services, which can accommodate an increase in demand. There is demand in the local area for additional market and affordable housing, and a shortfall of formal sports provision. In addition, there are currently restrictions on the registration of NHS patients at dental surgeries in the town.

NTS.22 The assessment concludes that the additional 100 dwellings alone will not have a significant effect on any of the social and community receptors and no mitigation measures are required. As a result, the cumulative effects with the consented developments at South West Bicester will be the same as those identified in the 2006 ES.

### ***Traffic and transport***

NTS.23 The traffic and transport assessment examined the potential effects of the additional 100 dwellings on the local road network and its users. The assessment was undertaken in the context of the consented development at South West Bicester and a number of other consented developments in the Bicester area.

NTS.24 The assessment found that the additional 100 dwellings would lead to a negligible increase in traffic on the local road network, with all roads experiencing an increase in traffic of less than 3%. Therefore, there will be no significant effects on pedestrian amenity, driver delay or the accident rate as a result of the proposed development.

NTS.25 The additional 100 dwellings will be covered by the construction environmental management plan currently being implemented for the consented South West Bicester development. They will also be covered by the consented development's travel plan, which promotes sustainable modes of travel.

### ***Hydrology and water quality***

NTS.26 There are three watercourses at or near the site, Pingle Brook, Gaggle Brook and an unnamed watercourse, as well as a number of field drains. The assessment considered the potential for pollution of these watercourses and groundwater during and post-construction, the potential flood risk and the increase in demand for wastewater treatment capacity and drinking water.

NTS.27 As discussed above, the additional 100 dwellings will be covered by the construction environmental management plan currently being implemented for the consented South West Bicester development. This plan incorporates a range of measures to prevent pollution of groundwater and watercourses during construction, including measures to address any accidental spillages of fuels or oils. No significant effects are predicted during construction.

NTS.28 The additional 100 units will be served by the sustainable drainage system (SuDS) designed for the consented development. This uses a combination of on plot source control SuDS (such as soakaways, swales and pervious pavements) and balancing ponds to restrict runoff to the existing greenfield runoff rates. Therefore, there will be no changes to runoff rates as a result of the additional 100 dwellings, and the consented surface water drainage system will ensure there will be no significant effects on surface water or groundwater hydrology. The drainage system has been designed in accordance with best practice and includes pollution prevention measures to ensure that runoff from the development will not significantly affect the quality of watercourses or groundwater post-construction.

NTS.29 There is capacity at the main Bicester sewage treatment works to serve the proposed development. A new sewer has already been constructed to connect the development to the works and there is adequate capacity within this network, which will ensure the development is adequately served with respect to wastewater drainage. Thames Water has confirmed that an adequate drinking water supply can be provided for the proposed development.

### **Conclusion**

NTS.30 This non-technical summary has outlined the findings of the EIA of the proposed variation of condition 16 of the consented South West Bicester outline scheme, contained within the ES that accompanies the planning application. The proposed increase in dwellings will not result in any significant effects in addition to those identified as part of the 2006 EIA. No additional mitigation is proposed.

NTS.31 Copies of the full ES and its technical appendices have been distributed to CDC and the statutory consultees. The full documents are available for public inspection during the consultation period at CDC's office at the following address:

Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX15 4AA

NTS.32 Copies of the ES on CD can be purchased from Terence O'Rourke Ltd at a cost of £20, which reflects the time and production costs. Paper copies may also be available (at printing cost) from Terence O'Rourke Ltd at the following address:

Terence O'Rourke Ltd  
Everdene House  
Deansleigh Road  
Bournemouth  
BH7 7DU

Tel: 01202 421142  
Fax: 01202 430055  
Email: [maildesk@torltd.co.uk](mailto:maildesk@torltd.co.uk)