

# South West Bicester

Technical appendix 1:  
Scoping consultation exercise

MAY 2006



Terence O'Rourke

# **South West Bicester Environmental Statement Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd**

## **Technical Appendix 1                      Scoping Consultation Exercise**

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# South West Bicester Environmental Statement

## Scoping Consultation Exercise

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### Introduction

Scoping sets the context for the remainder of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process. It determines the nature or characteristics of the development, the breadth of the EIA, the range and complexity of key issues and sensitivities, and the extent to which each environmental topic area needs to be investigated.

The work undertaken during the scoping stage of the EIA has been examined in this technical appendix.

### Scoping

A formal scoping opinion was requested from Cherwell District Council (CDC). This request involved issuing a scoping report to the planning department of CDC and a range of consultees to obtain their views on the issues and sensitivities of the proposal (Appendix 1).

The scoping consultation document was sent on the 8 July 2005 to CDC and the consultees. Examples of the covering letters are also included in Appendix 1.

The following organisations were invited to comment on the scope of the EIA:

- Cherwell District Council
  - Planning Control Manager
  - Planning Officer (Major Developments)
  - Principal Planning Officer (Local Plans)
  - Urban Designer
  - Landscape Services Manager
  - Head of Leisure Services
  - Conservation Officer
  - Environmental Protection Manager
  - Chief Engineer
- Oxfordshire County Council
  - Strategic Planning
  - Highway Authority
  - County Ecologist
  - Education Authority
  - Rights of Way Officer
  - County Archaeologist
  - Cultural Services

- Bicester Town Council
- Chesterton Parish Council
- Environment Agency
- English Nature
- Highways Agency
- English Heritage
- Countryside Agency
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Oxfordshire Badger Group
- Oxfordshire Bat Group
- Farming Wildlife Advisory Group
- Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- Banbury Ornithological Society
- Bicester Friends of the Earth
- Learning and Skills Council
- Network Rail.

### **Scoping responses**

A summary of the scoping opinion received from CDC and the key issues raised by the consultees are set out in Appendix 2. The full scoping opinion is included as Appendix 3 and the responses received from consultees are included in Appendix 4.

Following receipt of the scoping opinion, clarification was sought from CDC with respect to which environmental issues should be raised to issues of primary significance. A letter summarising the outcome of these discussions is included in Appendix 3.

It was confirmed that CDC recommends that both ‘noise and vibration’ and ‘land use’ are raised from secondary issues to primary issues. The reason for the change in ranking is due to the public perception of these issues.

CDC has received many comments from the residents in Chesterton with regard to the noise from traffic travelling along the M40. The potential for the development to increase this noise is considered to be a key issue and therefore the Council recommended that noise is raised to a primary issue.

CDC also recommended that land use is raised to a primary issue due to the scale of the change arising from the development proposal. The change in land use from a greenfield site to a built development is considered to be very significant from a public perception point of view. The Council accepts that this assessment will only consider the change in land use and will refer to other chapters with regard to changes to local views, disturbance from the construction work and the impact of traffic during construction and post-construction.

## Conclusion

The range of issues raised by CDC and the consultees during the scoping consultation exercise have been examined and considered as part of the EIA.

The preliminary ranking of the environmental topics was amended following receipt of CDC's comments. The ranking of the environmental issues has been undertaken to ensure that the EIA focuses on the appropriate issues. Issues of primary significance will be thoroughly assessed in the EIA. The secondary issues will also be examined in depth but to a lesser degree than the primary issues. The final ranking of the environmental topics is as follows:

Final Ranking of the Environmental Issues	PRIMARY ISSUES	SECONDARY ISSUES
	Cultural heritage	Air quality
	Community and social effects	Natural heritage
	Land use	Ground conditions and contamination
	Landscape and visual	
	Hydrology and water quality	
	Noise and vibration	Waste
	Traffic and transport	

## **Appendix 1**

### **Land South-West of Bicester Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report**

#### **Examples of the covering letters**

8 July 2005

Ms R Tibbetts  
Conservation Officer Oxfordshire  
English Nature Thames and Chilterns Team  
Foxhold House  
Thornford Road  
Crookham Common  
Thatcham  
Berkshire  
RG19 8EL

Our ref: 180601/rj

Dear Ms Tibbetts

**PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ON LAND SOUTH-WEST OF BICESTER  
Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales)  
Regulations 1999 – Scoping consultation report**

Countryside Properties Ltd is proposing a mixed use development on land south-west of Bicester. The development would comprise 1,585 dwellings, an element of employment, education facilities, a local centre, recreational facilities and enhanced open space. Details of the proposals and site are included in the enclosed report.

The proposals are of a type listed within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (the EIA Regulations) because it is an urban development project in excess of 0.5 hectares (category 10 of Schedule 2). Countryside Properties Ltd has appointed Terence O'Rourke Ltd to manage the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and to prepare an environmental statement (ES) which will accompany the planning application for the proposals.

In line with the EIA Regulations we wish to gain the views of a range of consultees including yourselves on the proposed scope of the EIA. The enclosed report contains our preliminary views of the proposed scope, and how we have reached those conclusions.

It is ultimately for the planning authorities to confirm the scope of the EIA. We would therefore be grateful if you could send any comments on the report to the council and ourselves. We will use the responses to finalise the scope of the EIA, thus enabling us to concentrate on the most important issues.

The contact for the officer in the council who is dealing with this project is:

Mr A Wilson  
Principal Planning Officer (Implementation)  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxon, OX15 4AA

The EIA Regulations suggest that planning authorities should have five weeks in which to draw together all necessary comments on a scoping report and pass them back to the developer. To assist Cherwell District Council, we would therefore be grateful if you could forward your comments on the document as soon as possible, ideally by *Friday 29 July 2005*.

Countryside Properties Ltd has appointed a number of specialist environmental consultants to work on the EIA. It is possible that you may receive requests for information of a specific and technical nature from members of this team in addition to this request for comments on the scoping report. I would be grateful if you could deal with these matters separately to the scoping process.

If you require any further information or clarification regarding the proposals, please let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

**Rachel Jones**

Senior Environmental Manager

enc. Scoping consultation report

cc. Tony Wilson, Cherwell District Council  
John Oldham, Countryside Properties Ltd



## **Appendix 2**

**Summary of scoping opinion and comments received from consultees**

**LAND SOUTH-WEST OF BICESTER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
SUMMARY OF SCOPING OPINION AND CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

**CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL – SCOPING OPINION**

The Council has requested further clarification of the area of the site particularly the southern boundary and land east of A41(T). In addition, further information of the proposals should be included and it should reflect the wording of policy H13 and the wishes of Oxfordshire County Council. The Council has also suggested additional consultees to be included at the application stage.

The proposals include a significant provision of employment land and new school and college facilities and these issues should be reclassified as primary. The impact on quality of life should also be primary as the proposal will have significant effects upon the local population, particularly those living north of Middleton Stoney Road.

There are no direct implications for listed buildings arising from the proposal and this issue should be down graded to secondary. The ES should examine the impact of the proposals on the existing conservation areas of Bicester and Chesterton and this is of primary significance.

A Flood Risk Assessment should be undertaken for Pingle and Gaggle Brook. The 1 in 100, 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 year flood envelopes should be assessed. Sustainable methods of surface water drainage should be positively investigated to mitigate discharge of contaminants to adjacent water courses and to control volumes of run off.

The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to views into the site on approaches to Bicester and from more distant viewpoints (eg Graven Hill). The potential to improve views into the site is likely to exist in only limited, local circumstances. The impacts to landscape quality, landform and topography should also be graded primary to match the other impacts under the heading of landscape and visual.

Natural heritage – the significance of all elements under this heading should be primary as a consequence of the significant change envisaged by the proposal. However, the Council does not suggest that the overall environmental topic is raised to a ‘primary’ issue.

The impacts on the character and biodiversity of the hedgerows on-site may be more significant than the minor changes to the structure.

Noise should be reclassified as a primary issue. Residents of Chesterton have expressed concerns about noise generated by M40 traffic. This issue is likely to be prominent during the construction phase and in any completed development. Mitigation measures should be examined in the ES.

With regard to land use, changes to urban activities and built form should be assessed as having primary impacts. This section should also take into account wider policy issues (national and local) behind the identification of the site and its suitability for development. All built elements of the proposal should be considered to have 'primary impacts' (especially the commerce, local centre and community facilities, secondary school) as there would be a very significant change in character on-site. There may also be environmental impacts from uses such as the local centre and public house. The Council suggests raising 'land use' to a primary issue.

Assessment of alternatives – the ES should examine the potential for alternative development solutions within the site and justify the preferred proposal. The document should also consider the suitability of the site for alternative land uses and why the proposal represents the most appropriate solution. The ES should consider alternative sites in and around Bicester as potential solutions to meeting the town's development needs and explain why this proposal best meets these needs.

The ES should assess the provision of open space within this site and its availability in surrounding areas as the level and quality of open space provision is a recognised issue in Bicester.

The additional demands for rail services may have operational implications for stations at Bicester and on the London to Birmingham line.

The scoping opinion makes reference to some specific comments raised by the consultees. These have been covered within the other sections of this table.

<b>CONSULTEE RESPONSES</b>	
<b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>	
Strategic Planning	Land should be reserved for two primary schools and a secondary school. This should be taken into account in the community and social effects chapter. The impact of the development on the local library service, social and healthcare and fire and rescue should be considered.
Highway Authority	No comments
County Ecologist	Landscape – a landscape character assessment (with consideration to Cherwell district’s LAC and OWLS) and visual impact assessment is required. Biodiversity – no wildlife designations at the site, but would require a full ecological survey with reference to any BAP priority habitats / species that are present. Bird / invertebrate surveys particularly butterflies and dragonflies should be included. TV-ERC should be consulted for any existing data. Other issues – an impact assessment of proposals on landscape character / biodiversity resource should be included, applicants should highlight mitigation measures to reduce impact on landscape / biodiversity and compensation for any loss / damage to landscape / biodiversity resource. The open space strategy should contribute towards landscape character / biodiversity interest of the area. Reference should be made to the OWLS website.
Education Authority	No comments
Rights of Way Officer	There are two footpaths that cross the site. Where they meet the roads running into Chesterton there is little or no provision on the roadside verges for pedestrians and improvements would be needed. Where the paths run through new housing they should be surfaced and lit. Whether cycle provision is provided on these paths will depend on what other cycle provision there is on site. Any barriers to the route should be removed or improved.  A new route running in a south-easterly direction linking the paths to the east of Chesterton would be desirable. There is no provision for people towards the western end of the Middleton Stoney Road to access this area. A new footpath / cycleway to link to Chesterton Footpath 1 would be useful.

County Archaeologist	Archaeological evaluation work has been undertaken for a portion of the site and this produced positive results. Further evaluative archaeological work will be required for the remainder of the proposal area and should be undertaken prior to determination.
Cultural Services	No comments
<b>Bicester Town Council</b>	No comments
<b>Chesterton Parish Council</b>	No comments
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<p>Ground conditions – The EA support the issues raised in the scoping report.</p> <p>Hydrology and water quality – the application should include a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as part of the site lies within Flood Zone 3 and the scale of the development can generate significant volumes of surface water. Groundwater flooding may also be an issue. The FRA should investigate fluvial flooding for areas located within Flood Zone 3, surface water flooding and groundwater flooding.</p> <p>The EA fully supports the use of SUDS within the development. However, SUDS can have a detrimental impact on the groundwater quality. The ES needs to explore how SUDS can achieve a successful outcome.</p> <p>The ES should investigate and seek to confirm that the proposed development would not affect or be affected by groundwater flow, particularly in areas of high groundwater.</p> <p>The watercourses should not be culverted, a buffer zone should be left on either side of any watercourse and culverted watercourses should be opened up.</p> <p>Natural heritage – adjacent to the smaller parcel of land, east of the A41 (T), is a county wildlife site known as Promise Land Farm, North Meadow. The ES needs to investigate and ensure there will be no detrimental effects to this site.</p> <p>Agree that a phase 1 habitat survey and protected species survey will be required. According to the EA’s records both water voles and native crayfish have been recorded at the site.</p> <p>The ES should include an ecological survey of the site at the correct time of year. It should identify features worthy of retention and enhancement as well as give an indication of what will be lost.</p> <p>All protected species of fauna and flora should be noted, together with national, regional and local rarities. For any protected species found, action programmes for their retention / rescue and translocation</p>
<b>English Nature</b>	

	<p>should be included. Both kingfisher and great crested newts are known to the area. Potential sources of disturbance / pollution should be described e.g. air emissions, site lighting, surface water run off and construction traffic especially impacts of lighting on bats and invertebrates, and fuel spillages, surface water runoff into any nearby water courses.</p> <p>Scope of the transport assessment and related environmental aspects should extend to include M40 junction 9.</p>
<b>Highways Agency</b>	No comments
<b>English Heritage</b>	No comments
<b>Countryside Agency</b>	No comments
<b>Berkshire, Buckinghamshire &amp; Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust</b>	<p>Welcome acknowledgement of potential habitat enhancement and the relationship between biodiversity enhancements and provision of open space, but feel magnitude of the change could be high. There is a significant need for habitat creation and to incorporate plans into public open space and landscaping. Developing a network of multi-functional green spaces, or green infrastructure, which can cater for numerous different social, environmental and economic needs is recommended. Would support and recommend the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy to accompany the proposals.</p> <p>The proposed development of this scale represents a significant opportunity to create new wildlife habitats, thereby contributing to the targets contained in the Cherwell and Oxfordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plans.</p>
<b>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</b>	No comments
<b>Oxfordshire Badger Group</b>	No comments
<b>Oxfordshire Bat Group</b>	<p>It will be important to maintain to a degree the hedgerows on-site and to ensure the continuation of hedgerows across the site. There are bats in the area (3 species in Chesterton) and they will be using the hedgerows as foraging routes. Tree-planting is suggested as mitigation for the loss of agricultural land arising from the development.</p>
<b>Farming Wildlife Advisory Committee</b>	No comments
<b>Thames Water Utilities Ltd Waste Water</b>	No formal comments. Informally – no change to situation. Sewage treatment works at Bicester cannot handle the development without operational changes or a new treatment works.
<b>Thames Water Utilities Ltd Water Supply</b>	Thames Water will be laying a new main to reinforce the strategic main to Bicester. Developer will be required to fund an impact study to ascertain the level of reinforcement required within Bicester to the distribution network.

	<p>Consideration should also be given to reducing water consumption in new dwellings. Average water consumption is 59m3 per person per year but Thames Water would support reducing this to 40m3. Thames Water also recommends building new homes to an Ecohomes standard of excellent with particular emphasis on reducing internal water use (fitting water efficient WC's, taps, showers and dishwasher and washing machines and installing water re-use systems), reducing external water use by encouraging rainwater recycling for irrigation and car washing.</p>
<p><b>Banbury Ornithological Society</b></p>	<p>Suggest retention of few existing copses of mature trees, together with as much hedgerow as possible. Request that Gagle Brook is left 'natural' and spared from any realignment, dredging, concrete or 'other' improvement.</p> <p>The land east of the A41 is one of the most attractive parts of the area with the potential for considerable ornithological interest. It is hoped it can be kept free of bricks and mortar and left inaccessible. Would like to comment on design and proposed maintenance regime of the surface water balancing in due course. They could become useful attractive ornithological features.</p> <p>Late comments – arrived 30 August 2005 after scoping opinion issued.</p>
<p><b>Bicester Friends of the Earth</b></p>	<p>Hedgerows should be retained, some will be ancient. Bignall House and grounds are of historic value and add to village of Chesterton. Effect on global climate and healthy boiler, traffic, energy use must be fed into Council's and government data. Provision of open space needed for development and to address shortfall in town. Provision of new facilities must be for new community and town, not to attract traffic from wide area. All development should include water butts, water meters and water conscious gardening information. Local climate effects will be increased, ground level ozone.</p>
<p><b>Learning and Skills Council</b></p>	<p>No comments</p>
<p><b>Network Rail</b></p>	<p>Given the size and nature of the proposed development, consideration should be given to the impact of the scheme on the operational capacity of the two stations in Bicester. There will be a significant increase in the numbers of people using these stations, in particular commuting to work, which may place additional pressure on existing facilities (such as station car parking) and train services. The developers should consult with Chiltern Railways.</p>

**Appendix 3**

**Scoping opinion**

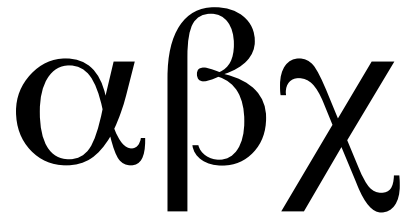
**Clarification letter**



# *Planning and Development Services*

Alan Jones MA (Cantab) DipTP MRTPI  
Head of Planning and Development Services

Nigel Evans DipUP MRTPI Planning Policy Manager



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*Please ask for **Tony Wilson***

*Our ref **AW/PL1/24/1/10/2/1***

*Your ref **CPR/cjb/1644***

*Direct Dial **01295 221842** Fax **01295 221856** Email **tony.wilson@cherwell-dc.gov.uk***

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25 August 2005

## **BY POST AND E-MAIL**

Dear Ms Jones

### **Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - Land at South West Bicester Environmental Statement Scoping Report**

I write in response to your request for views on the scoping report submitted to the Council on 8 July. I have consulted with relevant colleagues within the Council, at Oxfordshire County Council and with statutory consultees as defined by Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment, the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 and the General Development Procedure Order 1995.

I provide below a schedule of comments in relation to the scoping report. I have referenced them wherever possible to the paragraphs within the document.

#### **Paragraph 2.1**

The southern boundary of the site should be more explicitly defined.

#### **Paragraph 2.2**

The area of land to the east of the A41 has not been clearly defined.

#### **Paragraph 3.1**

The components of the proposal outlined within the document should reflect more accurately the wording of Policy H13 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (NSCLP). This includes reference to affordable housing (including the percentage to be provided), the extent and type of employment land and hotel provision.

The reference to a link road to the existing Bicester by-pass does not properly reflect the requirements of Oxfordshire County Council. Reference should also be included to the requirement to provide land for two primary schools and a secondary school.

### **Paragraph 5.8**

The list of consultees should be expanded to include the following:

Chiltern Railways, Stagecoach Oxfordshire and National Express (transport issues); Launton, Weston on the Green, Bucknell, Wendlebury and Caversfield Parish Councils; and DEFRA.

### **Paragraph 6.10**

The impact of the proposal on local library services, social and healthcare facilities and fire and rescue services should also be considered.

### **Page 9 – Community and Social Effects**

I would suggest that the significance of the proposals in respect of impacts upon employment and education should be reclassified as ‘primary’ as the overall proposal includes significant provision in terms of employment land and new school and college facilities. Additionally, I would consider that the impact upon quality of life issues should also be reclassified as ‘primary’, as the proposal would have significant effects upon the local population, particularly those living to the north of Middleton Stoney Road.

### **Paragraph 6.13**

The future use of Whitelands Farm will need to be clearly defined if it is to be properly assessed by the ES.

### **Paragraph 6.15**

The ES should include reference to the need for further archaeological investigation across the whole site. This investigation will be necessary following the previous archaeological interest revealed by previous trenching and non-invasive surveys. Any further investigations should be undertaken prior to the determination of any planning application and appropriate mitigation measures agreed.

### **Page 11 – Cultural Heritage**

I would suggest that the significance of effects upon listed buildings should be reduced to ‘secondary’ as there are no direct implications arising from this proposal. However, I feel that the ES should include reference to the impact of the proposal on existing conservation areas in Bicester and Chesterton. This element should be given ‘primary’ significance.

### **Paragraph 6.25**

Sustainable methods of surface water drainage should be positively investigated in order to mitigate the discharge of contaminants to adjacent watercourses and to control overall volumes of run-off.

Flood Risk Assessments should be undertaken with regard to the Gagle Brook and Pingle Stream. As identified in the scoping report, it is thought that the risk of flooding from these watercourses is low; however, the 1 in 100, 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 year flood envelopes should be assessed for reference purposes. Groundwater flooding may also be an issue where groundwater levels are high; this should be investigated within the ES.

A part of the site also lies within Flood Zone 3 (high risk 1 in 100 year flood risk). The Flood Risk Assessment should therefore fully investigate fluvial, surface water and groundwater flooding in this area

### **Paragraph 6.27**

The examination of the operation of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD) on the site is welcomed and further guidance is available from the Environment Agency. The implementation of SUD can have negative impacts upon groundwater quality; therefore the

ES should examine how SUD can be achieved without detriment to either factor. With regard to groundwater flow, the ES should demonstrate that development does not affect, or is affected by groundwater flows.

#### **Paragraph 6.28**

While the Environment Agency is not aware of other watercourses within the site, if others are discovered, they should not be culverted. Any new watercourse should be set within an appropriate buffer zone and any culverted watercourses should be opened up and included as a feature within the site.

#### **Paragraph 6.31**

The ES for the site should also include a landscape and visual assessment of the impact of the proposals, with particular reference to views into the site on the approaches to Bicester and from more distant viewpoints (e.g., Graven Hill).

#### **Paragraph 6.32**

The B4030 has been incorrectly classified as an 'A' road.

#### **Paragraph 6.33**

The paragraph refers to the potential of the development to improve views into the site. I would consider that such potential exists in limited local circumstances and that such a general statement is inappropriate. Again, the views into the site should be assessed as part of a wider landscape and visual assessment that should form part of the ES.

#### **Page 17 – Landscape and Visual**

The table lists the significance of the impacts of development on Landscape Quality and Landform and Topography as 'secondary'. I would hold the opinion that these impacts should be graded as 'primary', to match the significance of other impacts within this heading.

#### **Paragraph 6.36**

While there may be potential for 'minor changes' to existing hedgerows and woodland on site, the implications for the character and biodiversity of these areas may be more significant.

#### **Paragraph 6.39**

The report classifies the land use effects of the proposal as a 'secondary' issue. While recreational land, footpaths and open space uses could reasonably be assessed as having 'secondary' impacts, more urban activities and built form should be assessed as having 'primary' impacts.

#### **Page 18 – Land Use**

This section should also take into account wider policy issues (national and local) behind the identification of the site and reasons for its suitability for development of this type.

#### **Page 19 – Land Use**

The classification of the impacts of commerce, local centre and community facilities as 'secondary' impacts is not considered appropriate. While these elements are only relatively small components within the overall proposal, they do constitute a significant change in the use of the land, from agricultural to urban use. The proposed secondary school is likely to be a significant building in its own right and this is likely to have a significant social and physical impact, particularly if it is located on the periphery of the development area. All built elements of the proposal should be considered to have 'primary' impacts as there would be a very significant change in the character of this site. There may also be environmental impact from uses such as the local centre and public house.

#### **Paragraph 6.40**

The ES should be supported by appropriate surveys, undertaken during relevant time periods to establish the presence of all protected species. For example, although kingfishers and great crested newts have not been specifically identified on site, they are known to exist in the Bicester area.

The ES should also incorporate a landscape character assessment with cross reference to the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Survey (OWLS). Further guidance is available from Oxfordshire County Council.

The scoping report identifies the need to survey for protected fauna and identifies the key species. It would be beneficial if the ES could also incorporate surveys of bird and insect life, particularly butterflies and dragonflies. Action programmes for the retention or relocation of protected species should also be included within the ES. The methodologies for any investigations, surveys or mitigation measures should also be included and all source material included within a reference section.

The scoping report considers the impact of development on existing habitats and species. However, the ES should also consider the potential for the creation of new habitats and increase biodiversity within the proposed development site. The County Ecologist will be able to provide advice on the scope and relative priority for habitat creation.

A County Wildlife Site (CWS), North Meadow, Promised Land Farm is located east of the A41. While this site is beyond the proposed development area, the ES should demonstrate that there will be no detrimental effects arising from the proposal.

The Natural Heritage section notes that further survey work will be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of such resources. For information, the Phase 1 Ecological Survey undertaken in 2001 identified a number of important features within the site; these included, rush pasture and stream, species rich hedgerows, mature trees and a number of copses (the southern most copse is of particular value). A subsequent invertebrates survey undertaken by the Council considered that the site had low interest for invertebrates.

#### **Page 21 – Natural Heritage**

I would consider that the significance of impacts for all elements within this heading be reclassified as ‘primary’ as a consequence of the significant change envisaged by the proposal.

#### **Noise and Vibration**

I would consider that this issue should be reclassified as ‘primary’. Residents of Chesterton have expressed concerns about noise generated by M40 traffic; therefore, this issue is likely to be prominent during the construction phase and in any completed development. Mitigation measures should therefore also be examined as part of the ES.

#### **Paragraph 6.49**

The ES and Transport Assessment should extend to the consideration of impacts at Junction 9 of the M40.

The site is also crossed by two footpaths. The ES should consider how these rights of way can be properly integrated into an extended pedestrian network and assess the impacts upon those who use them. The rural character of footpaths should be preserved as much as possible within the development proposals.

**Paragraph 6.52**

The creation of a significant new residential area is likely to create additional demands for rail services which may have operational implications at stations in Bicester and on the London-Birmingham rail line. The ES should address the likely implications for this infrastructure.

**Other Matters****Assessment of Alternatives**

The ES should examine the potential for alternative development solutions within the site and justify the preferred proposal. The document should also consider the suitability of the site for alternative land uses and why the proposal represents the most appropriate solution.

The ES should consider alternative sites in and around Bicester as potential solutions to meeting the Town's development needs and explain why this proposal best meets these needs.

**Open Space**

The ES should assess the provision of open space within the site and its availability in surrounding areas as the level and quality of open space provision is a recognised issue in Bicester.

I hope that you will find these comments useful. Please let me know if you require any additional clarification.

Yours sincerely

Tony Wilson  
Principal Planning Officer (Implementation)

Cc Duncan Chadwick, Bob Duxbury, Linda Rand, Jenny Barker, Sharon Whiting, Philip Rolls, Judith Ward, Rob Lowther, Tony Brummell, CDC  
Linda Currie, Howard Cox, Tony Clark, OCC

## **Appendix 4**

### **Responses received from consultees**

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

Our ref: BW9.1.4.1

Your ref: 180601/rj

27 July 2005

Dear Ms Jones

**PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ON LAND SOUTH-WEST OF BICESTER  
Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales)  
Regulations 1999 – Scoping consultation report  
Application No: 180601/rj**

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 2005, received in this office on the 11 July 2005 regarding the above application.

The proposed development is unlikely to have a direct impact on sites designated for nature conservation; however, wider nature conservation sensitivities must be given full and thorough consideration. The scope of environmental issues provided would appear to be satisfactory. However I have laid out below some general pointers as to what we would expect an Environmental Assessment to include which you may find useful.

- An ecological survey of the proposal site carried out during the appropriate time of year. This should detail those features worthy of retention and enhancement on site as well as give an indication of what will be lost as a consequence of the development.
- All protected species of fauna and flora on site should be accounted for, together with national, regional and local rarities. The Environmental Assessment should include surveys for protected species carried out in accordance with current best practice. For any such species found, action programmes for their retention/rescue/translocation should be included. I note that both Kingfisher and great crested newts are known to the Bicester area.
- The Environment Agency should be consulted over potential effects of the proposed development on its areas of responsibility.
- Potential sources of disturbance and/or pollution should be described, such as air emissions, site lighting, surface water runoff, and construction traffic. These can each have an impact both on wildlife and the environment in general. Of particular concern are the impacts of lighting on bats

and invertebrates, and fuel spillages/surface water runoff into any nearby watercourses. Measures for mitigation should be recommended, where adverse impacts are envisaged.

- For any investigation carried out, the methodology known to be most useful and effective for any particular study should be used. If it is not explained in full in the text, then both this and the analysis of results should be made available at a named source. The methodology used for species surveys and the results should always be included within the Environmental Statement.
- Conclusions should remain impartial rather than favour any particular outcome of the Environmental Assessment. They should be based upon the evidence found within the scope of the Environmental Assessment, rather than upon unsubstantiated opinion.
- Any source material should be referred to and listed in a reference section. Where data has not or cannot be obtained, for whatever reason, this should be explained in the text and no conclusions reached in its absence.

I hope these comments are useful, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Mansbridge  
Assistant Conservation Officer



Mr A Wilson  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxon  
OX15 4AA

13 July 2005

Dear Mr Wilson

**Proposed mixed-use development on land SW of Bicester – EIA Scoping Report**

Consultants acting for Countryside Properties Ltd in the above matter have invited the RSPB to comment on the proposed scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment. We were asked to address our comments to you.

The scope of the EIA as it relates to *existing* biodiversity interest on the site appears satisfactory. However, we consider a proposed development of this scale represents a significant opportunity to create *new* wildlife habitats, thereby contributing to the targets contained in the Cherwell and Oxfordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

Therefore, in addition to assessing the potential to 'enhance existing habitats on site' as set out in the 'Natural Heritage' table on p.21 of the report, the EIA should specifically address the potential to create new wildlife habitats and contribute to LBAP targets. Craig Blackwell, Oxfordshire County Ecologist, should be asked to advise on the scope and relative priority for delivering specific habitat targets through this development.

I trust these comments are of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Colin Wilkinson MRTPI  
Planning & Local Government Officer

CC. Rachel Jones, Terence O'Rourke Ltd

**Subject:** Re: Land South-West of Bicester [Virus Checked]  
**Date:** Thursday, August 11, 2005 11:04:28 am  
**Sender:** Jo Griffiths <jo.griffiths@torltd.co.uk>  
**From:** Karl.Tuchscherer@thameswater.co.uk  
**To:** Rachel Jones <rachel.jones@torltd.co.uk>  
**Cc:** tony.wilson@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Rachel,

with reference to the report for the above I can comment as follows:

Thames Water will be laying a new main to reinforce the strategic to Bicester, however the developer will be required to fund an impact study to ascertain the level of reinforcement required within Bicester to the distribution network.

Consideration should also be taken into account in terms of reducing water consumption in new dwellings we would advise as follows:

The average water consumption per person per year in the Thames Water region is currently about 59m<sup>3</sup>. We would support reducing the average water use in new homes to 40m<sup>3</sup> per person per year, or in terms of building use, 40m<sup>3</sup> per bedspace per year.

We would recommend that, in the absence of a finalised Government 'Sustainable Code for Buildings', new homes be built to a BREEAM EcoHomes standard of 'Excellent', with particular emphasis on:

(i) reducing internal water use (through the fitting of water efficient WC's, taps, showers, dishwasher and washing machines, as well as the installation of water re-use systems) and

(ii) reducing external water use by encouraging the recycling of rainwater for irrigation purposes, and car washing.

Regards

Karl Tuchscherer  
Network Coordinator  
Thames Water

A family of four can save 220 buckets of water a month by turning the tap off when they brush their teeth.  
Water is precious: It's the non-rainy days we all need to save for.

RWE Thames Water plc, Registered Office Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8DB.  
Registered No. 2366623. This e-mail is confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RWE Thames Water plc or its subsidiaries. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail you may not copy, use, forward or disclose its contents to any other person ; please notify our Computer Service Desk on +44 (0)118 9593587 and destroy and delete the message and attachments from your system.

For more information on RWE Thames Water visit our web site at <http://www.rwethameswater.com>

**Subject:** Land SW of Bicester - scoping  
**Date:** Friday, August 12, 2005 4:39:01 pm  
**Sender:** Jo Griffiths <jo.griffiths@torltd.co.uk>  
**From:** Rachel Jones <rachel.jones@torltd.co.uk>  
**To:** Tony Wilson <tony.wilson@cherwell-dc.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Jeff Picksley <jeff.picksley@torltd.co.uk>

Dear Tony

For your information, Oxfordshire Bat Group called with comments on the scoping report. The comments are as follows.

It will be important to maintain to a degree the hedgerows on-site and to ensure the continuation of hedgerows across the site. There are bats in the area (3 species in Chesterton) and they will be using the hedgerows as foraging routes. Tree-planting is suggested as mitigation for the loss of agricultural land arising from the development.

Please call if you need any further information.

Regards  
Rachel Jones

--

Terence O'Rourke  
Everdene House  
Deansleigh Road  
Bournemouth  
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**Subject:** Re: Land South-West of Bicester  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 10, 2005 12:22:09 pm  
**Sender:** Jo Griffiths <jo.griffiths@torltd.co.uk>  
**From:** Tom Munro <tom.munro@fwag.org.uk>  
**To:** Rachel Jones <rachel.jones@torltd.co.uk>  
**Attachments:** Text10.htm (2KB)

Rachel

Thanks for your reminder - I have been on holiday. I have consulted with my colleague who knows the area better than I. In terms of what the EIA will cover, from our point of view I think it is comprehensive.

Regards

Tom

---

Tom Munro  
Farm Conservation Adviser  
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group  
Unit 11, Blenheim Business Park  
Long Hanborough  
Oxon OX29 8LN  
01993 886568

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Rachel Jones  
**To:** [tom.munro@fwag.org.uk](mailto:tom.munro@fwag.org.uk)  
**Sent:** Monday, August 01, 2005 12:19 PM  
**Subject:** Land South-West of Bicester

Dear Tom

For your information, we sent an environmental impact assessment (EIA) scoping report to the Farming Wildlife Advisory Group for comments. This document was concerned with a site on land south-west of Bicester.

We would be grateful if you could confirm whether you received the document and to let me know if you have any comments on the proposed scope of the EIA.

Thank you very much for your time.

Regards

Rachel Jones.

- -

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**Subject:** Land SW of Bicester Scoping Report  
**Date:** Monday, August 8, 2005 2:02:05 pm  
**Sender:** Jo Griffiths <jo.griffiths@torltd.co.uk>  
**From:** Rachel Jones <rachel.jones@torltd.co.uk>  
**To:** Richard Hutchings <richard.hutchings@wspgroup.com>

Dear Richard

For your information, we have had a response from the Highways Agency to the EIA scoping report for the mixed use development at land SW of Bicester.

It states that they have no comments on the report except that the scope of the transport assessment and related environmental aspects should extend to include M40 Junction 9. The nearest roads for which the Highways Agency is responsible are the M40 and A34. The letter was received from Douglas Rounthwaite, wing 4c, Federated House, Dorking.

We are expecting to receive the scoping opinion from Cherwell District Council early next week. Comments from the highways authority are still outstanding. I will forward a copy of the scoping opinion and the related letters to you in due course.

Please call if you need any further information

Regards  
Rachel Jones

--

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