

02.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.3.6 Local Facilities

Beyond the historic town centre a number of local centres can be identified. These are typically focused around small local shops, schools, pubs and community centres.

The majority of the local centres were established during the rapid expansion of Bicester in the 1970's and 1980's. Some of these local centres suffer from being sited on non-through routes.

- Local shops
- Community centre
- Pub

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Primary school (proposed)
- Secondary school (proposed)

- Town Centre
- Local Centre



02.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.3.7 Topography

The Application Site is typical of the Middleton Stoney Landscape Character area, dominated by large arable fields and rolling topography.

The topography character is one of gentle undulating slopes, falling from a high point on the north west edge of the Site (96.50 AOD) down to the south east corner towards the junction of Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane (approx 85.00 AOD) with an overall fall of 11 m.

To the north of the Application Site the topography continues to gently rise to the north west albeit with a more ridged landform due to the water courses associated with the River Bure.



02.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.3.8 Topography



Key



02.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.3.8 Landscape and Ecology

Hedgerows

The existing landscape is characterised by large areas of agricultural land bounded by hedgerows.

There are approximately 6km of hedgerows on the Application Site.

These hedgerows, as well as supporting a variety of vegetation, are a major contributor to the biodiversity of the Site, providing habitat links across the Site.

Ecology and Habitat surveys have identified 39 hedgerows across the Application Site, 26 of which were considered 'important' Wildlife and Landscape Criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations (1997)

Water

There are two ponds associated with the Application Site; a small pond to the east of Himley Farm and a larger pond to the south east of the Farm.

The ponds contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the Site.

Woodland

The Site is bounded to the east by approximately 4ha of recently planted broad leaved planted woodland.

Beyond the Site to the south there is more mature woodland, forming part of the Bignell Park estate.



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2.3.8 Landscape and Ecology

Whilst the Site largely consists of agricultural land, the areas of hedgerows, woodland and ponds all play a significant role in supporting the biodiversity of the Site and provide a habitat for a variety of wildlife.

A bat roost have been confirmed at a barn at Himley Farm and a number of hedgerows have been identified as supporting commuting and foraging activities for bats.

A medium sized colony of great crested newts have been recorded at the ponds to the east and south east of Himley Farm. Great crested newts typically forage within 250m of their breeding pond and whilst the surrounding arable land offers poor quality habitat for foraging, the bases of hedgerows and nearby woodland areas do provide a suitable habitat for foraging.



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2.3.8 Landscape and Ecology

Hedgerows



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Hedgerows



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Water



View of larger southern pond at the Himley Farm



View of smaller northern pond at the Himley Farm

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2.3.8 Landscape and Ecology

Woodland



View of the northern section of woodland edge



View of southern section of woodland edge

02.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.3.9 Views

Due to the undulating character of the Site and the surrounding area and the presence of significant hedgerows bounding the Site, there are limited views on to the Site.

Direct views from Middleton Stoney Road along the southern boundary are limited to gaps in vegetation and hedgerows, particularly at access points for farm traffic.

Further west along Middleton Stoney Road longer views of the west edge of the Site are afforded.



Key

