

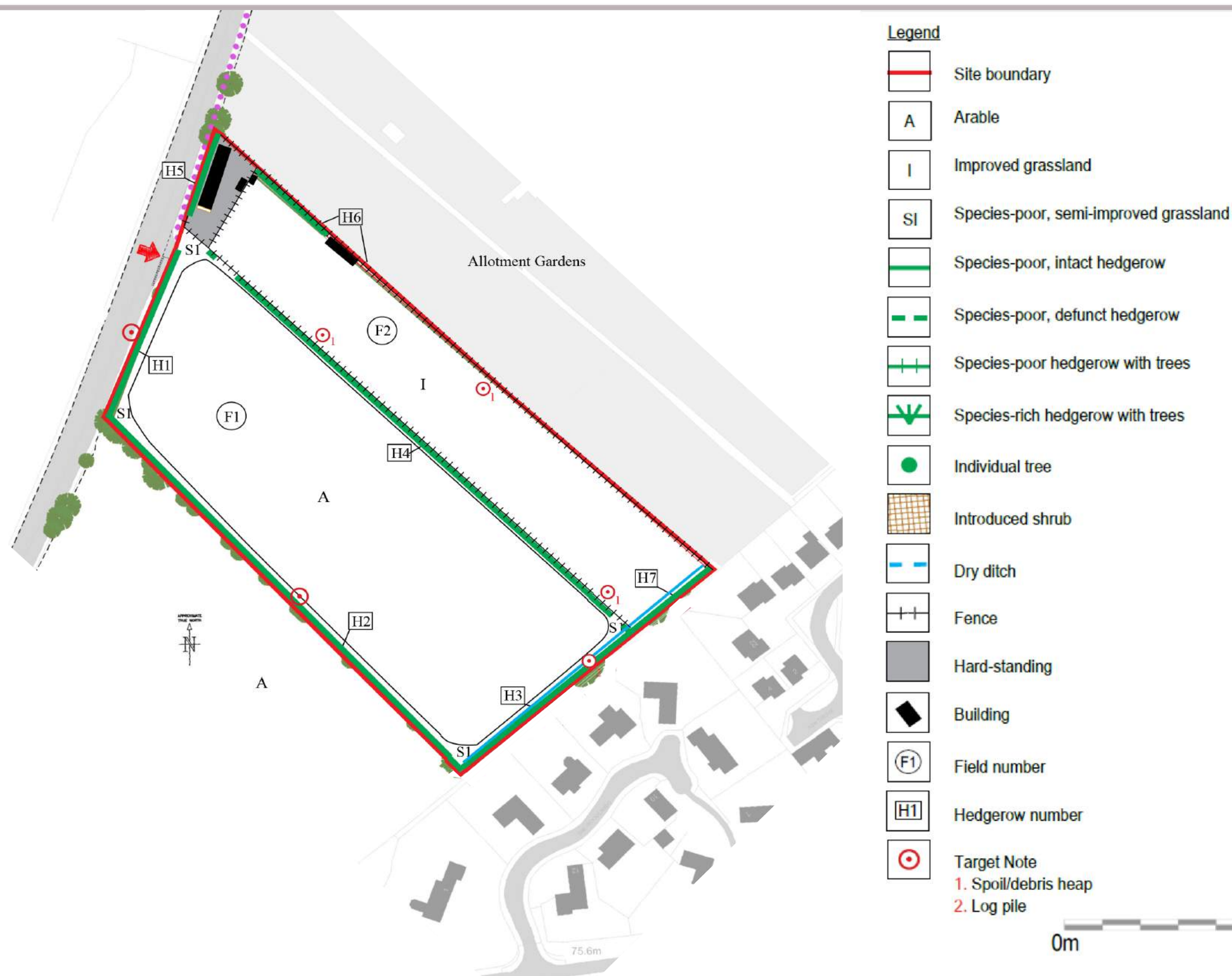
## 2.4: Ecological Appraisal

A residential development of 45 dwellings is proposed on land west of Chesterton in Oxfordshire. This Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken to present the findings of a desk study, an extended Phase 1 habitat survey and hedgerow assessments completed by CSa Environmental Planning in April and May 2014. The ecological features have been valued from the findings. The majority of the site comprises arable land and improved grassland, which are low grade widespread habitats considered to be of low ecological value.

Habitats of ecological value at the Local and Site level comprise native hedgerows with associated trees, long grassland margins and dry ditch. The retention, protection and enhancement of such habitats is recommended wherever possible, particularly the more ecologically valuable hedges, considered to be H1, H2, H3 and H7 (see Habitats Plan in Appendix C). The loss of sections of the central hedgerow that divides the fields (H4) is anticipated to facilitate development. This hedgerow is of relatively low value and it is considered that its loss could be adequately mitigated through improvements to the northern boundary hedge (H6).

Further surveys for the following protected/notable species are recommended:

- Bat roosting- Ground-based tree assessment (any time of year);
- Bat commuting and foraging- Three transect and static detector surveys (May to September);
- Birds – Four breeding bird surveys (mid-March to mid-July);
- Reptiles – Seven visit presence/absence survey (April to September)
- Great Crested Newt - Pond assessment (HS1) and subsequent four visit presence/absence surveys and (mid-March to mid-June, with at least half of surveys undertaken between mid-April and mid-May). If present, two additional visits within the same period to gain an understanding of population size.





## 2.5: Geophysical Survey

A detailed magneto meter survey was undertaken within two land parcels at Chesterton, near Bicester in Oxfordshire. The results indicate the presence of cut features of archaeological potential in the form of a rectilinear enclosure and linear ditch. These extend across both survey areas, although the north eastern area contains widespread magnetic debris which may have obscured further weaker features. Several other linear and discrete anomalies have been located, and while these may relate to cut, ditch-like and pit-like features they are weak, fragmented and indistinct.

Area centred on OS NGR 455818 221418,  
Anomalies of archaeological potential

(1) – A positive linear anomaly extends across the width of the survey area and is a response to a cut feature which continues to the south west as anomaly (7).

(2) – A positive linear anomaly extends across the south eastern part of the survey area and links to the north eastern part of anomaly (7) seen in Area 2 to the south west.

(3) – A positive linear anomaly is located in the north western part of the survey area and appears to be a continuation of anomaly (8) within Area 2.

Anomalies with an uncertain origin

(4) – The survey area contains a number of weak and short positive linear anomalies. It is not clear if they relate to cut features, or if they have some association with the use of the site as allotment gardens. Anomalies associated with magnetic debris (5) – The survey area contains widespread magnetic debris. This obscures weak anomalies and is likely to be associated magnetically thermoremanent material incorporated into the topsoil during the use of the site as allotments and possibly to more recent burnt material. Anomalies with a modern origin

(6) – Magnetic disturbance is a response to steel buildings and ferrous fencing. Area centred on OS

NGR 455775 221375,  
Anomalies of archaeological potential

(7) – Three sides of a positive rectilinear anomaly appear to form an enclosure that extends north eastwards as anomalies (1) and (2) in Area 1. The response is generally 2nT and there appears to be a partial extension at the western corner.

(8) – A discontinuous positive linear anomaly extends along the western part of the survey area. There appears to be a gap of 5.5m and then it continues north eastwards as anomaly (3) in Area 1. The response is generally 3-4nT and it 7 Archaeological Surveys Ltd Land north of Green Lane, Chesterton, Oxfordshire Magneto meter Survey Report indicates a cut, linear feature, such as a boundary ditch.

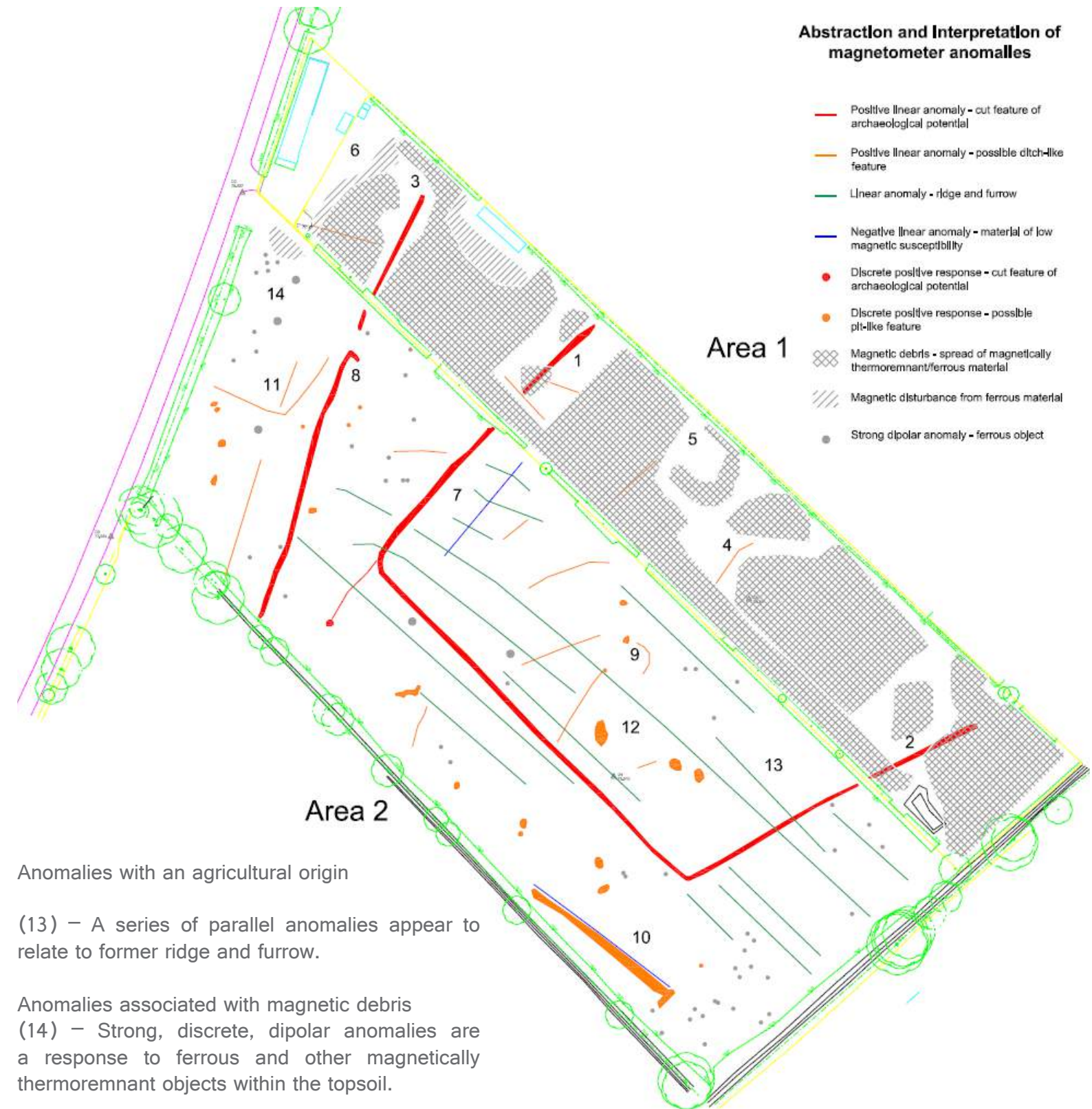
Anomalies with an uncertain origin

(9) – Within the confines of anomaly (7) are a number of positive and negative linear anomalies and a possible positive curvilinear anomaly. Although these may relate to cut features, they are short and weak (<1nT) and lack a coherent morphology preventing confident interpretation.

(10) – Located close to the south eastern corner of the survey area is a broad positive linear anomaly with some associated negative response. As it is located close to the field boundary it is not clear if it relates to a cut feature, but this is possible.

(11) – A number of positive linear and rectilinear anomalies are located to the west of anomaly (8). They have a similar response to anomalies (9) and it is not possible to determine their origin.

(12) – A number of discrete positive responses have been located within the survey area. Although some lie within the confines of anomaly (7) it is not possible to determine if they relate to pit-like features with an anthropogenic or natural origin, but archaeology should be considered.



## 2.6. Planning Policy Context

### National Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines national policy guidance and the foreword to the NPPF explains that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development and that development means growth with development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay.

#### *The presumption in favour of sustainable development*

The key principle of the NPPF, as set out in paragraph 14 of the document, is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are directed to approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date.

#### *Core planning policies*

A series of 12 'Core Planning Principles' are set out at paragraph 17 which require that planning should, among other things, pro actively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs; promoting the vitality of our main urban areas; encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed; make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

#### *Building a strong competitive economy*

Paragraph 18 of the NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, and paragraph 19 states that significant weight should be place on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Paragraph 21 goes on to explain that business should not be over-burdened

by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations and that policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to growth to investment, which might include a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing.

#### *Promoting sustainable transport*

Paragraph 34 states that 'Plans and decision should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised'.

#### *Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes*

The emphasis of the NPPF is that the planning system must look to increase housing delivery. The NPPF is clear at paragraph 47 where it seeks to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'.

In order to achieve this LPAs should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

#### *Requiring good design*

In paragraph 63 it states that 'In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area'. The location of the site is close to a key arterial road into Northampton dictates that a strong design will provide a positive impact on the surrounding built environment is required.

The design principles in the Illustrative Master plan have been forged using government guidance and objectives in relation to the creation of sustainable communities.

In addition to the National and Local Planning Policies the following relevant guidance has also been considered in the development of the Master Plan;

### Local Policy

#### Cherwell Local Policy II

The identified Saved Policies that are applicable to the development are noted as follows and will be explained to better demonstrate how the proposal meets each policy;

H13	Category 1 Settlements
H18	New dwellings in the countryside
C2	Protected species
C5	Creation of new habitats
C7	Harm to the topography and character of the landscape
C8	Sporadic development in the countryside
C27	Development in villages to respect historic settlement pattern
C28	Layout, design and external appearance of new development
C30	Design of new residential development
C33	Protection of important gaps of undeveloped land
R12	Public open space provision
ENV12	Contaminated Land
TR1	Transportation Funding Recommendations

Further information can be found within the Planning Statement that accompanies the application.

### Local Plan 2006-2031

5.54. The proposed Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 31st January 2014 for Examination. There are outstanding matters to be resolved before the document is enacted. The examination continued on 9th December 2014. The main policies relevant to the proposal are listed as under;

- (i) Policy Villages 1 : Chesterton is identified as a village where infilling, minor development and conversions will be permitted
- (ii) Policy Villages 2 : Distributing growth across the rural areas
- (iii) Policy BSC3 : Provision of affordable housing. In rural settlements proposals for residential development of 3 or more dwellings will be expected to provide at least 35% affordable homes on s ite
- (iv) Policy ESD3 : Sustainable construction. All new homes are expected to meet at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes
- (v) Policy ESD7 : Sustainable drainage. All development will be required to use SUDS for the management or surface water run-off
- (vi) Policy ESD13 : Local landscape protection and enhancement expects developments to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided
- (vii) Policy ESD16 : The character of the built and historic environment should be protected and where development is allowed it should respect the local character context.



The site is located 500 metres from Chesterton village centre and 2.4 kilometres south-west of Bicester town centre. Local facilities available in Chesterton include a primary school, a church and vicarage, a village hall, recreation ground and a public house, all of which are located on the main road through the village, Alchester Road.

Two kilometres is generally considered acceptable walking distance while five kilometres is regarded as acceptable cycling distance. The facilities located within the village and bus stops on Alchester Road are located within walking distance while Bicester is within cycling distance of the site. The village benefits from a bus service to Bicester, Kidlington and Oxford. The bus stops on Manorsfield Road, in Bicester are located within cycling distance and are served by various bus services to surrounding areas. Bicester Town and North rail stations are also located within cycling distance of the site.

The detailed scheme should provide a garage and a general space per 3 beds and a double garage and two general spaces for 4 and 5 beds. In addition to this eight visitor spaces could be implemented on the street throughout the development. Although this level of parking is slightly over the adopted standards, it is considered that this could avoid any overspill parking on surrounding streets.

It was proposed and permitted to close the existing access to The Hale and create a new access south of the existing access. The access will take the form of a priority junction. The level of visibility achievable from the site access is in accordance with guidance and is appropriate for speeds recorded.

The access road is likely to be 5.5 metres in width with a 2 metre footway on the southern side of the access road for approximately 100 metres. Following which, the access road can take the form of shared surface at 5.5 meters in width.

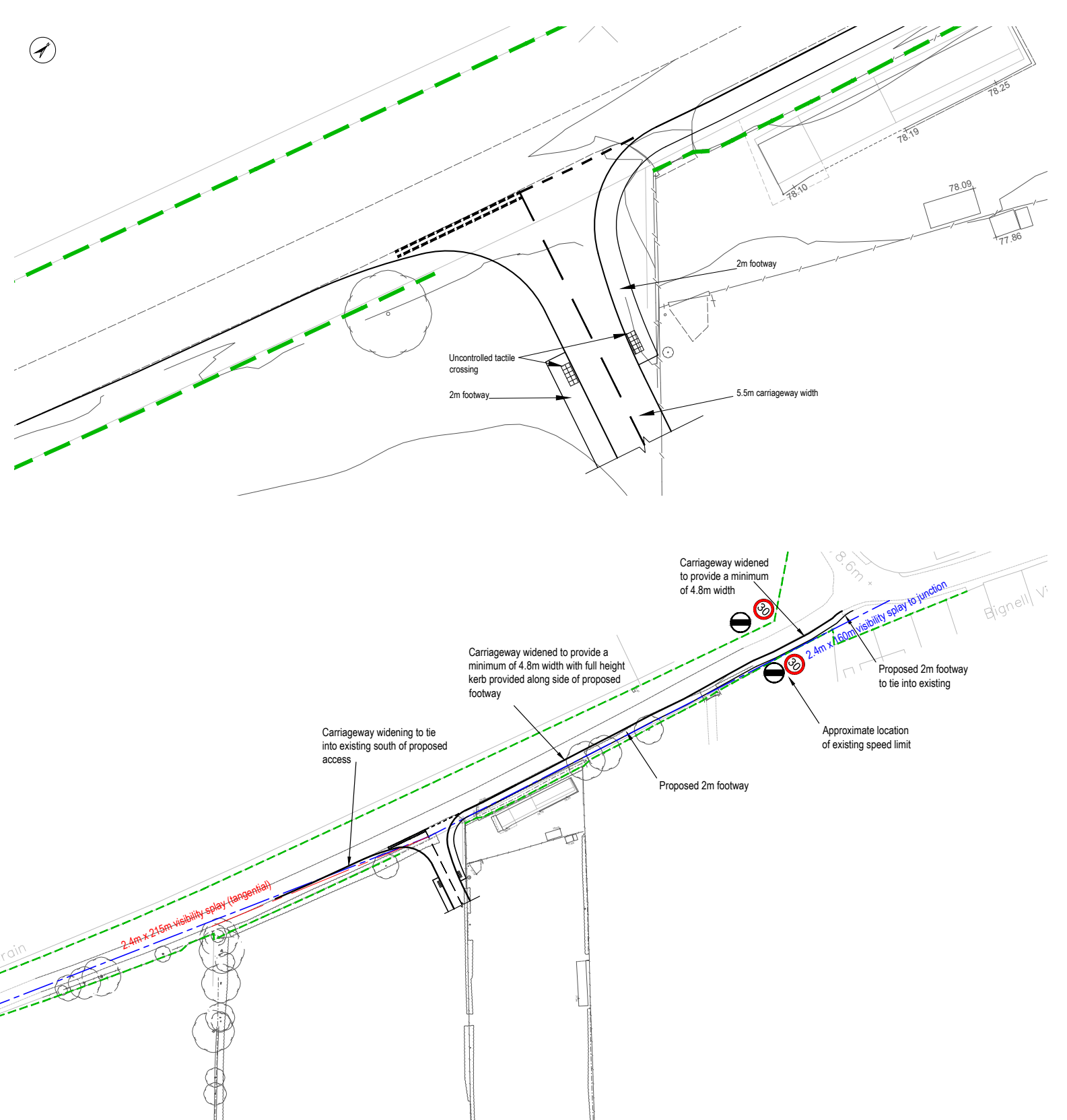
The footway along the Hale will provide a connection between the development and the footway on the A4095, thus providing a safe walking route to the village centre and bus stops.

The development will improve 'The Hale' with local widening of the carriageway to 4.8 metres and provision of a footway of 2.0 metres in width which will make it suitable to accommodate these additional trips as well as improving the pedestrian environment for existing and future users.

It is not considered beneficial to provide a footway to the south of the development along the unnamed road as amenities cannot be accessed in this direction.

To encourage sustainable travel amongst future residents and to influence their travel choices from the beginning, it is proposed to provide each dwelling with a Residents Welcome Pack which will contain useful travel information.

It is expected that the proposed development of up to 45 dwellings will result in 29 two-way vehicular trips in the morning peak hour, 28 two-way vehicular trips in the evening peak hour and 247 two-way vehicular trips daily.



## 2.8. Consultant Involvement

### Conservation Area & Archaeological

Extract from Archaeological Assessment prepared by CSa Environmental Planning.

The top of the tower of the grade II\* listed Church of St. Mary, approximately 250m to the east, is visible from the western part of the site through an existing tree/hedge line. However, views from the Chesterton conservation area and other listed buildings into the site are otherwise screened by built development and, in the case of the western tip of the conservation area designation along the A4095 by Hedgerows. It is therefore highly unlikely that low-rise residential development within the site will result in any change to the significance of the conservation area or any listed buildings.

#### Archaeological Background

The site lies approximately 100m to the north of a Roman road known as Akeman Street, which led to the Roman town of Alchester approximately 1.2km to the south-east. The site therefore lay within the hinterland of this Roman town. However, an archaeological evaluation carried out in 2009 approximately 100m to the south on the southern frontage of Akeman Street did not identify any significant archaeology.

The site was probably part of an open field system known as Hale Field throughout the medieval period and continued to be so prior to field enclosure in 1768. The site was part of a single field on Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 and 1899 but by 1922 the northern field was part of a larger allotment garden, becoming grassland by 1989.

#### Archaeological Potential

No significant archaeology was identified in the 2009 archaeological evaluation approximately 100m to the south. However, given the proximity of Akeman Street and the location of the site within the hinterland of the Roman town of Alchester, the possibility of associated Roman remains being present within the site cannot be discounted. The site was almost certainly under arable cultivation as part of an open field system throughout the medieval period, and remained so until enclosure in 1768. Field 1 has also been part of a wider system of allotments and field 2 is currently under arable cultivation. The centuries of arable activity and also the allotment digging may have had a scattering effect on any possible fragments of archaeology.

#### Heritage Assets

As the site is within proximity to heritage assets consideration should be given to a possibility of discovering archaeological remains on site, most notably Roman as the site is close to the Roman town of Alchester. An archaeological study should be undertaken to ascertain the archaeological value of the site, it is arguable that the generations of arable activity may have degraded any surviving archaeological remains, although not discounted.

Because of the potential for the site to contain buried archaeology of Roman date a geophysical survey has been carried out.

The reports conclusion is as follows:

The detailed magneto meter survey located a positive rectilinear anomaly that appears to relate to an enclosure feature that is present within both survey areas. A further linear ditch, with an apparent deliberate 5.5m gap, is located to the west of the enclosure. Several other linear and discrete anomalies have been located within the site, but these are generally very weak and indistinct and although they may relate to cut, ditch-like and pit-like features, their origin is uncertain.

Widespread magnetic debris with the north eastern part of the site is likely to have originated from its use as allotment gardens. The south western part of the site contains evidence of medieval cultivation in the form of ridge and furrow.

- HER 1 - Bronze Age Barrows
- HER 2 - Line of Akeman Street
- HER 3 - Roman Coin findspot of 25 coins
- HER 4 - Earthwork remains of 13th century building
- HER 5 - 12th and 13th Century Ditch
- HER 6 - Medieval Ditch
- HER 7 - Deserted Medieval Village
- HER 8 - Post Medieval Manor Farm Mill

#### Community Engagement

Community engagement was undertaken at outline stage. The feedback of which continues to shape the evolution of the Reserved Matters proposal.

