



ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
VOLUME 2
APPENDIX 13.2 – PLANNING POLICY

13.2 PLANNING POLICIES

B.1 National Planning Policy Framework

B.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is material consideration in making planning decisions. Those policies relevant to this LVIA are listed in **Table B1. 1**.

Table B1. 1 Relevant National Planning Policies

Reference	Summary
Chapter 2	Achieving sustainable development
Para. 7	The objective of sustainable development is summarised as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
Para. 8	Achieving sustainable development is provided through the following three overarching objectives: economic; social; and, environmental. Of relevance to landscape and visual effects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”
Chapter 3	Plan-making Strategic policies
Para. 20	The NPPF requires local planning policies to “set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of the development, and make sufficient provision for:” amongst others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”
Chapter 8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
Para. 91	Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, for example through mixed-use developments; b) Are safe and accessible, for example, through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public spaces; c) Enable and support healthy lifestyles, for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
	Open space and recreation
Para. 97	Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
Para. 98	Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example, by adding links to existing rights of way networks.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (19 February, 2019). *National Planning Policy Framework*

Reference	Summary
11	Making effective use of land
Para. 117	“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.”
Para. 118	“Planning policies and decisions should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
Chapter 12	Achieving well-designed places
Para 124	The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.
Para 127	Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
Para 128	Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.
Para. 131	In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
Chapter 14	Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
	Planning for climate change
Para. 150	New development should be planned for in ways that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) when new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its locations, orientation and design.

Reference	Summary
Para. 151	<p>“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:” among others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximised the potential for sustainable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);”
Chapter 15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Para. 170	<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
Para. 171	<p>“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”</p>
	Ground conditions and pollution
Para. 180	<p>Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
Para. 182	<p>Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sport clubs).</p>
16	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Para. 184	<p>“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”</p>
Para. 185	<p>Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: amongst others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

Reference	Summary
	c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”
	Proposals affecting heritage assets
Para. 189	In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
Para. 192	In determining application, local planning authorities should take account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the desirability of sustainable and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

B.2 Current Local Planning Policies

B.2.1 The site is located within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC). The current development plan policies of CDC are contained within a set of Local Plans, consisting of:

- **Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part I);**
- **Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996;**
- **Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (December 2004);**
- **Interactive Adopted Policies Map**

B.2.2 The policies that are relevant to landscape and visual matters and within the context of the Site and Proposed Development are contained in **Table B1. 2**.

Table B1. 2 Development Plan policies

Reference	Summary
	Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part I) This contains strategic planning policies for development and the use of land. It forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Cherwell to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications.
Policy PSD1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	When considering development proposals the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The Council will always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
Policy SC10	Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision
	The Council will encourage partnership working to ensure that sufficient quantity and quality of, and convenient access to open space, sport and recreation provision is secured through the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting existing sites; • Ensuring that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals

Reference	Summary
Policy ESD1	Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
	<p>The incorporation of suitable adaptation measures in new development to ensure that development is more resilient to climate change impacts will include consideration of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking into account the known physical and environmental constraints when identifying locations for development; • Minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods; and • Reducing the effects of development on the microclimate (through the provision of green infrastructure including open space and water, planting, and green roofs). <p>Adaptation through design approaches will be considered in more locally specific detail in the Sustainable Buildings in Cherwell Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p>
Policy ESD3	Sustainable Construction
	<p>All development proposals will be encouraged to reflect high quality design and high environmental standards, demonstrating sustainable construction methods including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making use of sustainable drainage methods; and • Reducing the impact on the external environment and maximising opportunities for cooling and shading (by the provision of open space and water, planting, and green roofs, for example);
Policy ESD10	Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
	<p>Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District; and • Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity.
Policy ESD13	Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement
	<p>Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe location, 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.</p> <p>Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside; • Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography; • Be inconsistent with local character; • Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity; • Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or • Harm the historic value of the landscape. <p>Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate.</p>
Policy ESD15	The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Reference	Summary
	<p>Successful design is found upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the assets will be essential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions; • Contributing positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, significant trees, features or views in particular within designated landscape or conservation area and their setting. • Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets' as defined in NPPF including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. • Respect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing material, mass, scale and colour palette; • Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; • Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible. Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality.
Policy ESD17	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity; • Ensuring that green infrastructure network consideration are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunities to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond.
Section C	Policies for Cherwell's Places
	<p>Section C of the Local Plan contains specific policies for particular growth areas in Bicester and Banbury. The Site is not located within any strategic growth areas as defined by the Local Plan, therefore a review of Section C is not included here.</p>
<p>Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 remain part of the statutory Development Plan to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications.</p>	
C7	Landscape conservation
	<p>Development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the Landscape.</p>
C10	Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and historic battlefields
	<p>Development which would have a detrimental effect upon the character and appearance of historic landscapes, parks and gardens and battlefields and their setting will normally be resisted.</p>

Reference	Summary
C23	Retention of features contributing to character or appearance of a conservation area
	There will be presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.
C25	Development affecting the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument
	In considering proposals for development which would affect the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument, other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments of special local importance, the council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining its overall historic character, including its protection, enhancement and preservation where appropriate.
C28	Layout, design and external appearance of new development
	Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development.
<p>Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (December 2004) The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 was intended to review and update the Local Plan adopted in 1996. Due to changes to the planning system introduced by the Government, work on this plan was discontinued prior to adoption. The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 is not part of the statutory development plan but was approved as interim planning policy for development control purposes in December 2004. Therefore, this is document has not been reviewed for this LVIA.</p>	

B.3 Emerging Local Planning Policies

- B.3.1 Cherwell District Council is currently preparing Part 2 to the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) which will contain non-strategic site allocations and development management policies.
- B.3.2 A Partial Review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) is in preparation to help meet the unmet housing needs of Oxford. When adopted it will become part of the statutory Development Plan to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications.
- B.3.3 As part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal agreement within the Government, the six Oxfordshire authorities have committed to producing a joint statutory spatial plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. JSSP will provide an integrated strategic planning framework and evidence base to support sustainable growth across the county to 2050, including the planned delivery of new homes and economic development, and the anticipated supporting infrastructure needed.

Supplementary Documents

Bicester Masterplan – Consultation Draft (August 2012)

- B.3.4 The Bicester Masterplan is under preparation and contains a set of strategic objectives to guide development, a set of masterplan to demonstrate how the objectives are achieved, and key policies and actions.
- B.3.5 The Site is not located within any defined strategic area.
- Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance
- B.3.6 Countryside Design Summary was produced by Development and Property Services in 1998 to guide the development in the rural areas so that the distinctive character of the district's countryside and the settlements and buildings within it are maintained and enhanced. It also describes the character of Cherwell District and divides the countryside into four broad areas. The intention is to encourage creative and imaginative approaches to new development, which reflects the existing distinctive character of the villages and countryside of Cherwell District.
- B.3.7 The Site lies within the Ploughley Limestone Plateau Countryside Character Area. The key characteristics in relevance of the Site include:
- extensive remains of 18th century parkland and estate farmland;

- woodland cover is comparatively extensive in some parts, as long plantation belts bordering streams or roads adjacent to arable farmland, or in association with historic parkland;
- arable is the primary agricultural use of the area;
- views are often broken by woodlands; and
- a network of roads criss-crosses the entire area.

B.3.8 The guidance also recommends that development should avoid exposed and prominent locations. The protection given by a valley location, existing buildings or woodland, should be used where this does not undermine the character of these existing landscape features. Extensive areas of woodland may be appropriate in certain locations, e.g. in association with existing plantations and away from exposed plateau locations.

Evidence Base

B.3.9 During the past few years, a series of studies and assessments have been undertaken as evidence to inform the Cherwell Local Plan. Those relevant to landscape and visual matters are included below.

ENV06 Bicester Environmental Baseline Report (September 2013):

B.3.10 LDA Design Consulting LLP was instructed by Cherwell District Council in January 2013 to produce an 'Environmental Report' to help aid the further understanding of the environmental resource in and around Bicester in order to enhance the evidence base for the emerging Cherwell Local Plan.

B.3.11 The study collated the relevant environmental baseline such as landform, landscape character areas as defined in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, key views from the countryside towards the centre of Bicester, designated ecological sites and heritage assets, public rights of way and public amenities.

B.3.12 They report concludes that *"the countryside around Bicester is an important resource for the town. It contains a rich and diverse range of environmental assets – natural, historic and related to the landscape more widely -that contribute to the sustainability of the town and the quality of life of its inhabitants."*

ENV07 Bicester Green Buffer Report (September 2013)

B.3.13 LDA Design Consulting LLP (LDA Design) was commissioned by Cherwell District Council to provide a review of the Green Buffer around Bicester as illustrated in the Cherwell Local Plan Proposed Submission (August 2012). The Site is not located within any landscape identified as Green Buffer.

ENV08 Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (September 2013)

B.3.14 WYG was commissioned to carry out further Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment work to supplement and build upon the Cherwell District Council Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment prepared in September 2010 by Halcrow Group Limited.

B.3.15 The Site is not located within or adjacent to any assessed parcel, therefore this document is not reviewed further as part of the LVIA.

ENV19PM Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Addendum (August 2014)

B.3.16 This Assessment Addendum has been prepared on behalf of CDC following the previous assessment and Local Plan Examination Hearing in June 2014. In this assessment, a number of additional sites have been included for consideration. However, the Site is not located within any of the additional sites, therefore this document is not further reviewed as part of the LVIA.