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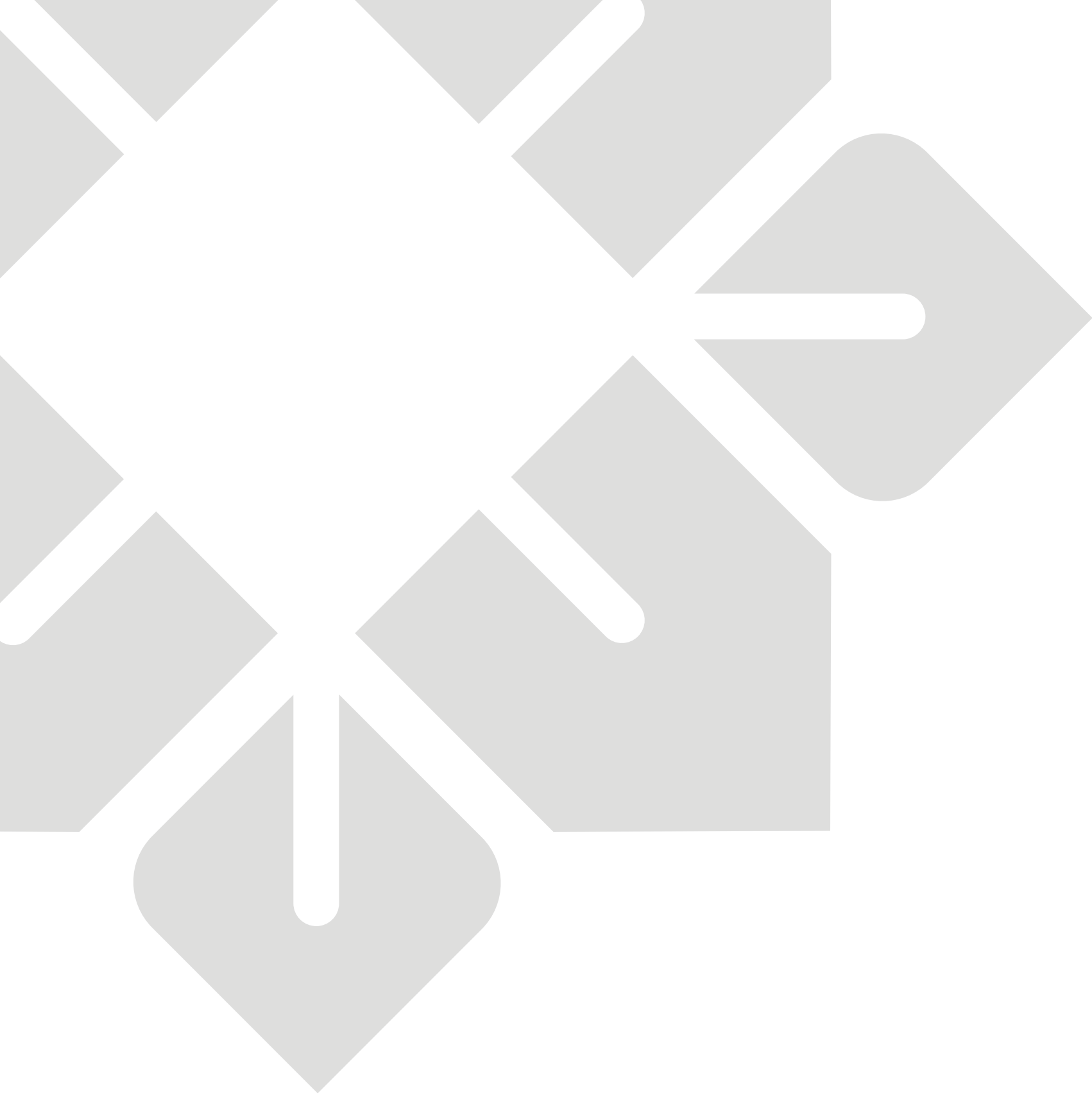
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HIMLEY VILLAGE BICESTER

BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE (BHL) ASSESSMENT



Prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Countryside Properties
APRIL 2021 | LP20-3215_29



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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

1.1 This assessment has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Countryside Properties LTD. This document is intended to accompany and be read in support of a Reserved Matters submission for residential development of Himley Village North West Bicester.

BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE (BHL)

- 1.2 Building for a Healthy Life is the latest edition of - and new name for - Building for Life 12.
- 1.3 Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) updates England's most widely known and most widely used design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature. The original 12 point structure and underlying principles within Building for Life 12 are at the heart of BHL. The new name reflects changes in legislation as well as refinements which we've made to the 12 considerations in response to good practice and user feedback.
- 1.4 The new name also recognises that this latest edition has been written in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement. BHL integrates the findings of the three-year Healthy New Towns Programme led by NHS England and NHS Improvement (please see page 12 for more details about 'Putting Health into Place').

1.5 Many local authorities across the country have cited Building for Life 12 in their Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. As BHL is the new name for Building for Life 12, local authorities can use BHL without having to rewrite existing policy documents.

1.6 The 12 considerations Building for a Healthy Life is a Design Code to help people improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods.

1.7 BHL has been created to allow a broad range of people to use it easily - from members of a local community, local councillors, developers to local authorities - allowing those involved in a proposed new development to focus their thoughts, discussions and efforts on the things that matter most when creating good places to live.

1.8 Organised across three headings, 12 considerations are presented to help those involved in new developments to think about the qualities of successful places and how these can be best applied to the individual characteristics of a site and its wider context. These three headings will guide you from macro through to micro scale considerations.

1.9 Each consideration is illustrated with clear written and visual prompts helping you to identify good practice and avoid common pitfalls.

1.10 BHL can help local communities to set clear expectations of new developments by offering a series of easy to understand considerations that will also allow local communities to more easily identify the qualities (or deficiencies) of development proposals.

1.11 The three headings are:

- **Integrated Neighbourhoods**

- o Natural connections;
- o Walking, cycling and public transport;
- o Facilities and services; and
- o Homes for everyone.

- **Distinctive Places**

- o Making the most of what's there;
- o A memorable character;
- o Well defined streets and spaces; and
- o Easy to find your way around.

- **Streets for All**

- o Healthy streets;
- o Cycle and car parking;
- o Green and blue infrastructure; and
- o Back of pavement, front of home.

ACHIEVING THE BEST OUTCOME

1.12 BHL is foremost a design process structure, not a scoring system. For this reason we list and illustrate examples of good practice highlighted by a green light. Poor practice is highlighted with a red light.

1.13 Where an element of design is considered to fall between a green and a red traffic light, an amber light can be assigned to a particular consideration. An amber light does not mean that the design scores 'half a point'. Instead it cautions that an aspect of a scheme is not fully resolved. In many cases it is possible to rethink and redesign an aspect of a scheme to achieve a better outcome.

1.14 The more green lights a proposed development secures, the better it will be. The objective is to minimise the number of amber lights and avoid red lights.

1.15 A red light suggests that one or more aspects of a scheme need to be reconsidered.

1.16 BHL offers a process for collaborative working between developers, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders by providing principles for creating better places and focusing attention on them. Successful place making comes from talking, discussing and exploring ideas, workshops, drawing and modelling.

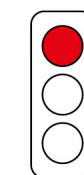
1.17 The best way to use BHL is to use the 12 considerations as a starting point and for those involved to agree what is needed to secure a green light against each consideration. It is particularly helpful if local authorities clearly explain what is expected to secure a green light against a particular consideration.

1.18 There may be circumstances where amber lights cannot be avoided due to circumstances beyond the control of the local authority and/or the developer.

1.19 For instance, third-party land ownership may prevent optimal connectivity from being achieved (See Natural Connections, page 14). Here an amber light might be justified if the layout of streets and spaces does not prevent you from improving the scheme's connections in the future.

1.20 BHL reflects Manual for Streets (2007) in the Healthy Streets consideration (see page 62). It is recognised that a number of local highway authorities have not adopted (or have not fully adopted) the principles set out in Manual for Streets. This can make it very difficult for developers to secure a green light against Healthy Streets. Where this is the case, an amber light is considered justified. This means the developer should not be penalised for not being able to secure a green light against this particular consideration.

1.21 BHL promotes more innovative practices adopted by some Highway Authorities to encourage other authorities to reconsider current practice. In 2020, Homes England will publish a set of street details that meet the expectations of both urban designers and highways officers. These more innovative approaches to street design encourage slower vehicle speeds, higher levels of walking and cycling; improving levels of physical activity and local air quality.



red = stop & rethink



amber = try & turn to green



green = go ahead

Note | Text and Graphics taken from the Building for a Healthy Life Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods PUBLISHED 2020

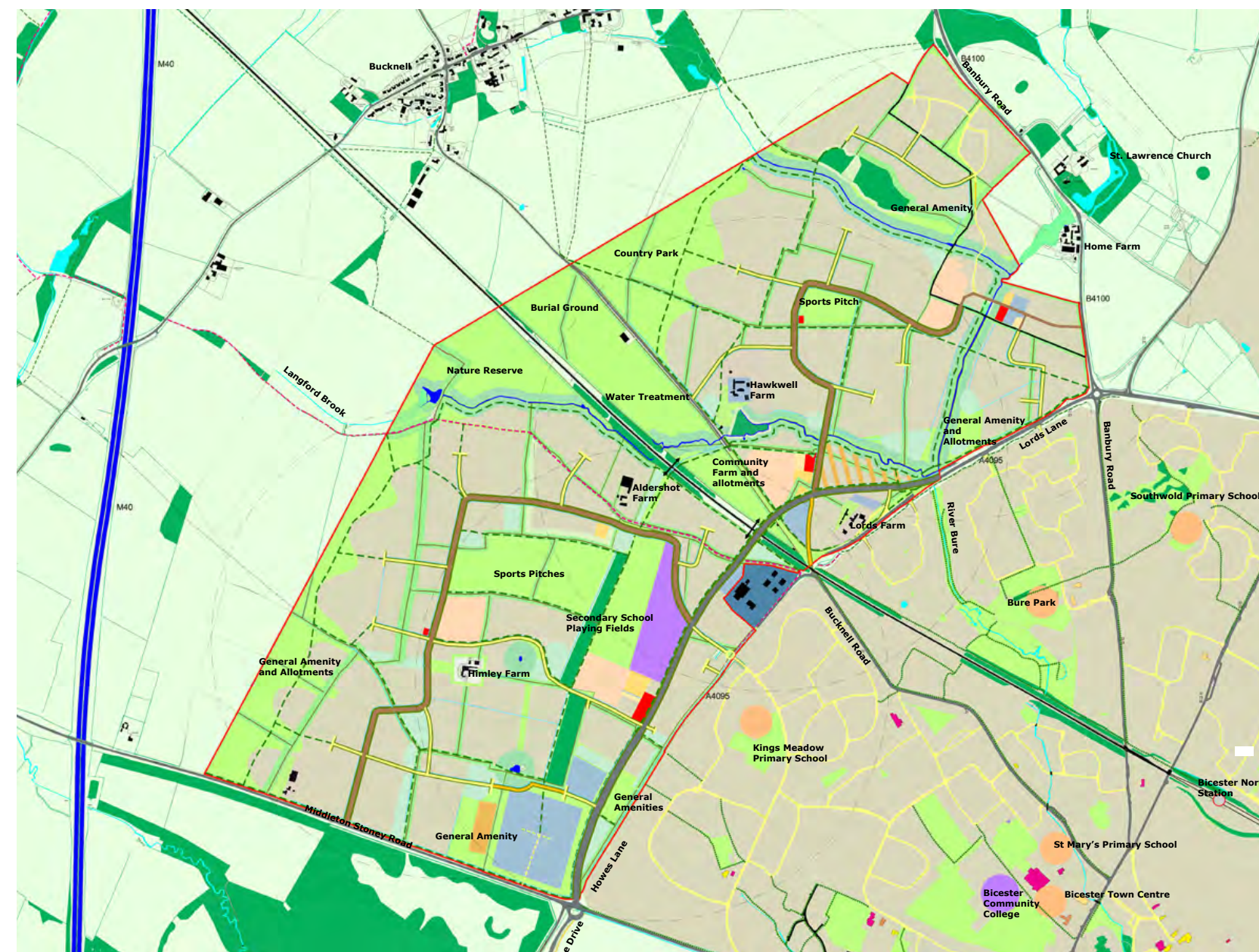
INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS



NATURAL CONNECTIONS

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.

- 2.1 The site is situated approximately 1.4 miles north west of Bicester town centre.
- 2.2 Access to the site will be gained from Middleton Stoney Road and will ensure pedestrian and cycle linkages to the wider masterplan and surrounding area.
- 2.3 The wider Himley Village site is bound by Middleton Stoney Road to the south, mature woodland to the east, and arable land to the north and west.
- 2.4 The masterplan integrates the existing hedgerows and surrounding vegetation into the proposed masterplan, keeping the hedgerows within the public realm and safe guarding their future retention and management.
- 2.5 The proposed masterplan has been designed to allow for streets and routes to be extended in the future.



NW Bicester Masterplan Framework (BIMP6 01) | Not to scale



WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.

- 5.6 The Primary Road linking Middleton Stoney Road along the southern boundary creates a movement corridor, by providing a cycle/pedestrian path on either side of the road and allows for public transport through the provision of a bus route.
- 5.7 A network of Secondary Roads provide access from Middleton Stoney Road to the south and to future development along the north-western boundary and eastern boundary. Creating these connected routes between the access points will ensure the majority of all new homes will be within recommended walking distances of a public transport node.
- 2.8 Residential movement corridors link directly from the Primary and Secondary Roads via Tertiary Roads, Home Zones and Private Drives to individual development parcels.



FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.

- 2.9 Further east from Himley Village is Bicester town centre, providing the site with close proximity to local facilities including primary and secondary schools, shops and community facilities.
- 2.10 Bus service 25A that connects Bicester, Kirtlington and Oxford via Middleton Stoney and Heyford, uses Middleton Stoney Road. This service runs half hourly during the morning and evening peak and hourly for the rest of the day. Currently there are no bus stops in the vicinity of the Application Site as there is no demand for the service.



HOMES FOR EVERYONE

A range of homes that meet local community needs.

- 2.11 The development achieves an average net density of approximately 36 dwellings per hectare (dph). The density results in the efficient use of the site whilst at the same time promoting densities which are appropriate to the local area and which will help assimilate the Design Code.
- 2.12 The proposed housing mix is split into the following four tenures:
 - Private Sale;
 - Private Rent;
 - Shared Ownership; and
 - Social Rent.

DISTINCTIVE PLACES



MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT'S THERE

Understand and respond.

- 3.1 The layout and appearance of the proposals have been informed by the parameters and design guidance of the outline planning permission ref. 14/02121/OUT, the North West Bicester Masterplan documents, the Cherwell Design Guide SPD, the Oxfordshire County Council Residential Road Design Guide and through consultation with the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.2 The Statement sets out how the development vision for Himley Village has evolved, with reference to the considerations of streets and spaces, landscape and open space, built form and layout and character and identity, as depicted within the Cherwell Design Guide SPD.
- 5.3 The site is defined by an extensive green infrastructure network. The blueprint to which is defined by the existing landscape resources on the site. This consists of:
- Agricultural land bound by mixed native hedgerows and associated trees.
 - 2 small ponds and associated vegetation.
 - Broad leaved woodland to the eastern site boundary.
- 5.4 These landscape resources will be retained and enhanced where possible to ensure the development is integrated within an established rural landscape setting.



Design Principles Plan | Not to scale

1. Proposed access points via Middleton Stoney Road; 2. Access points to the wider Himley Village Masterplan; 3. Existing trees and woodland retained and enhanced; 4. Existing hedgerow / field boundary's retained and enhanced; 5. Public open space; 6. New habitat area / corridor; 7. Existing ponds; 8. SuDS corridors; 9. Cycle and pedestrian paths; 10. Green infrastructure pedestrian and cycle routes; 11. Primary road / tree lined corridor (formal); 12. Secondary road / tree lined corridor (formal); 13. Tertiary roads (intermediate); 14. Mews links (informal); 15. Private drives (informal); 16. Residential development parcels; 17. Employment areas; 18. Energy generation and storage centre; 19. Care facility; 20. Community / social space; 21. Allotment provision; 22. Himley Farm retained; 23. School site; 24. Playing fields; 25. Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (INEAP); 26. Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP); and 27. Public Art.



MEMORABLE CHARACTER

Create places that are memorable.

- 3.5 The masterplan consists of a variety of densities and building heights throughout the site, combined with landscape and building form assists in providing different areas of recognisable character.
- 3.6 Himley Village is fabricated by a range of architectural styles that each have its own identity and appearance. The architectural styles are:
- Georgian Primary;
 - Georgian Secondary;
 - Core Housing; and
 - Contemporary.
- 5.7 Georgian primary dwellings have been positioned along the primary route to create a cluster of buildings in a key area in the development, creating a memorable space from architectural detailing along a key route.
- 5.8 The contemporary house types create a distinctive contrast to the Georgian architectural style by the use of timber cladding and gable fronting dwellings.
- 5.9 Key views are created by the positioning of buildings at the ends of streets and spaces. They are enhanced by the use of render and building heights.
- 5.10 Middleton Stoney Road is the only vehicular route bounding the application Site and the movement of traffic along this visible edge of the Site implies a certain character.



WELL DEFINED STREETS AND SPACES

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.

- 3.11 Himley Village is structured by blocks and streets that link to adjacent amenities, allowing people to move safely and conveniently through the area.
- 5.12 Streets and open spaces will cross different character areas and will be important in providing continuity across the site. The streets are designed with key aspects of the public open space, the nature and form of which will vary according to their connectivity, and the location within the development.
- 5.13 The key aspects defining each street typology are:
- Scale and setting of the street;
 - Movement network designed to be pedestrian and cyclist friendly to maximise sustainable forms of transport, this relates to both the overall street hierarchy and the detailed design of spaces;
 - Parking strategies depending upon the location, density and building typology. Tandem parking to be reduced where possible to ensure parking is on-plot and visitor parking bays to be provided;
 - Engineering requirements; and
 - Materials and details that coordinate and have a level of consistency across the site.
- 5.14 The proposed masterplan includes a variety of feature corner turner properties, creating dual aspect homes on street corners with windows serving habitable rooms.



EASY TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.

- 3.15 The Site-Wide Masterplan has informed the Regulating Plan by fixing a number of elements to provide a coordinated implementation of the overall development. These include:
- Land Use;
 - Built Character;
 - Building Heights;
 - Placemaking;
 - Access and Movement; and
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure
- 3.16 The Site-Wide Masterplan has been split into 'Character Areas' to provide a more detailed guide on how Reserved Matters applications should respond to these elements.
- 3.17 This reserved Matters planning application area falls entirely within Character Area 5: Himley Park (Residential). Section 5 of the Design Code discusses the Regulating Plan for this area, the defining features and how the proposed design has incorporated the principles.
- 3.18 The proposed masterplan comprises of simple street patterns based on formal grid pattern, subsequently aiding to the ease of navigation from within the site. This is reinforced by the retention of the existing green infrastructure.
- 3.19 The proposed masterplan consists of a hierarchy of streets that relates to an architectural style. For instance the primary street is dressed with Primary Georgian style properties along the route. Enabling the architecture detailing of the dwellings to aid wayfinding within the site.

STREETS FOR ALL



HEALTHY STREETS

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.

- 4.1 Himley Village is based on a series of well-connected streets and spaces, providing suitable and convenient access to the surrounding road network and linking up key areas of open space as well as new facilities and services. This sets out the design requirements of new streets to reflect the hierarchy of routes and spaces.
- 2.2 The proposed masterplan integrates a variety of cycle and pedestrian paths;
- The attractive tree lined primary and secondary avenue includes a 3 metre wide cycle and pedestrian path;
 - Green infrastructure with pedestrian routes that forms continuous connectivity along the proposed public open space; and
 - Additional 3 metre wide cycle and pedestrian paths throughout the masterplan to form short and direct walking and cycling connections that make public transport an easy choice to make.



Proposed Site Layout | Not to scale



CYCLE AND CAR PARKING

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.

- 3.3 The proposed development offers a variety of parking typologies including on-plot parking, frontage parking and rear parking courts.
- 3.4 Visitor parking spaces have been integrated throughout the masterplan. Additional visitor spaces have been introduced near the LEAP and public open space to avoid antisocial parking in the area.
- 3.5 The masterplan includes small and overlooked parking courtyards, with properties within courtyard spaces with ground floor inhabitable rooms.
- 3.6 Proposed tree lined verges throughout the masterplan will help to settle parked cars into the street.



GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Creative surface water management such as rills, brooks and ponds enrich the public realm and help improve a sense of wellbeing and offer an interaction with nature. As the richest habitat for a range of flora and fauna, they are also a key play in achieving the net gain in biodiversity sought by the 2020 Environment Bill.

- 4.7 A retained large block of woodland lies to the south of the site, with arable land to the north and east, due to form further development. Parcels of the Bidwell West allocation and arable land to the west is proposed to form a large amenity area, to include sports pitches and formal recreational space, to serve the overall development, including these development parcels.
- 4.8 Himley Village will provide a network of multi-functional green spaces that respect key aspects of the existing landscape and introduces new features to create an attractive setting for new development.
- 4.9 The approach will harness new and existing ecological benefits to add greater social and economic value. This will facilitate the movement of people through attractive green spaces linking Himley Village to the countryside and Bicester.
- 3.10 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).
- 3.11 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.



BACK OF PAVEMENT, FRONT OF HOME

Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of a place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.

- 4.12 Proposing a variety of boundary treatments, all residential plots will be enclosed with boundaries. No boundaries will be left without a suitable form of boundary treatment to enclose the plot and assist in providing definition to the public realm, with brick used for boundary walls to match those used for the corresponding house.
- 4.13 A variety of boundary treatments are used in different areas to aid in individual character areas. Boundary treatments include:
- 600MM High Wall 1200MM Piers and railings;
 - 1200MM High estate railings;
 - 1200MM High timber post & Rail fence;
 - 1800MM High close-boarded timber fencing; and
 - 1800MM High Screen wall.