

Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town

Development Area: 390 hectares

Development Description: A new zero carbon(i) mixed use development including 6,000 homes will be developed on land identified at North West Bicester.

Planning permission will only be granted for development at North West Bicester in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan for the whole area to be approved by the Council as part of a North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document. The Council will expect the Masterplan and applications for planning permission to meet the following requirements:

Employment

- Land Area – a minimum of 10 ha, comprising business premises focused at Howes Lane and Middleton Stoney Road, employment space in the local centre hubs and as part of mixed used development
- Jobs created –At least 3,000 jobs (approximately 1,000 jobs on B use class land on the site) within the plan period
- Use classes – B1, with limited B2 and B8 uses
- It is anticipated that the business park at the South East corner of the allocation will generate between 700 and 1,000 jobs in use classes B1, B2 and B8 early in the Plan period
- A Carbon Management Plan shall be produced to support all applications for employment developments
- An economic strategy to be produced to support the planning applications for eco-town proposals demonstrating how access to work will be achieved and to deliver a minimum of one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport
- Mixed use local centre hubs to include employment (B1(a), A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1 and D2)
- New non-residential buildings will be BREEAM Very Good with the capability of achieving BREEAM Excellent.

Housing

- Number of homes – Up to 6,000 (3,293 to be delivered within the plan period)
- Affordable Housing – 30%
- Layout to achieve Building for Life 12 and Lifetime Homes standards
- Homes to be constructed to be capable of achieving a minimum of Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on completion of each phase of development, including being equipped to meet the water consumption requirement of Code Level 5
- The provision of extra care housing
- Have real time energy monitoring systems, real time public transport information and Superfast Broadband access, including next generation broadband where possible. Consideration should also be given to digital access to support assisted living and smart energy management systems.

Infrastructure Needs

- Education – Sufficient secondary, primary and nursery school provision on site to meet projected needs. It is expected that four 2 Forms of Entry primary schools and one secondary school will be required. There should be a maximum walking distance of 800 metres from homes to the nearest primary school.
- Health – to provide for a 7 GP surgery to the south of the site and a dental surgery
- Burial Ground – to provide a site of a minimum of 4 ha for a burial ground which does not pose risks to water quality (this may contribute to the Green Infrastructure requirements)
- Green infrastructure – 40% of the total gross site area will comprise green space of which at least half will be publicly accessible and consist of a network of well managed, high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the open countryside. This should include sports pitches, parks and recreation areas, play spaces, allotments, the required burial ground (possibly a woodland cemetery) and SUDS.
- Planning applications shall include a range of types of green space and meet the requirements of Policy BSC11
- Access and Movement – proposals to include appropriate crossings of the railway line to provide access and integration across the North West Bicester site. Changes and improvements to Howes Lane and Lords Lane to facilitate integration of new development with the town.
- Community facilities – to include facilities for leisure, health, social care, education, retail, arts, culture, library services, indoor and outdoor sport, play and voluntary services. The local centre hubs shall provide for a mix of uses that will include retail, employment, community and residential provision. Education, health care, community and indoor sports facilities will be encouraged to locate in local centres and opportunities for co-location will be welcomed. Provision will be proportionate to the size of the community they serve. Each neighbourhood of approximately 1,000 houses to include provision for community meeting space suitable for a range of community activities including provision for older people and young people. A site of 0.5 ha for a place of worship to be reserved for future use.
- The submission of proposals to support the setting up and operation of a financially viable Local Management Organisation by the new community to allow locally based long term ownership and management of facilities in perpetuity
- Utilities – Utilities and infrastructure which allow for zero carbon and water neutrality on the site and the consideration of sourcing waste heat from the Ardley Energy recovery facility. The approach shall be set out in an Energy Strategy and a Water Cycle Study. The Water Cycle Study shall cover water efficiency and demand management, water quality and how it will be protected and improved, WFD compliance, surface water management to avoid increasing flood risk and water services infrastructure improvement requirements and their delivery, having regard to the Environment Agency's guidance on Water Cycle Studies. Zero Carbon (see PPS definition) water neutral development is sought. Development proposals will demonstrate how these requirements will be met.
- Waste Infrastructure – The provision of facilities to reduce waste to include at least 1 bring site per 1,000 dwellings positioned in accessible locations. Provision for sustainable management of waste both during construction and in occupation shall be provided. A

waste strategy with targets above national standards and which facilitates waste reduction shall accompany planning applications.

Monitoring

- Embodied impacts of construction to be monitored, managed and minimised (ET21)
- Sustainability metrics, including those on zero carbon, transport, water and waste to be agreed and monitored for learning, good governance and dissemination (ET22).

Key site specific design and place shaping principles

- Proposals should comply with Policy ESD15.
- High quality exemplary development and design standards including zero carbon development, Code Level 5 for dwellings at a minimum and the use of low embodied carbon in construction materials, as well as promoting the use of locally sourced materials.
- All new buildings designed to incorporate best practice on tackling overheating, taking account of the latest UKCIP climate predictions.
- Proposals should enable residents to easily reduce their carbon footprint to a low level and live low carbon lifestyles.
- Layout of development that enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities.
- A layout that maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods.
- New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and community facilities with a legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel
- A layout which makes provision for and prioritises non-car modes and encourages a modal shift from car use to other forms of travel.
- Infrastructure to support sustainable modes of transport will be required including enhancement of footpath and cyclepath connectivity with the town centre, employment and rail stations. Measures to ensure the integration of the development with the remainder of the town including measures to address movement across Howes Lane and Lords Lane
- A well designed approach to the urban edge, which relates development at the periphery to its rural setting and affords good access to the countryside, minimising the impact of development when viewed from the surrounding countryside
- Development that respects the landscape setting and that demonstrates enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors to achieve a net gain in biodiversity
- Consideration should be given to maintaining visual separation with outlying settlements. Connections with the wider landscape should be reinforced and opportunities for recreational use of the open countryside identified. Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by a landscape/visual and heritage impact assessment
- Careful consideration of open space and structural planting around the site to achieve an overall improvement in the landscape and visual impact of the site
- No development in areas of flood risk and development set back from watercourses which would provide opportunity for green buffers. Proposals should include a Flood Risk Assessment.

- Maximisation of the sustainable transport connectivity in and around the site
- Consideration and mitigation of any noise impacts of the railway line.
- Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the provision of a bus route through the site with buses stopping at the railway stations and at new bus stops on the site
- Contributions to improvements to the surrounding road networks, including mitigation measures for the local and strategic highway network, consistent with the requirement of the Eco-Towns PPS to reduce reliance on the private car, and to achieve a high level of accessibility to public transport services, improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and the provision and implementation of a Travel Plan to maximise connectivity with existing development
- Provision of a Transport Assessment
- Measures to prevent vehicular traffic adversely affecting surrounding communities.
- Significant green infrastructure provision, including new footpaths and cycleways, enhancing green modal accessibility beyond the site to the town centre and Bicester Village Railway Station, and adjoining developments. Public open space to form a well connected network of green areas suitable for formal and informal recreation
- Preservation and enhancement of habitats and species on site, particularly protected species and habitats and creation and management of new habitats to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity including the creation of a local nature reserve and linkages with existing BAP habitats
- Sensitive management of open space provision to secure recreation and health benefits alongside biodiversity gains.
- A Landscape and Habitats Management Plan to be provided to manage habitats on site and to ensure this is integral to wider landscape management.
- Careful design of employment units on site to limit adverse visual impact and ensure compatibility with surrounding development
- The provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity
- The retention and respect for important existing buildings and heritage assets with a layout to incorporate these and consideration of Grade II listed buildings outside the site
- Take account of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the site
- Provision of sustainable drainage in accordance with Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), taking account of the recommendations of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures including exemplary demonstration of compliance with the requirements of policies ESD 1 – 5
- An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary.
- A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.
- Undertake a staged programme of archaeological investigation.

*The definition of zero carbon in eco-towns is that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole are zero or below.

Strategic Development: Bicester 2 - Graven Hill

C.51 Graven Hill to the south of Bicester is part of an extensive MoD site comprising some 600 hectares of land stretching for over 5km from the edge of Bicester to the villages of Arncott to the south and Piddington to the north east. It includes a number of distinct, built-up sites separated by areas of countryside and accommodates a number of military functions. Part of the site is a major logistics and distribution hub serving the armed forces, but with the potential from this proposed development at Graven Hill to help strengthen Bicester's economic role within the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.



C.52 Following a national Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP) in 2008, the MoD identified a need to modernise its estate, improve efficiencies, reduce costs and improve the support services to the Armed Forces. It reviewed its assets and concluded that the widely dispersed estate at Bicester was ageing and suffering from under-investment.

C.53 The MoD wishes to retain its valued presence in Bicester. It has decided to rationalise and consolidate its logistics operations with the development of a new freight and distribution interchange at Arncott. The land at Graven Hill, Bicester can then be released with the receipts used to fund the consolidation and modernisation programme in Bicester, to improve support services to the Armed Forces.

C.54 The MoD's financial viability exercises have concluded that a mixed use scheme of some 2,100 homes with major employment would enable the required modernisation to proceed and secure between 420 and 620 additional military jobs. The land released at Graven Hill could provide a further 2,000 civilian jobs. Development of the site will identify Bicester as a prime location for investment through the creation of significant jobs-led economic growth to address the town's historic housing/jobs imbalance. The development area covered by Policy Bicester 2 will include land at Langford Park Farm. Development should be concentrated towards the eastern part of this area to take account of the potential impact of development on Langford Park Farm (which is a listed building) and the sewage works.

C.55 The Graven Hill site represents a unique sustainable development opportunity, consisting of predominantly previously developed land in single ownership that is well located in relation to the centre of Bicester, Bicester Village Railway Station and strategic development sites. It has existing infrastructure and landscaping, but previously stood separate from the town. Development of this site presents the opportunity for integration of this development area with Bicester and for its development to be undertaken in an integrated, coordinated and planned way.

C.56 Within the Graven Hill site stands the woodland topped hill itself, which is a landmark in the local landscape that could be opened up for public access providing recreational and health benefits (subject to careful management given the ecological value of the woodland and its designation as a Local Wildlife Site).

C.57 The site benefits from excellent transport connections. There are rail tracks still on the site and rail linked distribution warehouses. There are also planned transport improvements for the town including East-West Rail (to improve links between Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and Bedford), and M40 J9 improvements. The site will also contribute to transport infrastructure improvements. Graven Hill could accommodate a possible relief road as one possible option for highway improvements to the town through the eastern part of the development area. New road links on the site may be either site accesses only or form part of a strategic relief road.

C.58 The proposal will also support local economic growth including the warehousing and logistics sector in a location that lends itself to both national and regional distribution. This sector is well placed to maximise the strategic accessibility from which Bicester benefits. A Bicester Rail Freight Interchange (RFI) would provide a logical continued use of this existing employment area. The job creation impact of a RFI will make a positive and significant contribution to the employment provision for Bicester.

C.59 The delivery of rail served distribution nodes is a key part of the Government's policy of transferring freight from roads to rail. Government policy recommends that sites with unique transport connections to develop as rail freight interchanges should be protected from other forms of development. This site is located adjacent to the A41 and within easy access of the Strategic Highway Network, ensuring that operations based at Bicester will perform well in terms of transport cost minimisation and in being able to attract rail freight from the UK and international locations. The close proximity of the improved Junction 9 on the M40 presents a unique opportunity to locate a RFI on a highly sustainable and accessible site with limited impact on residential properties.