

## 3.0 SITE AND DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

### Site Context

- 3.1 The Site, forming part of a strategic allocation for 6,000 dwellings at North West Bicester<sup>1</sup>, is 2.5km to the north west of Bicester Town Centre, south east of the village of Bucknell and north west of Caversfield. The land and boundaries of the Site comprise Banbury Road (B4100) and the ongoing construction works associated with first phase of the North West Bicester allocation (Exemplar Scheme), completed housing associated with the same development, and fields, hedgerows and trees to the north, north west, and west. Further to the south lie fields running up to Lords Lane (A4095) which is approximately 550m to the south and forms the northern edge of Bicester.
- 3.2 Beyond Banbury Road to the east is the Church of St Laurence Grade II\* Listed Building, Caversfield House, which is surrounded by vegetation, and a Public Right of Way (PRoW) beyond that. Home Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building is located approximately 85m to the south east at the closest point to the Site.
- 3.3 The land separating the two parcels of the Site comprising the first phase of the Exemplar Scheme is part complete and part under construction. The new development includes housing development and a primary school (Gagle Brook). An estate road, Charlotte Avenue, travels north of the new housing development, in between the two parcels of land comprising the Site becoming Braeburn Avenue before joining Banbury Road.

### Site Description

- 3.4 The Site comprises two parcels of land totalling approximately 23.97 hectares (ha) of uncultivated agricultural land. The land is predominantly grassland with fields bounded by hedges with some large trees, woodland and plantation, and is classified as good to moderate value (primarily Grade 3b) under the Agricultural Land Classification system. The west of the Site contains two distinct areas of woodland, and the most northern area of woodland contains a dry pond. There is a historic hedgerow which runs along the north eastern border of the Site and is a drainage feature running through the south of the Site, which also comprises areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3. The Site is relatively flat rising gradually to the north west.

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<sup>1</sup> within Policy Bicester 1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>1</sup>

## Sensitive Receptors

- 3.5 The features which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Development have been identified and the likely significant effects on these potential receptors have been considered by the various technical studies and chapters of this ES. The potential sensitive receptors are identified in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Potential Sensitive Receptors**

| Category                          | Sensitive Receptor/Land Use  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Residential/Buildings             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing residential dwellings off Charlotte Avenue/Braeburn Avenue and Caversfield House as well as other roads potentially affected by traffic from the Development; and</li> <li>Future residents of the Development during the construction process.</li> </ul> |
| Transport Infrastructure          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banbury Road</li> <li>Lords Lane; and</li> <li>Charlotte Avenue/Braeburn Ave.</li> </ul>  |
| Landscape and Views               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing neighbouring residential dwellings; and</li> <li>Local Landscape Character.</li> </ul>   |
| Ecological Features               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hedgerows and trees on and surrounding the Site.</li> </ul>   |
| Archaeology and Cultural Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church of St Laurence Grade II* Listed Building; and</li> <li>Home Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building.</li> </ul>   |

## The Development

### Development Parameters

- 3.6 For an outline planning application where EIA is required, the description of the development must be sufficient to enable the requirements of the EIA Regulations to be fulfilled, and in particular, to enable the potential significant effects of the development to be identified. In the case of the Development, it would not be feasible to make a detailed application at this stage, however, to ensure that as it evolves with the benefit of further approvals (i.e. reserved matters) the Development remains consistent with that assessed within this ES, 'Development Parameters' have been established and assessed. Development Parameters detail all the limits necessary to define and fix those aspects of a development capable of having significant environmental effects. This will enable planning conditions to be drawn up and agreed to control the implementation of the Development. The Development parameters to be defined by such conditions include:

- the location and types of land use including access; and
- the maximum heights of development as maximum metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

3.7 The Development comprises an outline planning application for:

*residential development (within Use Class C3), open space provision, access, drainage and all associated works and operations including but not limited to demolition, earthworks, and engineering operations, with the details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination.*

3.8 The description provided in this chapter and chapter 5 of this ES, and the parameter plans, Figures 3.1 to 3.3, comprise the Development.

### Land Use

#### *Residential*

3.9 The Development comprises up to 530 residential units (Use Class C3). The range of residential accommodation within the Development may extend from one-bedroom apartments to five bedroomed detached houses, and all formats in between and will include private and affordable homes. All properties will have access to open space within the Development.

### Building Heights

3.10 The majority of the Development will be up to 12m above ground level however parts of the Development will comprise buildings with a maximum height of 16 metres (m) above ground level (up to three storeys). Ground levels at the Site are not expected to require extensive remodelling and therefore a 2m variation has been included in Figure 3.1. The proposed storey heights have been set with reference to their wider context and on a local scale, with the massing changing through iterative feedback throughout the design process, as detailed in Chapter 4 of this ES.

### Access

3.11 Access will be provided into the eastern and western parcel of the Development from four highway connection points, as shown on Figure 3.3. Pedestrian and cycle connections will be provided at each of the vehicular access points. Safe and attractive environments for walking and cycling will be provided to encourage local journeys to be made sustainably.

### Vehicle and Cycle Parking

- 3.12 Car and cycle parking for the development will be provided in accordance with required standards and in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council.

### Green Infrastructure

- 3.13 The Development includes extensive retained greenspace as shown on Figure 3.2. Green space, including retained vegetation, buffers and the landscape and visual mitigation zone will comprise a minimum of 40% of the Site area when the Development is complete. The greenspace will include private gardens, landscaping, and structural planting; drainage; ecological and natural areas; parkland; formal and informal recreation areas; orchards and edible landscapes; allotments; equipped and non-equipped play areas; wetlands and watercourses, water features; flood risk management areas; and natural areas.

### Drainage

- 3.14 The majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and subsequently at low risk of fluvial and tidal flooding however a small portion of the Site (along the eastern boundary of the eastern parcel) lies within the extents of Flood Zone 2 (at medium risk of flooding) and Flood Zone 3 (at high risk of flooding), associated with Town Brook. The Development Parameters include flood attenuation areas within the green spaces as shown on Figure 3.2. Opportunities for sustainable drainage will be maximised across the Development and the existing topography and proposed landscape corridors provide an opportunity to create a system of swales and ponds to mitigate surface water. See Chapter 13 Water Resources and Flood Risk for further information.

### Lighting

- 3.15 The adoption of controlled lighting and implementation of a lighting strategy in accordance with current best practice guidance will ensure that the potential effects on surrounding sensitive receptors from light spill, glare and sky glow are minimised and reduced to an acceptable level.

### Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change

- 3.16 The Development will create a cohesive, permeable and sustainable development. The Development will provide sustainable transport facilities within walking distance of residents

and pedestrian and cycling routes that connect to local facilities and will promote sustainable living. A modal shift towards active travel and more sustainable modes would reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases that might otherwise be the case, helping to mitigate climate change.

- 3.17 The Development will include the following energy efficiency measures, which would also help mitigate climate change: use of air source heat pumps, solar arrays on-site and either off-site solar arrays or carbon offsetting.
- 3.18 The Development includes measures to increase adaptation to climate change. The Development will include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and water efficiency measures to reduce consumption and will include new planting that will provide natural cooling and channel surface water runoff. Buildings will be designed to adapt to climate extremes by reducing water consumption and reducing overheating and improving ventilation.