

**APPENDIX 9.5
LOCAL PLANNING POLICY**

Appendix 9.5: Local Planning Policy

The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and sets out the long term spatial vision for the District in the period up to 2031. The following adopted policies are considered relevant to the landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape proposals:

Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision, requires that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision by:

- Protecting existing sites;
- Addressing existing deficiencies of existing provision and improving access to existing facilities or securing new provision; and
- Ensuring that new development contributes to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.

Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation, states that *“development proposals will be required to contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its management and maintenance”*. The policy recognises the recommended standards for each typology of open space including general green space (parks and gardens/natural semi-natural/amenity green space), play space, outdoor sports provision and allotments. The minimum size of provision and thresholds for on-site provision are intended to act as a guide to developers; however, the composition of provision will depend on the details of the proposal, its location and the community needs generated by the proposal. Open space provision within North West Bicester will be considered against the requirements of ‘Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town’.

Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, primarily deals with the protection and enhancement of biodiversity; however, the policy recognises that landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, trees, rivers and riverbanks, ponds and floodplains can be of importance both in urban and rural areas, and often form wildlife corridors.

Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, seeks to conserve and enhance the distinctive and highly valued landscape character of the District and recognises the importance in determining the relationship between the urban areas and on the character of the countryside. Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, 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.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character and secure appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted where they:

- Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;
- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;

- Be consistent 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.

Policy ESD 13 continues: *“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.”*

Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, states that new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through siting, layout and high quality design and that all new development will be required to meet high design standards. New development proposals should [inter alia]:

- *“[...] Be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions; [...]*
- *Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes; [...]*
- *Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings; [...]*
- *Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette;*
- *Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features;*
- *Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places [...];*
- *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation;*
- *Be compatible with up to date urban design principles [...];*
- *Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design [...];*
- *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible [...].”*

Policy ESD 15 continues: *“The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale.”*

Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure, recognises that development proposals, particularly on larger sites, can offer the opportunity to improve the green infrastructure network

across the District. Maintenance and enhancement of the District's green infrastructure network will be secured through the following measures:

- *“Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation;*
- *Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites [...];*
- *Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity 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; and*
- *All strategic development sites [...] will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.”*

The Site forms part of the wider allocation at North West Bicester and is covered by Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town. The Council will expect the masterplan and applications for planning permission to meet the following landscape related requirements.

Infrastructure needs include:

- *“[...] 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 [...].”*

Site specific design and place shaping principles include:

- *“[...] 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 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;*
- *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;*
- *[...] 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;*
- *[...] A Landscape and Habitats Management Plan to be provided to manage habitats on site and to ensure this is integral to wider landscape management; and*
- *[...] The provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity.”*