

# BICESTER GATEWAY

## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



JANUARY 2020





Figure 1: Gateway development on the A41.



Figure 2 : Relationship of the Innovation Community with adjoining Business Park.

**Site:**

Land at Bicester Gateway,  
Bicester, OX25 2PA

**Masterplanning:**

SpaceStrategy

**Credits:**

Bloombridge LLP  
Maddox Planning  
Ramidus Consulting  
Stantec  
MCA Landscapes  
Paul Cordle Design  
Ecology Solutions  
Cotswold Archaeology  
Alan Wood & Partners  
Kyoob  
OneStudio  
VSL

**Date:**

JANUARY 2020

## SUMMARY

This Design and Access Statement addresses the proposed continuation of development at Bicester Gateway with an outline planning application for Phase 1B (all matters reserved exc. access). The site comprises 3.15ha of land with the benefit of a previous outline consent.

This development on Bicester Gateway Phase 1B would deliver:

- ◇ Approximately 4,413sqm GIA (47,502sqft) of open market office space (typical B1 use) served by a dedicated car park including 147 spaces (partly in a multi storey car park with 4 EV charging spaces).

- ◇ Approximately 15,030sqm GIA (161,800sqft) comprising approximately 273 residential units, with amenity space, including,

A maximum of 33 car-free residential flats, with access to 4 car club spaces; and

Approximately 240 residential flats, including ancillary gym and MUGA, served by a car park providing an overall allocation of 1 space per unit.

- ◇ An ancillary mixed-use co-working HUB of about 836sqm GEA (9,000sqft), including a site management office, a lounge area, desk space for hire, an Active Travel Hub and a small food retail facility (day-to-day top up shopping), served by 2 car parking spaces for the use of staff at the site management company.

This unit would also incorporate,

- ◇ Approximately 190sqm GEA (2,000sqft) A3/Café use, served by a 20 spaces car park for customers and 2 additional spaces for staff.

In terms of the Knowledge Economy, the research supporting this application (Ramidus, 2019) identifies a range of economic, social and environmental factors leading occupiers to express a preference for a mix of ‘innovative development’ that blends ‘work, life and play’ in a mixed use and co-working/co-living environment. We describe such developments as ‘business communities’ (for example, see [www.mepc.com](http://www.mepc.com)); and in the Oxfordshire context there is the potential to plan for a sub-set, which we refer to as **innovation communities**. This is our vision for the frontage land at Bicester Gateway (Phase 1B).

The submitted evidence suggests that such proposals will successfully attract ‘**inward innovators**’ (i.e. people) from knowledge hotspots such as central Oxford, or elsewhere in the Sub-Region, especially young professionals and entrepreneurs who cannot afford Oxford and Cambridge’s exceptionally high house prices and rents. With the ‘war for talent’ it is reasonable to conclude that knowledge-based **inward investment will follow** (i.e. corporates/employers).

**This generates scope for innovative planning – with wide-ranging benefits.**

It is also likely that an ‘innovation community’ in Bicester (potentially the first in Oxfordshire) will build on the changing perception and ‘brand’ of Bicester, which will be self-reinforcing and highly beneficial for the town so that it becomes fully-integrated into the wider Oxford-Northampton/Oxford-Cambridge Arc innovation narratives.

In place-making terms, this strategy is fully compatible with the adopted Bicester 10 Local Plan Policy. It makes sense to develop such a solution at this ‘front of town’ location, especially as it is probably the only way to achieve an appropriate design ambition in terms of the scale and massing of a gateway – *“Exemplary building quality and design to provide a strong sense of arrival to the town and a statement of the sort of economy we have aims to secure” (Cherwell Local Plan, paragraph C.97).*

This report concludes:

1. The proposals provide a significant gateway opportunity to redefine the employment needs of Bicester and orient the town towards new working practices focussed on the knowledge economy.
2. This will attract and support young entrepreneurs and knowledge workers; bringing them to Bicester by providing a preferential co-working/co-living structure supported by a managed environment and touchdown HUB; all within a non-car bias landscaped setting.

We see no reason why such a sustainable, policy-compliant scheme should not be a welcome addition to Bicester. The stakeholders we have spoken to agree (as set out in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement).



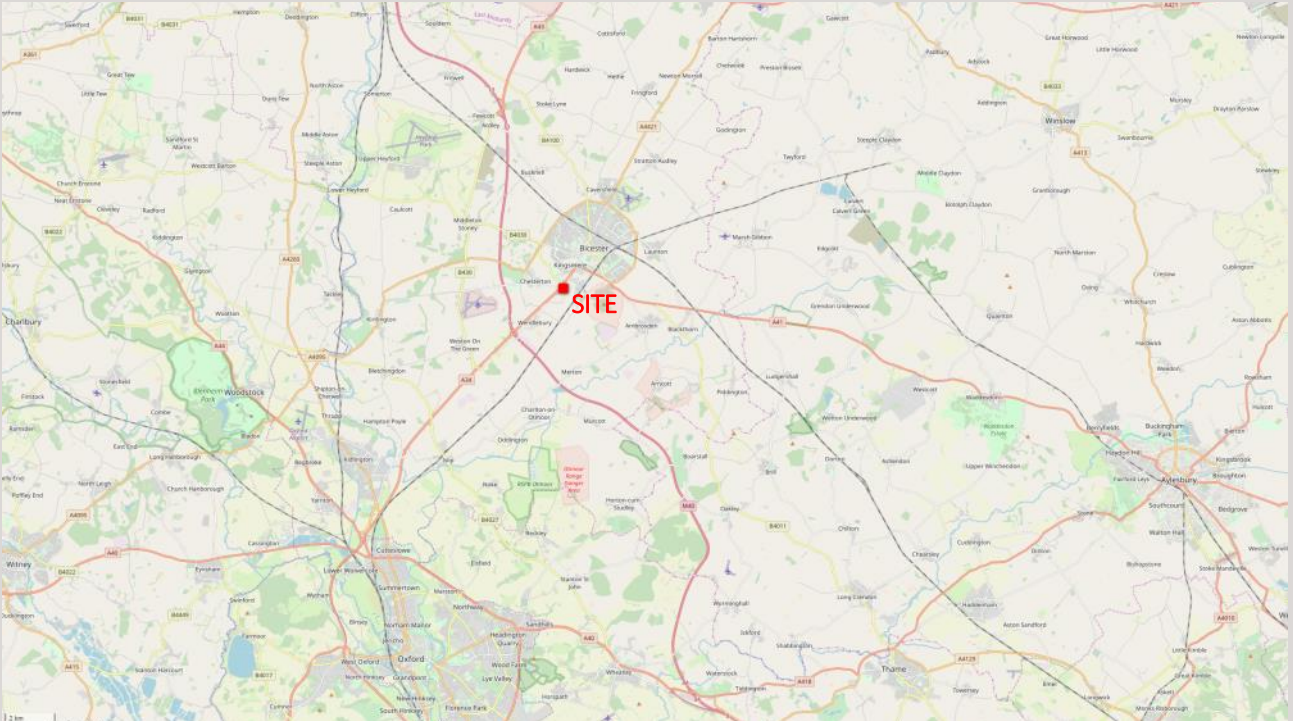


Figure 3: Regional Plan



Figure 4: Settlement Plan

# INTRODUCTION

A Design and Access Statement is a report that supports a planning application and illustrates the process that has led to the development proposals. It explains the design in a structured way.

This document allows the Council and third parties to better understand the analysis underpinning the design, and how the scheme contributes to quality, sustainability, and inclusiveness. It allows local communities, access groups and other stakeholders to review the scheme in relation to their interests without having to interpret technical or specialist documents (whilst recognising that this statement draws from such documents).

This statement: –

- ✓ Demonstrates analysis of the development's context and appraises how the design should take this into account.
- ✓ Explains the design principles and concepts that underpin the scheme.
- ✓ Sets out how access has been provided and how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.
- ✓ States what consultation has been undertaken by reference to the Statement of Community Involvement and how the scheme has resolved the outcomes of this consultation.

This report is divided into the following sections –

**Context:** This section includes an assessment of the development's context, summaries further reports on site-specific matters, details the key findings of consultation and provides a summary evaluation.

**Design Principles:** This section describes the use, amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the proposals, setting out the underlying design principles. As this is an outline application, some matters can only be addressed more broadly.

**Access Matters:** This section describes how pedestrian/cyclist, vehicular and access for mobility impaired groups is provided.

# DOCUMENTS

This statement draws from the following drawings and reports, which provides further and more detailed information. It should be read in conjunction with them.

## PLANS

Site Location Plan (1:1250).

Constraints Plan (1:500).

Regulating Plan (1:500).

Access Plan (1:500).

Indicative Masterplan (illustrative; 1:500).

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Landscape Strategy (illustrative; 1:250).

Landscape Strategy Concepts (illustrative; 1:250).

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## REPORTS

Planning Statement.

Design and Access Statement.

Statement of Community Involvement.

Economic Research.

Transport Statement.

Landscape and Visual Assessment & Tree Report.

Ecology & Biodiversity Statement.

Archaeology Summary

Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment.

Energy Statement.

Utilities Planning Statement.

Marketing Evidence.

CGI Visualisations to assist evaluation (Illustrative).



# CONTEXT

## PROPOSAL

It is proposed to develop 3.145ha at Bicester Gateway, Bicester, OX25 2PA – see Figure 3: Regional Plan; Figure 4: Settlement Plan; and Figure 7: Site Location Plan.

This development on Bicester Gateway Phase 1B would deliver:

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Approximately 240 residential flats, including ancillary gym and MUGA, served by a car park providing an overall allocation of 1 space per unit.

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This unit would also incorporate,

- ◇ Approximately 190sqm GEA (2,000sqft) A3/Café use, served by a 20 spaces car park for customers and 2 additional spaces for staff.

## LOCATION

This Gateway location lies to the south of Bicester, adjoining the A41 (see Figure 5).

- ◇ **North** – A newly constructed 6 storey 149-bed hotel (19.60m high) forms the other half of the gateway; to the north-west Kingsmere — a significant urban extension of more than 1,585 new homes/2 schools/ community & sports facilities with a new retail core; to the direct north Blue Diamond Retail Village, Bicester Business Park and the now expanding Bicester Village; then the town centre.
- ◇ **East** – Wendlebury Road; 20.4ha Bicester Gateway Phase 2, Bicester Catalyst (19/01740/HYBRID & 19/01746/OUT) including proposals for a new David Lloyd Sport Centre. Beyond that lies the self-build residential led redevelopment at Graven Hill.
- ◇ **South** – Embanked Bridge over A41. The A41 links directly to M40 (2.5km).
- ◇ **West** – A41 passes to the west of the site, with new Park and Ride beyond; Chesterton Village lies farther again to the west.

Figure 5 also shows planned development around Bicester (both residential and commercial sites). This is a developing masterplan responding to strategic growth opportunities (e.g. UK's only designated Eco-Town development). It also shows the string of consented/allocated developments along the A41, including,

- ◇ Existing Outline Planning consent & Application Site (edged red),
- ◇ Bicester 10 Innovation Gateway (hatched purple),
- ◇ Kingsmere Urban Extension (R4) including retail core (E3),
- ◇ Bicester Business Park (E4) & Bicester Retail Village to the north of that.

Part of the site sits with the [adopted Local Plan Policy Bicester 10](#), which describes the available employment opportunity (below; extracted from Local Plan):

**C.96** Development on the Bicester Gateway site has the potential to contribute towards building and reinforcing a modern knowledge economy for Cherwell and surroundings, securing a location for science and research and technology transfer and commercial application.

**C.97** This site has the potential to be a major high-quality employment area at this critical gateway to the town. Being a major development site at the southern edge of Bicester will require exemplary building quality and design to provide a strong sense of arrival to the town and a statement of the sort of economy we have aims to secure for Inward investors or local companies in need of land for expansion.

**C.98** There is an opportunity to encourage the knowledge economy in Cherwell by enabling businesses which have or want links to the Oxford cluster, as well as direct spin out companies from successful research and development, to locate in Bicester. Oxford is constrained by its historic environment and by the Green Belt. Bicester is only 10 miles from Oxford, with good transport links between the two.

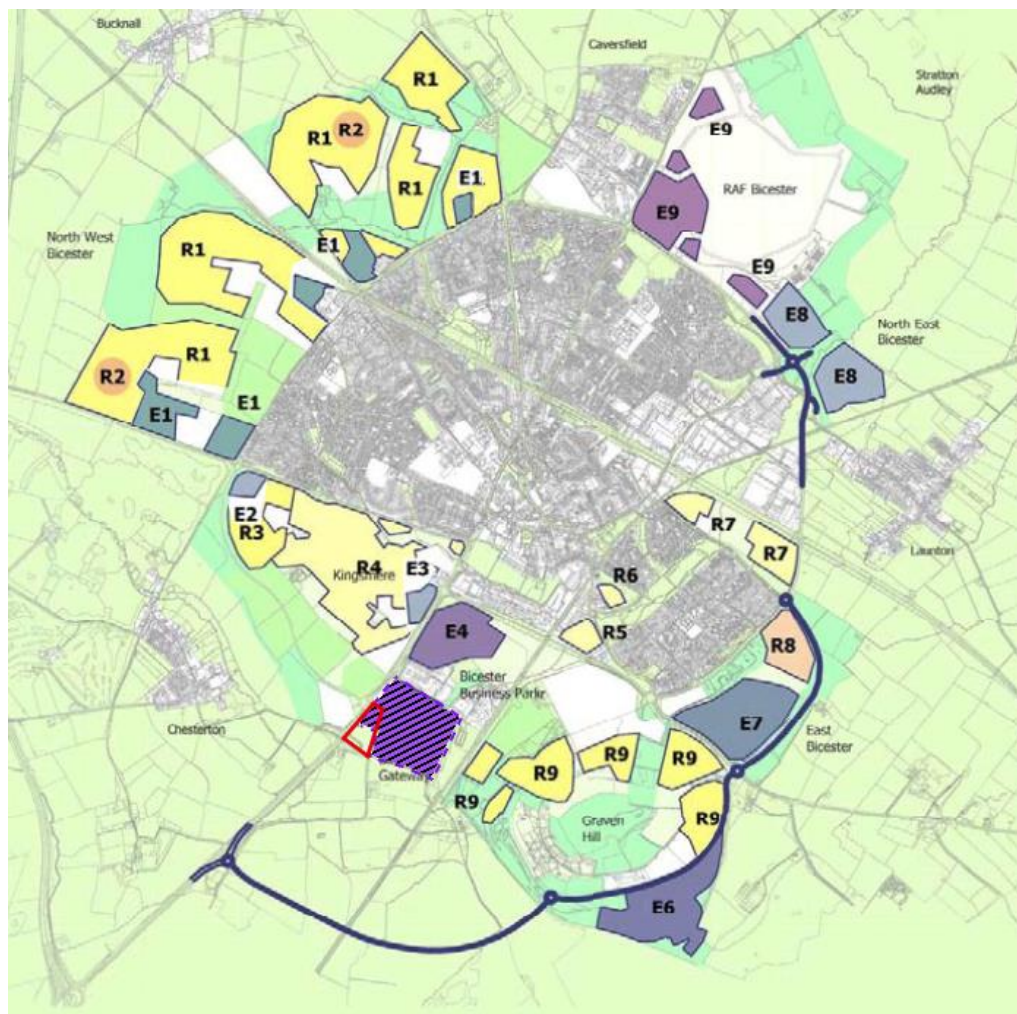


Figure 5: Emerging Bicester Masterplan [Residential & Employment Sites].  
Site (edged red) & 'Bicester 10' (hatched purple).

**C.99** Development of this site will provide employment in Bicester helping to reduce the number of people out commuting to Oxford and London. The development will also complement the proposed employment development at Silverstone [based on the Master Plan and planning permission achieved by Bloombridge LLP] and will form part of the technology corridor from Oxford to Northamptonshire and Oxford to Cambridge.

This is underpinned by the submitted research document by Ramidus (2019), which reviews the opportunity to attract the knowledge economy to Bicester. The report states,

*“The economy is changing rapidly. This means that the nature of work is also evolving, and that the backdrop that we need for that work, the workplace, must also respond.”*

Adding,

*“One of the most notable responses is the reversal of a planning assumption that we should separate, or zone, different activities and that we should instead, and where appropriate, integrate them more. Where once, many work activities were incompatible with living space (due to noise, pollution and so on), in large parts of the knowledge economy this is not the case. And in an age when sustainability should be an underlying principle to all that we do, it is coming to be realised that we need more innovative development that addresses both working and living needs.*

*Bicester generally, and Bicester Gateway in particular, offers an opportunity to create a step change in the delivery of the knowledge economy in the county – by means of what could be described as a mixed use ‘innovation community’. Such a fresh approach to emerging issues could help provide the step change that is needed to reverse the perception of Bicester as a ‘tired, industrial’ town, so that it becomes a vibrant town attractive to innovation and regionally significant inward investment.*

*The Bicester Master Plan 2012 [Figure 5 above] was a major achievement and step towards changing this perception of the town; but seven years on, the knowledge economy remains notable for its absence.”*

Further,

*“The workplace is moving away from being a static backdrop for process-based, largely routine and solitary work, to an increasingly actively curated environment, managed more like a hotel than a traditional office, with a high level of service and experience for ‘guests’.*



*The emergence of WeWork, and growth of the flexible space market generally, demonstrate the enormous demand for new styles of working and living. But even this sector is highly dynamic and is evolving rapidly.*

*Today's workforce is more demanding and discerning than in the past: the knowledge worker has transferable skills and no longer feels tied to a single or limited number of employers. There is a 'war for talent', and talented workers demand choice and quality in the workplace. Similarly, as work, home and leisure become increasingly blurred in terms of when, where and how they are undertaken, so the workplace is having to provide workers with greater choice and freedom and, commensurate with this, mixed use and live/work environments are taking on a significant role, notably in innovation districts."*

And,

*"In recent years there has been a significant growth in the number of 'innovation districts'."*

*"Affordability is part of this mix, notably for entrepreneurs – and a lack of affordability is a well-documented problem with the Oxford economy. Patterns of living and working are changing, and research suggests that the notion of residential areas solely as dormitories is on the decline, with more people spending more time where they live, leading to the need for different types of local services. Moreover, there is a strong and growing market for live/work districts, combinations of mixed-use units and work hubs. Live/work development will be an important consideration for new settlements and growth towns.*

*Innovation development therefore increasingly involves a blending of 'work, life and play' in mixed use and co-working/co-living environments. We describe such developments as 'business communities'; and in the Oxfordshire context there is the potential to plan for a sub-set, which we refer to as 'innovation communities'. The evidence suggests that such proposals will successfully attract 'inward innovators' (i.e. people) from knowledge hotspots such as central Oxford, especially young professionals and entrepreneurs who cannot afford Oxford's exceptionally high house prices and rents. With the 'war for talent' it is reasonable to conclude that knowledge-based inward investment (i.e. corporates/employers) will follow. There is therefore scope here for innovative planning – with wide-ranging benefits.*

*Such development will help the County spread the economic success across a wider selection of settlements, to include the so called 'Country Towns', thereby helping to ease commuting into central Oxford and benefiting parts of the county that need an economic stimulus. It is also likely that an 'innovation community' in Bicester (the first in Oxfordshire) will build on the changing*

*perception and 'brand' of Bicester, which will be self-reinforcing and highly beneficial for the town."*

*"This 'innovation community' proposal for Phase 1B of Bicester Gateway would aim to support a wider county effort to rise to the challenges and opportunities of 21st Century Oxfordshire with innovation development. Bicester Gateway is an ideal opportunity for innovative planning, not least because, as a gateway site, there is so much potential to broadcast the innovative potential of Bicester."*

As the site sits across the Bicester 10 Policy allocation and adjoining land (see Figure 8), it is uniquely positioned to deliver both the needs of the policy and additional development to support the same.

## EXISTING PLOT

The land, albeit generally quite level, falls from Shula Drive towards the south (65.9m AOD to 65.5m AOD). The land then rises again towards 70.0m with an embanked bridge over the A41. There is a redundant slip-road within the southern section of the site. A footpath and powerline cross the site. *Note: the powerline is currently being re-routed in the adjoining highway and the lines across the site will shortly be removed.*

The perimeter of the site is bounded by roads on all sides and lined with shrub-sized planting with groups of trees. Sections of the perimeter are bound with existing culverts.

In July 2017, outline consent was granted for a hotel (up to 149 bedrooms) with up to 14,972 sqm (Gross External Area) of B1 employment-based buildings on the application site; with associated infrastructure, car parking and marketing boards (16/02586/OUT; see Figure 8).

This application was seen as the first phase of the development of Bicester Gateway.

The reserved matters consent for the hotel to the northern end of Phase 1 ("Phase 1A") was granted in March 2018 and is currently under construction (17/02557/REM) and due to open in July 2020.

Subsequent, outline applications have been submitted by Albion for Phase 2. These include the option to develop a David Lloyd Sports Centre (19/01740/HYBRID & 19/01746/OUT).

The extant outline consent for the application site ("Phase 1B") shows 4 large L-shaped buildings (nom. 14-m high) laid out along the A41 frontage with

significant grade parking to the eastern side of the site (adjoining Wendlebury Road).

The outline consent resolved all principle issues pertaining to development on the site; including Transportation / Flooding Risk / Archaeology / Trees / Ecology and Landscape. This further application follows the principles set out and consented therein.

Figure 6 (below) shows that 37% of the July 2017 outline permission and extant application Phase 1B site fall within the Bicester 10 Policy allocation.



Figure 6: 'Bicester 10' Policy Map, showing site boundary.

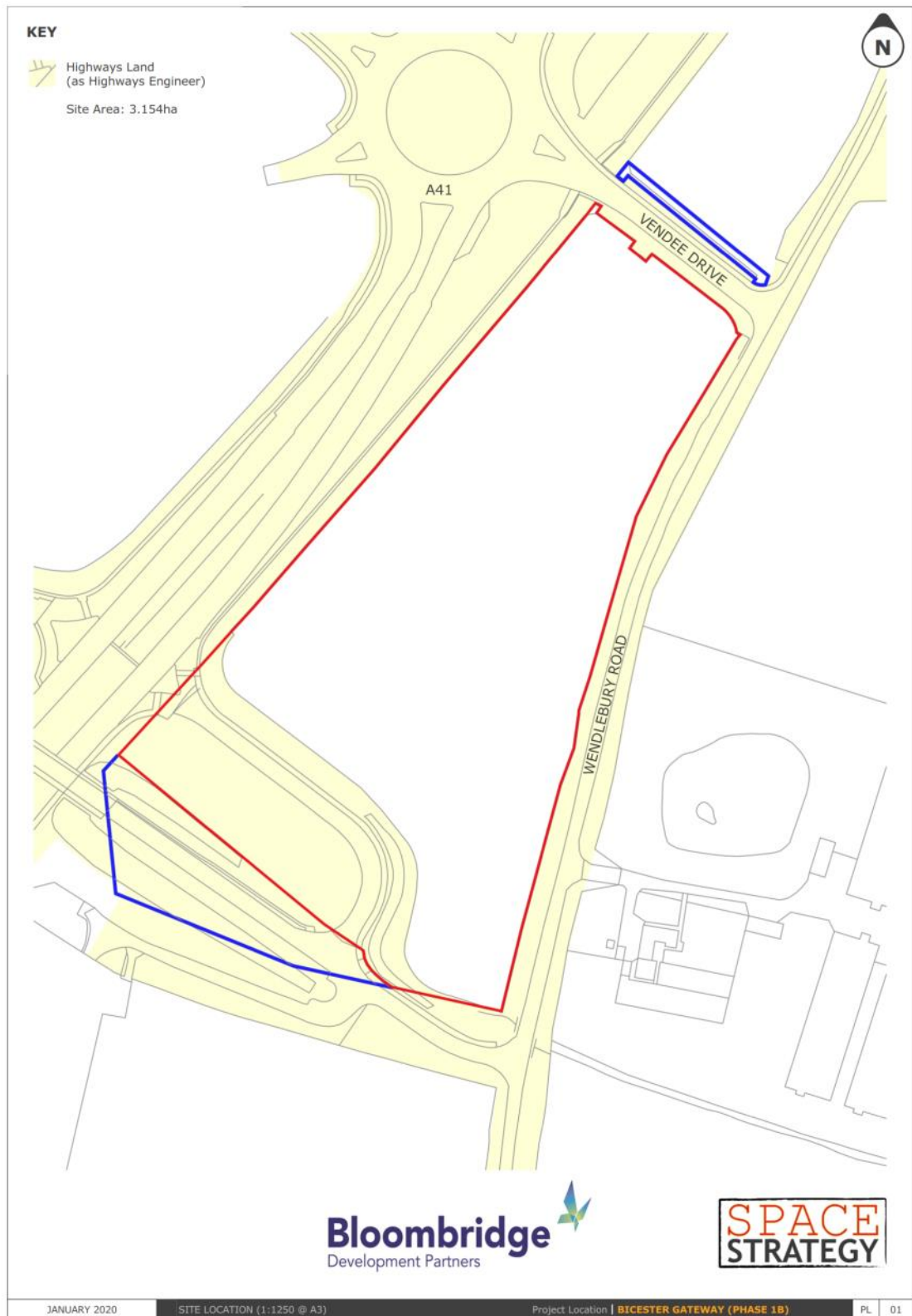


Figure 7: Location Plan Submitted



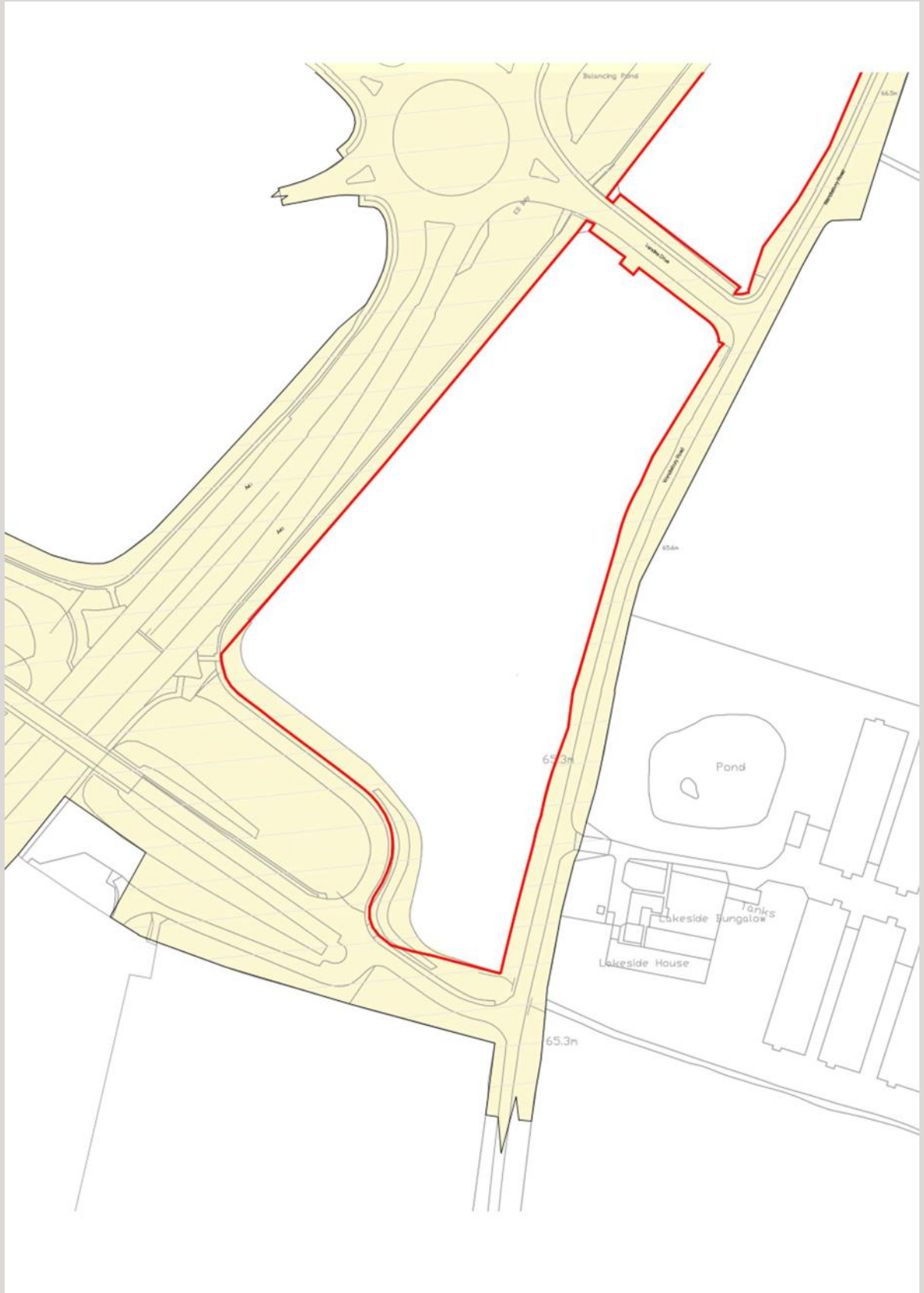


Figure 8: Location Plan Consented

The remaining 63% of the site has planning consent for development but is not in the Policy Bicester 10 policy allocation.

## EVALUATION

### DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS

All developments are driven by market opportunity – the best by vision. It follows that, to achieve competitive territorial advantage for Bicester, it is important that these opportunities are not unreasonably constrained or delayed where they are held to be sustainable and generally advantageous. This is sometimes called the ‘planning balance’. This Design & Access Statement evaluates both the opportunities and constraints in terms of the scheme’s design and will show how they shape the scheme to create the territorial advantage on offer.

### OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities can come from many sources, both from the development team and externally. In this case, the design must meet several challenges set out in the adopted Local Plan.

To sustain the ideals of the Bicester 10 Policy, the applicant commissioned a report from Ramidus Consulting – a widely respected economic consultancy and leader in research relating to business occupier requirements. As recorded above, this report concludes that, with reshaping as an Innovation Community, the site is capable of driving and supporting the knowledge economy growth that Bicester desires. An accompanying report by agents, VSL, records that marketing efforts in the last 5 years have not been successful, echoing the story for the 500,000 sqft at Bicester Office Park.

On the basis of this advice, the applicant has decided to pursue the opportunity to deliver both the Policy Bicester 10 employment generation and anchor this new form of employment through the recommended Innovation Community; thereby providing (for Bicester) the first of such new economic assets in Oxfordshire. This offers a strategic, locational advantage.

These include,

**Challenge 1:** Promote this location in relation to Local Plan Policy ‘Bicester 10’ and as a strategic development site. Delivering high quality employment that encourages the knowledge economy in Bicester

Opportunity: Attract the right sort of employment by encouraging/attracting the right sort of people. Responding to the latest economic and social trends set out in the Ramidus Report to provide territorial

advantage for Bicester.

**Challenge 2:** Propose a design that provides a strong sense of arrival to the town.

Opportunity: Deliver development that is appropriate to a ‘gateway’ location.

Opportunity: Place-making, branding, public realm, developing a new destination, appearance and a step change for Bicester.

**Challenge 3:** Help to reduce the number of people out-commuting to Oxford, the rest of Oxfordshire and London by responding to growth strategies such as the knowledge spine and technology corridors from Oxford to Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes and Oxford to Cambridge.

Opportunity: Mixed use, accessibility, sustainability, strategic planning and place-leadership.

#### SPECIALIST INPUTS

Based on the extant consent and subsequent additional specialist inputs, as well as marketing efforts on site since 2014, several summary evaluations can be made. Summaries of the relevant submitted reports are set out below; including: -

#### OUTLINE CONSENT (16/02586/OUT)

The LPA noted the following ‘database’ constraints, these were addressed by the outline consent, including approved conditions.

They were,

- ◇ Air Safeguarding - Construction Height - Constraint 150 Feet (45.7m)

Action: No action – development over 45m not considered.

- ◇ Agricultural Land Classification - Grade 4

Action: Principle resolved with extant Outline Consent.

- ◇ Potentially Contaminated Land within 50m.

Action: Principle resolved with extant Outline Consent.

- ◇ Protected and Notable Species - Eurasian Badger, Yellowhammer, Polecat, Grass Snake.

Action: Net gain agreed and delivered as explained in the Outline Application’s Reports and Conditions — also see Ecology below.

- ◇ Public Rights of Way - Onsite 161/8/20.

Action: Consented Statement remains relevant and is resubmitted.

- ◇ Archaeological Constraint Area.

Action: A Mitigation Strategy was approved with the Consented Outline Application and Conditions — also see below.

- ◇ Water Utility Designation

Action: Principle resolved with extant Outline Consent.

#### TREE REPORT

This report assesses the quality of existing trees and provides an addendum to the tree report submitted with the consented outline application; it also identifies the zones in which roots need to be protected during construction work, which is shown on the submitted Constraints Plan.

The Tree Report for the consented outline planning application concludes,

*“All of the trees to be removed are of low quality with little future potential. The remaining trees are either not impacted by the development or can be protected from damage. A landscape design including replacement trees would mitigate the removals.”*

The addendum Tree Report for the submitted proposals notes,

*“This review concurs with the findings of the previous survey and a visual examination finds that there has not been sufficient change upon the site to merit a full re-survey.”*

Adding,

*“It continues to be the case that, overall, the quality, condition and landscape value of the existing trees upon the site is mostly poor. Furthermore, there are no trees upon the site that are of such arboricultural, ecological, landscape or cultural value that they could not be removed and replaced with superior stocks as part of the development proposals. However, there are a few trees of intermediate quality and intermediate landscape value that it would be preferable to retain and incorporate within the revised scheme for the proposed development if possible. These are the same trees as identified previously by Mark Harrison during the original CBA survey.”*

The Tree Report goes on to conclude,

*“The original survey correctly identified the species of all of the trees upon the*



site. These include a high proportion of ash, many of which are self-set trees that have established themselves within the hedgerow boundary.

The original survey correctly identified the quality of the tree stocks upon the site and found no trees of high quality (Category A). There were 8 trees of medium / fair quality (Category B) and of these 7 were Ash trees and one was found to be Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*).

The majority of the remaining trees upon the site were of low quality (Category C), either as individual trees or as groups. There were 24 individual Category C trees found, comprised of few species, predominantly ash and oak. In addition, all of the trees with the groups G1 to G6 were of Category C, although the report notes that in several cases the total landscape effect is greater than the sum of its parts. From a landscape point of view, there are no trees that are of sufficient individual aesthetic merit that they cannot be removed, coppiced or replaced as part of the proposed re-development scheme. Because it is clear that the hedgerows and hedgerow trees are a landscape asset more than they are fine specimens, it is entirely possible to maintain and enhance the landscape asset with superior stocks as part of an improved planting and management plan.

From an ecological point of view the total amount of volume of habitat and food source should, as a minimum requirement, remain the same by net volume and by variety. The revised scheme must increase and improve both the amount overall and the variety of habitats and food sources on offer for wildlife. Additionally, the more spacious revised proposals retain ample internal green space which provides a better network of interconnected vegetation, rather than just a linear perimeter.

From a disease / future climate point of view, care should be taken to choose species that are suited to the roadside environment and are capable of withstanding periods of drought. There are very few native trees that are able to perform well under such challenging environmental and climatic variations. Therefore, a balanced species palette should be chosen that includes a range of native species, cultivars and robust (but not invasive) non-natives in order to give the overall landscape of trees the best chance to thrive, even where some individual species may struggle over the medium to long-term.

At this point, the original winter 2016-17 survey provides enough detailed data upon the existing tree stock on the site to enable the critical design decisions to be made. There is no need to re-survey at this time. The correct time to carry out a supplementary survey would be in April / May 2020 in order to ascertain the extent of infection of the Ash trees with *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*."

*“Works to the tree belt of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees along the southern boundary of the site is recommended, including late thinning.”*

**Action:** No significant design constraints, as the existing tree stock and hedgerows along the western (A41), southern and eastern (Wendlebury Road) boundaries of the site can be retained; as they are found to the site perimeter and replacement tree provision for loss is identified as a reasonable prospect for Reserved Matters. Site access points need to consider identified tree parameters.

**Action:** Identify tree parameters on the Constraint Plan. The existing trees are located at the periphery of the site and, as such, development needs to be placed to take account of Construction Exclusion Zones and the protection of trees in accordance with BS 5837.

## ECOLOGY

The Ecological assessment of the site states,

*“Noting the similarity of the Development Proposals to the previously consented scheme for Phase 1B (insofar as there is potential for impacts on biodiversity), it is considered that the previously approved mitigation and enhancement strategy for the site will be equally suitable in respect of the revised Development Proposals for the site. Indeed, the proposals offer significant opportunities for betterment relative to the approved scheme, with a net gain in the quantum of semi-natural habitats being delivered on site (see below).”*

And,

*“Given its small size, its isolation as a result of the existing road network and the limited range of habitat present, it is not considered that the application site is of any significant value for any other protected or notable faunal species. This view is consistent with the planning decision made in 2017.”*

The following section summarises the mitigation and enhancement proposals for the application site. It is noted that the mitigation strategy for the wider site was approved following extensive consultation with Cherwell’s Ecological Advisors.

It is that the opportunities to enhance ecology on site can be delivered through a similar condition to the outline planning consent, thus enhancing the wide ranging suite of mitigation and enhancement measures negotiated and now agreed for implementation as part of the consented proposals (which includes the application site). Indeed, the revised proposals offer significant opportunities for betterment relative to the previously consented.

Mitigation and enhancement measures will include,

- ◇ Implementation of an appropriate landscape strategy utilising local species of local provenance. This is to include the provision of areas of species rich grassland, SuDS, tree and shrub planting and the retention and enhancement of treeline T3. It is noted that these measures would be secured through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and would allow for a net increase in semi-natural habitats on site relative to the consented scheme.
- ◇ Install a minimum of 25 bat roosting features within the application site and implement a sensitive lighting scheme to promote bat usage, significantly more than the consented scheme.
- ◇ Enhance existing Trees/Hedgerows ensuring a net gain in foraging and nesting habitat. Install minimum 40 bird boxes within the application site (including a minimum of 20 Swift boxes), significantly more than the consented scheme.
- ◇ Install a minimum of 25 bee-bricks.
- ◇ Any scrub and all tree removal should ideally be outside of the bird nesting season. Any clearance of suitable reptile habitat is to be undertaken in accordance with a sensitive methodology.
- ◇ A revised sum of £36,026 due to be paid by the applicant to facilitate a 'Biodiversity Scheme' at Bicester Wetland Reserve. This fee would allow for an additional £6,000 to be made available as part of the revised scheme, securing further long-term ecological enhancements.

Subject to these measures, it is considered that the Development Proposals will secure significantly enhanced biodiversity opportunities relative to the consented scheme, ensuring enhanced biodiversity opportunities overall, as clearly accords with local and national planning policy.

Action: No significant design constraints, as items listed are within scope of any Reserved Matters applications.

Action: Identify suitable planning condition to ensure delivery of identified LEMP, Bat roosts, lighting design, birdboxes, swift bricks, bee-bricks and site clearance methods.

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The submitted LVIA report concludes,

*"The Visual and Landscape Impacts are assessed against the background of the Bicester Area Strategy within which the proposed development occupies an allocated site [with planning consent for development]."*

*The direct impacts upon landscape features associated with the landscape character of the locale are minimal, and measures to mitigate for these impacts will have beneficial impacts.*

*The adverse landscape impacts are mostly confined to indirect impacts upon the setting, the locale and the sense of place. Owing to the already developed nature of much of the surrounding land and the intrusiveness of the A41, the locale has relatively low susceptibility to these additional adverse influences. [Additional planned development (e.g. Bicester Catalyst) will further reduce the susceptibility of the surroundings].*

*These outcomes give a combined landscape impact which is Slightly Adverse and does not represent an impediment to the approval of the planning application for the proposed development on landscape character or visual grounds.*

*There are positive landscape impacts associated with the proposed scheme. The Design & Access Statement refers to: -*

- ◇ *improvement of the existing hedgerow boundaries through reinvigoration and restocking to create larger, healthier and denser hedgerows around the site perimeter [see LEMP above].*
- ◇ *the planting of new standard trees, such as oak (*Quercus robur*) and other site native species, in keeping with the local Landscape Character, in order to provide future veteran boundary trees of the type that are prevalent in the locale but absent from the site.*

*Any moderately adverse visual impacts are mostly confined to locations where changes to the visual appearance of the site are experienced at very close, "point blank" range, and where visual mitigation is not possible owing to the immediate proximity.*

*There are also a range of positive landscape effects associated with the landscape design and management proposals associated with the development, which will deliver a high quality landscaped gateway site and create a prestigious sense of arrival to Bicester from the south-west ( A41 / M40 )."*

Action: No significant design constraint.

Action: Re-survey trees (especially regarding Ash Die-back Disease) before submitting Reserved Matters for Landscape to correctly identify final landscape needs.

Action: Reserved Matters landscape designs to identify (a) how hedgerows can be reinvigorated and restocked to enhance LVIA; in conjunction LEMP above.



Action: Reserved Matters to assess planting of new standard trees, such as oak (*Quercus Robur*) and other site native species, in keeping with the local Landscape Character, in order to provide future veteran boundary trees of the type that are prevalent in the locale but absent from the site. Having regard for a balanced of species in order to give the overall landscape of trees the best chance to thrive, even where some individual species may struggle over the medium to long-term.

## HERITAGE

The Heritage position for the consented outline planning application was addressed in the previously submitted summary note (14/12/2016; accessed via Cherwell Planning Register),

The Phase 1 area of the Bicester Gateway site has been subject to a detailed Heritage Desk-based Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology, 2016), Geophysical Survey (Pre-Construct Geophysics, 2016) and archaeological evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2016). In the light of your intention to submit the planning application for Phase 1 of the Bicester gateway site in the near future, I have attached copies of these three documents. The assessment of the archaeological potential of this site has been considerably influenced by the adjacent site of Alchester Roman Town, and the known extent of its extramural settlement and associated farming landscape. It has therefore been necessary to consider whether archaeological remains within the Phase 1 area may be both contiguous, and contemporary, with the wider layout of the Roman town and its environs. However, in accordance with paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework, this pre-application programme of archaeological work has provided a sufficiently detailed understanding of the heritage and archaeological resource of this part of the site, and of its significance, to inform a planning application .

This work has identified no overriding heritage constraints which would preclude development. The potential for later prehistoric and Roman remains was assessed as high, in view of the widespread recorded remains of these periods within the closer environs of the site. This assessment was at least partly confirmed by the results of geophysical survey, which identified a dense concentration of archaeological features within the south-east corner of the Phase 1 area. These features appeared to be contiguous with those recorded by a previous investigation conducted by Oxford Archaeology within an immediately adjacent area.

Evaluation confirmed the results of geophysical survey, and recorded a distinct concentration of archaeological remains within the south-east of the Phase 1 area, which dated principally to the second to fourth centuries AD. Very few archaeological features were identified elsewhere within Phase 1, with the exception of an undated ditch, which appeared to conform to the layout of ridge and furrow earthworks, and may therefore have been of medieval date. No structural remains were identified, although a pit and floor surfaces and a possible corn-drying oven of Roman date were recorded. This evidence suggested a small roadside settlement situated within the extra-mural area of the Roman town, and was considered sufficiently significant to justify preservation in situ. Accordingly, amendments to the foundation design of the proposed Phase 1 scheme will enable these remains to be preserved.

Further, Conditions 18 & 19 (17/00426/DISC; 19/10/17) were discharged; with a, “Design Brief for Archaeological Recording Action”. This states,

*“This Project Brief provides the outline framework for a detailed costed Project Design to MAP2 specifications covering a timetabled programme of archaeological investigation, recording analysis and publication.”*



## FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE ASSESSMENT (FRDA)

The submitted FRDA assesses the Flood Risk and practical Drainage solutions for the site.

The assessment's summary concludes,

*"The site falls in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) on the Environment Agency Planning map and the proposals are considered to be 'Less Vulnerable' in terms of flood risk vulnerability which is considered to be appropriate in Flood Zone 1.*

*This report has considered other potential sources of flooding to the site, including fluvial, groundwater, surface water, existing sewers, water mains and other artificial sources. The majority of the site is shown to be at risk from surface water flooding with the locations of the new buildings shown to be prone to a minor depth of flooding. Flood mitigation measures are proposed which it is considered will reduce this risk to an acceptable level.*

*No other specific issues in respect of flood risk have been identified in the preparation of this report. Overall this report demonstrates that the flood risk to the site is reasonable and acceptable."*

**Action:** Ensure Finished Floor Level (FFL) are set at 65.30m AOD (max) or with a minimum of 150mm above external ground level whichever is higher.

The report also states,

*"Overall, this report also demonstrates that the site can be suitably, safely and sustainably drained, with the development being designed and constructed to meet the required standards.*

*Surface water run-off will be suitably restricted and discharged to the adjacent watercourse via a new swale.*

*Foul water will discharge to the existing public foul sewer via the rising main and pump station previously provided within the adjacent development to the north."*

**Action:** Suitably worded conditions can be applied to the grant of planning permission to control the delivery of drainage for the development in the usual manner.

**Action:** Neither Flood Risk or Drainage generate significant design constraints.

## ENERGY STATEMENT & UTILITIES STATEMENT

An Energy Statement is submitted with the application. This statement address a fundamental imperative of contemporary design – the sustainable use of energy. The document assesses the availability of following categories to

the scheme: Passive Design, System Efficiencies, Low Carbon Heating / Cooling Sources, Zero Carbon Renewable Energy Technologies, Water Conservation, Transport, Materials and Waste and Community Related Matters.

The purpose of the appraisal is to demonstrate that energy conservation has been considered. It is clear that sufficient opportunities exist within the scope of the Reserved Matters Applications.

Action: No significant design constraint. Reserved Matters to assess delivery of opportunities set out in the Energy Statement.

A Utilities Planning Statement is submitted with the application. At this stage, it is important to identify that there is reasonable access to utilities to support sensible and pragmatic solutions to energy conservation that can be delivered with Reserve Matters Applications.

The Utility statement shows that there is reasonable access to,

- ◇ Water
- ◇ Electricity
- ◇ Telecoms
- ◇ Foul and surface water drainage arrangements are addressed in the Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment above.

These two reports show how the Reserve Matters Applications following grant of outline planning are unlikely to be fettered by access to energy or its efficient use. Moreover, they show that there is an opportunity to develop excellent, policy compliant, series of buildings.

Action: No significant design constraint.

#### PROW STATEMENT

A Public Right of Way Statement was submitted with the previously consented Outline Planning Application, the conclusion of the statement reads,

*“We conclude that the pedestrian accessibility is not adversely affected by the Bicester Gateway development proposals. In fact, there are opportunities for enhancements to footpath enjoyment, legibility and safety. This can be picked up at the detailed design stage when the form and layout of the proposed buildings have been determined (with a specific occupier in mind). The footpath could be left as is, but our feeling is that a route change would be*

*beneficial, and we will make the case for that when/if the evidence is available, at the appropriate time.”*

This position remains consistent with the current proposals.

Action: Show the existing Public Right of Way on the Constraints Plan.

#### TRANSPORT STATEMENT

The submitted Transport Statement summary states,

*“The proposal is for a new type of residential led development based on the concept of ‘co-living’ and ‘co-working’, promoted under the banner of an ‘Innovation Community’, building on the high transport accessibility and sustainability of the site. The proximity of the Bicester P&R offering direct bus access to the knowledge economy jobs in Oxford, coupled with the vast range of leisure, retail, education facilities linked by excellent cycling and walking facilities in the centre of Bicester and the nearby Kingsmere and Bicester Village developments, to which can be added two railway stations with convenient links to London in particular, mean that the proposed development aims to provide community living where car use can be limited to weekend and occasional trips as most day-to-day residents needs can be accommodated on site or close by.”*

Adding,

*“The concept of ‘Innovation Community’ put forward as part of this development offers a specific lifestyle for future residents and site users, with sustainability and community high on the agenda. The access strategy for the development therefore contributes to and shape this lifestyle offer on site, building on the excellent accessibility of the site.*

*The proposed development will be accompanied by a set of transport measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel patterns to and from the development and addressing any impacts associated with the development.”*

Such measures would include,

*“Development of a Framework Travel Plan, including measures aimed at encouraging the use of sustainable modes of travel including a parking management strategy; The provision of improved shared walking and cycling facilities along the A41 connecting to the extensive existing networks; The provision of an Active Travel Hub supporting a culture of walking and cycling at the Development; and suitable cycle parking provision providing facilities for the use of all types of bicycles, including cargo bikes, tricycles and Ebikes.*



*Vehicular parking to be provided so as to accommodate the anticipated car parking demand at the development, taking into account the sustainable and community ethos of the proposals, managed through a permit-based system encouraging the adoption of a car-free lifestyle.”*

Hence,

*“The weekend percentage impact assessment and weekday peak junction capacity testing undertaken within this TA demonstrates that the proposed development would not have an impact on the operation of the local and strategy road networks. The proposed new development would lead to significantly reduced trip generation when compared with the consented development on site and would not necessitate any of the highway mitigation schemes and financial contributions associated with the consented scheme.*

Concluding,

*“This report demonstrates that the proposed new development would have a beneficial impact on the operation of the transport networks in Bicester when compared to the consented Bicester Gateway Phase 1B development. The concept for the proposed new development and its ethos are strongly anchored in the principle of sustainability, building on excellent accessibility by non-car modes.*

*Based on the findings of this report, it is considered that there are no valid highway or transportation reasons that should prevent the development proposals from being awarded planning consent, subject to securing the proposed package of sustainable transport measures by way of appropriate legal agreement”*

**Action:** Identify suitable planning condition to ensure Reserved Matters assess and secure a suitable package of sustainable transport measures by way of appropriate legal agreement.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The scheme has benefitted from the involvement of the Community, as detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement (“SCI”) that concludes,

*“The community involvement efforts since 2013 have proved an invaluable contribution to the design-evolution exercise. Very careful attention has been paid to the comments received. We also feel that the parish level consultations were helpful in demystifying the development proposals, providing reassurance on design quality and mix, and in helping the scheme to evolve to something*

*that feels grounded in what local people want and need. There was also a good level of acceptance that the extant permission addressed the key technical issues, such as ecology, heritage, landscape and visual impact, flood risk and transportation."*

The main point of discussion with a number of stakeholders was the economy. There was interest in, and general support for, the 'innovation community'. Above all, there was a strong desire to attract the knowledge economy to Bicester from Oxford and elsewhere in Oxfordshire in order to create a 'step change' in the economic potential of the town. It was undisputed that the annual take-up of B1 space in the town is very low and that something needs to change.

Many of the items identified cover broad desires or actions that had already been discovered through the site evaluation.

Other matters included,

- ◇ The principle of development being established by the extant planning permission. Acceptance that the extant permission addresses the main technical constraints, but a desire for traffic impact not to be increased.
- ◇ Support for public transport, cycleway and footpath improvements.
- ◇ Concern about 'rat running' through Wendlebury village.
- ◇ Concern about the recent accident at the A41 roundabout.
- ◇ Interest in new housing, especially addressing young person, small scale and affordable needs. Better at Bicester Gateway than impacting directly on the villages.
- ◇ A preference for a master plan that emphasizes landscaping and green public realm rather than car parking areas for commercial uses.

Action: No significant design constraints. Overall, there is a good alignment with the identified Vision and Opportunities.

## SUMMARY

The following key points are noted,

### CONSTRAINTS

- \* Identify tree parameters on the Constraint Plan.
- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure delivery of identified LEMP, Bat roosts, lighting design, birdboxes, bee-bricks and site clearance methods.
- \* Re-survey trees (especially regarding Ash 'Die-back') before submitting Reserved Matters for Landscape to correctly identify final tree replacement needs.
- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure Reserved Matters landscape designs to identify (a) how hedgerows can be reinvigorated and restocked to enhance LVIA; in conjunction LEMP above.
- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure Reserved Matters to assess planting of new standard trees, such as oak (*Quercus Robur*) and other site native species, in keeping with the local Landscape Character, in order to provide future veteran boundary trees of the type that are prevalent in the locale but absent from the site; in conjunction LEMP above.
- \* Identify the "Proposed Archaeological Mitigation Plan" zones on the Constraints Plan.
- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure continuation of agreed Archaeology works and methods.
- \* Ensure Finished Floor Level (FFL) are set at 65.30m AOD (max) with a minimum of 150mm above external ground level – or suitable further FRDA analysis is undertaken. Show max FFL to Regulating Plan.
- \* Suitably worded conditions can be applied to the grant of planning permission to control the delivery of drainage for the development in the usual manner.
- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure Reserved Matters assess delivery of opportunities set out in the Energy Statement.
- \* Show the existing Public Right of Way on the Constraints Plan and identify suitable planning condition to ensure that further evaluation is undertaken with Reserved Matters.

- \* Identify suitable planning condition to ensure Reserved Matters assess and secure a suitable package of sustainable transport measures by way of appropriate legal agreement.

The composite Constraints plan is shown in Figure 10.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- \* Attract the right sort of employment by encouraging/attracting the right sort of people. Responding to the latest economic and social trends set out in the Ramidus Report to provide territorial advantage for Bicester.
- \* Deliver development that is appropriate to a 'gateway' location.
- \* A step change for Bicester; including place-making and branding, public realm, developing a new destination, and appearance.
- \* Through good strategic planning and place-leadership, help to reduce the number of people out-commuting by provide an attractive, mixed use, accessibility, and sustainability scheme.

#### PUBLIC BENEFITS

- \* Propose a scheme design that provides a strong sense of arrival to Bicester.
- \* Promote this location in relation to Local Plan Policy 'Bicester 10' and as a strategic development site. Delivering high quality employment that encourages the knowledge economy in Bicester, including on Phase 2 and at Bicester Office Park (the latter consented for 50,000sqm of B1).
- \* Help to reduce the number of people out-commuting to Oxford and London by forming part of the technology corridor from Oxford to Northamptonshire and Oxford to Cambridge.

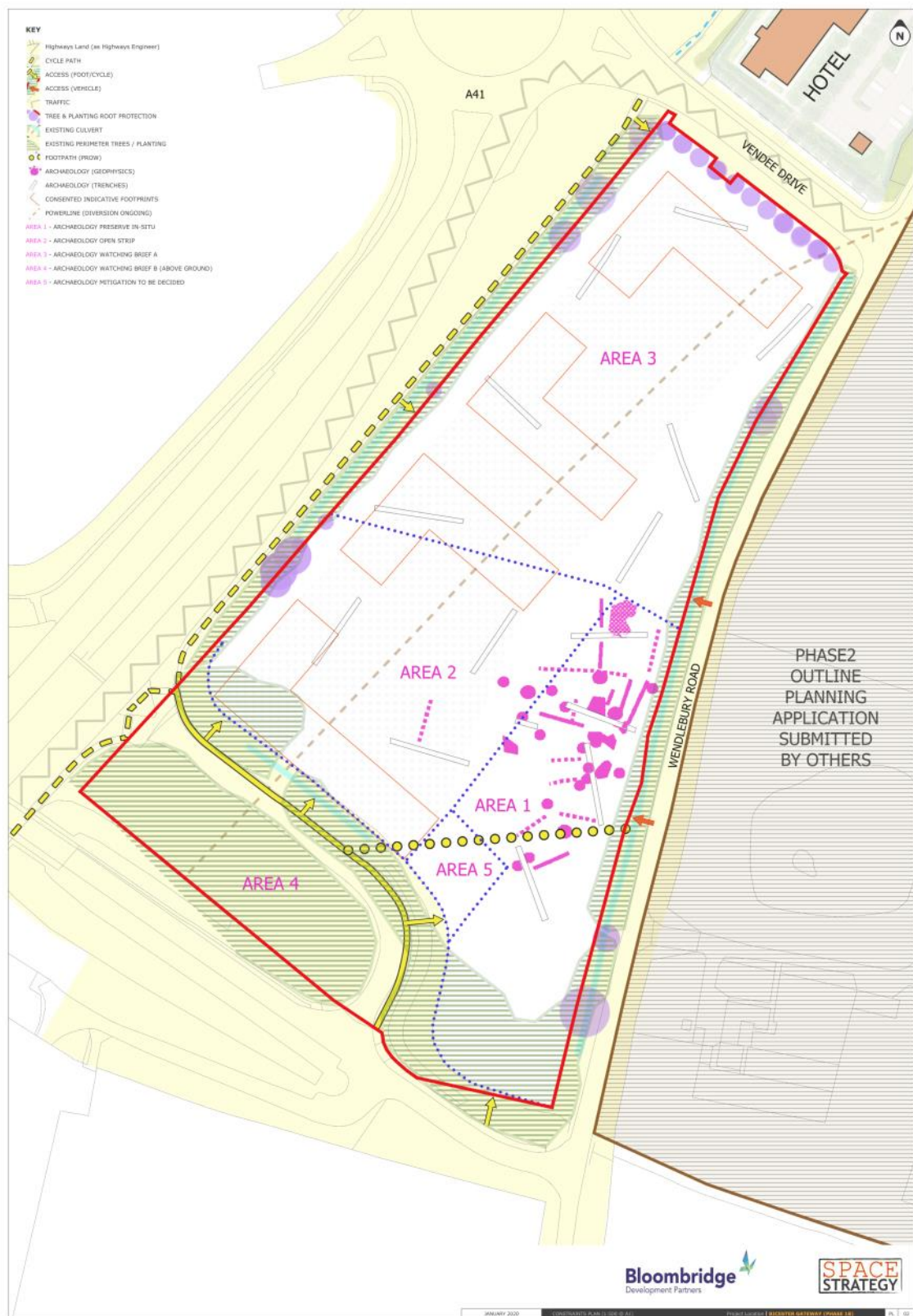


Figure 10: Constraints Plan.





Figure 11: Indicative Masterplan



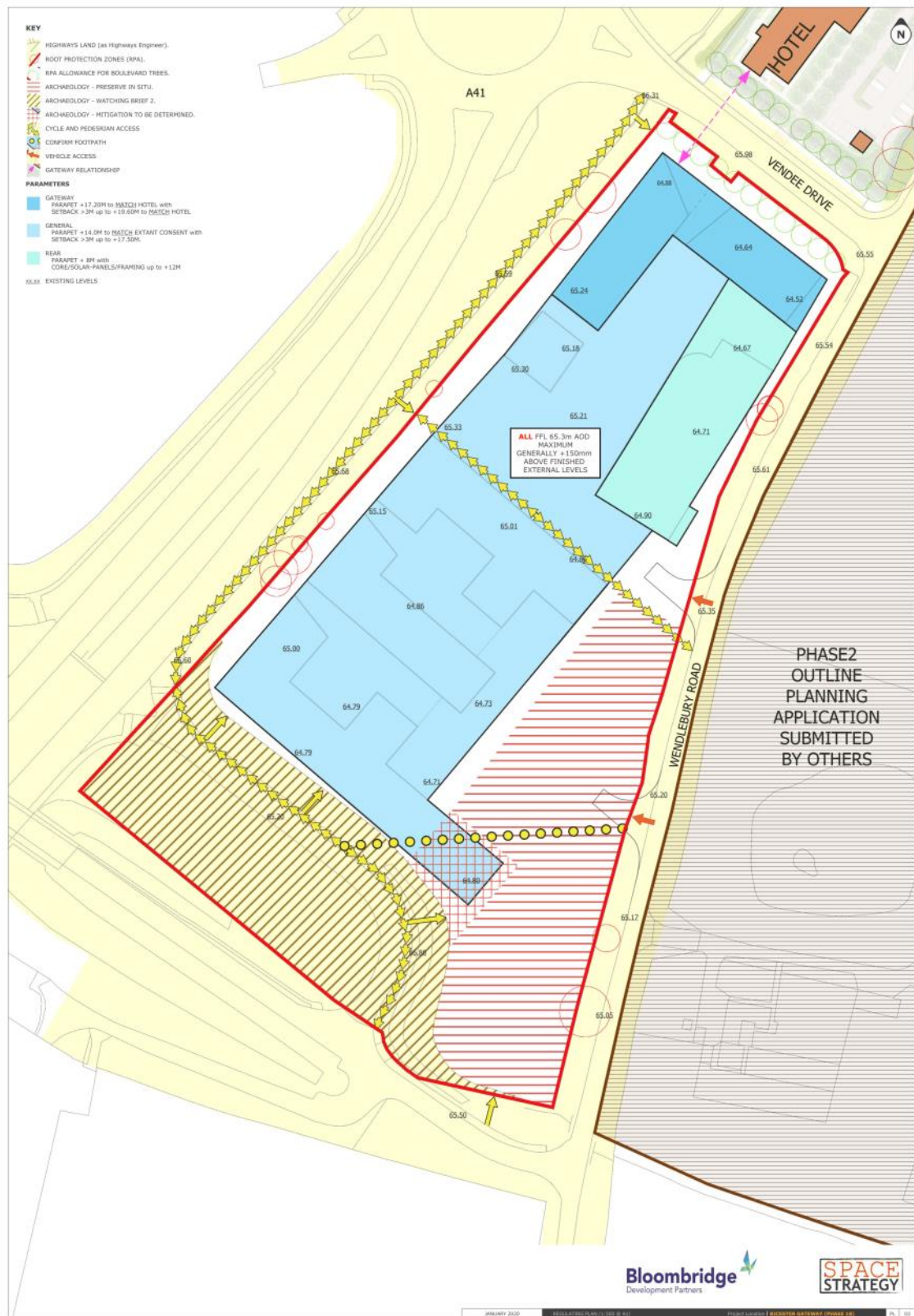


Figure 12: Regulating Plan.

# DESIGN

A Design and Access Statement plays an important role in linking the general principles driving a development with its design details. In the case of an Outline Planning Application, it shows how the design principles will shape the design details when they are submitted later – it regulates them; hence the submitted Regulating Plan.

A scheme's design is usually assessed under several headings. In this report, they are set out as follows: -

- ◇ Use & Amount.
- ◇ Layout.
- ◇ Scale (Massing & Form).
- ◇ Landscape.
- ◇ Appearance.

Layout, Scale, Landscape and Appearance are 'reserved' in this application. These Reserved Matters will be addressed in subsequent planning applications. Reserved Matters Applications ("RMA") contain the bulk of the detail; however, this statement addresses the principles in each case.

## USE & AMOUNT

This describes how much development is proposed and the use or 'mix of uses' proposed for the land/buildings. It explains how the context has been considered in relation to the proposed uses, how these uses will be distributed across the site, the relationship between the different uses and those surrounding the site. This section needs to be read in conjunction with the submitted Planning Statement which sets out how the proposed uses are justified in terms of planning policy. Use & Amount cannot be a reserved matter in an outline planning application.

The prospective mix and distribution of uses is subject to the identified constraints (evaluated in the previous Chapter). In this case, most of the constraints were considered and resolved as part of the previous Outline Planning Consent, including,

- ◇ Protecting the identified In-situ area of Archaeology.
- ◇ Making sure the buildings are constructed at a level where they will not be affected by surface water as it drains into the drainage system.
- ◇ Avoiding existing trees and groups of trees.
- ◇ Supporting and enhancing Biodiversity.

The submitted Constraints Plan (Figure 10) shows that the area of site available for building footprints. This is broadly the same as the land bounded by development in the existing consented scheme – which is not surprising.

Design Response: Locate development towards the A41. Developing the A41 frontage will create the ‘front-of-town’ gateway, place-leadership, destination and strong sense of arrival identified in the Bicester 10 Policy. It will also press the territorial advantage needed to attract Knowledge Economy innovators and Investors.

The site is partly within the Bicester 10 Local Plan allocation (37%). This calls for ‘gateway development’ supporting jobs in the Knowledge Economy.

Design Response: Locate primary employment uses to the north of the site. This approach relates well to the existing Hotel and access to Phase B (20.4ha) to the east.

A significant body of research (submitted) has identified the need for an Innovation Community. This demands a scheme that is attractive to both Innovators and those investing in the Knowledge Economy; this is, by necessity, a mixed-use strategy.

Design Response: Given the existing Housing Need within the Oxfordshire area and a requirement for reasonably priced accommodation to attract a younger generation of entrepreneurs and knowledge-economy workers; the right people to prime further knowledge economy development in and around Bicester (e.g. Bicester Office Park & Bicester Catalyst (Phase 2), as well as elsewhere), it was decided to develop a residential component to complement with the commercial land-uses; all within a high quality parkland landscape (see landscape section below).

This whole community would have access to HUB facilities (including café, workspace, cycle hub and other adjoining facilities; including the David Lloyd Sports Centre proposed on Phase 2).

The Indicative Masterplan (Figure 11) shows the distribution of Site.

At grade car parking is often associated with empty areas of tarmac at certain points of the day (e.g. business parks at night/at the weekend). These areas contribute little to the sense of a quality environment. They are also less than secure for users and their property.

Design Response: It was decided at an early stage that landscape would be a significant design driver in the scheme. Car-parking is therefore ‘hidden’ within the site layout (as a podium, or multi-story carpark).

## LAYOUT

An outline planning application should provide information on the approximate location of the proposed buildings, routes and open spaces. It should explain the principles behind the choice of development zones, blocks or building plots and explain how these principles will inform the detailed layout.

The Indicative Masterplan (above; Figure 11) together with a Regulating Plan (below, Figure 12) illustrate this. The Regulating Plan sets out how the key elements will be distributed across the site. This plan will be consented and form a baseline for future Reserve Matters Applications.

The proposed layout follows the broad principles of the previous outline consent; wrapping development along the A41 frontage and then towards Wendlebury Road at either end of the site; quieter amenity spaces fall to the east of the site. A Multi-Use Games Area is proposed to support community recreation and well-being.

As discussed above, the commercial development is primarily and logically placed at the 'gateway' end the site, with the southern land falling to a more residential use. The landscape unites both uses and provides the setting for this Innovation Community.

A HUB building articulates the layout, it provides a focus (both in use and design – see submitted CGIs). This building provides Café, information and touchdown meeting/workspace for the whole community.

Pedestrian & cyclist access is from the upgraded cycle path along the A41. These points of access are close to wider transport links – including cycling to the town centre. It is also intended to provide a path bisecting the site (in the middle), thus providing access from the cycle path to Phase B. Internal paths will link to these points of access. Most of these paths will be 3m wide allowing site-wide movement by both pedestrians and cyclists - there will be a mixture of paths within the site some providing immediate access and others for amenity use. The indicative Masterplan shows a jogging/walking route around the perimeter of the residential section of the site.

Vehicles access the site from Wendlebury Road. At the gateway end of the site, a portion of this frontage provides a 3-storey carpark; otherwise access is through a soft landscaped open-space (see Parkland in the Landscape section). The Layout avoids significant grade parking; the core principle being a community predisposed to co-living/co-working. Thus, cars have been mostly removed from the landscape (to Podium and Carpark). This arrangement is, both, supportive and consistent with the trend toward reducing and zero car owners – and a non-car bias site layout.

Overall, the general arrangement provides a legible series of spaces, excellent access to individual uses from a strong amenity landscape.

## SCALE (MASSING & FORM)

Scale has been reserved at the outline stage, so the application should indicate the limits of the height, width and length of each building proposed, to establish a 3-dimensional building envelope within which the detailed design of buildings will be constructed.

### EXISTING CONSENT



Figure 13: CGI of consented commercial scheme.

The existing outline consent accepts buildings that are +14.0m high; that is three full commercial floors, or four residential floors. This mass was assessed in LVIA terms and in relation to development fronting the A41 (including meeting the demands of a Bicester Policy 10). The form of the consented scheme also wraps the A41 frontage and then returns towards Wendlebury Road at either end.

### COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

The proposed commercial blocks mirror the extant consented layout – wrapping around the gateway corner.

The adjoining CGI (Figure 14) shows the massing of the consented layout at the gateway corner, it became quickly apparent during design development that the proposed commercial uses appears subservient to the adjoining hotel. To counteract this position, it was felt that additional commercial mass was required at this gateway location. The proposed Regulating Plan identifies the cornice of the adjoining hotel as the max height of the cornice of the proposed commercial uses (+17.20m), with similar setback development up to the full height of the hotel (+19.60m).

The proposed gateway is shown in the submitted CGI (see Figures 18-20 p.49 51).



Figure 14: CGI of extant Outline consent scheme.

To avoid the poor amenity of partly filled grade parking and to support the opportunity for a positive landscape (see further information in the Landscape section of this Chapter), parking for the commercial land-use is located in a secure 3-storey carpark. Some surface parking is still available for the Coffee Shop to accommodate visitors and informal meetings. This arrangement allows most of the landscape to provide amenity – a positive for those aspiring to a non-car community (set out in detail in the submitted Transport Assessment and in the Access Chapter of this report).

#### RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS

The residential blocks also follow the building line of the extant outline consent, wrapping along the A41 frontage and then returning along the slip road to the south. The maximum height of these blocks will be +14.0 m to the cornice and with the potential for partial setback floors (max. + 17.50m). The blocks are intended to match the cornice of extant consent (as Figure 13) and provide the additional benefits below.

Rooftops are an important aspect of contemporary development; using the roof area to provide additional amenity and (on top of that) ecological benefit e.g. a low intensity green roof to reduce run-off rates) seems both a sensible and sustainable approach.

Parking for the residential blocks is principally at ground floor level with a raised amenity deck above. Much as with the commercial blocks, this solution releases most of the open space for amenity use.

The arrangement of the scheme's landscape and open spaces is set out in the following section.

Access is discussed in the Chapter of the same name.



## LANDSCAPE

For outline applications where landscaping is reserved, the application does not need to provide any specific landscaping information. However, this statement explains and justifies the principles that ought to inform any future landscaping scheme. The intention is to show that landscape has been a primary design-driver and not an afterthought - landscape will be an important activator in the proposed Innovation Community.

Two landscape plans are submitted with the application. These show the general arrangement of the Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 15) and a plan that starts to identify the landscape character of the scheme (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Landscape Strategy Plan



Figure 16: Landscape Strategy Illustrative Plan

The Landscape Strategy for Bicester Gateway is designed to create a tree-dominated and pedestrian friendly environment in which the outdoor spaces exude quality and offer a sense of modern community life with open space, parks and cafe terraces.

The principles of the landscape design can be identified through several landscape character areas.



Figure 17: Landscape Characters





A green square with formal trees and hedges.



A tree lined pedestrian thoroughfare with a swale.



Amenity spaces on a podium deck.



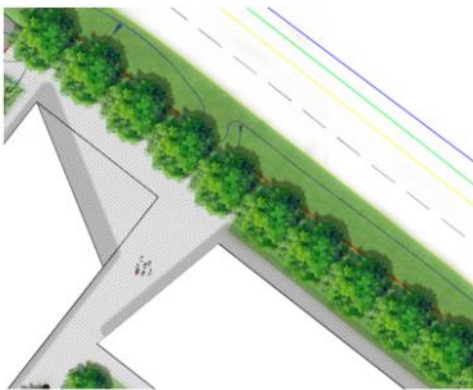
Parkland spaces between buildings.



Seating in the shade of trees in rolled gravel.

## VENDEE DRIVE (SHULA DRIVE)

A strong landscape structure signifying the Gateway and leading to Phase B.



A local feeder road with grandeur imposed by an avenue of trees.



A new avenue of Plane trees on a residential street.



An avenue of Field Maple.

## PIAZZA

Paved entrance area to Co-Living Blocks with seating and trees with uplighters.



Building apron with high quality paving forming a cafe space with seating under trees.



Modern contemporary seating in wood and concrete.



Pebble seats in polished concrete.



Paving blocks in silver, mid-grey and graphite.

## PEDESTRIAN AVENUE

A well-defined pedestrian route between mirrored trees, sculptural hedges, seating and lighting.



A cool green pedestrian avenue under tree canopies.



Incidental play as a sculptural entity in the landscape.



Pedestrian spaces providing circulation between buildings and creating a setting.



PODIUM DECK COURTYARD GARDEN  
Residential Amenity Environment.



Raised planting beds creating soil volume over a concrete slab.

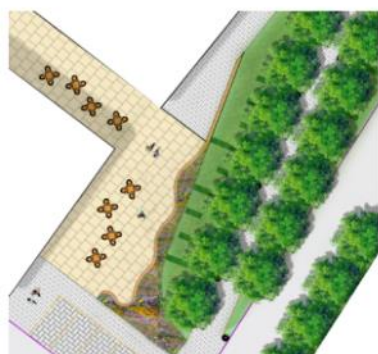


A pergola creating dappled shade on a podium deck.



A podium deck garden providing amenity space for residents.

CAFÉ BREAK-OUT SPACE  
Immediate access from the HUB Café.



A series of informal outdoor café spaces

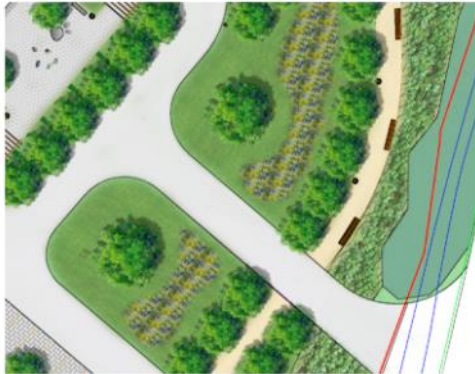


Planter edge seating



## PARKLAND

Wide turf lawns, large parkland trees creating a setting for the buildings with space for informal recreation.



Footpath winding through trees and lawns.



Parkland with trees and sinuous beds of flowering plants.



The white trunks of birch on a green overlooked by apartments.



Grasses and herbaceous plants in a contemporary urban parkland scheme.

## PERIMETER

New woodland planting reinforcing the existing native hedgerow on the east and west boundaries.



Newly planted woodland screen planting with individual native trees i.e. Field Maple and Wild Cherry with an edge of native shrubs i.e. Hawthorn and Hazel and a peripheral herb layer of grasses and wildflowers. This type of vegetation is inherently biodiverse and the scalloped edge creates a high surface area which maximises opportunities for forage and shelter for birds and small mammals.



## APPEARANCE

Appearance is fully reserved in this application. An outline application does not need to provide any specific information on the issue. In this case the applicant has commissioned three computer-generated visualisations of the scheme. These images are not intended to provide specific information on the appearance of the buildings. They are submitted (indicative) to show how the visual qualities of the scheme inter-relate and can enhance the proposed mix.



Figure 18: CGI showing Innovation HUB.





Figure 19: CGI showing Gateway development on the A41.



Figure 20: CGI showing adjoining Gateway Hotel by Norr.



Figure 21: CGI showing relationship of Innovation Community to adjoining Phase 2



Figure 22: CGI showing Gateway development in Oxford (Barton Park) by Alison Brookes Architects



# ACCESS

This section addresses how people get to and from the site; how people will move within the site; and how this will change based on current and predicted trends.

The submitted Transport Assessment has been tested against an Illustrative Masterplan to confirm capacity and deliverability. This report shows that the amount of development proposed – in conjunction with identified constraints – has less impact on all transport matters than the existing Outline Consent. It shows how the site layout might distribute the required access/transport assets and how such decisions might shape the scheme. The final layout of the site will be submitted as a Reserved Matters Applications, yet if the level of development signified by the Illustrative Masterplan works then the overall level of development and its driving concepts can be deemed reasonable.

Specific Site Access Points and works to support the development per se are set out on the submitted Access Plan (see Figure 21). The Access Plan & Regulating Plan will be consented as part of this application. These will form an underlying framework to the Reserved Matters Applications.

## PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE ACCESS

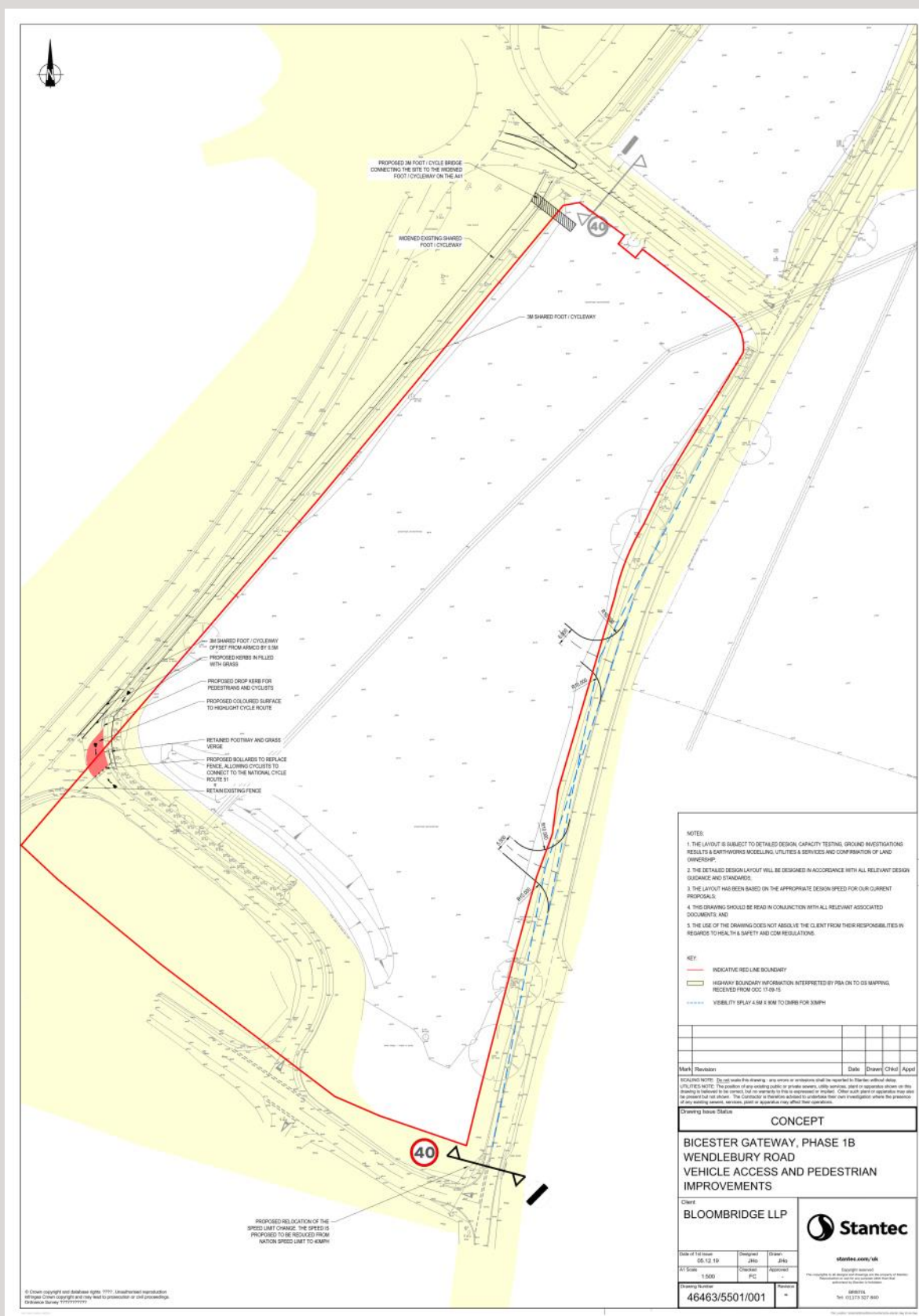
The submitted Transport Assessment states that the site benefits from good existing walking and cycling accessibility; many of these have been recently developed to support the proposed South West Bicester Urban Extension (Kingsmere).

Cyclists: The off-carriageway cycle path adjoining the A41 and the site is part of National Cycle Route (NCR) 51, which is a long-distance route connecting Colchester and Oxford. This route also provides access to Bicester Village and Bicester Town Centre to the north. Combined with other cycle paths, NCR 51 provides continuous off-carriageway routes in the vicinity of the site.

Buses: The site has access to X5, S5 and NS5 (from the Park-and-Ride). These routes provide good accessibility (every 15 – 30 mins) to Bicester; and further south to Oxford. The 26 route provides local access through Kingsmere to Bicester every 30 minutes.

Rail: Two railway stations are accessible from the site; Bicester Village (2km; 25mins walk) and Bicester North (2.5km; a cycle ride).

The site strategy is to build on this, already excellent, accessibility to make sure the development is connected to the existing transport networks. The extant Outline Consent conditioned an upgrade to the footpath and cycleway adjoining the A41, providing a 3m wide shared surface for both cyclists and pedestrians. These works are carried forward to this application.





The principal pedestrian (and cyclist) access to the site will be from this upgraded route. Access is proposed at both ends of the site – and at the middle. To the south of the site, access is possible for pedestrians and cyclists, at a number of points, from the existing slip road.

To facilitate permeability within the site. It is proposed that all major pathways be at least 3m wide. This will enable both pedestrians and cyclists to comfortably use the same routes. A route is proposed across the middle of the site. In the fullness of time, this route can provide access to the 20.4ha of land beyond (Phase B).

The submitted Transport Statement allows for cycle parking (in accordance with Local Standards). It also recommends a dedicated space, or 'bike hub', where site-users can obtain information on cycle accessibility and access repair facilities.

Further details of the routing and final arrangement of the path network will be confirmed with the submission of the Reserved Matters Applications, subsequent to an Outline Planning Consent.

In summary, the site has excellent accessibility by non-car modes. The application identifies sustainable access points for both pedestrians and cyclists. An illustrative masterplan has been developed that shows that delivery of the proposed quantum of development does not fetter access for pedestrians or cyclists to, or within, the site.

## VEHICLES

The A41 is a dual carriageway road connecting the M40 to the centre Bicester. The site is accessed from Wendlebury Road; connecting to Vendee Drive (Shula Road) and a roundabout on the A41 (also providing access to the Bicester Park and Ride). Details of this access is shown on the submitted Access Plan (Figure 21 above).

The submitted Transport Assessment has taken account of current and future trends in car ownership (which it sets out in significant detail) and identifies a parking solution that suits the proposed quantum of development. This includes,

- \* A maximum of 33 care-free residences with access to 4 car-club spaces;
- \* Approximately 240 residential flats, each with access to parking equating to 1car/unit (designed to accommodate those who don't have or don't need a car e.g. permit based system);

- \* Approximately 4,413sqm GIA of Open Market Office Space with dedicated parking spaces of some 147 space, and 4 EV charging points (1/30sqm GIA);
- \* Café space with 20 parking spaces (1/5sqm GIA); and
- \* Some addition staff and management parking spaces.
- \* 5% of parking spaces would meet Blue Badge Standards.

The Illustrative Masterplan has allocated this level of parking across the site – showing that the proposed level of parking does not fetter the identified opportunities or adversely impact a suitable design layout. The Illustrative Masterplan has engaged with the current and future trends in parking and aggregated parking in a podium and multi-storey car park(3 storey). This allows the bulk of the open space to purposely be amenity space. This approach avoids swathes of partly empty parking – grade carpark being, in no sense, an attractive or useful land in its own right.

The Illustrative Masterplan has undergone tracking analysis to assess the implications and practicality of various vehicle movements. In the case of larger vehicle movements, a first-gear-in first-gear-out solution has been identified that utilises a loop between the north and south access points (controlled using drop-bollards). Both Fire Appliance and Refuse Trucks were tracked.

Travel Demand and Trip Generation analysis shows that the Traffic Impact can be summarised as follows (extracted from the Transport Assessment),

*“The overall predicted trip generation of the proposed development in the weekday peak periods is significantly lower than that of the consented B1 office development and therefore it is considered that the proposed new mixed-use development is acceptable in transport terms;*

*The consented development was assessed as not having an impact on the operation of the Strategic Road Network (“SRN”). The proposed new development being assessed as generating fewer vehicular trips than the consented development, it is therefore concluded that the proposed new development will not have an impact on the operation of the SRN either;*

*The operational implications of the proposed new development on the local road network have been considered and this assessment concludes that the proposed new development would not have a severe impact on the operation of the local road network when the existing network’s geometry is considered. This therefore confirms that the highway vehicular capacity mitigation schemes agreed as necessary to support the consented development will not be necessary to support the proposed new development;*

*The predicted vehicle trip generation to/from the proposed new development is significantly lower than predicted for the consented scheme. Therefore, the rationale for and level of contribution towards the South East Peripheral Road ("SEPR") agreed for the consented scheme needs to be revisited and revised down if still considered justifiable at all;*

*The assessment presented in this report also confirms that the proposed new development would not have a material impact on the local road network in the weekend peak period;*

*The assessment carried out is based on relatively generic parameters agreed with OCC at the scoping stage as suitable and representing a robust basis for assessment. In practice and in line with the ethos of the proposals, it is expected that the traffic impact of the new development will much lower than predicted in this report;"*

Concluding,

*"Overall, the assessment of the proposed Access provision confirms that the proposed new development will not have a severe traffic impact on the local and strategic road networks."*

## SUMMARY

The objective of this statement is to show that the proposed amount of development can be reasonably delivered through further Reserved Matters Applications. In Access terms, it is clear that this is the case. The accessibility credentials of Phase 1B are exceptional.



# CONCLUSION

The process described in this statement responds to the site's unique location in relation to Local Plan Policy 'Bicester 10' and as a strategic front-of-town 'gateway' site. Delivering high quality development that encourages the knowledge economy in Bicester, including the more traditional business parks on Phase 2 and at Bicester Office Park (the latter with 50,000sqm of B1 available), is a central component of the emerging business district in this location, creating synergies and helping to attract the knowledge economy to the town – a fundamental and long-standing objective of the County, District and other economic stakeholders.

In parallel to employment on the allocated part of Phase 1B, the residential component of the scheme will help to reduce the number of people out-commuting from Bicester to Oxford, Oxfordshire and London by promoting the knowledge spine and technology corridors from Oxford to Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes and Oxford to Cambridge.

This scheme will co-locate (co-living/co-working) innovators and innovation companies; bringing them to Bicester. An 'innovation community' (potentially the first in Oxfordshire) will start changing Bicester's employment offer in favour of the future-facing knowledge economy. The report by Dr Rob Harris of Ramidus, commissioned by the applicant last summer, charts the emergence of 'innovation communities' and explains how the employment and residential components of the scheme fit together – this is the future. It is cutting edge.

This statement shows that the proposed development is driven by a clear vision; grasping the available opportunities to achieve competitive territorial advantage for Bicester. Set within the context of an extant planning permission, these opportunities are not unreasonably fettered by technical constraints and are sustainable and generally advantageous.

On balance, this Design & Access Statement evaluates both the opportunities and constraints in terms of the scheme's design and shows how they shape the scheme – directing how it can be delivered with subsequent Reserved Matters Applications.

The scheme has benefited from the considered input from a number of specialist consultants and others. This is welcomed and has both shaped and improved the final design.



In conclusion, the proposals will:

1. Provide a significant gateway opportunity to redefine the employment accommodation available in Bicester and orient the town towards new, modern working practices focussed on the knowledge economy.
2. Attract and support young entrepreneurs and workers; bring them to Bicester by providing a preferential co-working/co-living environment supported by a managed structure and touchdown HUB; all within a non-car bias, landscaped setting.

We see no reason why such a sustainable, policy-compliant scheme should not, on balance, be a welcome addition to Bicester. The stakeholders we have spoken to agree (as set out in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement).