



BICESTER
MOTION

Pre-Application Submission for
Bicester Motion: Experience Quarter at Former RAF
Bicester

Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

For

Bicester Motion

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision

The Bicester Motion vision is to provide a vibrant future for the former RAF Bicester, promoting public access and offering a collection of inclusive visitor experiences unlike any other destination in the country.

The Experience Quarter offers a landmark opportunity for Bicester to become a world-leading destination to celebrate the past, present and future of automotive and aviation culture.

This will not only secure a sustainable future for our historic site, but it will promote significant social and economic growth for the region. In addition, it will create new skilled employment and activities which will enhance the community, providing us all with a place to be proud of.

The Experience Quarter

The Experience Quarter will be formed as a cluster of high-quality buildings that will house world-leading brands across the Motion sector with each building providing views across the airfield, towards the vibrant activities taking place in the air and on the tracks, visitors can enjoy wings and wheels technology.



Indicative Bird's Eye View

New driver training and handling tracks will be formed for visitors to learn new skills in a safe and family focused environment, guests of all ages can get behind the wheel or simply enjoy the show from the viewing points and walkways planned.

Demonstration and event areas are planned enabling brands to showcase new and exciting technologies to the public. The aspiration is that the Experience Quarter will be internationally recognised as the leading site for sustainable transport product launch

and demonstrations with the benefit of the on-road and off-road tracks, demonstration zones and airfield.

The creation of new walkways and cycleways connecting the four Quarters of the site (Heritage, Innovation, Wilderness & Experience) will enable visitors to explore on foot, cycle, scooters or shuttle promoting health and well-being through the enjoyment of open green space filled with vibrant activities for all of the family.



Indicative Bird's Eye View

The Tracks

One of the internal loop tracks (the West Loop) is located in front of the Esplanade and proposed hotel with good views from these locations. A second track (the East Loop) is located in the north east of the flying field and the third (much smaller – the South Mini-Loop) is located in the east side of the field. All three are within the perimeter track.

The Airfield

The airfield operated by the Bicester Aerodrome company (a wholly owned subsidiary of Bicester Motion) will host a wide range of aviators who will demonstrate and promote aviation's past present and future bringing the history of the site to life.

Scope of LVIA Report

This LVIA report has resulted from a process of desktop study, site appraisal and analysis to the current guidelines of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment. The report has been prepared by Anthony Stiff BSc MA CMLI, Managing Director of ASA Landscape Architects, a landscape architect with over 35 years' experience.

The report has addressed the landscape and visual impact of the EQ development on

the site itself, its wider setting of the former RAF Bicester and on the wider landscape.

The development is located primarily on the north west boundary of the site near to the existing residential edge to Bicester and adjacent to a busy trunk road. The landscape character is predominantly sub-urban and sits within what can be described as a transitional landscape between town and country. The site itself is so large as to have a landscape character all of its own.

The design team have identified a number of challenges and opportunities led by landscape and heritage specialists.

Key Findings

A key feature of the site is that it lies on the extreme periphery of the airfield outside the perimeter track. The latter currently defines the actual operational flying field (in recent use by gliders) and the openness of this is a key characteristic of the site as a whole. The EQ site does not impinge on the openness of the flying field. Another key feature is the visual link between the wider Bicester site and the rural, distant landscape. These views are respected and retained by the EQ development.

There are also important views from the Technical Site and Watch Tower. The view will change and the EQ development will clearly be visible, but it will not be dominant in the view and will be partly seen against a backdrop of an existing residential area and the Buckingham Road. Most of the development will be seen against a back drop of trees and none of the buildings appear against the skyline. The architectural form and design will echo elements from the existing technical site and so the architectural vernacular will be sympathetic to the existing built heritage.

The design team has been landscape and heritage-led, but has worked collaboratively to evolve the design to a set of agreed parameters including quantum of development, scale, mass, form and height. The building footprints are varied in size to minimise the perceived massing from the sensitive view of the Watch Tower. The buildings heights are limited to 5m at either end of the EQ development and are otherwise at 10.5m with the automotive and aviation pavilions Automotive and Aviation Pavilions being at 5m. This will minimise the impact on the view connections to the rural landscape in land Parcel 2e.

Local views and receptors from the Buckingham Road and some residential properties, and including pedestrians will experience some local adverse impacts in the view, however these would be mitigated in the medium to longer term by the establishment of hedge and tree planting within the site boundary that would further screen the views.

Within the site itself views are sensitive, being within the setting to the Conservation Area and including numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There will be a change to some views, for example from the former Watch Tower. However, the

development is not out of scale with or inappropriate for the site and the change to the view will result in less than significant harm.

The new buildings will not compete visually with the historic structures and the form and materials used for the new buildings will be sensitive to those already used within the site. In the round, taking account of the existing and future uses and context of the site, the visual impact is considered to be acceptable.

The two grass runways have been retained more or less on their historic alignments. This factor has been influential in determining the optimum layout for the three new track loops. These are to be dispersed in areas of the flying field that won't be affected by operational flying activities. The perimeter track remains more or less the same, however the benefit of the proposed arrangement is that bunding is able to be mostly avoided. This will mean that there are no permanent physical barriers around the outside of the perimeter track in the majority of locations. Limited lengths are required however on the far side of the airfield away from the Esplanade. In this location these are sufficiently distant from views from the Esplanade that they are unlikely to be discerned by the naked eye.

The track layout has achieved a balanced and integrated combination of the flying and automotive uses of the site and in particular, the flying field. The two uses are well suited and complement each other as far as the re purposing of the airfield, the securing of flying as a sustainable activity and the business model for Bicester Motion. The new arrangement is confident and does not shy away from celebrating the repurposing and dual use of the land area in a way that will promote the future use of the site and will benefit the long-term sustainability.

From a landscape point of view the initial reaction might well harm the openness of the flying field. However, the tracks are at ground level and will not have vertical infrastructure to cause visual clutter or elements to impede views across the flying field. The area over which the tracks extend is distributed over the site and are clearly set out to facilitate the flying activities within the core of the Flying Field while at the same time accommodating the core automotive activities that the site is developing.

Conclusions

The proposals will not be out of character or inappropriate for the re-purposed site. The current proposals will have localised impacts within discrete areas of the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that the EQ buildings will not dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the Technical Site. The cumulative effects of the EQ developments, though significant within its own peripheral zones, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall. The tracks will have some sequential impact in terms of cumulative impacts but due to the overall large scale of

the airfield, the separation between the tracks and the absence of any permanent vertical clutter, these effects are considered to be less than significant.

In term of planning policy and in particular Cherwell Local Plan Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a short-term local impact on nearby landscape receptors including residential, road and roadside footpath users, but these impacts will be mitigated over time with proposed new structural planting.

Policy Bicester 8 of the Cherwell Local Plan enables Bicester Motion to put “wheels in Motion” for the strategic regeneration and transformation of the former RAF Bicester to create tourism, leisure and recreational uses to deliver employment opportunities and support the use of the site by the community

The EQ development proposals are in line with the NPPF Paragraph 12 - Achieving well-designed places, in that they will achieve the creation of high-quality buildings and places. In addition, they will:

- function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- will be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- will be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
- will establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- will optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- will create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users

There will be no impact on areas of high tranquillity. The site is not in an area of high tranquillity being subject to aircraft noise, road noise and existing motoring uses.

Overall, in landscape and visual terms, the EQ developments will have site level and local level impacts, but these impacts will be mitigated over time, as new planting establishes and matures. The impacts on key features of the existing Bicester Heritage

site and the wider landscape are considered to have less than significant harm.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is carried out in support of a pre-application submission for a proposed automotive Experience Quarter at Bicester Heritage (previously RAF Bicester) adjacent to the A4421 north of the Bicester. ASA Landscape Architects was first appointed in November 2018 to undertake this commission. This updated issue of the LVIA report was undertaken in November 2020 to respond primarily to iterations made to the proposed track layouts and integration of automotive and flying field activities. Prior to, and during, the pre-app process, opportunities have been provided for the council's officers to feedback their reactions and comments on the proposals. The design team has been able to demonstrate a strong emphasis on a landscape and heritage-led process that has driven the evolution of the design.

Scope of This Study

- 1.2 The purpose of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process is to inform and assess the impact of a development proposal on two aspects related to landscape and the public's enjoyment of it. These aspects are firstly the landscape setting itself and second the visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding areas from which views are possible. In this case there is also a focus on the impacts on the site itself due its place in terms of its heritage significance and the part that landscape character plays in helping define the key characteristics of the site, and also how landscape issues help to maintain the understanding of the way in which the former RAF aerodrome functioned.

Methodology

- 1.3 The methodology for the LVIA is derived from the Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013. The methodology also draws from: Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland Swanwick C and LUC 2002. The report is based on a combination of desk-based research and field survey work.
- 1.4 The latest guidance in the 3rd edition of the LVIA guidance has not changed the basic method of assessment from the previous guidance (Version 2) but has placed an emphasis less on formulaic methods and more on the judgement of a qualified and experienced professional. While this report does use matrices, these are not based on numeric values. Instead they use descriptive scales to inform the overall judgement and conclusions of the report and to provide a degree of transparency that would otherwise be lacking. The way in which the field data and other data compiled as part of the study are interpreted is defined by the Assessment Methodology contained in Appendix B. This methodology has been developed over a period of time and has been found to be

robust, providing transparency and traceability of the findings of the report.

1.5 The LVIA process makes a distinction between the landscape effects and visual effects. Landscape effects are those which affect individual components of the landscape, its pattern and composition, or its perceptual qualities such as openness or tranquillity. Visual effects are those experienced by individuals or groups of people who are likely to view the development.

1.6 The LVIA process carried out for the study comprised of:

- A baseline study to identify the existing landscape character and likely landscape and visual 'receptors'. This was carried out through a process of desk study and field observation. This process has identified landscape parcels within the site and their relative sensitivity and capacity for development. There has also been a strong emphasis on a collaborative approach between landscape, heritage and ecological disciplines combining over 70 hours of collaborative design workshop and site studies, with the joint findings of the relevant specialists feeding into the architectural and masterplan proposals to inform the quantum of development for the site. The extent and complexity of the study is proportionate to the scale and size of the proposed development.
- The identification of the landscape and visual effects likely to result from the development;
- An assessment of the significance of these effects through an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors, and the likely magnitude of change that the receptors will experience compared to the existing landscape and visual baseline. Assessment Methodology and Criteria are set out in Appendix B.
- An initial assessment of cumulative impacts, assessing at a high level the effects of multiple developments within the site is contained within the report. The Cumulative Effects Methodology is also set out in Appendix B.

2 The Existing Landscape Context

Site Location

- 2.1 The EQ site location is shown on Figure 1. The site is part of former RAF Bicester which has been re-purposed as a Centre of Excellence for historic motoring, Bicester Heritage is formed of over 40 businesses in the historic motoring sector located within the Technical Site and the hangars as well as a track for vehicle testing, demonstration and experience which is located on part of the perimeter track. The airfield is operational and is used for historic aviation leisure experiences and gliding.
- 2.2 This former RAF Bicester is a large-scale site set within a partly suburban and partly semi-rural setting with open expanses of grassland and established hedgerows, interspersed by a network of historic hard-standing associated with the historic aerodrome activities and buildings.
- 2.3 The site is focused primarily on the north perimeter of the flying field outside of the perimeter track. The site is predominantly laid to grass with the concrete perimeter road / taxiway forming its inner boundary adjacent to the flying field. On the west edge of the site is a screen of mature boundary vegetation that borders the Buckingham Road. Other aspects of the site include the perimeter track itself, new driver experience tracks located within the northern part of the flying field and a 4x4 driver experience located to the north east within the former Stratton Audley Quarry, now disused. There are also 4 Automotive and Aviation Pavilions proposed within the peripheral area between the perimeter track and the former quarry. A karting track will be located behind these pavilions.
- 2.4 The nearest settlements are at Caversfield on the other side of the A4421 (0.4km to the west, which encompasses the previous RAF Bicester Domestic site), the northern edge of Bicester (0.55km to the south) Stratton Audley (2.44km to the north east) Launton (1.2km to the south east). The cumulative effects of urban influences impart a significant urban fringe character on the north east and south east boundaries of the site.
- 2.5 Other than the northern edge of Bicester and associated suburb of Caversfield to the west, there is very little development in the surrounding countryside other than scattered villages and isolated farmsteads and houses. Beyond the extent of the flying field (on the north east edge of the wider site) lies the Stratton Audley Quarry, now disused, which is now in parts designated as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Local Wildlife Site.

Topography

- 2.6 The former airfield site lies in relatively low-lying ground at around 83m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The ground falls away gently over the extent of the airfield to approximately 75m. The EQ site is at between 80 and 85m AOD. Land to the north and

north east beyond Stratton Audley is at 80m AOD and near to Stratton Audley Park is at 110m AOD providing some remote views back towards the wider site from the countryside (2.5km away). Views towards the EQ site are difficult to perceive from remote views being screened out by intervening horizons of trees. Similarly, there are potential views towards the airfield from near to Poundon (4.9km) to the east where land rises to 116m AOD. There are local high points near Abrosden (Graven Hill 113m AOD) 4km to the south west, Upper Arcott (108m AOD) 7km away visible from within the site above the boundary tree line. Considerably further away to the south (9-10km away) there is land at 197m AOD at Muswell Hill, though this is too remote for any significant views back towards the airfield. None of these locations were found to have significant views.

Land Use

- 2.7 The wider landscape is broadly rural to the north and east, and urban to the north west, south and west. As mentioned previously, the busy roads (particularly to the north west and south west) dominate the local landscape in terms of landscape and visual impacts and also noise and pollution. The Technical Site itself is an established centre for over 40 businesses connected with historic motoring. Former Stratton Audley quarry is unused and lies vacant. A new Technical Site comprising 8 new buildings has recently been successfully completed and integrated into the main site along Skimmingdish Lane.

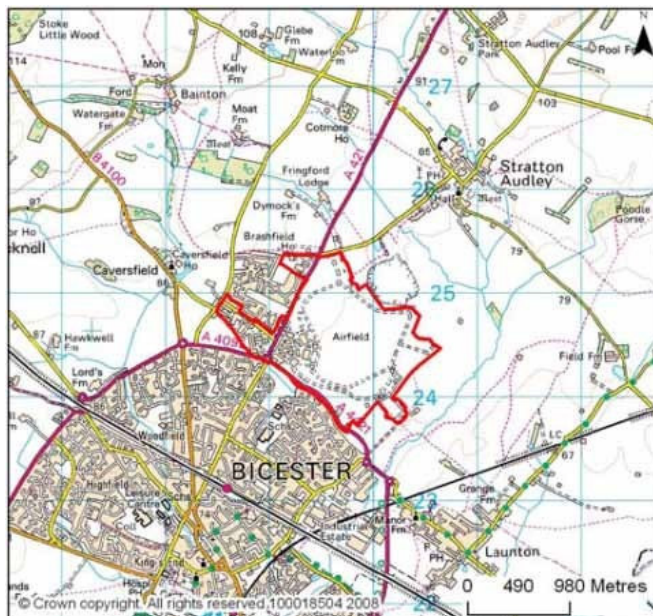
Statutory Designations and Rights of Way (Figure 1)

- 2.8 Figure 1 shows the currently recorded statutory designations and public rights of way for the study area which has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. The whole of Former RAF Bicester (Technical Site and Domestic site) is designated as a RAF

Bicester Conservation Area.

2.9 The Conservation Area boundary is shown below.

Conservation Area Boundary



2.10 There are a 10 Scheduled Monuments within the wider Bicester site comprising various former war-time structures, including Mushroom Pill Boxes, Seagull Trenches and Bomb Stores. There are 21 buildings and structures designated as listed buildings, associated with the RAF Bicester Technical Site. The nearest SAM is 230m and the nearest listed building (Watch Tower) is 470m away. (See Figure 1)

2.11 There is an extensive network of public rights of way (PRoWs) (Shown on Figure 1) within the countryside around the site. To the north east of the site footpath 371/7/10 and 371/7/20 circulates the part of the disused Stratton Audley quarry site before returning to Stratton Audley.

Non-statutory designations:

2.12 The application site is within Bicester Airfield Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is a site of county importance, designated for presence of Habitats of Principal Importance Lowland Calcareous Grassland and also Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land. The land covered by the LWS contains a range of protected and notable species.

3 Landscape Planning Context

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

3.1 The NPPF was updated in July 2018 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

3.2 In terms of landscape-related policy, the following paragraphs are relevant:

NPPF Paragraph 12. Achieving well-designed places

In summary the relevant aims of this Section 12 of the NPPF are to achieve (paragraphs have been summarised, shortened or paraphrased):

3.3 The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

3.4 To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design.

3.5 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users*

3.6 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their

proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

- 3.7 Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for Life.
- 3.8 Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).
- 3.9 In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
- 3.10 The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

NPPF paragraph 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 3.11 Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services*
 - *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
 - *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of*

soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

3.12 Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites

Habitats and biodiversity

3.13 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- *Safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity*
- *promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats,pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

3.14 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

3.15 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

Ground conditions and pollution

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

In doing so they should:

- *mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life*
- *identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
- *limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

NPPF paragraph 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This subject is dealt with more comprehensively in the Heritage Statement by Worlledge Associates.

3.16 Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- *grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- *assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

3.17 Summary of Local Planning Policy Relevant to Landscape

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031	How the proposal complies with policy
<p>Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems in considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS will require the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as LLFA and SuDS Approval Body, and proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features.</p>	<p>An appropriate SuDS drainage system will be incorporated into the proposed development taking account of the site constraints including ecology.</p>
<p>Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources • The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District • The reuse of soils will be sought if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), Adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted. 	<p>The ecological consultant, Ecology Solutions will prepare a comprehensive Ecology Strategy for the development, detailing the proposed approach, which will involve full consultation with the CDC Ecology Adviser. The ecological proposals will be closely tied to the landscape framework and landscape design for the proposal as a whole which will be agreed through planning conditions.</p> <p>The intent will be to retain boundary trees. Any tree losses will be compensated for by planting new trees as part of the proposals. There is a comprehensive Tree Protection Plan and Tree Management Plan in place. Tree losses resulting from the development will include 3 poor quality ash and some mixed groupings of scrub, also of poor quality.</p> <p>Soils on site would be reused where appropriate.</p> <p>Other ecological aspects will be dealt with by Ecology Solutions.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated • Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity • Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity • Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity • Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value • Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution • Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably • A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long-term suitable management. 	<p>A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan would be prepared to plan the future management of the site. See Ecological Assessment 7884 EcoAss by Ecology Solutions</p>

<p>Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside • Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography • Be inconsistent with local character 	<p>The Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment (CDLA) and the OWLS SPG has been referred to as part of this study. The CDLA describes the landscape type as being Transitional defined as: <i>This is one of several landscape types that have specific uses (in this case a military airfield) that also therefore have a specific and overwhelming influence on their landscape character.</i></p> <p>The character and appearance of the landscape will be sustained and improved over the long term by appropriate development in peripheral areas which will create a new sense of place and purpose.</p> <p>The strategy described for the future for the landscape type is for ‘restoration’.</p> <p>There is a committee resolution to grant permission for a new Hotel north of the existing Technical Site. The New Technical Site was approved and is now completed.</p> <p>The impact on the local countryside to the north and north east of the site is likely to be minimal. Such receptors are remote from the site and the effects are mitigated by distance and most views are partially screened by existing boundary vegetation and intervening layers of vegetation on the site itself and along field boundaries outside the site. The site is generally well contained to the north west with public views being only possible obliquely from the adjacent Buckingham Road on the footpath and from moving cars when views are limited due to travel speeds of up to 50mph.</p> <p>The landscape has no statutory designations but is noted in SPG (Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment 1995 [CDLCA]) as An Area of High Landscape Importance. The Local plan is not retaining this designation but is proposing instead to seeks to conserve and enhance the distinctive and highly valued local character of the entire District. A mitigation strategy will also provide long term amenity and biodiversity benefits as well as offsetting any negative impacts identified within the assessment.</p> <p>The CDLCA States that: <i>‘These landscapes would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place’</i>. The report states further that: <i>‘These landscapes have a high capacity to accommodate change as they have lost their intrinsic character’</i>. The local character is suburban in nature and is dominated in local views by the adjacent road (within a generally contained corridor) and by a modern housing estate. The former airfield and its large-scale hangars are also dominant features, with long open views possible to the south. The proposed EQ development will create a strong</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. 	<p>new built form to the site with a family of contemporary buildings that will provide a new sense of place and purpose to the site. The new buildings will not be inappropriate to the re purposing of the airfield for automotive uses. Limited new bunding will be limited to the outside of the perimeter track in the north corner of the airfield for the purposes of safety for cars and the public. These will be generally low key in scale (up to 1m high) and will grassed on the outside faces. Three tracks will be formed within Eco's the perimeter track facilitating the integration of the automotive and flying uses. The EQ site is close to a busy road and as a result the noise and visual intrusion from the traffic is constant and significant. The site is not considered to be tranquil. Aircraft activity is also present which means that the flying field is not inherently tranquil.</p> <p>New development will need to be seen in the context of existing historic buildings and structures and proposed development. The EQ development will be focused on discrete sets of buildings concentrated within the north perimeter of the site, distanced from the current Technical Site by a gap of at least 300m. A further cluster of 4 automotive pavilions will be located to the east, outside the perimeter track. These are also separated from the main EQ buildings by a gap of approximately 300m. The cumulative impacts of existing, consented and proposed development are also assessed at a high level in this report.</p> <p>Reference has been made in undertaking this study to SPD [Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary] as referred to opposite. An additional summary response to this policy is provided at the end of this section. A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan will be produced to set out in a 10-year strategy for the management and monitoring of the site.</p>
<p>Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.</p>	<p>The design development has been informed by a heritage and landscape-led approach to analyse the challenges and opportunities (Figs 4a and b). These have provided the basis for parameters plans (including the Proposed Land Use (Fig 4c), the Proposed Developable Area (Fig 4d) and Existing and Proposed Heights (Fig 4e), that have, in turn, enabled the design team to produce a broad vision masterplan for the wider site (Fig 6). The EQ site forms part of this vision.</p>

<p>New development proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions. Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions • Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity • 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, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting • Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage’s At-Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged • Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. • Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be 	<p>The parameter plans seek to ensure that the development would be designed to be appropriate in overall quantum of development, form, layout, scale and massing, responding to the site's characteristics and delivering a positive contribution.</p> <p>The detailed design will need to deliver a high-quality design to be appropriate for its use, and to enhance the intrinsic qualities and distinctiveness of the area; to respect public rights of way, to reflect the use of local materials and to have a holistic, landscape-led approach. The aim will also be to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure and to promote healthy place shaping in consultation with Healthy Bicester – See Document: Bicester Motion – Healthy Place Shaping. The proposals would address the degraded elements of the existing landscape, the limited public access and lack of purpose.</p> <p>The EQ development will add a new modern character and sense of place and will enhance the site’s distinctiveness through its use for an appropriate automotive use in the form of a driver experience. The distinctive open character of the main flying field area will not be affected, although its setting will change to some degree.</p> <p>The site lies within the RAF Bicester Conservation Area. This has been addressed in the Heritage Report (Worlledge Associates).</p> <p>This has also been addressed in the Heritage Report (Worlledge Associates).</p> <p>The EQ buildings are focused within a parcel of land that is in context of the suburban, build-up residential edge of Bicester. The new development sits on the edge of the airfield within the perimeter zone, and outside the perimeter track and flying field. The scale of the buildings is much less than the existing very large scale of the ‘Technical Site</p>
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<p>designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed • Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space • 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, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation • Consider sustainable design and layout at the master planning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout 	<p>Hangers and proposed Hotel and Aparthotel that lie to the south west some 300m away. The main group of EQ buildings will appear as a discrete cluster of buildings distinct from the Technical Site. The cluster of Automotive and Aviation Pavilions will also appear as a separate discrete development. The main group of 9 EQ buildings is not out of scale with the location and while being a significant new development on this edge of the airfield, will not compete visually with the Technical Site. The layout of the development in a 'V' form will mean that public views are very limited. Other views within the site are mitigated by keeping the views below the skyline, by varying the building heights and by lining up gaps between buildings from the key Watch Tower view.</p> <p>The EQ buildings will be purposely contemporary to reflect the technological history of the site and the proposed business uses contained within them, providing a modern character and sense of place to the building groupings.</p> <p>The EQ buildings will have a clear identity and will provide a sensitively designed development along this length of the Buckingham Road. Increased access by the public will be provided with this facility. A purpose made Experience Quarter Design Code has been prepared to guide the generally design parameters.</p> <p>The design will be developed as a distinct building grouping to reflect their combined uses within the context of the Bicester Motion vision.</p> <p>The development will incorporate open space within the building clusters and will link via internal and external access link roads and paths to the rest of the site and to Buckingham Road. Lighting will be subject to detailed design, but will be managed to take account of local residential amenity and ecological considerations. This is covered in the Design Code. Both these aspects will be taken into account as part of the design development and detailed design.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy) • Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality • Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible. • The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2. • 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. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website. 	<p>The detailed proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects. A comprehensive strategy for landscape and ecology will be proposed as part of the detailed planning application to support the long-term management of the site for amenity, landscape structure and for biodiversity. This will be done where practical. Plants and trees will be UK sourced.</p> <p>This has been done within the array of expertise that has been employed to collaborate on this project. This is illustrated in the Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement.</p>
<p>Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: 	<p>The proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects.</p> <p>A comprehensive strategy for landscape and ecology will be proposed as part of the detailed planning application to support the long-term management of the site for amenity, landscape structure and for biodiversity.</p> <p>A SuDs strategy will be integral to the development proposals.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16) • 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 • All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance. 	<p>The proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects. New pedestrian and cycle access will be promoted within the wider site.</p>
<p>Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 161 Section C - Policies for Cherwell's Places <u>Policy Bicester 8: Former RAF Bicester</u> The Council will encourage conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester technical site and flying field.</p> <p>It will support heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses. The development of hotel and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses. All proposals will be required to accord with the approved Planning Brief for the site and take into account the Bicester Masterplan. They must maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield. The biodiversity of the site should be protected and enhanced and habitats and species surveys (including a Great Crested Newt survey) should be undertaken. The continuation of gliding use will be supported. Opportunities for improving access to the countryside will be encouraged. The Council's SFRA should be considered. Proposals should be considered against Policy ESD 15.</p>	<p>Policy Bicester 8 seeks to encourage a mix of uses aligned to the constraints and sensitivities of the site whilst also recognising the need for flexibility to secure the commercially viable future for the allocation site. The proposal will support the delivery of a mix of business, employment and leisure with a range of ancillary uses to support the repurposing of the wider site for new uses to ensure it has a sustainable future. The detailed design will need to deliver a high-quality design to be appropriate for its use, and to enhance the intrinsic qualities and distinctiveness of the area; to respect public rights of way, to reflect the use of local materials and to have a holistic, landscape-led approach. The aim will also be to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure. The EQ development will add a new modern character and sense of place and will enhance the site's distinctiveness through its encouraging greater public access and appreciation of the site. The new track layout has been designed to facilitate the sustainable integration of automotive and flying activities. Limited lengths of safety bunding on the north side of the airfield will be required, but other permanent above ground 'clutter' will be avoided. Some low level, visually transparent fencing will be required to separate the public from the active flying field and tracks. The distinctive open character of the main flying field area will not be significantly affected. The use of the flying field will be encouraged for a greater range of aviation activities enhancing the public understanding and experience of the site.</p>

Summary

- 3.18 In terms of landscape, heritage and biodiversity related planning policy the aims and objectives of the NPPF are reflected closely within the local plan policies set out above. Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement sets out the main points of policy as determined by Cherwell District Council and the following addresses in more detail the compliance of the new development against Policy ESD13.

Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

‘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’.

The proposals are part of a broad vision to secure a sustainable future for the former RAF Bicester, and include specific and appropriate new uses for the site that will improve the quality of the site and promote public access. The openness of the airfield will not be harmed by this development that is located within its own discrete peripheral area, well outside the perimeter track. Neither will the EQ buildings compete in mass or scale with the distinctive large and imposing hanger buildings of the Technical Site or other heritage features that add to the special character and interest of this important historic site

The long-term vision includes increasing access for visitors to the site and allowing the heritage aspects to be understood and interpreted for future generations within an appropriate context of new business and leisure uses related to automotive engineering and technology culture of the past, present and future. This aspect addresses the point made in the explanatory text to CDC Policy ESD 13 relating to sites with a ‘time-depth’ value. In addition, there will be extensive opportunities for new technologies to be developed and showcased as well as the opportunity for education, training and employment. The landscape of the site has been in a fairly static and neglected state for many years and will continue to decline without a meaningful business case and management strategy, without this a lasting future for the site is not secured. The Bicester Motion development team have already proven their abilities to deliver high-quality, award winning schemes such as the Bicester Heritage Technical Site, the future can be planned with confidence that the heritage and its landscape context can be protected, managed and can provide significant opportunities, amenity and biodiversity

value in conjunction with the new development that is proposed.

There will be no significant impact on existing landscape features including the skyline.

‘Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside*

The proposals will not cause significant harm to open countryside as inwards views are limited in location to higher areas of land as represented by Remote View Points (RVPs) 1-5 in Appendix A and these range approximately from 3.25km away and extend to 4.1km away (distances are taken from the Watch Tower), meaning that the perception of the site is diminished in the view, taking up a small proportion of the overall panorama.

The effect of any development on the northern edge of the airfield will be difficult to perceive due to distance and intervening features and would in some views be seen against the backdrop of the existing housing/edge of Bicester or screening vegetation of the site itself. There would be some local views (VPs 21, 22 and 23) from local receptors such as the highway corridor of Buckingham Road (a receptor of low sensitivity), and some residential views (of higher sensitivity) but which would only experience oblique, glimpsed or partial views, limited to upper storeys, and filtered by existing road side or intervening vegetation, and/or which will be mitigated by the addition of further boundary planting.

- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography*

The same comments to the point above would apply. Views from elevated topography as informed by Remote View Points (RVPs) 1-5 in Appendix A show that these are more remote and as a result the effect of distance and/or intervening vegetation means that the proportion of any developments around the periphery of the airfield will take up a relatively small horizontal angle of view compared to the wider panorama and also a narrow vertical angle of view due to the distance. The proposals would not harm any natural landscape features or topography. Development would be kept below the skyline and is designed to have a backdrop of trees. Furthermore, the layout has been carefully designed to be closely aligned with the common view corridor from the Watch Tower that includes a backdrop of existing residential development, avoiding the backdrop of the rural, farmed landscape. Building heights have also been carefully considered as part of the assessment process and the height parameters (Fig 4e) have taken account of sensitivities identified from landscape and heritage advice. Buildings within the main cluster are limited to 10.5m, with the buildings at the extreme east and west of the cluster being limited to 5m. The cluster of Automotive and Aviation Pavilions

Automotive and Aviation Pavilions would be restricted to up to 5m in height.

- *Inconsistent with local character*

The proposals would be consistent with the likely and appropriate uses for a re-purposed site of this kind, which is illustrated by the other similar precedents of other airfields being re-purposed for motoring-related uses. In particular a good example of a site being re-purposed for motoring heritage whilst retaining its aviation history is Goodwood. Other re-purposed sites include Thruxton, Silverstone, Croft, Snetterton, Darley Moor, Lowood, Brooklands, Boreham, Donnington and historically many more. Source: <https://www.watsonlv.net/tracks.shtml>

Former RAF Bicester is within its own conservation area and has many heritage features of interest but these are all part of the story and 'time-depth' value that can be brought to life as an integral part of the development vision.

The open character of the airfield will be retained and built development on the north west boundary and east boundary of the airfield will lie within the peripheral zone outside the area of the main flying field. The three experience tracks within the boundary of the Perimeter Track are located outside the area of flying activity. The proposed layout provides a good relationship and integration of the automotive and flying activities. The tracks are at ground level and there are no significant or permanent vertical structures proposed that will impede or erode the open character of the airfield. A boundary feature of a visually transparent fence located outside the line of the Perimeter Track of no more than 1.2m high will be required to prevent public access to the operational airfield or track activities.

From a cumulative impact perspective, there will be local adverse (or beneficial) impacts on landscape character and significant changes to the relevant peripheral land parcels, however these are part of a wider vision for the site that must be taken in the balance of achieving a long term and sustainable future for the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that no one development will dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the Technical Site and hangars. The cumulative effects of the developments, though significant within their respective peripheral zones, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall.

- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity*

The site remains an operational airfield and the fact that the EQ site is bordered by a busy road means that the level of tranquillity is limited by virtue of persistent traffic noise and it is only areas away from these influences that have tranquil characteristics.

- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

These aspects are commented on within the specialist heritage report by Nick Worlledge Associates.

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.

This LVIA Report addresses this point, having made reference to the published CDC Landscape Character Assessment and the OWLS Study. The Council's Countryside Design Summary published in 1998 remains as SPD. The aims of this document include:

- *The purpose of the Countryside Design Summary is to guide development in the rural areas so that the distinctive character of the district's countryside and the settlements and buildings within it are maintained and enhanced.*
- *The guidance is not meant to be prescriptive. **The intention is that this document will encourage creative and imaginative approaches to new development**, which reflects the existing distinctive character of the villages and countryside of Cherwell District. [my bolding]*

3.19 The Bicester Motion vision is about delivering creative and imaginative ways in which the public can experience and understand the historic site. Bicester Motion has ambitious plans to create new recreational footpaths and cycleways that build upon the distinctive character of the site. The proposals will enable the landscape to be actively managed over the long term to achieve landscape, amenity and biodiversity goals

4 Proposed Development

Description of Development

4.1 The EQ concept was created to provide Bicester with dynamic international exposure as the world's leading multi-marque driving experience venue.

4.2 The Bicester Motion Experience Quarter will become a world-leading automotive and technology experience facility, home to leading international automotive brands providing a wide range of activities for all the family.

4.3 The Bicester Motion Experience Quarter will not only inspire and excite the next generation; it will create skilled apprenticeship and employment opportunities in automotive technology, leisure and business.

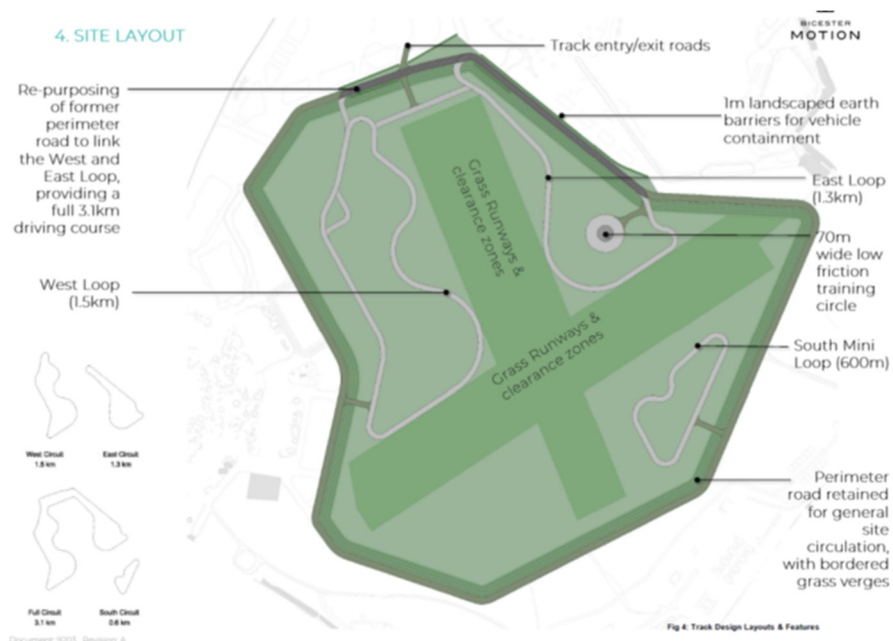
4.4 The application includes the creation of built form to include:

- Experience Quarter buildings – development footprint in the region of 15,000m² creating approximately 20,000m² GIA (including the pavilions) for mixed-use business and leisure.

4.5 Demonstration zones within the Experience Quarter:

- That include 3.1km demonstration circuit that can operate as a 1.3k loop and 1.5km loop that can operate independently as well as a 600m mini loop and low friction training surface area.
- E karting track and 4x4 tracks and demonstration areas.

4.6 Plan Extract from Driven Report



- 4.7 The general layout and site arrangements can be seen in Figure 6 Masterplan (by Ridge) and the Proposed Site Plan Figure 7 (both contained in this report), also by Ridge. Wire frame visualisations have been provided in Appendix A and 3 photomontages including the proposed tracks are provided under separate cover.

Mitigation - See Landscape Strategy/Framework Plan (Figure 10), Cross Section CC (Figure 8) and Cross Section EE (Figure 9)

- 4.8 A comprehensive scheme for landscape mitigation will form part of any full planning application for this site and this will be supported by a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan that will set out the future strategy for management over the next 10 years.
- 4.9 Mitigation will respect the intrinsic qualities of the site and its unique sense of place. New planting will be used carefully to integrate new development within the site and often this will be done in conjunction with the architectural design, tying the landscape and built forms together with the use of earth mounding and green roofs and walls.
- 4.10 In other areas of the wider Bicester site, mitigation will include the removal of self-sown scrub that has gradually, through lack of management, taken over some areas. This is especially the case in the FAST zone. The removal of this vegetation will assist in restoring the flying field perimeter to allow the functionality of historic defence structures to be appreciated and understood.
- 4.11 The mitigation proposals will support the aims of the OWLS Landscape Assessment in that they will minimise the visual impact of the new development with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surroundings, but at the same time being sympathetic to the unique landscape of the airfield.
- 4.12 **EQ Buildings.** The boundary planting along the Buckingham Road frontage already provides a substantial screening element up to a height of 8-14m tall. This will be supplemented with further planting within the site as indicated on the Cross Sections Figures 8 and 9. Other existing lower boundary planting will be allowed to grow to up to 6m high to provide further screening and to provide a more complete and robust edge to the site. Other groups of trees will be provided to act a green foil to the built form in the same way that exists around the existing hangars.
- 4.13 The Bicester Motion Design Code prepared by Ridge sets out the broad design parameters that will guide the design moving forwards.

The Tracks

- 4.14 The track loops will be constructed of asphalt to a width of 8-11m (compared to the Perimeter Track width of 12-14m). They will tie in to existing levels with no visual change

to the airfield ground levels. (See Photomontages 1-3 provided under separate cover)
The tracks will be edged with a 150mm wide white line and there will be grass run-off areas where required for safety and operational purposes. Service tracks linking the loops to the Perimeter Track or to the EQ will be paved with a low-key grass-crete to reduce visual impact. The grass areas around and between tracks will be mown to varying heights to be determined in conjunction with the Ecologist to maximise the biodiversity of the area. This strategy will further facilitate the low-level screening out of views of the tracks.

5 Landscape Assessment

Site Baseline (See Landscape Significance Diagrams ASA Figure numbers 4a and 4b)

- 5.1 This area is characterised by grassland and some areas of hardstanding comprising the area between the perimeter track and the northern boundary of the airfield. The former RAF buildings lie in a cluster to the south west of the site (The Technical Site). To the north west of the site is an area of RAF housing and other buildings, and to the south west of the airfield lies an area of residential development. To the south of the main building cluster is the perimeter track and the flying field. Beyond the site boundaries to the north east lies the former Stratton Audley Quarry (some of which lies within the site boundary). Three new track loops will be installed within the existing flying field to accommodate the two existing grass runways.
- 5.2 The main town of Bicester lies to the south and west of the airfield.
- 5.3 To the north east of the airfield the land is an undeveloped area (former unrestored quarry) of scrub and ponds which is a site of local wildlife value. Beyond this the ground increases in elevation and is in arable use. Land outside of the airfield to the east and south east is also in arable use. Adjacent to the southern edge of the airfield is a newly built cluster of large-scale commercial buildings which dominate the landscape from the surrounding views including from nearby residential areas.
- 5.4 There are some long views from within the airfield to the landscape beyond, notably to rising land to the north east and east, but also to localised high spots further away noted in the Topography Section 3 above. These views are over the top of any boundary screening around the site and assist in maintaining the open character of the flying field and its relationship to the rural landscape which is lies adjacent. Where boundary vegetation is lower and more permeable, this effect is more emphasised.
- 5.5 The open character of the airfield is dominated by the central area of the flying field within the perimeter track. This point is made within the Conservation Area Appraisal Para 9.7.1 for the site that '*The perimeter track effectively defines the extent of the flying field on the ground*': The vast scale of the site means that the existing development confined to the periphery of the site (the Technical Site) does not erode this key element. Even the existing hangars which are 20m tall and large-scale buildings in their own right do not appear to be out of scale. Indeed, they appear to be in-scale with this large-scale landscape and they have an appropriate relationship to the flying field providing the strong 'waterfront' or Esplanade to the Technical Site form and layout.
- 5.6 The description of the wider landscape and its importance is informed by published sources including the National (Joint) Landscape Character description and the 'OWLS' Landscape Study, plus from various field visits and an extensive photographic survey

for this report. At a local level, the Cherwell District commissioned the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment in 1995 which remains as Supplementary Planning Guidance. These published sources of data are summarised below.

National (Joint) Character Area (NCA)

- 5.7 The National (Joint) Character Areas were first developed in the mid 1990's by Natural England and divide England into 159 Character Areas.
- 5.8 This study places the site in the Upper Thames Clay Vales (NCA 108). A short distance away to the west the landscape lies within The Cotswolds (NCA 107) and further away to the north the landscape is within the Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. The web link for this JCA is: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk>.
- 5.9 The NCAs provide a broad-brush description of the landscape. At a more local level, which is more focussed on the landscape characteristics of the specific area in question, a regional study and Cherwell-specific study are available as reference documents to assist in the definitions of the baseline landscape. Selected extracts to describe the key wider landscape features are included in Appendix C:

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

- 5.10 'OWLS' is the current landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire. Its main purpose is to investigate the landscape character and biodiversity resource of the county and to use the results of the survey work to help safeguard, maintain and enhance this resource.

The site lies within the Cotswold Regional Character Area as defined by this study:

This landscape type extends from the vale landscapes adjacent to the northern part of the River Cherwell to the Upper Thames area south and east of Bicester and the site. It also occupies a large part of the Vale of White Horse to the north-east of Wantage and borders part of the River Thame and its tributaries. This is a low-lying vale landscape associated with small pasture fields, many watercourses and hedgerow trees and well-defined nucleated villages

Key Characteristics

- *A flat, low-lying landform.*
- *Mixed land uses, dominated by pastureland, with small to medium-sized*
- *hedged fields.*
- *Many mature oak, ash and willow hedgerow trees.*
- *Dense, tree-lined streams and ditches dominated by pollarded willows and*
- *poplars.*
- *Small to medium-sized nucleated villages.*

The site lies within the **Wooded Estatelands** Landscape Type

- 5.11 The airfield is described within this landscape type and the descriptions below relate to the landscape to the north of the site rather than the site itself.

Key Characteristics

- Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.
- Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.
- Large parklands and mansion houses.
- A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.
- Small villages with strong vernacular character.

- 5.12 The OWLS Study goes on to say:

- 5.13 The landscape has a mix of land uses but is largely dominated by arable farming. On the steeper slopes there is some semi-improved grassland, as well as pockets of calcareous grassland, acid grassland and gorse. This is a well-wooded landscape with large, prominent blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland often located on the steeper slopes. In addition, there is a significant number of smaller, mainly mixed plantations that are scattered throughout much of the area and this adds to the overall sense of enclosure.

- 5.14 The site is noted to have areas of calcareous grassland and while the surrounding landscape does have areas of woodland, they are not numerous or extensive. Other linear vegetation features following watercourse or field boundaries are however influential in providing enclosure and layers of visual screening within the landscape.

- 5.15 Two of the guidelines noted within the OWLS document that are relevant to the site:

- *Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, **airfields** and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.*
- *Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.*

- 5.16 In terms of landscape mitigation for the wider site, the extent of any new planting will respect the underlying landscape character, but also the special qualities and key characteristics that make the distinctive landscape of the former bomber base unique. (See Figure 10 Landscape Strategy/Framework Plan). Specific measures will be

developed for the EQ site as part of detailed design.

Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment 1995

- 5.17 At a local (District) level, the Cherwell Council commissioned a district landscape assessment in 1995. This study (the CDLA) is now over 20 years old but remains on the Council's web site as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). Some reference is made to this study below but this report also refers above to the OWLS Study which is also cited as SPG.
- 5.18 The CDLA Study records the site as being within the Otmoor Lowlands (Landscape Character Area) (This equates to the OWLS Clay Vale Landscape).
- 5.19 Extract from the CDLA: At the south of the district is the distinctive, low lying area associated with the River Ray flood plain which forms the large character area of the Otmoor Lowlands. This flat, open farmland has a distinctive atmosphere, particularly where the traditional wet meadows and pastures and their important flora and fauna exist.....A number of isolated low hills dominate the skyline, and the south of the area is contained by the low ridges of the Oxford Heights. **Military development has had considerable influence upon settlement and land use within the area.**
- 5.20 The CDLA also records the Landscape Type as 'Transitional' (within the Otmoor Lowlands Landscape Character Area)
- 5.21 The CDLA definition of Transitional landscape is: *This is one of several landscape types that have specific uses (in this case a military airfield) that also therefore have a specific and overwhelming influence on their landscape character.*
- 5.22 The CDLA Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands (to the north of the airfield on rising ground) equates to the OWLS Wooded Estate lands. These are defined as:
- 5.23 *'.....a rolling arable landscape with a strong field pattern of copses and trees, with a patchwork of arable and pasture, defined by well-maintained hedges and is an 'Area of High Landscape Value'. [Note: these areas have now been omitted from the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 in favour of a policy to enhance the distinctiveness and quality of the highly valued landscape of the entire District].*

Sub-Landscape Types here are defined within the CDLA Study as being:

- R1a (land to the north east of the airfield): Elevated or low-lying arable farmland with weak structure
- R2a (to the north of the airfield): arable landscape with weak field pattern and isolated trees
- R2b (to the north east of the airfield beyond Landscape Type R1a): Rolling

arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees.

5.24 The CDLA sets out a strategy for landscape intervention. This includes the following categories:

- Conservation
- Repair
- Restoration
- Reconstruction

5.25 The site lies within an area identified as being within the 'Reconstruction' category defined as:

5.26 *'These landscapes are those where the landscape has been so modified by human activity that they no longer bear any resemblance to their former character. They included quarries and **airfields** which occur in significant numbers throughout the study area'.*

5.27 This was the conclusion in 1995, and from the point of view of the underlying landscape remains true today in terms of the continued dominance of the airfield and its associated former military buildings, plus the influence of the unrestored quarry.

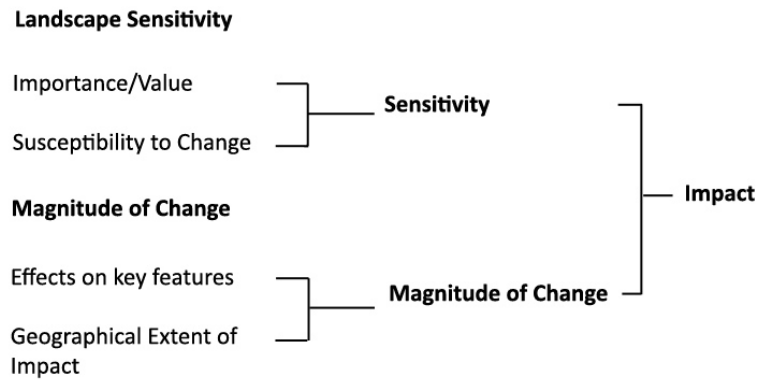
5.28 As the CDLA states: 'These landscapes would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place'. The report states further that: *These landscapes have a high capacity to accommodate change as they have lost their intrinsic character'. At Bicester the character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures are appreciated for what they were, and are, and are being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character. However, this report concludes that there remains a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site which has already been heavily influenced by urbanising elements and other development nearby. The EQ development will drive forward part of the Bicester Motion vision that will deliver a new sense of place and will give the site a new purpose and modified character.*

Landscape Effects: Sensitivity (derived from considering the landscape value and its susceptibility to change)

5.29 The overall Sensitivity is judged by considering the aggregate effects of the

importance/value of the landscape and its susceptibility to change.

Diagram to Explain the Landscape Assessment Method



Also overlaid on the outcomes from this methodology is the influence of the geographical extent of the corpuses impact:

Geographical Extent in relation to the assessment of Magnitude of Change.

The geographical extent as defined in this document is as follows:

- **'Site'** extents are confined to impacts within the site boundaries
- **'Local'** extents are those outside the site boundary generally within 500-1000m of the site.
- **'Borough or District'** extents would be those beyond 1km of the site boundary.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between geographical extent, magnitude of change and significance of impact.

SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

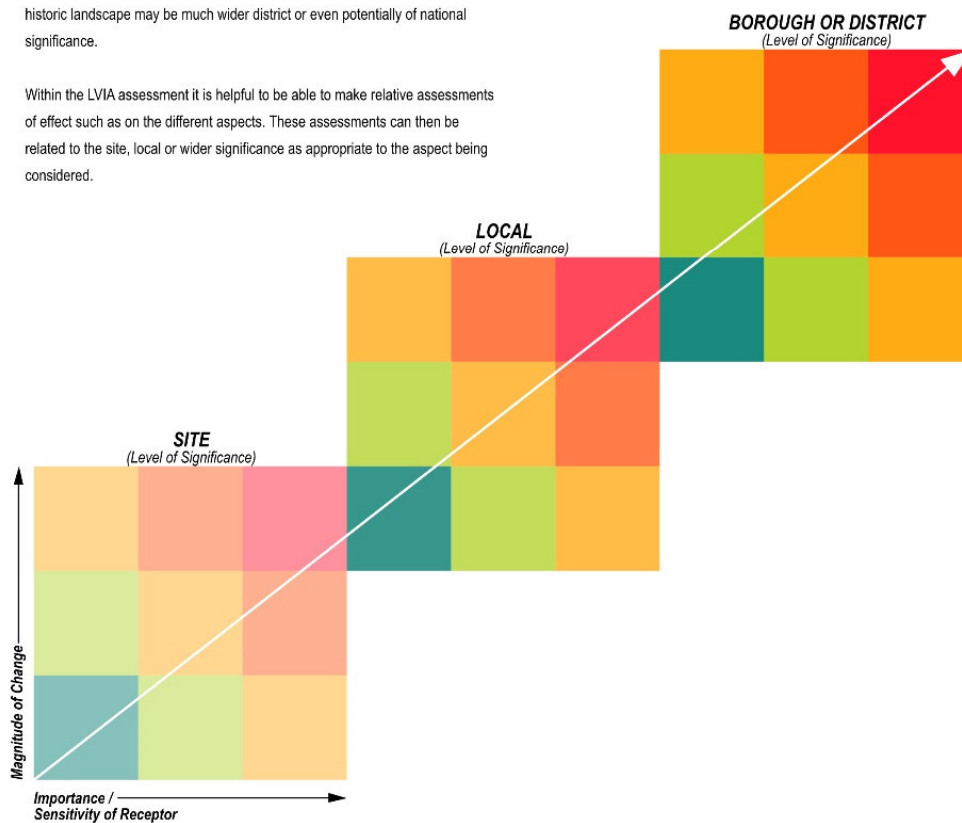
The tables below illustrate a further development of the assessment guidance to help rationalise the variations that occur between the different aspects of landscape considered in this assessment.

As Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment covers a wide range of different aspects of the potential effects on a local area it is often the case that the different aspects are of greater or lesser significance.

For example the changes to the physical landscape of a site may involve the loss of features which may only be really apparent within the internal or immediate site environment. While these may be very important at a site wide level they are not necessarily of any major significance to the wider local area or district.

Alternatively impacts on popular public view point or a national designated historic landscape may be much wider district or even potentially of national significance.

Within the LVIA assessment it is helpful to be able to make relative assessments of effect such as on the different aspects. These assessments can then be related to the site, local or wider significance as appropriate to the aspect being considered.



SIGNIFICANCE DIAGRAM



- 5.30 The landscape sensitivity of the site needs to be considered at two scales. This is because the site is so large and dominant within its local context that it really has to be considered as a landscape character area in its own right. There also needs to be an appreciation of the sensitivity of the landscape beyond the boundaries of the airfield taking account of the baseline factors described above, the land uses, the urban and rural influences and interrelationship between the airfield and the wider landscape.
- 5.31 This report has also undertaken a more detailed analysis of the site itself in terms of character and sensitivity by looking at discrete parts of the site and how these can be described as more or less sensitive. This had been done as part of a sieve analysis process with all relevant disciplines to inform the design process and to enable the master planning to be based on a consensus of expert opinion, itself backed up with reasoned narrative.
- 5.32 The result is a map (Figure 5 below) showing a series of land parcels within the wider site that breakdown into levels of landscape sensitivity with a corresponding description to provide the reasoning for why they have been described thus. It must be appreciated that this exercise is not a precise way of defining the sensitivity and that the sensitivity is described within a broad spectrum. Where the terms of higher and lower are used, it does not imply that the areas of higher sensitivity are the highest possible in landscape terms or the areas of lower sensitivity are the lowest.
- 5.33 The site or the surrounding landscape are not covered by any statutory landscape designations. However, overall, the value of the landscape of the site is considered to be relatively high due to the national importance of historic features on the site and their settings. Depending on the local view the prominence of the adjacent busy Buckingham Road is a visual detractor and there are large existing hangars (Grade II Listed) on the site. These can be viewed either as a positive attribute to the historic landscape or a negative influence on the urban edge of Bicester. Overall, it is considered that the structures are set within an appropriate setting and that they form a local landmark and feature which is valued and helps provide a sense of place and history on this edge of the town.
- 5.34 The susceptibility of the overall site to change is stated in the published landscape assessment (CDLA) to be relatively low. However, the susceptibility to absorb change (and its capacity for development) is determined by gauging how vulnerable (and rare) the landscape is and how it is able to accommodate change taking account of any mitigation measures that are proposed as part of the development. The landscape is rare due its good state of preservation being intact with so many original features and buildings. The judgement of this factor is made using a balance of positive and negative features within the landscape, and takes account of physical characteristics of the land

as well as human perceptions and how irreplaceable the landscape is.

- 5.35 In recognition of the historic value of the site, the site's structures and buildings, it is considered that the ability to absorb change must be caveated by the fact that any change should be appropriate, should not erode the historic value of the site and indeed should provide an overall positive influence on the site for the future.
- 5.36 The wider site is therefore of relatively high sensitivity due primarily to the historic landscape attributes including, as it does, 10 Scheduled Monuments and 21 Grade II listed buildings on the adjacent Bicester Motion land.

Figure 5 (below) provides a plan of the site broken down into 'land parcels' of varying sensitivity that are based on an analysis of the challenges and opportunities that have been identified by the Design Team. This then informs the master planning process of the potential capacity for development within each parcel.

- 5.37 The main EQ building cluster is located primarily within land parcel 3b, extending marginally into 2e. The Automotive and Aviation Pavilions and karting track are within 2d. The tracks are located within the perimeter track in Parcel 1b and the 4x4 driving experience is in Parcel 3c. The assessment of impacts is provided below.

Land Parcel Sensitivity

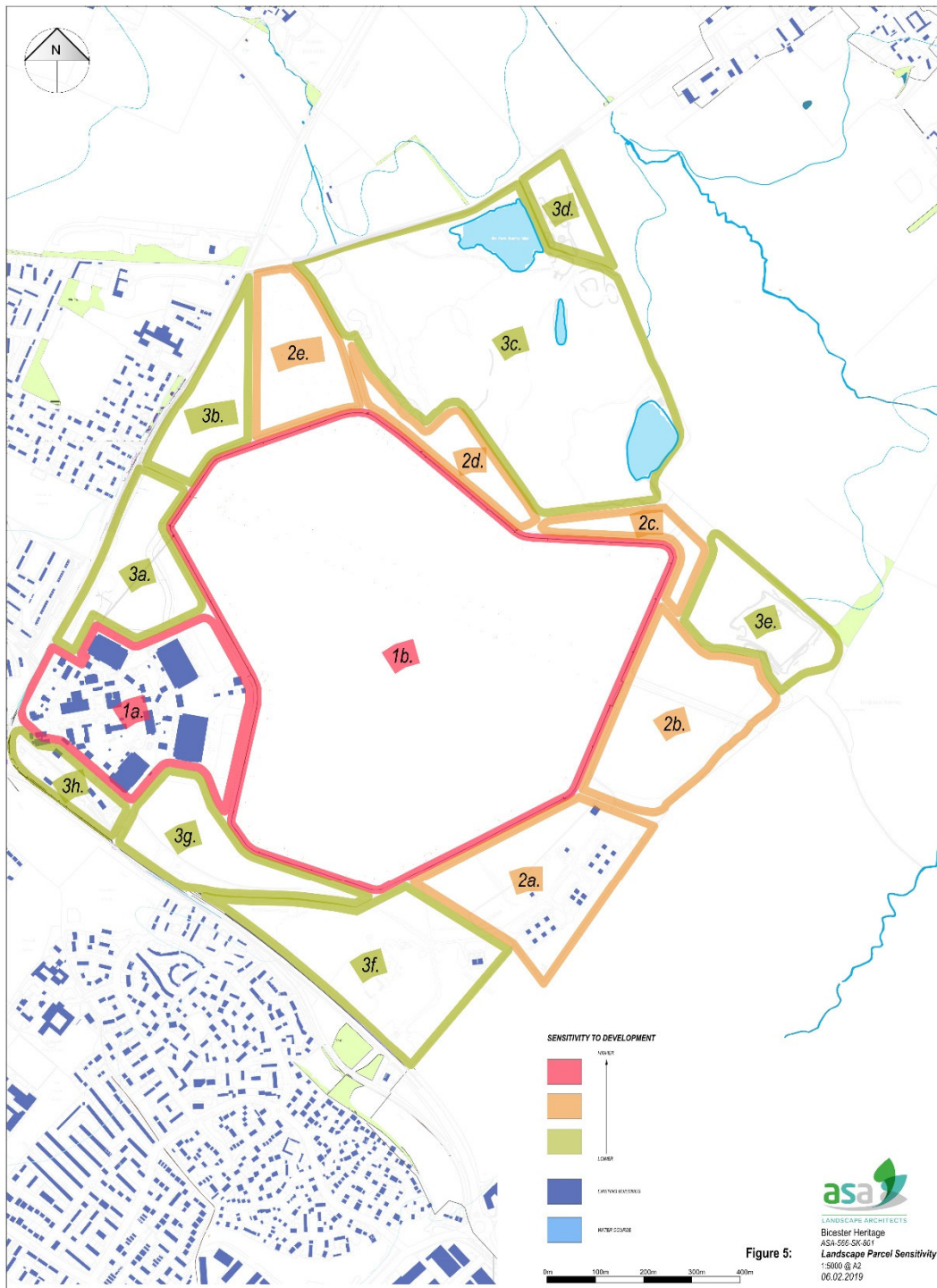


Figure 5:

5.38 Overall, the **Sensitivity** of the landscape parcels within the site ranges from **Medium to Medium/High**. The capacity for development ranges from **Low to Medium**.

Table 6.1 Summary of Landscape Parcel Sensitivity and Capacity for Development. The relevant EQ Land Parcels are highlighted in the table.

	Landscape Sensitivity	Capacity for Development
1a	Medium-High	Low
1b	Medium-High	Low
2a	Medium-High	Low
2b	Medium-High	Low
2c	Medium-High	Low
2d	Medium-High	Low
2e	Medium-High	Low
3a	Medium	Medium
3b	Medium	Medium
3c	Medium to Medium-Low	Medium-Low
3d	Medium	Medium
3e	Medium	Medium
3f	Medium	Medium
3g	Medium	Medium
3h	Medium	Medium

5.39 The assessment of the wider landscape describes the landscape character within the influence of the site in terms of the presence or absent of various landscape elements and the judgement takes account of the overall contribution these elements make in defining the key characteristics of the landscape.

5.40 For receptors within the highway landscape adjoining the site sensitivity is considered to be less than for the site itself. The landscape of the highway corridor is less valuable and is dominated by moving traffic. For the nearby residential landscape (of higher sensitivity) the road is also a dominant factor and a detractor in landscape terms and it lies between the housing and the site. Visual impact is examined in the Visual Impact

section of this report.

- 5.41 For the landscape receptors to the north and east of the site (Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands), the rural landscape does not benefit from any statutory landscape designation or protection, though it is recognised within the CDLA landscape report as being an Area of High Landscape Importance (this designation has now been removed from the Cherwell Local Plan). The landscape is nevertheless locally valued and is relatively susceptible to change.
- 5.42 For landscape receptors within the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands, the Sensitivity would also be **Medium/High** (this combines the factors of Importance/Value [Medium] and susceptibility to change [also Medium/High]).
- 5.43 The methodology detailing the criteria for the assessment is contained in Appendix B.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity (Also refer to Landscape Parcels [LPs] on Figure 5)

- 5.44 The wider Bicester Motion site is large and has a distinctive ex-military airfield landscape character of its own. The character and appearance relate closely to its functional uses as an operational airfield. This function and character will endure and be actively promoted as part of the Bicester Motion vision. The site lies within its own Conservation Area and there are many heritage assets. The existing built form also relates strongly to the former military functions. Some of these have undergone restoration as part of the emerging vision and business plan for the site. Other buildings including the large hangars are still in an unrestored state. Some buildings are derelict, unsafe and therefore currently have restricted access. Similarly, the landscape of the airfield has been neglected for many years and has been subject to the invasion of scrub resulting in some areas (including heritage assets) being hidden from view. This loss of 'sense of place' needs to be redressed in order to rediscover parts of the site and to restore the integrity and historic links which can be brought into the new vision for the site. There are storage areas for gliders and other temporary structures, vehicles and caravans that lead to a cluttered appearance.
- 5.45 There is now a vibrancy to the re-purposed Technical Site that has a strong influence on the character of this area with new businesses and many classic cars in evidence. There is a strong feeling of renewal and purpose to the site. The recent completion of the New Technical Site endorses these factors. This area has already started to create a renewed sense of place.
- 5.46 The emphasis on the importance of continued flying activity provides a dynamic aspect to the site.
- 5.47 New development around the site is evident in some views, especially to the south where a cluster of large new commercial buildings have appeared on the skyline. A

large new substation has also been built opposite the site on Skimmingdish Lane. Two major new developments also have consent on the site. The new hotel and the 8 new buildings comprising the New Technical Site (now successfully completed).

- 5.48 The Technical Site (Land Parcel 1a) and central area of the flying field (Land Parcel LP1b) are particularly sensitive areas and have a low capacity to absorb new built development. The Technical Site is especially sensitive due to the well-preserved layout and fabric of existing buildings and features. The central part of the flying field within the perimeter track plays an important part in providing the open setting to the overall site and its heritage.
- 5.49 The parcels bordering the northern boundary of the site are mostly well contained by existing screening vegetation. Parcel 3a has vegetation of 5-8m high with the potential for trimmed hedges to be allowed to grow higher towards where the existing and proposed access to the site lies (between Parcels 3a and 3b).
- 5.50 The site analysis has identified an opportunity and capacity for change within Parcel 3a. Existing urbanising characteristics, absence of tranquillity and limited views for sensitive receptors mean that the site has limited sensitivity. It is outside the area of the flying field and does not impinge on its inherent characteristics of openness. Views include a backdrop of residential development.
- 5.51 Parcel 2e is adjacent and is more constrained by being contiguous physically and visually with the rural landscape to the north. The backdrop to this area from views from the Watch Tower are to the rural, farmed landscape on rising ground.
- 5.52 Parcel 2d lies on the undeveloped east flank of the flying field, outside the perimeter track, against a backdrop of existing vegetation between 8 and 14+m high. Views above this vegetation line are also to the rural, farmed landscape. This parcel lies outside the main perimeter track but maintains a close visual and physical link to the flying field and does also contribute to its openness. This parcel is of a similar sensitivity to Parcel 2e and similar to 2e there is some capacity to accommodate change within this peripheral zone.

Landscape Effects: Magnitude of Change

- 5.53 The magnitude of change is a combination of the impact of the development on the key features of the landscape and also the area over which these changes are evident.
- 5.54 The EQ buildings are a key part of the Bicester Motion vision and masterplan for a sustainable commercial future for the site, providing a means of re-purposing the airfield and providing a home for new innovative automotive businesses. The changes to the site as part of this proposal are significant but are not necessarily negative in landscape

and visual terms provided that the key sensitivities are recognised and taken into account in the design process to mitigate potential adverse impacts where relevant, and also that the key characteristics of the landscape and heritage setting of the site will experience less than significant harm.

5.55 The process of developing the current proposal has incorporated the findings of the baseline studies above to enable a realistic approach to the quantum of development, the scale, form and massing, and the potential mitigation, to be formulated. The result is a set of parameters (including the Proposed Land Use (Fig 4c), the Proposed Developable Area (Fig 4d) and Existing and Proposed Heights (Fig 4e), which have enabled indicative layouts, footprints and building heights to be agreed, supported by illustrative material showing the form and style of likely part of the site. This is backed up further with 3 illustrative 'mass-modelled' views using wire-line visualisations to indicate how the proposed building groupings would be perceived from key locations. (These have been used in various iterations to help inform the design team as to the general siting, form, layout and arrangement of the building). Two cross sections (Figures 8 and 9) have also been provided to indicate relative heights compared to boundary planting for example, and how proposed planting would either add to existing landscape features, or would provide additional appropriate landscape structural planting to enable the new development to be integrated into the wider site vision.

5.56 The magnitude of change based on the agreed parameters within the current proposal has then been assessed for each of the relevant adjacent land parcels and has been amalgamated with the sensitivity analysis to enable an indication of the broad impacts (and informing the cumulative impacts) to be appreciated.

Summary of the Effects (Magnitude of Change) of the proposed developments

5.57 Summary of Predicted Magnitude of Change.

Impacts are assumed to be adverse unless stated, and are up to local in extent, generally affecting the site itself and the adjoining peripheral land parcels or landscape receptors immediately outside the site. As noted above the effects can also be positive in landscape and visual terms. The LVIA methodology allows for a reasoned narrative to drive the conclusions of the assessment, avoiding the over reliance on matrices. While the latter are still used to guide the process, they should not be relied upon to provide the full picture especially on complex sites where many issues are at play.

The conclusions in terms of the overall significance of impact, and if the impacts are positive or negative, will be determined at detailed design stage when the design is fixed and the overall appearance can be judged. It is also necessary to judge the significance of impacts in the context of the geographical extent (Site, Local or Borough-District) as

described above.

The EQ parcels are recorded in the table.

	Predicted Magnitude of Change
1b	Medium-High
2d	Medium-High
2e	Medium-Low
3b	High
3c	Low

5.58 The magnitude of change is considered taking account of the mitigation proposals that have been described above for the EQ development. All the effects are Low to Medium in terms of their geographical extent depending on if the landscape significance is confined to the site (Low) or to the immediate locality outside the site (Medium). Most effects are perceived from within the airfield itself, while some are also perceived from just beyond the site boundary in the adjoining Buckingham Road highway corridor (generally less sensitive receptors), and beyond the highway, residential areas (of higher sensitivity) but with more limited views. It is recognised that residential receptors will naturally place a high value on their surroundings and their views. However, the impacts overall on this residential landscape have been assessed to be of only local significance at worst. (Also see paragraph 6.11 below for the visual analysis). Developments not would affect the wider landscape in any significant way.

Parcel 3b

5.59 The Parcel (LP3b) has nine new EQ buildings ranging from 5m for the western and eastern-most buildings, to 10.5m for the main central cluster of buildings. This factor and the retained gap between these buildings and the Technical Site helps to ensure that this cluster of buildings does not compete in scale or dominance with those of the Technical Site and hangars. The magnitude of change within this parcel will be high, but will be mitigated by high quality, considered design: The design process and landscape and heritage-led approach has achieved significant modifications in the evolving design that have been successful in reducing impacts, by for example, omitting buildings, reducing and varying building heights and increasing spacings to preserve gaps between building clusters. The 'V' shaped layout of the building cluster minimises the impact as perceived from the gap in vegetation on the Buckingham Road boundary.

5.60 The scale, mass and overall quantum of development can be accommodated within the peripheral area of the large-scale airfield landscape and will not appear inappropriate

development in the context of the re-purposed site. There will be a perception of increased built form on this boundary particularly from the A4421 and the footpath on this road and from housing where open views can currently be experienced. However, the impact of this proposed development from the residential landscape to the north west will be largely limited by existing mature tree planting on both sides of the A4421. (See Cross Section EE Figure 9). The development will be part of a transitional landscape that is part sub-urban (by virtue of the road and housing estate) and part ex-military flying field with the dominating influence of the existing hangers and the new Hotel of similar size.

- 5.61 The openness of the flying field within the perimeter track is maintained. Overall, the impact is limited to a local level of significance and is considered to be acceptable.

Parcel 2e

- 5.62 This parcel has a small amount of built development proposed within it. The built form that extends from Parcel 3b comprises the eastern-most EQ building which would be up to 5m in height. Other development would comprise low level elements related to the autonomous and electric vehicle demonstration area. Overall, the magnitude of change (at a site level of significance) would be medium high taking account of the development in adjacent land parcel 3b. The development would be within the peripheral area of the site and would be seen against a backdrop of existing vegetation and would not break the skyline.

Parcel 2d

- 5.63 The Automotive and Aviation Pavilions Automotive and Aviation Pavilions in Parcel 2d are also within a discrete cluster, separated from the other EQ cluster and from the Technical Site. Four buildings up to 5m high are proposed parallel to the perimeter track within this parcel. They are spaced out and at a low density and are predicted to be below the level of the existing trees bordering the quarry site. They will therefore not interrupt the skyline. (See Cross Section CC). A karting track is to be located behind the buildings and would largely be screened from view.
- 5.64 There will be significant change to this land parcel, however the development type and form can be designed to be appropriate for its location, taking account of the re-purposing of the airfield and its future activities. Low density, lower buildings would not necessarily be out of context in terms of perimeter development around an airfield. This would not necessarily be out of character as above depending on detailed design. The overall quantum of development can be accommodated within the context of this large-scale airfield landscape.
- 5.65 The openness of the flying field within the perimeter track is maintained. Overall, the

impact is limited to a site level of significance and is considered to be acceptable.

Parcel 1b

- 5.66 There will be some direct effects of introducing three new driver experience track loops within the airfield enclosed by the outer perimeter track. The tracks would be located outside the active areas for flying activity. They would comprise low level development that would be largely invisible from remote views across the airfield provided that above ground clutter is avoided. (The 3 Photomontages provided under separate cover illustrate this).
- 5.67 Overall, it is considered that the tracks will not cause unacceptable harm to the openness of the flying field. In many views within the site, which would be a low level, with a narrow angle of view, the tracks would be barely visible and would only be able to be identified by moving cars when in use. The significance of impact would be generally at a site level. There are no buildings proposed for this parcel. The tracks would not be inappropriate use of this large-scale airfield landscape and there are many other precedents in similar contexts already noted in this report. Together with the continuation of the flying activities of the flying field, they would comprise a key component of the vision for the future of the site, without which the economic success of the site would not be possible in the current scenario.
- 5.68 The perimeter track would still be perceived as the dominant track on the site defining, as it does, the extent of the flying field. The narrower inner loops would be used for Overall, vehicle demonstration and driving experiences. In only a limited number of locations on the north side of the airfield, and in order to create a safe environment for this use, some low-level bunds would be required outside the line of the track. These would be approximately 1m high and would be grass covered on the outside face. The inner face would be a tyre wall. The impact of the bunds would be mainly in close views, but as they would only be 1m high the openness of the flying field would not be significantly harmed. In views across the airfield (for example from the Technical Site) the bunds would be insignificant in the view. The perimeter track is currently in a poor state of repair and the proposals will enable the track to be reinstated.
- 5.69 The proposals will avoid the use of permanent vertical infrastructure and clutter within the or around the track loops. There will however be a requirement for a physical fence to restrict public access onto the active airfield and tracks. This will be designed to be visually transparent and of no more than 1.2m in height. This feature, of necessity, is common in some form or another to all active airfields and will not be out of character to its given context.

Parcel 3c

- 5.70 Parcel 3c lies within the boundary of the former quarry site. The proposed 4x4 experience track is proposed within the northern part of this area to the west of the

existing lake. It is envisaged that this element would be relatively low key and would be designed to minimise the effects on the ecological resources of the site. In landscape terms the site is well contained by existing vegetation around and within the site. The sensitivities would be site-based and would need to take account of other proposed uses within the overall vision plan. The magnitude of change would be relatively low and at a site level of significance.

- 5.71 Lighting associated with the EQ site will be a factor in assessing the magnitude and impact on the surrounding landscape and on visual receptors. This element is covered within the Experience Quarter Design Code. For the new EQ details of the lighting are not known at this stage but it is anticipated that there will be a general level of external lighting that will be evident in terms of operational and security lighting as well as other car parking lighting and a general level of light coming from the windows of the buildings themselves. There will be some impacts from the use of the facilities in the hours of darkness. Most of these local effects are predicted to be largely mitigated by good design (directional LED lights) and the existing and proposed screening to the northern boundary.
- 5.72 At completion, the proposed planting will be limited in its effect, but as the planting becomes established new trees and hedgerows will become progressively more successful in achieving the end vision as set out in the Landscape Framework Plan (Figure 10). Cross sections CC and EE indicate the potential canopy heights of existing and proposed planting at +5 and +10 years after planting
- 5.73 Any potential negative impact must be balanced against the positive response that the new development will have as part of the evolving use of the site. The new developments are planned as part of an overall sustainable vision for the site to be set within an appropriate context.

Cumulative Effects (See Appendix B for Methodology)

- 5.74 The assessment of the cumulative effects in this case is complex and is based on the subjective opinion of a landscape expert, based on modelling studies of the wider Bicester Motion vision masterplan, the photographic studies and an appreciation of the factors highlighted above.
- 5.75 The cumulative impact of future proposals will be assessed at the point they are submitted against those already with planning permission. Developments proposed around and beyond the perimeter track as part of the EQ (in addition to the existing Technical Site, the New Technical Site (completed) and the proposed Hotel) will add to the amount of built development visible from within the site.
- 5.76 There will be a perception of increased development on the periphery of the airfield. The level of perception will be directly related to the massing, scale, building heights and

relationship/proximity to other developments. The existing hangars on the waterfront of the Technical Site are large scale and up to 20m high with large footprints, which will be echoed by the proposed Hotel. The EQ buildings (main cluster) will be up to 5m for the buildings at either end and up to 10.5m for the main group. The footprints will be considerably smaller though there are more of them (9). The 4 Automotive and Aviation Pavilions Automotive and Aviation Pavilions will be up to 5m in height. The scale, height and perception of the overall quantum of the EQ buildings are therefore appreciably smaller than those of the Technical Site.

5.77 In terms of the predicted massing and scale in relation to other building clusters, this will also be influenced by the introduction of associated features such as lighting, car parking and noise. There are also other factors such as the loss of physical open space, the closing off of views and the potential perception of a disconnect with the wider rural landscape where currently boundaries have no development and the natural 'green' elements (trees, hedges) that form part of the rural edge or transition between the airfield and the countryside beyond.

5.78 The impacts vary with the distance of the receptor (or viewer). The scale of the airfield is large and this factor will tend to reduce the significance of cumulative development. This is a key factor and the wire frame views show that even large buildings appear quite small when seen from the other side of the site. The vertical angle of view becomes very small and the field of view horizontally similarly diminishes, meaning that the individual elements take up a relatively small proportion of the panorama taken in by the human eye. Other factors will also influence the human perception including roof form, mitigation, materials, colour and even atmospheric conditions i.e. a clear sunny day will often make development more obvious than a dull rainy day.

5.79 As the site is so large it is difficult to see all of it in one view. As demonstrated by the wire frame views, the camera or the human eye can only look in one direction at a time. For this site cumulative impacts are mostly seen in 'combination' or 'frequently sequential' scenarios, where moving around the site reveals views or the experience of other developments.

5.80 The broad conclusions are that developments have considerably more impact in close views, and also when agglomerated together in the same views. However, impacts are understandably significantly less in static views from the other side of the airfield, or when developments are seen in isolation, but impacts can be increased when viewed sequentially moving around the perimeter of the airfield when the perception of multiple development will become more apparent. Where there are significant gaps between types of developments or different building forms, this tends to reduce the cumulative impact.

5.81 As previously stated, the design process and landscape and heritage-led approach has

achieved significant modifications in the evolving design that have been successful in reducing impacts, by for example, omitting buildings, reducing and varying building heights and increasing spacings to preserve gaps between building clusters. Other issues of detailed design will also be the subject of a collaborative approach to ensure that landscape and heritage considerations are taken into account at the appropriate stage.

- 5.82 Along the north west boundary there will be combined views of the Technical Site, Hotel and buildings comprising the Experience Quarter. A significant gap between the Technical Site (including the hotel) and the EQ is retained. This is a positive factor in mitigating the cumulative impact.
- 5.83 The main cluster of EQ development comprises 9 new buildings varying in footprint size and height. The buildings facing the flying field will be most visible with the buildings behind being largely screened by those in front. They will appear relatively discrete from the Technical Site and Hotel with a gap between developments of approximately 300m. From a visual aspect, oblique views from the road would be possible towards the apex of the 'V' form of development where the building height is 5m. Other taller buildings are angled away from the viewer and would be largely screened behind the existing boundary vegetation.
- 5.84 The receptors are mostly motorists and are regarded as being of generally lower sensitivity. From the housing on the opposite side of Buckingham Road views are also mostly limited by existing screen planting to a large extent restricting the extent of the visual impact. Users of the footpath along the north side of the road would have similar views to the motorists. This view would be also be affected by the busy highway environment which inevitably limits the amenity benefits of this footway.
- 5.85 The Automotive and Aviation Pavilions comprise 4 low-level, low-density buildings within their own cluster and land parcel, separated from the main EQ by a gap of around 300m. These may be seen in the same view as the main EQ but as they are distinct in appearance and within a separate grouping, they do not dominate the view or look out of scale or inappropriate. They will also be viewed sequentially in moving around the site, for example on the perimeter track, but in this context, they will be integral to the re-purposed airfield and its future function, providing part of the automotive experience. They will create a new opportunity to appreciate the views back towards the Technical Site and Watch Tower which are now not possible.
- 5.86 Taking account of the factors of overall quantum of development, the peripheral location of the buildings and gaps between them, plus the careful way in which the buildings are varied in size and aligned on the site, and in relation to each other, to minimise impact on local and more remote receptors, the cumulative impacts are considered to be acceptable. The large scale of the flying field is able to accommodate change around

the periphery and the separation between discrete developments means that the overall quantum of development is not overwhelming or inappropriate.

- 5.87 The new developments will appear below the skyline and will not compromise the visual relationship with the agricultural landscape beyond the airfield boundaries. Neither will the EQ development compete with the established buildings and heritage assets of the Technical Site. The new buildings will provide a new purpose and dynamism to the site that will help preserve the site and provide a sustainable future. The appreciation of the heritage landscape will be able to be enjoyed by more people as they visit the site for a variety of experiences and that will also provide wider community benefits and positive residual and cumulative impacts.
- 5.88 The introduction of the 3 new tracks within the Perimeter Track will add further surfaced roadway to the existing grassed airfield area. The historic configuration of the grass runways has been more or less retained and this has been influential in designing the layout for the three track loops to be dispersed away from the runways and out towards the edges of the flying field. This factor has had the effect of dispersing the potential impact of the tracks over a wider area. One can argue that in this form the impacts in any one part of the airfield, for example from a viewpoint on the perimeter track, are less than if all three tracks were concentrated in one part of the site. In the current dispersed model, there are sequential effects of seeing the three tracks individually when moving around the site. These effects are not considered to be significantly harmful (in particular to the openness of the flying field) for reasons already explained.

6 Visual Assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 The visual impact assessment is a separate exercise to the landscape impact assessment. It consists of assessing the impact on views into and out of the site of the proposed development. The impact takes into account the location of the viewpoint, its sensitivity, the importance of the view and the magnitude of change to the view that the development represents.
- 6.2 The importance of the view is a balance of how visible the site is and by whom it is viewed. Also important is whether the views are short or long term and if any negative changes can be mitigated.

Methodology

- 6.3 Potential viewpoints have been determined from several site visits (and were confirmed in discussions with Cherwell District Council's Landscape Architect), including for previous studies for the Hotel and New Technical Sites. In practical terms the wider Bicester Motion site is generally well screened from most views from the south due to existing buildings, limited local views from the west and north, with only more remote views being possible from receptors to the north east and east. Some local views into the site from the Buckingham Road (towards the EQ site) and from local housing are possible.
- 6.4 Private viewpoints have not been accessible and all viewpoints (apart from within the site itself) have been taken from public points of access. From a desk-top study of published maps the likely visual receptors have been determined and these were then verified on site as being appropriate. No photographs have been taken from private property and the impacts from private property (i.e. from upper storeys) can only be estimated from the knowledge of the site and distance from it.
- 6.5 A selection of specific and representative viewpoints is presented in this report with the locations chosen where there is likely to be an impact with respect to the sensitivity of the users and the magnitude of the change experienced. Other views are included for context and to sometimes demonstrate the lack of view available towards the development. A comprehensive photographic survey has been taken from within the airfield and site perimeter to illustrate the possible visual effects from various viewpoints. There are three documents in Appendix A showing VPs 1-23, one showing remote views RVPs 1-5 and one showing selected Wire-Frame views to indicate how the proposed EQ will appear in broad terms. It must be emphasised that these are not architects designs and do not seek to portray how the buildings will ultimately look. They have been prepared to assist in visualising and assessing the massing of the buildings and

how much or how little they will appear in, or impact upon, a particular view.

- 6.6 Refer to Figures 2 and 3 for the viewpoint (VP) locations. All photos are taken with a 50mm equivalent focal length lens approximating to the human eye.
- 6.7 Mitigation is assumed to be in place on completion of the development for the purpose of assessment of impacts.

Sensitivity of Receptors

- 6.8 In this analysis and in common with best practice public viewpoints and public routes and paths are considered the most sensitive locations as the users are moving slowly and most likely using and valuing the view as recreation. Residences with permanent views can also be in this category. Less sensitive receptors include outdoor sports facilities and outdoor spaces associated with places of work as users are not generally enjoying views as their prime activity. Road and transport corridors are considered lower sensitivity as the landscape experience is transitory and the user's focus is mainly on the activity of driving.

Survey Dates

- 6.9 The site visits were made during clear conditions in the winter month of January 2018, the summer of 2018 on several visits and in February 2019. The winter views represent the worst-case scenario in terms of the effectiveness of screening vegetation. The summer views represent the best case with maximum screening effect and so in the case where screen planting is thin, there may need to be an allowance for the winter season to accept that some glimpsed views may be possible.

Overall Visibility

- 6.10 The study area for this assessment has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. (see Figure 3 Remote View Points RVPs 1-5). In practical terms, views beyond this are unlikely to have a significant visual impact due to the distance away from the receptor, the intervening features and the small proportion or angle of view that individual new developments would take up in the overall panorama. Several views have been included in this assessment that are greater than 3km, from rising ground where distant views are possible. These views are included to demonstrate that the views from these points are not significant for the reasons described. In general, the zone of visual influence for significant views is quite close to the site. The furthest receptor from the site identified in this report is RVP3 at Goddington.
- 6.11 Local to the site, limited visual impacts on nearby residences east of Thompson Drive (opposite the proposed entrance to the EQ) have been identified. Views are not dominant due to the aspect of individual houses (gable ends or rear of properties facing towards the site – see photo below) and other windows facing away from or being at an oblique angle to the site, or being screened by vegetation on both sides of the road. Views

that may remain are limited to those from upper floor windows (and gable ends). These tend not to be primary living rooms, but are likely to be from bedrooms and/or bathrooms.



- 6.12 The existing road and boundary screening and the proposal to allow the existing trimmed hedge to grow to 6m in height, plus the proposed new tree planting within the site will, together, be effective in the medium to long term in helping to mitigate the visual impact and restricting the significance of impact to Moderate-Minor in the longer term.
- 6.13 Pedestrians on Buckingham Road would have limited views into the Parcel 3b from the footpath on the north side of the road. There would only be scope for a limited view towards the 'V' form of development. Motorists would be travelling at speed (the speeding limit for the road is 50mph) and so views would be fleeting in terms of duration and the impacts would be minor.
- 6.14 The EQ buildings and Automotive and Aviation Pavilions will appear below the skyline. The EQ buildings are smaller in scale and height and do not compete visually with the historic hangars of the Technical Site which extend above the tree backdrop. The EQ buildings are lower profile and they will also be punctuated with new vegetation to break up the building forms.

Remote Viewpoints (RVPs) 1-5

- 6.15 RVP1 is taken from a public right of way 3km from the site. The view is from elevated ground and views are mostly obscured by intervening vegetation, although some glimpses are possible of the tops of the existing hangars. The new EQ buildings are not predicted to be visible to a degree that would have a significant visual impact.
- 6.16 RVP2 is 3.2km away taken from minor road east of the A4421. The topography is raised in the foreground and the site is viewed through a veil of tree canopies making it difficult to pick out although the white wall of a hanger is visible and other hangars can also just be made out. The new EQ buildings are not predicted to be visible to a degree that

would have a significant visual impact.

- 6.17 RVP3 4.2km from the site is taken from a PRow to the north east of the site. It is just possible to pick out with white wall of a hanger visible and other hangars can also just be made out. The new EQ buildings are not predicted to be visible to a degree that would have a significant visual impact.
- 6.18 RVP4 is 4.2km from the site to the east on a minor road and from elevated ground. The view is remote however the extent of the airfield can clearly be made out in this view together with the large buildings. The Technical Site is in this view with little intervening screening. The buildings of the EQ site are lower but it is possible there may be glimpses of them in this view. The perception of any development in this location would be a minor element in the overall view at worst and would not represent a significant impact. The viewing receptor in this instance is a road user (less sensitive) and not on a PRow.
- 6.19 RVP 5 is 3.8m away on a minor road and is on the route of long distance right of way. The receptor is at a lower level compared to VP4 and the view is largely obscured by vegetation with only the barest glimpses of the hanger roofs possible.

Summary

- 6.20 The existing view from the Watch Tower (VP10) is useful in that it provides an elevated position looking over the site. The Watch Tower is used in this report as a reference point which is central to the 'waterfront' area of the Technical Site. In operational and heritage terms it retains significance in terms of appreciating how the airfield functioned.
- 6.21 The Watch Tower views also illustrate the importance of the connection to the landscape beyond the site boundaries, to elevated land where the landscape is rural, open countryside.
- 6.22 The impact on the views that will be possible of the EQ buildings and tracks from the elevated Watch Tower provide an overview for the general degree of acceptability for the quantum of development on the north west and north east boundaries and the way in which the tracks will appear within the flying field.
- 6.23 The views from Prow the Watch Tower are likely to be restricted to those dealing with the operation of the site activities. Due to the restricted access within the building it is unlikely that the general public will have open access.
- 6.24 Generally, visitors to the site will be there with the aim enjoying a day out in this specific location to experience the site and its range of automotive and aviation activities proposed as well as the opportunity to appreciate the site's heritage and historic importance. Such receptors will be likely to be, to a greater or lesser extent, tuned-in and sensitive to this unique environment. They will have expectations of seeing activity from a range of sources connected with historic aviation, cars and motoring, and/or,

heritage.

- 6.25 The degree of change that is proposed on the periphery of the site in Parcels 3b, 2e and 2d would not be unexpected or inappropriate especially against the backdrop of existing large scale, commercial development. Indeed, if the Bicester Motion vision for the future is to be realised, to introduce a range of activity and attractions, the level of the change will have to reflect this.
- 6.26 In visual terms the EQ developments are restricted to the north and north west periphery and north east periphery of the site leaving the flying field free of built development and its open character largely unaffected. The new buildings and associated development will represent a significant change to the views, but this is not necessarily an adverse effect. The introduction of appropriate new contemporary buildings in the context of re-purposing the airfield will provide a modern and sustainable way to preserve the key historic characteristics of the site. The EQ buildings will not be dominant in the waterfront view or in other general views from within the airfield. Nor will they compete in views with the much larger buildings of the Technical Site. The new tracks will introduce new features within the 3 discrete areas of the flying field at ground level. These are dispersed for the reasons explained to the edges of the flying field in order not to restrict flying activity.
- 6.27 The tracks are designed for various purposes as part of the coordinated and specialised driving experience. The final layout is a result of many hours of fine tuning in terms of examining the constraints and opportunities in heritage and landscape terms to arrive at a layout and quantum that is acceptable. In addition, the key aim of securing continued use of the flying field for aviation and retaining the two grass runways has influenced the layout. Views of the tracks experienced by the general public will generally be from ground level. The impact of the views will be dependent on where they are being viewed from. It is predicted that unless the viewer is relatively close to the tracks, the views of the tracks themselves are likely to be difficult to perceive. They will only be evident in most cases due to the fact that there are vehicles using them.. From closer views from the EQ buildings and Automotive and Aviation Pavilions they will become part of the experience and an integral and accepted part of the view for the visitor and observer.

- 6.28 Neither will the cumulative effects be such that they will be unacceptable in that the scale, massing and nature of the development will not be inappropriate from the site or the location. The impact is moderated by the significant gaps between peripheral developments and these will retain the discrete characters of proposed areas of the Bicester Motion vision.
- 6.29 Receptors from outside the site would perceive a change to the site and an increase in built form and activity, but this is not necessarily a negative factor. The perception of the open flying field from Buckingham Road is largely due to the current open nature of the boundary for a length of approximately 100m along the road. This gap would be reduced in length with new and reinforced planting, but some set back of boundary vegetation will be required to maintain sight lines for the proposed access. The view for motorists is constrained by vehicle speeds on Buckingham Road and for pedestrians by a constant stream of traffic interrupting the view.
- 6.30 Similar to the cumulative impact on the landscape, the tracks will have some sequential impact in terms of cumulative visual impacts. Again, due to the overall large scale of the airfield, the separation between the tracks and the absence of any permanent vertical clutter, these effects are considered to be less than significant.

7 Construction and Residual Effects

- 7.1 Construction Effects will be updated as more information becomes available in terms of construction phasing and a construction time-line.
- 7.2 The nature of the development will be accessed via the existing access on Buckingham Road. There will be a phased period to erect the new buildings, roads and infrastructure and this will cause periods of temporary disruption and disturbance to the local roads and residents.
- 7.3 It is anticipated that working hours will be limited in accordance with good practice and control of other factors such as noise and dust will also be controlled. The development programme is as yet unknown.
- 7.4 Temporary landscape and visual impacts would be relevant to those receptors local to the site.
- 7.5 The existing road receives heavy use and traffic is extremely busy on the local junctions and roads. Any increase in site traffic will be assessed as part of a Road Safety Audit and Traffic Management Plan.

Residual Effects

- 7.6 Residual effects are those that are apparent once the development is complete and in use. These will include the visual and landscape effects described above in terms of how the development is perceived long term by the various receptors. This relates closely to the quality of the design, the mitigation, the detailing and colour of the buildings and the appearance of the site.
- 7.7 The site has a gap screen of existing boundary vegetation and this will be allowed to regrow to an effective screening height where sight lines allow. Otherwise, new planting is proposed to further screen possible adverse views from the North west. The new planting will take 5-10 years to establish and to become effective.
- 7.8 This report has assumed that the buildings will be finished externally with a range of cladding solutions that will be of high quality and to an appropriate design. A Design Code has been prepared as part of this application to inform the design vernacular that is envisaged.
- 7.9 The strategy for mitigation and for providing a landscape framework of robust planting on the site boundary is portrayed on the Landscape Framework Plan (Figure 10). This planting is specified with a range of plant sizes to provide some instant screening effects but also to ensure that the planting establishes quickly. A comprehensive Tree Protection Plan will ensure that existing trees and hedges are protected during development. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan will also set out a strategy for the future management of the landscape to maximise biodiversity and amenity

values.

- 7.10 The completion of the site will occur over a number of years with discrete parts of the site maturing and becoming assimilated into the wider site landscape over time.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The key characteristics of the local landscape have been significantly eroded through, over time, the established development of the airfield and bomber base, the local roads and urban edge of Bicester, but positive characteristics remain in terms of the historic attributes of the site and the evolution of the site into a sustainable business. The resolution to grant at committee for a new contemporary hotel recognises the positive influence that appropriate new development will have on this landscape, providing, as it will do, a stimulus for the continuing use of the site as a commercial going concern while at the same time preserving its place in history and the community. The recent resolution to grant at committee for 8 new buildings within the New Technical Site (December 2018, completed in 2020) further underlines the recognition that this site has opportunities for development of an appropriate quantum, scale and massing in close proximity to the historic Technical Site and its listed buildings and scheduled monuments.
- 8.2 In term of planning policy and in particular Cherwell Local Plan Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a local impact on nearby landscape receptors including residential, road and roadside footpath users, but these impacts are local in significance and will be mitigated over time with proposed new structural tree planting.
- 8.3 The Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment describes this landscape as being in need of restoration and that it *'would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place'*. The landscape would benefit significantly from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place as proposed through the EQ proposals and would provide a long-term sustainable future for the site. There is a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site. The character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures can still be appreciated for what they were and still are, while being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character.
- 8.4 The landscape has no statutory designations but there is a need to recognise the Conservation Area and heritage setting of this well-preserved site. The long-term vision for the site includes increasing access for visitors to the site and allowing the heritage aspects to be understood, interpreted and enjoyed by future generations within an appropriate context of new uses associated with engineering and technology. These aspects address the point made in the explanatory text to CDC Policy ESD 13 relating to sites with a 'time-depth' value and similar aims set out in the CDC RAF Planning Brief.
- 8.5 The design team have identified a number of challenges and opportunities led by landscape and heritage specialists. These are captured on Figures 4a and b. The

aspects that related specifically to the EQ site include the relationship to the boundary, the highway, pedestrian and residential receptors nearby. This report has concluded that the impacts on residential receptors, on pedestrians and vehicle users are significant but at a local level and that the limited harm is likely to be outweighed by the wider benefits that the development brings, securing a long term and sustainable future for the site and heritage landscape. With sensitive design, the peripheral land parcels provide the opportunity for accommodating appropriate development of suitable mass, scale and form.

- 8.6 There are important views identified to the wider horizons featuring elevated land remote from the airfield and these connections are not affected by the EQ proposals.
- 8.7 The design team has also respected the premise that the erosion of the openness of the flying field should be avoided. The EQ developments are within the periphery of the site lying outside the perimeter track which defines the flying field. The aviation consultant has advised that aviation activities can be continued and that the 3 new tracks can be accommodated. The overall impact is therefore not considered to be so great as to overwhelm or to significantly harm the existing open character of the airfield. There are also important heritage considerations that will need to be integral to the design and layout.
- 8.8 The proposals will not be out of character or inappropriate for the re-purposed site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that the EQ buildings will not dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the technical site. The cumulative effect of the EQ development, though significant within the specific peripheral land parcels, is not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall and that the limited harm will be outweighed by the wider landscape and community benefits resulting from the development.
- 8.9 As explained in the Summary of Landscape Impacts Paragraph 3.18, the proposals will not cause significant impact to the open countryside. The proposals will not cause any significant harm to existing landscape features or topography. There will be no impact on areas of high tranquillity. The site is not within an area of high tranquillity being subject to aircraft noise, road noise and existing motoring uses.
- 8.10 The Worledge (Heritage) conclusions are that the proposed development will help to ensure that the site and its constituent buildings have a sustainable future, thus preserving collective memories. The proposals do not involve the demolition of any of the existing buildings. The new uses associated with Bicester Motion will help to create new memories that will add to the site's communal value.
- 8.11 In terms of the natural environment, there are ample opportunities for ecological

improvements which will offset the loss of the semi-improved calcareous grassland which makes up the majority of the site (outside the perimeter track). In this way the proposed development will be able to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the LWS, as per Policy Bicester 8.

Landscape Impacts

- 8.12 In terms of the impacts on the landscape the effect is considered to represent a significant change at a site or local level of significance. However, the site has already undergone significant change with the encroachment of the built edge of Bicester and the site is gradually losing its integrity through neglect and becoming overgrown in places. Without a well-defined and planned future, the site will deteriorate further and its future will be uncertain, making it vulnerable in terms of other opportunist development that could be unsuitable and harmful to the landscape and historic setting.
- 8.13 The parameter plans prepared by Ridge (including the Proposed Land Use (Fig 4c), the Proposed Developable Area (Fig 4d) and Existing and Proposed Heights (Fig 4e), have been prepared as a result of the analysis of the landscape and heritage challenges and opportunities. The parameters as now proposed have therefore taken account of the main impacts and have been developed to minimise harm. The resulting areas identified for development and the building parameters including footprints and heights can therefore be demonstrated to provide an acceptable quantum of new development. It can also be argued that with good design the overall changes to the site and wider community benefits effects can be considered to be beneficial in landscape terms resulting in the long-term sustainable future of the site.
- 8.14 Building heights have been carefully considered as part of the assessment process and the height parameters. As described above these have taken account of sensitivities identified from landscape and heritage advice. Thus, buildings within the main cluster are limited to 10.5m, with the buildings at the extreme east and west of the cluster being limited to 5m. The cluster of Automotive and Aviation Pavilions would be restricted to up to 5m in height.
- 8.15 In terms of direct impacts these are limited to the individual land parcels, and the significance of these impacts is at the site level itself or limited to local receptors opposite to the site. These local impacts are likely to be regarded as adverse by specific receptors.
- 8.16 In arriving at the conclusion of overall acceptability the local adverse impacts must be balanced by the larger picture considering the site's future and the continuing use of the airfield within an appropriate use and context. The challenges and opportunities as described above have been considered in detail to enable a set of parameters to be developed that have been agreed within the design team to be appropriate and that will have only limited (local significance) impacts for receptors outside the site. Within the

site impacts (positive and negative) are at a site level of significance and landscape and heritage impacts must be taken as part of the overall balance of factors.

- 8.17 Key to the overall assessment of harm to the site's character and setting is the impact on the historic landscape which has been analysed in detail within the Worlledge Heritage Impact Statement and has found there to be less than significant harm resulting from this proposal with public benefits outweighing the level of harm.
- 8.18 The communal 'place memory' of the site will be preserved through the continued use of the site and its buildings and the new development will make the site more accessible to the public which will add to this 'place memory' with new memories being facilitated. There is now a vibrancy to the re-purposed Technical Site that has a strong influence on the character of this area with new businesses and many classic cars in evidence. There is a strong feeling of renewal and purpose to the site. This area has already started to create a renewed sense of place. The EQ will build on this momentum as part of the broader business plan to provide a sustainable long-term future for the site.

Visual Impacts

- 8.19 The impacts on the wider landscape reduce as the distance increases. Visual impact from remote views are not significant. In visual terms receptors considered to have any significant impact are generally those within a 1km radius of the site. The more remote views that were identified from the site visit were in excess of this and in fact beyond the radius of the defined study area.
- 8.20 Local views and receptors from the Buckingham Road and some residential properties, and pedestrians will experience some local adverse impacts in the view, and these are predicted to be up to Moderate adverse but at a local level of significance, and would be mitigated in the medium to longer term by the establishment of new hedge and tree planting along the site boundary that would break up the mass of the buildings and would largely screen the views. Buildings will be mostly screened in any case behind existing vegetation on the boundary. The perception of development and increased activity would remain, but these residual impacts would be part of the site's evolving place in the community.
- 8.21 Within the site itself views are sensitive, being within the setting to the Conservation Area and including numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There will be a change to some views, for example from the former Watch Tower, but as noted, this is likely to have restricted public access. However, the development is not out of scale with, or inappropriate for, the site, and the change to the view will result in less than significant harm in landscape and visual terms.
- 8.22 The new buildings will not compete visually with the historic structures and the form and

materials used for the new buildings will be sensitive to those already used within the site. In the round, taking account of the existing and future uses and context of the site, the visual impact is considered to be acceptable. The final conclusions of how the new development will impact on the landscape and visual receptors within the site and locally off site will be determined by the detailed design.

Recommendations

- 8.23 This report is based on a concept level of design with a quantum of development, indicative footprints and building heights as informed by the parameter plans. The LVIA will need to be reviewed as part of the detailed planning application (or applications) to ensure that the detailed design of any or all of the development does not undermine any of the findings and conclusions of this report. There will need to be a strong emphasis on the evolving design on the continued collaboration of landscape, heritage and biodiversity (and other) expertise to ensure that the amenity, heritage and ecological values are maximised and harm to sensitive receptors minimised.
- 8.24 The challenges and opportunities have led to the development of the concept form, massing and scale of the EQ development as defined within the parameter plans and in the locations within land parcel 1b, 3b, 3c, 2e and 2d. The landscape and heritage specialists have explored, with the architects, options in terms of orientation, massing and layout, numbers of buildings and building heights.
- 8.25 The size of the buildings in terms of both height and footprint varies across the development, to respect the landscape constraints identified, such as the tree line heights and view connections to the rural landscape. Building heights are 5m in the more sensitive zones and 10.5m otherwise. Gaps in the two 'arms' of the 'V' layout of the EQ are aligned to respect the key views from the direction of the Watch Tower to reduce the perception of massing.
- 8.26 The detailed building design will be important in landscape and visual terms in terms of the nature of the buildings, form, massing and detailing.
- 8.27 It is recommended that separate LVIAs be carried out for all detailed planning applications to take account of the influence of detailed design considerations.
- 8.28 It is also recommended that a lighting study be part of any future planning applications so that the implications on the site, local and the wider landscape be properly assessed. This would in any case be required to satisfy ecological conditions.

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