

2 Site and Setting

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter provides a brief description of the Site and its surrounding areas, including key features, designations and key sensitive receptor locations that may be affected by the Development. A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to the technical assessments is provided in each technical chapter (i.e. Chapters 7 to 10 and ES Volume II - LVIA).

2.2 Site Context

Location and Extent

2.2.1 The Site is located on the edge of Bicester, wholly within the administrative boundary of CDC. It is situated 1.8km west of Bicester town centre, at Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 56526 23229. A Site location plan is shown in Figure 1.1 and the application boundary is shown in Surrounding Context

Land Uses

2.2.2 The Site is located on the urban edge of Bicester and is bound as follows:

- To the north by an area of tree planting, beyond which is agricultural land which extends both to the north and north east of the Site;
- To the east by Howes Lane (the A4095), extending down to the south east. Howes Lane is bounded by the existing Greenwood residential estate which forms the current urban edge of Bicester;
- To the south and south west by the Axis J9 development, as described in Chapter 1: Introduction and shown on Figures 1.2 and 1.3. Beyond the Axis J9 development is Middleton Stoney Road (the B4030); and
- To the west by an area of tree planting and agricultural land which extends to the M40 approximately 1.4km to the west of the Site.

2.2.3 The majority of the agricultural land adjacent to the west, north, north east and south (beyond Middleton Stoney Road) of the Site is currently consented for residential-led mixed-use development. Further details on these developments are provided within Section 2.4 'Future Development' and within Figure 3.1 of ES Chapter 3: EIA Methodology, with Appendix 3.4 providing further details of each scheme and its planning status.

Transport and Access

2.2.4 Vehicle access to the Site (for agricultural vehicles only) is currently off Howes Lane, via Phase 2. Phase 2 abuts the Site's western boundary. Middleton Stoney Road (B4030) provides access to the centre of Bicester and the M40. The M40 motorway is located approximately 1.6km to the west of the Site.

- 2.2.5 Bicester North Train Station is located approximately 1.9km east of the Site boundary. This station is on the Chiltern mainline route which provides connections to London Marylebone, Banbury, Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon. Bicester Village railway station is located 2.4km south east of the Site, with connections to London Marylebone and Oxford.
- 2.2.6 Bus service 250 runs along Middleton Stoney Road with stops in each direction directly outside the Phase 1 development. Bus service 21 runs within the Highfield residential area.
- 2.2.7 There is currently no access to the Site for pedestrians or cyclists, with limited infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists on the adjacent Howes Lane. There is a new cycle lane along Middleton Stoney Road delivered as part of the Axis J9 development (Phase 1).
- 2.2.8 There are no Public Rights of Way on the Site. A Public Right of Way is located to the east of the Site, providing access through the residential estates which terminates at Howes Lane. There is a public bridleway approximately 500m to the north of the Site extending west from Bure Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR).. The Site covers an area of 7.2 hectares (ha).

Figure 2.1: Site Boundary Plan (Drawing Reference: 20019-TP-001 REV B)



Site Description

- 2.2.9 The Site is currently relatively level and open and comprises agricultural land, and an access road between Phases 1 and 2. Records from early mapping shows that the Site has remained undeveloped since 1881.

- 2.2.10 Boundary hedgerows are present along the northern and eastern peripheries. To the west is a young, planted woodland with dense tree cover. No trees are located within the interior of the Site. No trees on the Site or in the immediate boundaries are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

2.3 Surrounding Context

Land Uses

- 2.3.1 The Site is located on the urban edge of Bicester and is bound as follows:
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 - To the east by Howes Lane (the A4095), extending down to the south east. Howes Lane is bounded by the existing Greenwood residential estate which forms the current urban edge of Bicester;
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Transport and Access

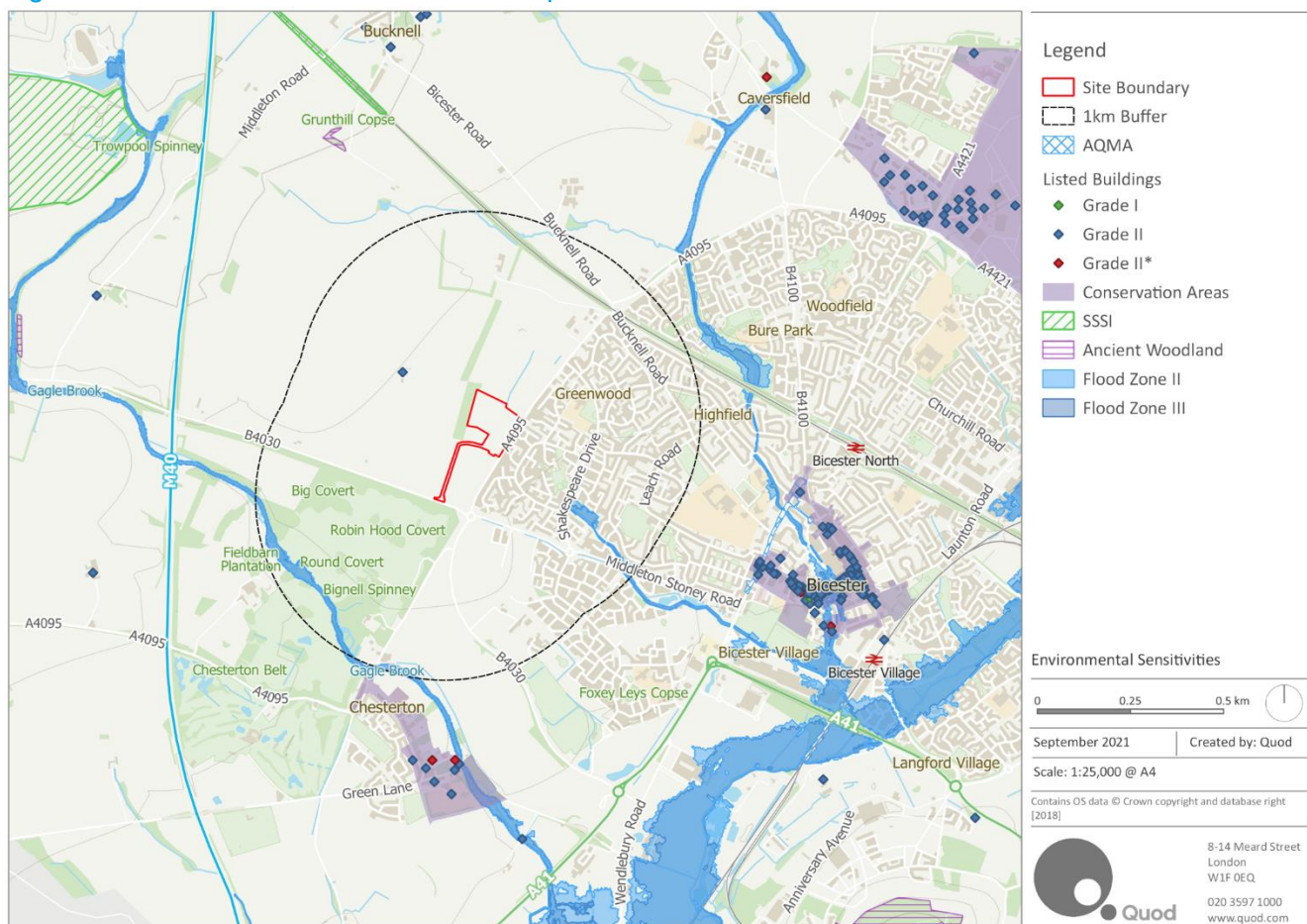
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- 2.3.4 Bicester North Train Station is located approximately 1.9km east of the Site boundary. This station is on the Chiltern mainline route which provides connections to London Marylebone, Banbury, Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon. Bicester Village railway station is located 2.4km south east of the Site, with connections to London Marylebone and Oxford.
- 2.3.5 Bus service 250 runs along Middleton Stoney Road with stops in each direction directly outside the Phase 1 development. Bus service 21 runs within the Highfield residential area.
- 2.3.6 There is currently no access to the Site for pedestrians or cyclists, with limited infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists on the adjacent Howes Lane. There is a new cycle lane along Middleton Stoney Road delivered as part of the Axis J9 development (Phase 1).

2.3.7 There are no Public Rights of Way on the Site. A Public Right of Way is located to the east of the Site, providing access through the residential estates which terminates at Howes Lane. There is a public bridleway approximately 500m to the north of the Site extending west from Bure Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Site and Surrounding Sensitivities

2.3.8 Figure 2.2 identifies the key environmental sensitivities within and close to the Site with further details provided in technical chapters (i.e. Chapters 7 to 10 and ES Volume II) and a summary provided below.

Figure 2.2: Environmental Sensitivities Map



Land Uses

2.3.9 Existing sensitive receptors are considered to be residents of nearby residential streets to the south and east of the Site, employees and visitors at the adjacent Axis J9 development, Kings Meadow County primary school (390m north east), habitats, species, trees and hedgerows on and adjacent to the Site and Bure Park Local Nature Reserve. Local road users will also be sensitive receptors to the Development.

Cultural Heritage and Landscape

2.3.10 There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the Site or within approximately 2km of the Site boundary as shown in Figure 2.2. The Site is not subject to a Conservation Area and does not include any listed

building or structures. The closest Conservation Area, Chesterton Conservation Area, is located approximately 1.55km south of the Site. There is only one designated heritage asset within 1km radius of the Site. This comprises two barns on Himley Farm, grouped together under one Grade II listing. Beyond that, the next nearest heritage asset is located in the town of Bicester.

- 2.3.11 The Site does not lie within a designated archaeological area such as an Archaeological Priority Area. The Site has already been subject to evaluation, and a report on the archaeological investigation is submitted with the application.
- 2.3.12 The Site is not located within or in the immediate vicinity of any statutorily designated or locally (non-statutorily) designated views, nor any landscape designations denoting value.

Biodiversity

- 2.3.13 There are no Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation or Site of Special Scientific Interest in the vicinity of the Site. The closest SSSI is the Ardley Cutting and Quarry located 1.8km north west of the Site which is designated for its limestone grassland, scrub, ancient woodland, and wetland habitats as well as its invertebrate assemblage and population of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. Bure Park Local Nature Reserve is located approximately 1km north east of the Site boundary.

Air Quality

- 2.3.14 The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the closest AQMA is located approximately 1.5km east of the Site in the centre of Bicester.

Water Resources and Flood Risk

- 2.3.15 There are two ditches present just off-site, which are shallow and narrow (approximately 0.5m to 0.75m deep and 1m wide) and were found to be dry during the ecological survey. No aquatic vegetation was present in any of the ditches, and none appeared to have recently supported water.
- 2.3.16 Based on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, the Site is shown to be located entirely within Flood Zone 1 meaning it is subject to a low probability of fluvial flooding (i.e. a less than 1 in 1000-year annual probability). Historical records show that there is no history of flooding on Site or close by. Flooding from surface and groundwater are not deemed to present a potential flood risk.
- 2.3.17 The Site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ).

Future Development

- 2.3.18 The majority of the agricultural land surrounding the Site is currently consented for residential led, mixed use development within the boundary of the North West Bicester 'Eco-Town', as outlined in Chapter 1: Introduction.
- 2.3.19 The closest cumulative schemes to the Site are Phases 1 and 2 of the Axis J9 development (No. 11) as described in Chapter 1: Introduction, and cumulative schemes No. 2, 4 and 9, as shown on Figure 3.1.

- 2.3.20 Cumulative Scheme No. 2 (Himley Village, Ref: 14/02121/OUT) was granted planning permission in March 2017 and will provide up to 1,700 residential dwellings, a retirement village and flexible commercial floorspace, social and community facilities. Cumulative Scheme No. 4 (Land Adjacent to Bicester Road, Ref: 14/01641/OUT), currently under consultation, will provide up to 900 residential dwellings, commercial floor space, leisure facilities and social and community facilities. Cumulative Scheme No. 9 (Kingsmere Phase 2, Ref: 13/00847/OUT), granted in May 2017 will provide residential development, an extra care facility, a primary school, retail and open space.
- 2.3.21 Further details of current and future development relevant to the assessment of cumulative effects of this EIA is provided through the identification of cumulative schemes (see Appendix 3.4: List of Cumulative Schemes and Chapter 3: EIA Methodology).