



Quod

Environmental Statement Volume I: Main Text

Axis J9, Phase 3

SEPTEMBER 2021

Q210470

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1 Introduction

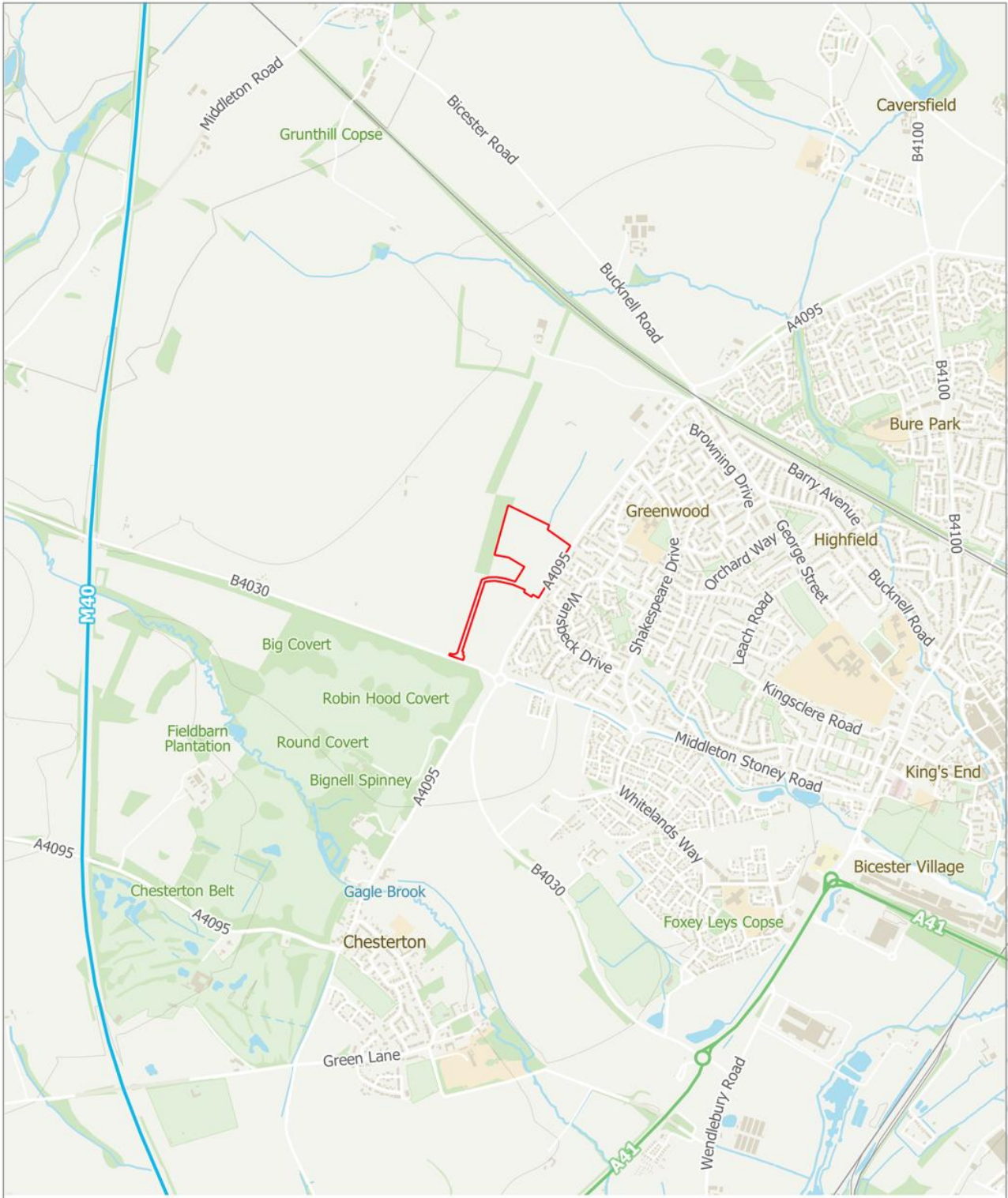
1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by Quod and a team of technical specialists on behalf of Albion Land (the 'Applicant'). The ES accompanies a full planning application submitted to Cherwell District Council ('CDC') for the redevelopment of land to the West of Howes Lane, North West Bicester (hereafter referred to as 'Axis J9 Phase 3') (the 'Site').
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the ES is to provide information to the decision-makers, stakeholders and the public about the likely significant effects of the Axis J9 Phase 3 development. The ES identifies measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse environmental effects, together with any monitoring that may be necessary, to help inform the planning application decision-making process. The ES also provides an opportunity to identify enhancement measures that would result in a betterment to the environment of the Site and its surrounding area.
- 1.1.3 The Site is located approximately 1.8km west of the Bicester town on the urban edge of the town and covers an area of 7.2 hectares (ha) in size and comprises agricultural fields. The Site location is shown in Figure 1.1.
- 1.1.4 A more detailed description of the Site and its surrounds, together with a figure showing the planning application boundary are provided in ES Chapter 2: Site and Setting.

1.2 Overview of the Development

- 1.2.1 The Applicant is seeking full planning permission for proposals which would deliver approximately 17,786 square metres (sqm) of fully flexible employment development (use classes E(g)(iii) and/or B2 and/or B8), together with vehicular access, servicing, and parking, and landscaping works (the 'Development'). The Development also includes delivery of part of the A4095 Strategic Link Road ('SLR'), as described in Section 1.3. A more detailed description of the Development is provided within ES Chapter 5: Description of the Development.
- 1.2.2 The details of the planning application for approval is provided in the planning statement.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



 Site Boundary

Site Location Plan



Scale: 1:20,000 @ A4 | September 2021

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1.3 Planning Context and History

Policy Context

1.3.1 The Development Plan for Cherwell District Council (“CDC”) consist of:

- Cherwell Local Plan 20122 – 2031 (Part 1) Adopted in 2015, which includes saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (“CLP 1996”)
- Adopted Supplementary Planning Document’s (“SPD”), which includes a site-specific document, titled North West Bicester SPD (“NWB”) which was adopted by CDC in 2016 and is a material consideration in the consideration of this submission.

Extant planning permissions

1.3.2 The Site benefits from two extant planning permissions for residential development as outlined below which were obtained by the Applicant.

2017 Residential Application

1.3.3 In August 2017, planning permission was granted for up to 150 residential units on the Site (Ref: 17/00455/HYBRID) (the ‘2017 Residential Application’). The 2017 Residential Application represented a resubmission (in part) of the residential element of the scheme previously refused by CDC in June 2016 under Ref: 14/01675/OUT (see below). The 2017 Residential Application was accompanied by an ES (the ‘2017 Residential ES’).

2017 Appeal Application

1.3.4 In December 2017, outline planning permission was granted on appeal (Ref: APP/C3105/W/16/3163551) against the refusal of CDC to grant planning permission for up to 150 new homes and up to 53,000 sqm of employment provision under Ref: 14/01675/OUT (the ‘Axis J9 development’). As with the 2017 Residential Application above, the 150 residential units were proposed on the Site, with the employment floorspace in the southern area of the Axis J9 development site. This planning permission is referred to as the ‘2017 Appeal Application’.

1.3.5 The environmental effects of the 2017 Appeal Application were assessed in an ES dated June 2017 (the ‘2017 Axis J9 ES’) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011¹ (as amended)².

1.3.6 The 2017 Appeal Application was later varied via a Section 73 application (S.73), approved in July 2019 (Ref: 19/00347/OUT) (the ‘S.73 application’). The S.73 application amended several of the approved Parameter Plans and the temporary access arrangements for the 2017 Appeal Application. The approved Land Use Parameter Plan is shown in Figure 1.2. The S.73 application was accompanied by an ES Addendum, dated February 2019 (the ‘2019 Axis J9 ES Addendum’).

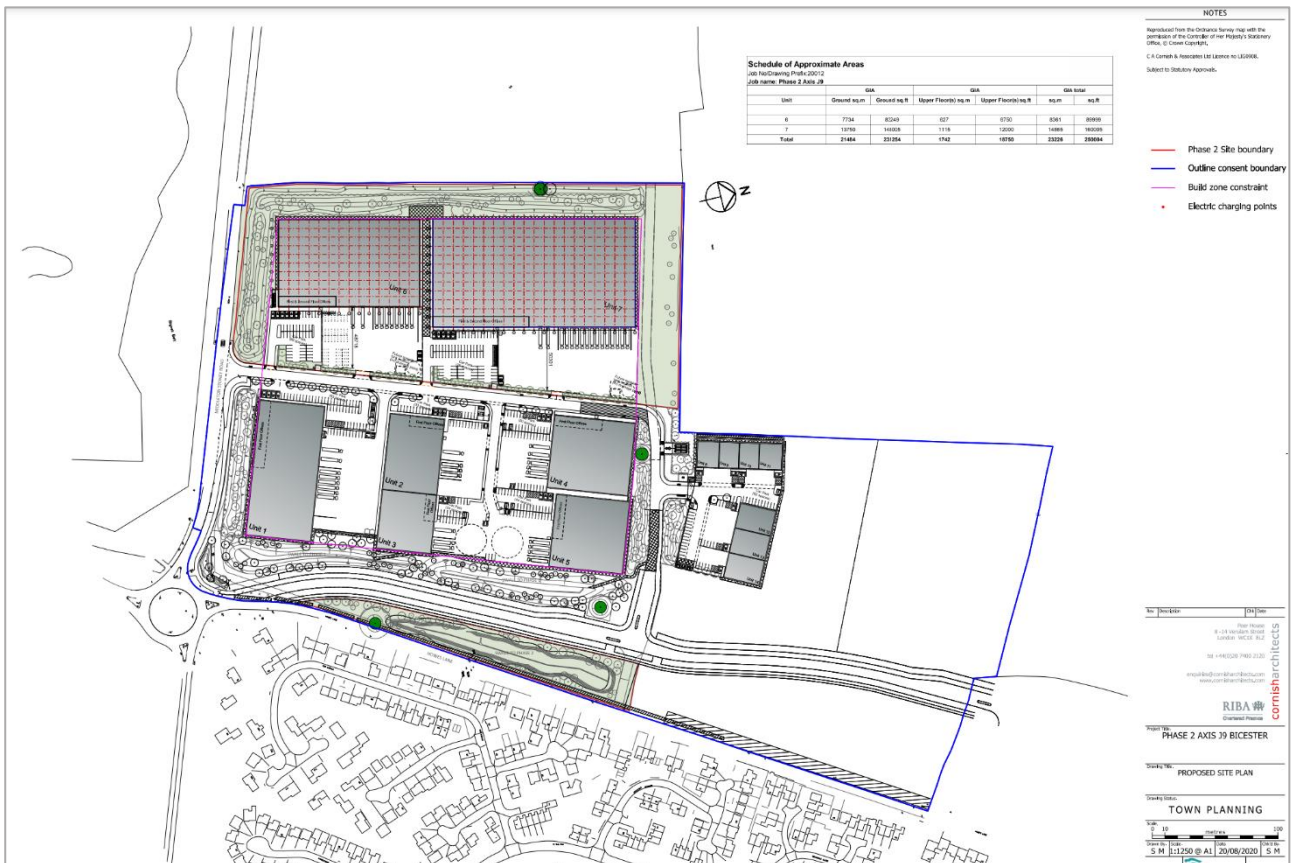
1.3.7 Alongside the S.73 application, reserved matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) for Phase 1 and earthworks for Phase 2 of the Axis J9 development were approved (Ref: 19/00349/REM). Phase 1 comprised 21,584 sqm of flexible B1c / B2 / B8 floorspace within six buildings, with a total of 12 units. Phase 1 of the Axis J9 development is now complete.

- 1.3.8 Reserved matters for Phase 2 were approved in December 2020 (Ref: 20/02454/REM), for 23,226 sqm employment floorspace across two units, car and HGV parking, hardstanding and associated facilities. It is anticipated that construction of Phase 2 will be complete by Q1 2022. The approved detail development plans for Phase 1 and 2 of the Axis J9 development is shown in Figure 1.3.
- 1.3.9 The 2017 Axis J9 ES and 2019 Axis J9 ES Addendum are hereafter referred to as the ‘Axis J9 ES’.

Figure 1.2: The 2017 Appeal Application Land Use Parameter Plan



Figure 1.3: Approved detail Site Plans for Phases 1 and 2 of Axis J9 development.



A4095 Strategic Link Road (SLR)

- 1.3.10 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) gained full planning permission in August 2019 (Ref: 14/01968/F) for a new link road, known as the SLR, to provide an effective transport route between Middleton Stoney Road roundabout and Lords Lane, east of Purslane Drive. The extent and location of the new SLR is shown in Figure 1.4. A section of this new SLR passes through the Site as shown in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Approximate Site extent and location of SLR



1.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Process

- 1.4.1 The ES reports on an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') process, which is a systematic assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development. The EIA process is required by UK law for certain types of development projects. Its original legal basis was the European Community (EIA) Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended)³ which was transposed into UK legislation. Some minor amendments have been made to the UK EIA regulations to address the UK's departure from Europe, although no substantive changes were made to the way the EIA regime operates.
- 1.4.2 The Applicant has submitted a planning application for the Development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, therefore the ES has been prepared in line with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017⁴ (as amended^{5,6}) (the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.4.3 In view of the nature and scale of the Development proposals and recognition that it has the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects, the Applicant voluntarily committed to undertake an EIA.
- 1.4.4 A scoping study was undertaken as the first stage of the EIA process to determine the scope of the ES and the general approach to the assessments. The Applicant submitted a request

for a Scoping Opinion on 29th June 2021 (Ref: 21/02254/SCOP). A Scoping Opinion was provided by CDC on 3rd August 2021 (Ref: 21/02254/SCOP). Further information on the scope of the ES and the general approach to assessments is provided in ES Chapter 3: EIA Methodology.

1.5 Environmental Statement Preparation

- 1.5.1 The ES contains such information referred to in Regulation 18(3) and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations as is reasonably required to assess the likely significant environmental effects of the Development. The ES is based on the Scoping Opinion provided by CDC. ES Chapter 3: EIA Methodology provides details of how the ES is compliant with the EIA Regulations and the location of the information specified in the EIA Regulations.
- 1.5.2 The ES reports on the existing and future baseline conditions and provides an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Development and their significance. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the ES considers the effects of all stages of the Development including construction and operation. Assessments are reported in topic-based chapters which also consider the potential for cumulative effects which may arise from the Development when considered alongside other relevant nearby development proposals. The ES also includes an assessment of the combined effects of individual effects resultant from the Development upon a single receptor (Effect Interactions). Where significant adverse effects on the environment are identified, the ES proposes ways to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset these effects ('mitigation measures').

1.6 ES Structure and Project Team

- 1.6.1 The project team, authors of ES Chapters and structure of the ES are set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Consultant Project Team

Consultant Role/Input	Organisation
Applicant	Albion Land
Planning Consultants Environmental Planning and EIA Co-ordinator	Quod
Architect	Cornish Architects
ES Volume I (ES Chapters)	
Chapters 1 – 6: Introduction; Site and Setting; EIA Methodology; Alternatives; Description of the Development; Construction.	Quod
Chapter 7: Socio-Economics	Quod
Chapter 8: Transport	David Tucker Associates (DTA)
Chapter 9: Noise	TetraTech
Chapter 10: Biodiversity	Tyler Grange
Chapter 11: Effect Interactions	Quod

Consultant Role/Input	Organisation
Chapter 12: Summary of Mitigation, Monitoring and Residual Effects	Quod
ES Volume II – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	re-form landscape architecture
ES Volume III – Appendices	Various
ES Non-Technical Summary	Various

1.6.2 In addition to the ES, the planning application is accompanied by a series of technical reports, including:

- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Drainage Strategy;
- Site Investigation / Verification Report;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Lighting Assessment;
- Sustainability Report, including (BREEAM Assessment, Carbon Reduction / Zero Carbon, Water Use); and
- Confirmation of Archaeological Investigations.

1.6.3 As defined by paragraph 18(5)(a) of the EIA Regulations, the ES must be prepared by 'competent experts'.

1.6.4 Quod is the lead editor of this ES and author of certain chapters as identified in Table 1.1. Quod is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment EIA Quality Mark Scheme, an accreditation scheme which sets high standards for EIA practice and demonstrates a commitment to excellence in EIA activities.

1.6.5 Each member of the project team is a suitably qualified professional and details of the professional competency of the technical author is provided in each technical chapter. The Applicant provided the following statement confirming that it considers the experts to be competent:

“In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, Albion Land can hereby confirm that the technical consultants appointed to contribute and author this Environmental Statement are competent experts and have demonstrated evidence of sufficient expertise to carry out robust assessment and reporting. This is evidenced in the technical chapters of the Environmental Statement.”

1.7 Environmental Statement Availability

1.7.1 The ES and all planning application documents are available for review online via CDC’s online planning portal (link below). Due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time of writing, hard copies have not been made available for physical inspection at CDC Planning Offices in

line with emergency planning legislation in force until 30th December 2021 (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning, Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings etc.) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1398)).

- 1.7.2 Hard copies can be requested for a reasonable fee and a USB stick of the ES can be made available free of charge. The Non-Technical Summary can be obtained free of charge upon request in hard copy or as an electronic file. All ES documents are available by emailing hello@quod.com and quoting Reference No. Q210470.

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/115/planning-process/443/view-or-comment-on-a-planning-application>

References

- ¹ Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO), 2011. *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011*. The Stationary Office.
- ² HMSO, 2015. *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015*. The Stationary Office.
- ³ The Council of the European Communities. Council Directive of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. As amended by Council Directive 97/11/EH of 3 March 1007, Directive 2003/35/EC of 26 May 2003 and Directive 2009/31/EC of 23 April 2009.
- ⁴ HMSO, 2017. *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017*. The Stationary Office. April 2017.
- ⁵ HMSO, 2018. *The Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018*. The Stationary Office. October 2018.
- ⁶ HMSO, 2020. *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning, Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings etc.) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020*. The Stationary Office. December 2020.