



Land to the north of

GAVRAY DRIVE BICESTER

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2021





Foreword

We are delighted to present this Design and Access Statement in support of an Outline Planning Application for the residential development on land to the north of Gavray Drive, Bicester, **for up to 250 dwellings including affordable housing and ancillary uses including retained Local Wildlife Site, public open space, play areas, localised land remodelling, compensatory flood storage, structural planting and access.**

This Site is being promoted by Charles Brown & Simon Digby, London & Metropolitan International Developments, and L&Q Estates Limited - one of the UK's most successful strategic land promotion and acquisition businesses working closely with stakeholders to tailor projects which maximise the potential of a site. 'Place making' lies at the forefront of L&Q's ethos, generating high quality neighbourhoods for diverse communities.

The overarching Vision for land to the north of Gavray Drive will be to deliver a high quality landscape-led scheme that is well integrated with its existing surroundings. The development will deliver much needed housing, generous public open spaces, and areas of ecological enhancement.

The Masterplan has been designed to create a vibrant new neighbourhood for a diverse community, delivering up to 250 new homes ranging from a 1-bed apartment, to a 4-bed detached property. Play areas, wildflower meadows, green spaces, and recreational walking routes will offer exciting outdoor opportunities for both the new and existing communities, whilst also helping to blend the urban heart of Bicester to the west of the Site into the rural Oxfordshire countryside to the east.

Prepared by: For:



In consultation with:



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Introduction

An overall introduction to Bicester, the site and development proposals, including overarching objectives and Vision.

Context Analysis

A detailed summary of all the site assessment work carried to ensure an informed approach to the design development of the site.

Design Evolution

A detailed constraints and opportunities plan, summarising all the findings of the site assessment work, a concept plan for the Site and a summary of the consultation strategy undertaken.

Masterplan Strategy

Presentation of the Illustrative Masterplan and the design principles adopted to ensure a robust development proposal.

Conclusion

A summary of the key benefits of the proposal and its merit as the next logical location for new development in Bicester.

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a dense pattern of streets and buildings. A white L-shaped graphic element is overlaid on the right side of the image, consisting of a horizontal line at the top and a vertical line extending downwards from its left end.

1

Introduction

Introduction

Bicester

Bicester is a historic market town and civil parish in the Cherwell district of northeastern Oxfordshire. The 2011 Census recorded the parish's population as 30,854, but this figure is likely to have increased due to the town's rapid urban development over the last decade.

Oxford City's housing supply is under strain from its escalating demand and limited supply, due to extensive legal and environmental constraints (such as the Green Belt) hindering its ability to grow. Bicester's proximity to Oxford (24km south-east) therefore makes it an ideal settlement to absorb part of this housing demand through urban development.

Other nearby towns include Aylesbury (27km south-east), Banbury (27km north), and Milton Keynes (40km north-east). Bicester is also a direct train ride away from High Wycombe and London's Marylebone Station (a 22 minute and 47 minute journey respectively), while the M40 on the western periphery of the town provides convenient vehicular connections towards London and Birmingham.

Bicester's advantageous geographical position has resulted in proliferated urban development, accommodating large residential developments such as Kingsmere (1,595 dwellings) and Graven Hill (1,900 self and custom build plots), in addition to commercial schemes such as Bicester Gateway (including a 15,000 sqm business park).

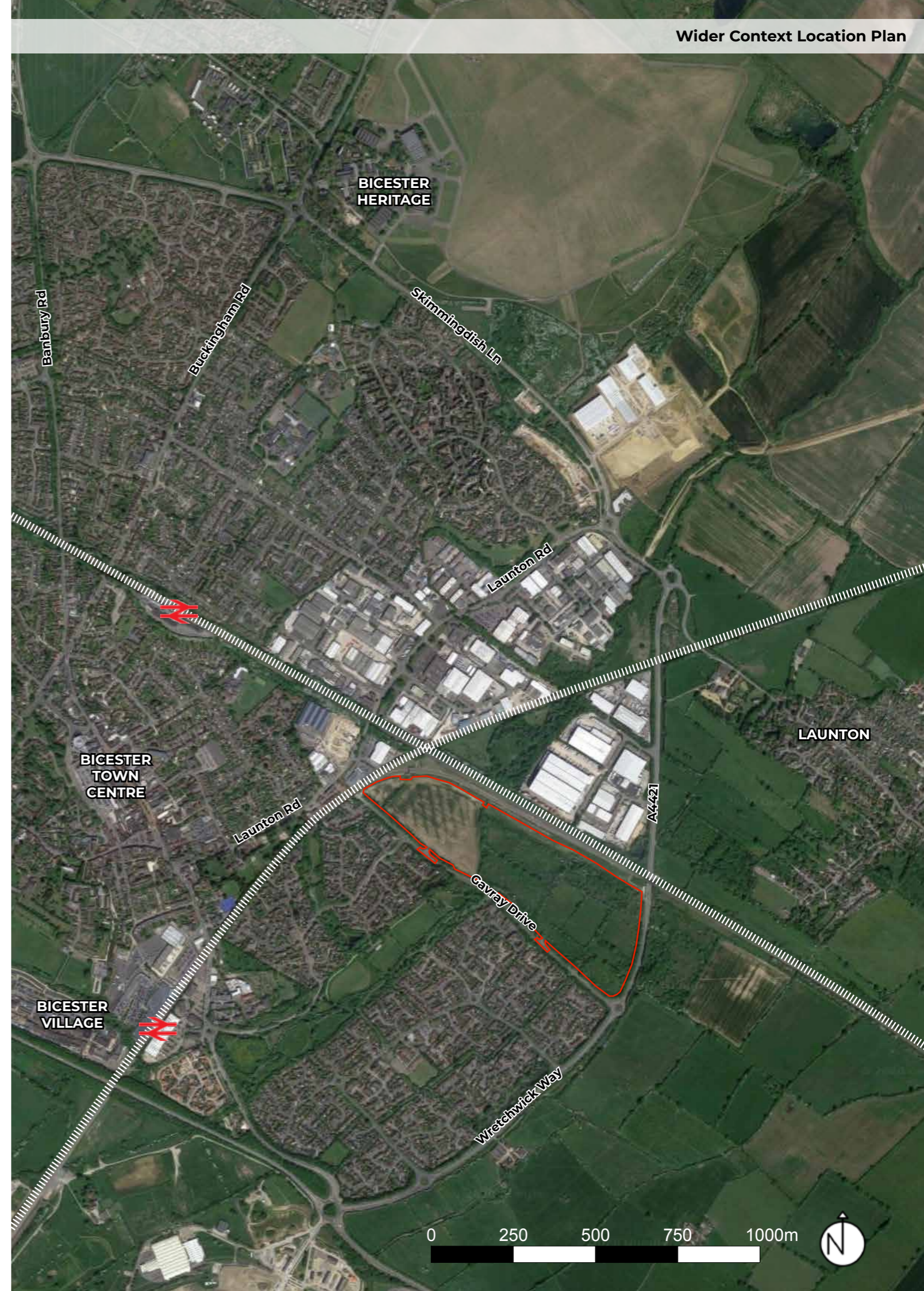
Bicester is also a major node for tourism, where visitors from across the world are attracted to its unique assets such as Bicester Village, the SWB Motorsport experience, Bicester Heritage, and Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa. These assets generate further employment opportunities and cater diverse recreational purposes, strengthening Bicester as a desirable location for further expansion.

Site description

The allocated Site is located on the eastern edge of Bicester, within the A4421 ring road ('Charbridge Lane') making it an ideal infill development. The Site covers 22.49 hectares across one parcel of land, as outlined in red on the Location Plan (see opposite and overleaf).

Industrial and commercial units are located beyond the railway line which forms the north and western boundaries, which can be accessed from the Site via pedestrian bridges. Limited vegetation is present along these borders and therefore passing trains can be seen from the Site, but a small incline beyond the railway conceals views from the service units.

Mature hedgerow acts as a natural buffer along the eastern periphery which protects the Site from traffic on Charbridge Lane. Agricultural fields are located beyond the carriageway, hosting a network of public footpaths which connects Launton village to Graven Hill.



— Site boundary
(22.49ha)



10

100

200

300

400

500 m



Residential estates along the southern border of the Site are divided into two sections by Bicester Fields and Langford Park Lake, and are used to absorb excess water from the stream which continues northwards into the Site. A single carriageway (Gavray Drive) splits the Site from these estates, although this is not a through-road and therefore vehicular traffic is light.

In terms of Site-specific character, it has been observed that the western section of the land is open, flat, and is primed for development; meanwhile the eastern parcel has evolved notable mature hedgerow and densely scattered trees particularly along the central watercourse, and therefore development in this area must be designed with environmental and ecological sensitivity.

Objectives

The main objective of this proposal is to create a distinctive, high quality and landscape-led development - providing new homes, sensitively integrated into the community in a sustainable and 'strategic' location as recognised by the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

The proposals will demonstrate strong urban design and placemaking principles, delivering homes that people will want to live in as well as creating spaces for informal recreation with safe and liveable streets. The neighbourhood will be well connected to encourage walking/cycling and promote a healthy way of life.

It is important to create a development with a locally distinctive character to form a natural and befitting infill to the existing settlement. This will be achieved through integrating existing landscape characters, connectivity, celebrating local features, and respecting the local vernacular to ensure a more natural, seamless blend into the town.

Site Proposal

The Site is proposed to deliver 250 dwellings through distinctive character areas set within high-quality landscaping and open spaces. It is proposed that the development will consist of a mix of house types, densities and tenure, with the provision of 30% affordable housing, helping to meet the need for market and affordable housing in the local area and the wider District.

The proposed development will create an enhanced community for Bicester, supported by existing Public Rights of Ways and frequent locomotive connectivity, linking spaces and places and integrating into the existing settlement as well as the greater nation.

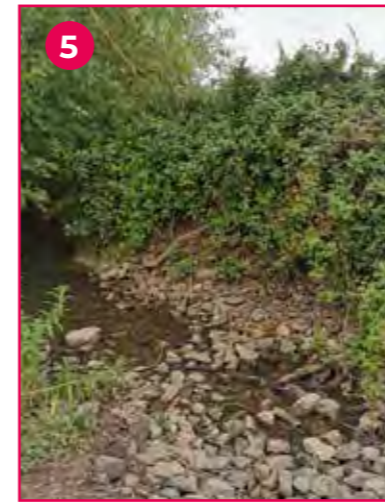
Improved access to green spaces and the Gavray Wildlife Meadows will ensure a pleasant environment for people to live whilst improving health and well-being for new and existing residents. Promoting access to nature will encourage walking, jogging, cycling and other recreational activities. Retention and enhancement of the PRow and further connectivity to the wider area footpath network will ensure integration with the existing settlement.

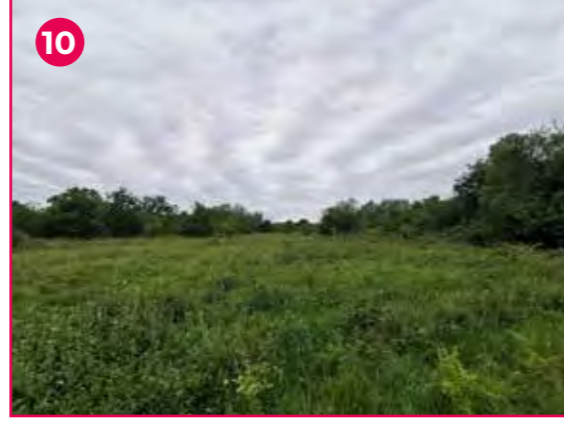


Introduction

View across Site from pedestrian footbridge to the north







2 Context Analysis

Context Analysis

Planning Policy Context

This section identifies provides a summary of the relevant national and local planning policies that are necessary to consider in bringing the proposals for the Site forward. Further information can be found in the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in February 2019 sets out the Government's core objectives for the planning system including the need for Local Authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing. Land at Braeburn Way is considered to be consistent with the aims and objectives of the NPPF, with reference made to the specific policies.

The OPA is submitted in the context of the Government's commitment to growth and development, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019). The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 11).

A fundamental element of sustainable development is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing. It is an overarching objective "...ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations." (Paragraph 8). The NPPF also sets out the need to deliver a wide choice of new homes including homes to meet affordable housing needs.

Paragraph 11 provides guidance on how the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply to decision making on planning applications. Proposals should be approved that accord with the development plan without delay or where policies are out-of-date which includes where a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated.

The Council's 2020 AMR shows a 4.7-year supply for the period 2021-2026, against the requirement for a 5-year housing supply and therefore Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is relevant.

Adopted Local Plan Policy

The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in 1996 and an end date of 2001. The saved policies have some limited relevance to the determination of this application. Policy C28 seeks a sympathetic layout, design and external appearance of new development and use of traditional building materials; and Policy C30 seeks that new housing is compatible with appearance, character, scale of existing dwellings in the vicinity and ensures acceptable standards of amenity and privacy.

The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 was re-adopted in 2016 which includes an allocation of the land north of Gavray Drive for residential-led development of up to 300 dwellings by Policy Bicester 13. The housing numbers allocated contribute to the District's housing requirements that are set out at Policy BSC1 and its housing land supply.

The policy sets out infrastructure needs from the development including the provision of 30% affordable housing, contributions towards offsite infrastructure and provision of open space as well as the provision of access arrangements. It also sets out a series of key site-specific design and place shaping principles.

Cherwell Residential Design Guide

Other material considerations include the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD (2018). This was produced to ensure that new residential development results in vibrant, sustainable, safe and attractive places that add to the District's legacy. The Guide is not focused on building detail but intends to support the development of new places that reinforce the character and vitality of a settlement. Central to this is the need for development that provides safe places to live and work, promotes sustainable transport and ways of living with good connections to local facilities.

History

The principle of residential development on Gavray Drive was established in 2006. At that time the Development Plan allocated the site for employment uses. An OPA for 500 units was approved on appeal. That outline consent was subsequently extended in February 2012 under the provisions of the guidance contained in Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions. The decision was ultimately set aside in the High Court following a legal challenge.

The suitability of the site for residential development was confirmed by CDC's subsequent decision to allocate the site

as part of a wider strategic residential allocation Cherwell Local Plan in Policy Bicester 13. This is underpinned by a substantial evidence base.

Most recently an OPA for up to 180 dwellings on part of the allocation, west of Langford Brook (referred to as Gavray Drive West) was dismissed at appeal in 2018. The Inspector's decision was primarily due to the application being for part of the allocation only and as such failing to provide a comprehensive development proposal for the wider allocation including its effect upon and management of the Gavray Meadows Wildlife Site.



Summary

Information submitted with this application demonstrates that no significant adverse impacts arise to be set against the considerable benefits arising from the development. The Site is appropriate for the development proposed. Local planning policy provides a positive framework in which to plan development. It provides design and place making objectives that have influenced the evolution of the proposals.

Banbury
(16 mins)
& **Birmingham**
(1hr 11 mins)

- Strategic Housing/Employment Allocations**
- 1** North West Bicester Eco-Town
Policy No: Bicester 1
10 hectares - 3,293 homes
 - 2** Graven Hill
Policy No: Bicester 2
Outline Application (19/00937/OUT)
- 1,900 homes, employment & schools
- Permitted
 - 3** South East Bicester
Policy No: Bicester 12
Outline Application (16/01268/OUT)
- 1,500 homes & 7ha of employment
- Awaiting decision

- Strategic Housing Allocations**
- 4** Gavray Drive
Policy No: Bicester 13
23 hectares - 300 homes
 - 5** South-West Bicester Phase 2
Policy No: Bicester 3
29 hectares - 726 homes
- Strategic Employment Allocations**
- 7** Bicester Business Park
Policy No: Bicester 4
29.5 hectares - approx. 6,000 jobs
 - 8** Bicester Gateway
Policy No: Bicester 10
18 hectares - approx. 3,500 jobs
 - 9** Employment Land at North East
Policy No: Bicester 11
15 hectares - approx. 1,000 jobs

KEY:

- Site boundary
- Housing + Employment
- New Employment
- Approved Housing
- Strategic Allocations
- Strategic road infrastructure
- Railway
- Flood Zone
- Conservation Area
- Conservation Target Areas

Oxford
(14 mins)
& **Reading**
(45 mins)

Bicester

Launton

High Wycombe
(24 mins)
& **London**
(51 mins)

Military Railway
(Bletchley)

