

Planning Statement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of L&Q Estates, Charles Brown & Simon Digby and London & Metropolitan International Developments in support of an outline planning application (OPA) for residential development at Gavray Drive, Bicester. The purpose of the Planning Statement is to describe and assess the proposals against adopted and emerging planning policy and conclude on the suitability of the proposals.
- 1.2 The Planning Statement includes reference to affordable housing provision, open space, and draft S106 heads of terms and has been prepared by David Lock Associates.

Application Proposals

- 1.3 Outline planning approval is sought with detailed design of the proposed highway access points also being submitted for approval. All other matters are reserved at this time.
- 1.4 The description of development comprises:

Residential development 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.

- 1.5 The proposals will establish a new sustainable urban neighbourhood forming part of the wider Langford Village. Development will support the growth objectives for Bicester and the wider Cherwell District. The proposal is in conformity with Policy Bicester 13 of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 (re-adopted on the 19 December 2016). The OPA proposals are detailed in Section 3.

Applicants and Land Ownership

- 1.6 The application is submitted by L&Q Estates on behalf of Charles Brown & Simon Digby and London & Metropolitan International Developments who retain a legal interest in the application site. The accesses fall within County highway land who have been notified as required. There are no restrictions on title that will impinge on the planning or implementation of the development.

Outline Planning Application Documentation

- 1.7 The OPA is supported by a suite of supporting information, as required by the relevant CDC validation checklist:

- covering letter;
- planning application form and certificates;
- planning application fee;
- application drawings;

- Location Plan
- Parameter Plans:
 - o Land Use Parameter Plan;
 - o Access and Movement Parameter Plan;
 - o Open Spaces Parameter Plan
 - o Density Parameter Plan; and
 - o Building Heights Parameter Plan.

- Detailed access plans
 - o Proposed Site Access 1;and
 - o Proposed Site Access 2.

Illustrative masterplans are included (one for the whole site, and separate West and East of Langford Brook). It is not intended that these will be listed as part of any planning permission.

- Design and Access Statement;

- Planning Statement;
- Sustainability Appraisal;
- Arboricultural Assessment (within the ES appendices);
- Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary;
- Transport Assessment;
- Travel Plan Framework;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statements;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Noise Assessment; and
- Statement of Community Involvement.

Principle, Context and Timing of Application

- 1.8 The OPA is submitted in the context of the Government's commitment to growth and development, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 11).
- 1.9 A fundamental element of sustainable development is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing (section 5). It is a *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.
- 1.10 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 or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates delivery substantially below the requirement over the previous three years.
- 1.11 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 would contribute to the District's housing requirements that are set out at Policy BSC1 and its housing land supply. 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.

- 1.12 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.
- 1.13 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*. That decision was ultimately set aside in the High Court following a legal challenge.
- 1.14 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.
- 1.15 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.
- 1.16 This OPA addresses the Inspector's points directly and presents a scheme for the entire allocation including retention and future management of the

LWS. The proposal can be built, is unconstrained by landownership or any major constraints. More detailed matters raised by the Inspector are addressed throughout this statement.

- 1.17 The application package is supported by a comprehensive set of documentation which secures delivery of the necessary infrastructure required to support the proposed development.

Pre-Application

- 1.18 A pre-application submission was made to Cherwell District Council in May 2020. (application number 20/01309/PREAPP). This included the submission of an indicative masterplan and early technical information. A number of constructive meetings were held with planning officers and other technical officers as part of the pre-app process (including drainage with OCC and CDC's ecologist). This helped shape the evolution of the proposals and allow discussion of issues arising. CDC's formal written pre-app response was issued on 28 April 2021 and issues raised within that letter are addressed throughout the submission.

Stakeholder Group Meetings

- 1.19 L&Q Estates have undertaken community consultation and engagement with local stakeholders in parallel to the pre-app process to ensure that all community views were considered in developing the Gavray Drive proposals.
- 1.20 The consultation process began on 15 October 2020 with a meeting of ecology groups and experts. This ecology stakeholder group met three times between October 2020 and February 2021.
- 1.21 Wider public consultation was undertaken at the end of 2020 and continued in early 2021, with a consultation leaflet sent in January 2021 to addresses in Bicester to inform local stakeholders of the Gavray Drive proposals and invite feedback. Further details are set out in the SCI.

Scoping

- 1.22 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report was sent to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in September 2020 setting out the proposed approach to EIA. In response, CDC provided a scoping opinion on 11 November 2020 (application number 20/02469/SCOP). These detailed comments have been considered and used to guide the approach of the Environmental Statement.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT**Location**

- 2.1 The site location plan identifies the boundary of the outline planning application. It extends to 22.49 hectares.
- 2.2 The site is located in the south-eastern quarter of Bicester, bounded by Gavray Drive to the south, beyond which lies the residential area of Langford Village, the Birmingham to Marylebone rail line (Chiltern Line) to the north, the Oxford to Bletchley rail line to the west (East-West Rail) and Bicester's eastern bypass to the east (Charbridge Lane, A4421). North of the site is Bicester Distribution Park, which provides a large footprint of B8 distribution units. Bicester town centre is located approximately 1.3km to the west of the site offering a full range of retail, commercial, employment and residential uses.

Physical Characteristics

- 2.3 A water course, Langford Brook, flows through the middle of the site. Land to the east of the brook is largely covered by a Local Wildlife Site designation characterised by pasture, small linear field compartments and tall, mature boundary hedgerows. The dominant, physical elements within the site are the mature standard oak trees. In addition, a wider area falls within the River Ray Conservation Area. Land to the west of Langford Brook is agricultural in use. Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the site, linking Langford Village with Launton and Bicester Distribution Park. There are no designated heritage assets within or adjoining the site and no built structures on the land.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

Physical Design and layout

- 3.1 The application proposals comprise residential development, areas of open space, together with flood attenuation measures. The proposed development will create a sustainable local community, forming part of the wider Langford Village. The development layout and structure has been influenced by the landscape context and topographical features of the site.
- 3.2 Two distinct residential areas are proposed, both outside of the LWS and CTA. The larger residential element is located west of Langford Brook (comprising around 180 dwellings) with a smaller lower density development of circa 50 dwellings located east of Langford Brook fronting Gavray Drive. This ensures no development within the LWS and CTA, whilst also seeking to deliver close to the 300 homes as required by CDC's policy.

Residential Development

- 3.3 The application proposes development of up to 250 new dwellings. This figure falls 17% short of the 300 dwellings that the site is allocated for. However, the site is heavily constrained with a large section being LWS and CTA where no built development is proposed. In addition, other constraints in the form of noise impact from the railway lines and flood zone restrictions further reduce the developable land available.
- 3.4 The development will have graduated densities with higher density closest to the town centre and along the railway line west of the Langford Brook (up to 100 dph). This is an appropriate response to the site specifics whilst providing 1-2 bedroom apartment units in the most accessible location to town centre and train stations. The built form of apartments can be used to mitigation noise impact associated to the railway without detriment to those residents. Lower density development (up to 30 and 40 dph) is more appropriately located at the edges of the CTA and LWS creating a softer edge and outlook to this area.

- 3.5 Policy BSC 4 seeks a housing mix to meet current and future requirements and create a socially mixed community. As an outline application the housing mix is not proposed to be set but the masterplan has tested the layout and it is intended to deliver a mix of 1-4 bedroom properties. Houses will be mainly 2 and 3 storey in height, with some 2.5 dwellings. To deliver closer to the allocated 300 homes allocated and to respond to the site constraints, a greater number of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments are proposed. In particular the noise constraint generated by the railway requires the creation of some longer continuous three storey elements which lend themselves to delivering 1 and 2 bed apartments and is a logical response to the line. The approach to design is elaborated in the Design & Access Statement that accompanies the OPA.
- 3.6 Provision will be made for affordable housing, with a mix of tenures encouraging a balanced community. The amount, type and tenure of affordable housing will be subject to negotiation with CDC. The Local Plan Policy BSC 3 seeks a target of up to 30% affordable homes, of which 70% are to be social rented affordable dwellings and 30% other types of intermediate affordable homes.
- 3.7 CDC's pre-app response of 28 April 2021, states that the provision of Extra Care Housing and self-build affordable housing will not be required on this site given other sites coming forward in Bicester.

Access and Movement

- 3.8 The Transport Assessment (TA) analyses the transport issues relating to the proposed development and identifies any necessary interventions to mitigate the impacts of the development and seeks to improve accessibility for all modes of travel. The TA takes account of potential cumulative impacts on traffic from committed and prospective schemes under consideration by CDC, including the nearby proposal at South East Bicester. A robust approach has been adopted which ensures that the OPA takes account of potential future development and identifies measures to mitigate traffic impact during the construction phase.

Access & Connectivity Strategy

- 3.9 Vehicular traffic from the development will use Gavray Drive and its roundabout connection with A4421 Charbridge Lane to access the rest of Bicester and beyond. Footpath and cycleway connections are designed to connect the development with the town centre. Routes connect to the new footbridges across the East-West rail line – one at Corncrake Way and the other in the northwest corner of the site. These will allow residents pedestrian access to the wider area.
- 3.10 Existing PRow run through the site and will be retained on its current alignment.

Travel Plan

- 3.11 A Travel Plan has been prepared to support the application. It sets out measures to encourage sustainable patterns of movement and travel by working in partnership with local schools and businesses. A range of measures, initiatives and mechanisms is proposed on site once the development is built and the travel demand is fully understood.

Parking

- 3.12 Parking provision will take account of guidance provided in the English Partnerships Manual Car Parking: *What Works Where (2006)* and OCC's Parking Standards for New Residential Development. Final provision will reflect the mix of units and the design principles on-site.

Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space

- 3.13 The retention and provision of green infrastructure is a fundamental principle of the proposals. There will be no built development in the Local Wildlife Site and the River Ray Conservation Target Area. Both are retained as part of the proposals.

- 3.14 Measures to avoid or mitigate ecological impacts, and to restore and enhance the site's ecological interest to achieve a net gain in biodiversity, are set out in the ecology section of the ES. The key mechanisms and vehicles through which measures will be secured include the following:
- Inherent mitigation embedded in the site layout;
 - Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS);
 - Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);
 - Wildlife sensitive lighting strategy;
 - Ecological Management Plan (EMP); and
 - Detailed soft landscaping proposals.
- 3.15 Public access will be provided to the least sensitive northern fields of the LWS with the creation of a circular pedestrian route linking on-site and off-site green infrastructure and PRow.
- 3.16 A wide development buffer to the west of Langford Brook is proposed, in part due to flood plain constraints, but which also enables conversion of the current arable land in this area to informal open space of potentially greater ecological value.
- 3.17 The primary means by which the restoration and enhancement of habitat within the site (including areas covered by River Ray CTA and Gavray Drive Meadows LWS) will be delivered is through the preparation, funding and implementation of a Ecological Management Plan (EMP).
- 3.18 Funding of both the initial and long-term management activities would be provided by the developer through a Section 106 (s106) legal obligation.

- 3.19 As a result of the pre-application engagement with key stakeholders, it is envisaged that the management of open space on the site will be split between the Ecological Restoration Zone (ERZ), which includes the LWS, and the wider application site including the play areas and SUDS.
- 3.20 An ecology stakeholder has put forward a number of possible management models for consideration. It is appreciated that the local stakeholders want certainty in terms of who will manage the open space on the site and how certainty will be secured in relation to the management of the site in perpetuity. Responsibility for implementation of the EMP and associated monitoring and review will be determined through discussion with CDC and local stakeholders but could be provided by a number of bodies including CDC, a Private Management Company or a third party such as Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.
- 3.21 It has been proposed and agreed that during the determination period, and ahead of Committee, there will be an opportunity to review the options and to consider the wording of any cascade mechanism in the s106 that secures the delivery and maintenance in accordance with the LEMP.

Open Space Assessment

- 3.22 Local Standards of Provision for Outdoor Recreation are set out under Local Plan Policy BSC 11. This sets out standards based on a population multiplier of 2.4 people per dwelling and is calculated against the application proposal for up to 250 dwellings. The calculations for this site are set out below.

Provision type	Area (ha/1000 people)	Notes	Threshold for on-site provision	REQUIRED (ha) (based on 250 dwellings with 2.4 people occupancy per dwelling)
General green space	2.4	min. 200m ²	10 urban dwellings	1.44
Play space	0.78	LAP-100sqm activity zone; 400sqm including buffer LEAP-400sqm activity zone; 3600sqm including buffer NEAP-1000sqm activity zone; 8500sqm including buffer	10 dwellings (for a LAP) 50 dwellings (for a LEAP and LAP) 100 dwellings for a NEAP and LEAPs/LAPs	0.47
Outdoor sports	1.13	min. 0.12ha	65 dwellings	0.68
Allotments	0.37	min. 0.2ha	275 dwellings	0.22
			TOTAL	2.81

- 3.23 Discussions on the previous appeal scheme had resulted in an agreement for a contribution towards offsite allotments and play space. It is assumed a financial contribution remains the most appropriate method of delivering offsite outdoor sports and allotment provision. Policy BIC 13 makes reference to the need for a contribution towards offsite outdoor sports.
- 3.24 As a result, the total open space required using these standards would be 1.91 ha. This application is submitted within an Open Space Parameter Plan. This includes:
- Ecological Restoration Zone = **13.3ha**
 - Attenuation basins = **0.46ha**
 - Informal/natural green space = **1.86ha**
 - Formal/amenity green space = **1.89ha**
- 3.25 The open space provision across the site is substantially in excess of the standard providing 17.51 ha of open space and green infrastructure with associated management. This is equivalent to 78% of the entire application area being set aside for open space.
- 3.26 In the appeal decision, the Inspector was critical of the multi-functionality of the open space proposed. In particular, he questioned the opportunities for expansive opportunities for dog walking and ball games. In response, the Open Space Parameter Plan submitted with this application includes indicative routes for recreational footpaths to form a circular route around the site and which would connect into the existing footpath network leading beyond the application site.
- 3.27 The Ecology Management Plan (EMP) submitted with this application proposes that the routes within the LWS would be fenced to ensure protection of the ecology and/or to facilitate habitat management. The EMP sets out the opportunities for limited public access without ecological detriment.

- 3.28 Footpaths are also proposed west of the brook, some through areas of meadow which is not to be fenced and will be accessible for dog walking. The 1.89 ha of formal/amenity space outside of this area would meet the opportunities for more expansive play and exercise. It falls just short of the 1.91 ha required by the standard but should be considered against the wider substantial open space gain provided across the application site.
- 3.29 Two play areas are included within the proposals; one in the south east corner of the site adjacent to the eastern smaller residential parcel. The second would be located within the formal/amenity play space west of the brook.
- 3.30 It is acknowledged that the western play area is located within an area where maximum flood depths of 0.5m are predicted during the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. The play area can be considered as being 'water compatible' in terms of vulnerability and therefore should be considered acceptable in any flood zone. There should be no raising of ground associated to the play area with all equipment to allow the free movement of water (metal framed etc) so as to have no impact on the flood regime.

Sustainable Design and Renewable Energy

- 3.31 The applicants are committed to delivering sustainable development, which includes a commitment to building to the appropriate national Building Regulation Standards in force at the time of construction. Site sustainability has played a central role developing the application proposals. The site has been designed to give people the opportunity to choose a healthy and sustainable lifestyle through pedestrian connections and provision of high quality areas of open space. Further information is set out in Sustainability Appraisal submitted with this application.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.32 Whilst the majority of the application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk, parts of the site lie within flood risk zones 2 and 3, reflecting a medium to high risk.

Sequential and Exception Test

- 3.33 When planning development a sequential approach should be applied to identify suitable sites which are at minimal risk from flooding and avoid Flood Zones 2 and 3 wherever possible. The overall aim of decision-makers should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1. If there are no suitable areas identified in Flood Zone 1 then sites with the lowest flood risk should be considered next. The Sequential Test aims to promote development in areas with low flood risk, and to direct more vulnerable developments away from flood risk zones.
- 3.34 CDC's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was produced to guide the application of the Sequential Test in identifying allocations for development in the Local Plan. The application site is an adopted allocation under Policy Bicester 13. Paragraph 162 of the NPPF states that where planning applications come forward on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test, applicants need not apply the sequential test again.
- 3.35 The Exception Test aims to demonstrate that a development located within a Flood Zone will remain safe and provide sustainability and community benefits. As the proposed development site currently lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3, the Exception Test must be passed. This is considered in detail in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.
- 3.36 The exception test is informed by the strategic and site specific flood risk assessments. For the exception test to be passed it should be demonstrated that: a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability

of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall. Part b) is considered in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

- 3.37 In terms of part a), the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk. In identifying the site as a Local Plan allocation, the Council undertook its own Sustainability Appraisal to ensure its proposed development in the district's most sustainable locations.
- 3.38 The Local Plan identifies Bicester as one of the district's main towns with most growth being directed towards it on account of its existing services, access to facilities including jobs, shops, rail, and economic drivers, whilst restricting development in less sustainable locations in the district. The Local Plan focuses development in Cherwell's sustainable locations, making efficient and effective use of land, conserving and enhancing the countryside and landscape and the setting of its towns and villages.
- 3.39 The allocation of the site over other locations sought to reduce the dependency on the private car as a mode of travel, increase the attraction of and opportunities for travelling by public transport, cycle and on foot, and to ensure high standards of accessibility to services for people with impaired mobility. It also seeks to create more sustainable communities by providing high quality, locally distinctive and well designed environments which will increase the attractiveness of Bicester as a place to live and work and which will contribute to the well-being of residents.
- 3.40 Furthermore, the proposal provides specific sustainable benefits through its protection and proposed long term management of the Local Wildlife Site; contributions towards education provision; open space provision including play spaces; retention of Public Rights of Way; new footpaths and cycleways; access to public transport and affordable housing provision.
- 3.41 On this basis, it is suggested that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk and part a) of the exception test is satisfied.

3.42 Flood risk is minimised through the proposed mitigation strategy outlined below.

Flood Risk

3.43 A Flood Risk Assessment (submitted separately with the application) has been carried out using the Environment Agency's most up to date hydraulic modelling results. This has examined the effect of the proposed development upon the existing hydrology and drainage of the site. The main flood risk to the site is considered to be from one source - the Langford Brook which flows through the middle of the development site.

3.44 As part of the planning and assessment process there is a need for the predicted impacts of climate change to be included to ensure all development is safe across its 100 year design life.

3.45 Local residents have provided photographs and accounts of recent flood events along with access to depth gauge data for the Langford Brook. This data was important and confirmed that the Environment Agency flood map for planning (and supporting modelling) provides an accurate assessment of flooding in terms of both extents and mechanisms.

3.46 Based on the assessment of fluvial risk, the majority of the proposed development is located outside the areas shown as being at an increased risk, being located within areas of the site at low risk (0.1% to 1% per year). For the area west of the brook, a proposed vehicular access, a small number of residential units, and surface water attenuation features are located within areas of the present-day Flood Zone 3 and when making an allowance for climate change.

Floodplain Compensation

3.47 A level-for-level floodplain compensation scheme will be provided to take the development outside of the floodplain and ensure water is not displaced elsewhere. An area located along the Langford Brook's western bank and

outside of the 100-year plus 35% allowance for climate change floodplain will provide floodplain compensatory volume during the same flood event. This is achieved through lowering parts of the undeveloped land west of the brook to a level of 66.5m AOD.

3.48 Modelling demonstrates that:

- The proposed compensation area results in no increase in flood depths downstream of the site and actually provides a betterment in flood depths to the north (upstream).
- Whilst there is a small increase in predicted flood depths on the application site, these do not increase the flood extents when compared to the baseline scenario.
- There is no 'new' land 'at risk' and only a betterment in terms of predicted off site depths.
- The proposals provide an additional volume of c.1,950m³ compared to the existing scenario. As such, the proposals have no net loss of floodplain storage and actually result in an increase in flood storage upstream of the existing residential developments when compared to the existing scenario.

3.49 Whilst the modelling has shown no detrimental impact downstream it is considered that the mitigation being proposed would have a betterment to the wider area. However, owing to the proposed volumes of additional storage being minor in relation to the overall catchment / flood volumes (the modelling is for the whole Langford Brook catchment) any negligible decrease in flood levels (<10mm) is outside of the software modelling thresholds and EA's acceptable tolerances and would not be accepted as part of any statutory consultee review.

Drainage Strategy

3.50 The Drainage Strategy (submitted separately with the application) considers the flood risk posed to the application site from pluvial (rainfall) sources and the impact on risk to associated areas due to development. As defined within the National Planning Policy Framework, the risk is to be

managed and contained within the site for storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year storm plus an appropriate allowance for climate change.

- 3.51 To ensure no detrimental impact to offsite flood risk from rainfall runoff, the proposed development will maintain the existing catchment regime whilst limiting discharge to pre-development greenfield runoff rates. This will provide a betterment of 4.3l/s and 1.7l/s for the west and east developments respectively, which in turn discharge to the brook and a culverted tributary. This represents a betterment decrease of circa. 108m³ and 285m³ of surface water discharged downstream (towards the existing residential area) over a 6 hour, 1 in 100 year storm event (extreme event). Surplus flows generated by the restriction are to be stored onsite through attenuation features. This will ensure the safe storage of surplus flows without causing risk to potential residents.

Agricultural Land Quality

- 3.52 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system divides land into five grades according to the extent to which inherent characteristics can be exploited for agricultural production. ALC is based upon an assessment of limiting factors, including soils, climate and other physical limitations and the way in which these factors interact. Grade 1 is described as being of 'excellent' quality and Grade 5, at the other end of the scale, is described as being of 'very poor' quality. Grade 3 is subdivided into Subgrade 3a 'good' and Subgrade 3b 'moderate' quality agricultural land.
- 3.53 A detailed ALC survey was undertaken by CPM in 2004 across the application site in 2004 as part of a previous Environmental Impact Assessment. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the ALC Guidelines.
- 3.54 Land quality west of Langford Brook is identified as Subgrade 3b. Land east of Langford Brook is not farmed, however the 2004 survey identified the majority as Subgrade 3b with a small parcel of grade 2 (approx. 1 ha) adjacent to the railway line. This grade 2 parcel will not be developed.

Subgrade 3b does not comprise the “best and most versatile agricultural land” as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF (2019).

- 3.55 Soils have a number of important functions beyond the support and growth of plants. These include improving drainage and maintaining pathways, supporting ecosystems and providing green areas for communities to use and enjoy. In order to sustain these basic functions it is important that appropriate consideration is given to the soil resource on any development site and, if it is not managed carefully during construction and ground preparation, these important functions can be lost.
- 3.56 “The Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites” (2011) is a practical guide to assist managers of construction sites in protecting the soil resource with which they work. The Code is not legally binding but, by using it, the soil resource on site may be enhanced and wider environmental benefits may be achieved. For example, careful movement of soil during ground preparation, including the timing of land work and storage of soils for after use, will provide materials in better condition for landscaping and will also help natural site drainage.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.1 The Government's commitment to delivery of sustainable development is enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Local Planning Authorities are duty bound to prepare positive plans to encourage sustainable development that meets the area's need for homes, jobs and open space. Applications should meet the overarching objectives of delivering economic, social and environmental objectives (paragraph 8).
- 4.2 The NPPF provides a clear decision taking framework and approach (para 11) to the determination of planning applications. The focus is the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. Decisions must accord with an up-to-date plan. In the absence of an up-to-date development plan policy, permission is to be granted unless there are adverse impacts that demonstrably and significantly outweigh the benefits of development. In the context of a time-expired or out of date local plan, consideration needs to be given to the balance of adverse impacts when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole. It is the policies of the entire NPPF, taken collectively, which provide the definition of sustainable development.
- 4.3 CDC acknowledge that its current housing land supply position is 4.7 years supply for 2021-2026 and as such paragraph 11d is relevant, within a context of a detailed site-specific Policy in the Adopted Local Plan Part 1 to which the application accords. Gavray Drive is part CDC's 5 year housing land supply of deliverable sites and so would contribute towards meeting this requirement.
- 4.4 Considered against the wider NPPF, the development can be seen to enhance an existing vibrant and healthy community through a mix of housing and by enhancing the natural environment through integration of existing habitats into the wider green infrastructure network and the use of renewable energy technologies.

- 4.5 Consideration of relevant chapters of the NPPF follows:

Chapter 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 4.6 Chapter 2 of the NPPF notes that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of development. This Planning Statement demonstrates how the development can be defined as sustainable by delivering a scheme that is sensitive to the environment, supports economic growth and establishes a socially robust community.

- 4.7 The development delivers up to 250 dwellings of the planned requirement of 10,129 units for Bicester to 2031. The site is deliverable, in the context of Annex 2 of the NPPF, in that it is available, offers a suitable location for development and has a reasonable prospect of housing delivery within five years. Furthermore, it is allocated in the adopted Local Plan. The mix of housing types and tenures will be refined at reserved matters stage.

Chapter 6 - Building a Strong Competitive Economy

- 4.8 The proposed development supports a strong, competitive economy in Bicester and the wider District. The Government recognises that competitive economies are as much about removing barriers to growth, such as local housing need, as it is providing new employment land. The application proposes up to 250 homes, part of the planned growth at Bicester, supporting investment by delivering much needed, housing.

- 4.9 The development will establish a new population (some residents will move from other parts of Bicester) that will help to support the enhanced retail and business elements proposed in the town centre. The economy will be supported by increased expenditure on goods and services. The area is close to major employment opportunities and within easy walking and cycling distance.

Chapter 7 - Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- 4.10 The NPPF promotes competitive town centre environments and recognises town centres as the heart of their communities. The new population will rely on town centre and other established retail centres for comparison shopping and leisure. Higher density development is located west of Langford Brook, closest to the town centre in order to provide the greatest opportunity that the community utilises town centre facilities and reaches it by non-vehicle means where possible.

Chapter 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.11 The proposed development adopts the approach advocated in the NPPF that people should be given choice about how they travel with a transport system balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes. Footways and cycle routes throughout the scheme support walking and cycling as realistic options. A Travel Plan will highlight opportunities for sustainable travel for all businesses and new homes. The Transport Assessment accompanying the OPA outlines the range of sustainable transport measures proposed, alongside the modal shift predicted.

Chapter 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

- 4.12 The network of footpaths, cycle routes and green infrastructure incorporating formal and informal open space will encourage activity and healthy lifestyles. The creation and future management of the LWS and CTA are fundamental to the proposals as outlined in this statement.

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

- 4.13 The Design & Access Statement demonstrates the high-quality design approach and the ability to establish a sense of place and identity. The principles in the Design & Access Statement will be taken forward at reserved matters stage for each development phase.

Chapter 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and coastal change

- 4.14 The NPPF notes that reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and resilience to climate change can be encouraged through good planning. The submitted Sustainability Statement and Design & Access Statement details the ways in which this may be achieved through location of the development, orientation and design, a focus of supporting sustainable modes of transport, sustainable construction and energy efficiency.
- 4.15 The NPPF requires that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment forms part of the OPA documentation and concludes that the site is suitable for the proposed development in the context of the NPPF sequential test.
- 4.16 Sustainable urban drainage solutions will be incorporated into both the built and green environments. SuDS will be implemented to reduce flood risk, minimise pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. The drainage strategy set out in the FRA will ensure that rates of run-off are no worse than existing.

Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 4.17 The NPPF places an emphasis on protecting valued landscapes, minimising impacts on biodiversity and preventing unacceptable levels of pollution, and on mitigating impacts where these occur. The ecological value of the site has been assessed in the Environmental Statement. This process has allowed a master plan to be developed that retains and enhances areas of ecological value.

Chapter 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 4.18 The NPPF recognises the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past and the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The application site does not include any heritage assets. There are no Conservation Areas, Registered Parks or Gardens, or Scheduled Monuments located within the site.

Local Policy

4.19 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan in Cherwell comprises the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996.

Cherwell District Local Plan Saved Policies (1996)

4.20 The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in 1996 with an end date of 2001. It remains part of the statutory Development Plan for the area but ran to only 2011.

4.21 The saved policies have some limited relevance to the determination of this application. These are:

- Policy C28 which seeks a sympathetic layout, design and external appearance of new development and use of traditional building materials; and
- Policy C30 which seeks that new housing is compatible with appearance, character, scale of existing dwellings in the vicinity and ensures acceptable standards of amenity and privacy.

4.22 The DAS submitted with the application set out the principles for establishing a high-quality design. The application is submitted in outline only but the Parameter Plans with the DAS establish the framework for future Reserved Matters application to adhere to.

Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 (re-adopted 2016)

4.23 The Cherwell Local Plan provides the policy framework to deliver sustainable growth to 2031 and beyond. The spatial strategy seeks to manage growth and focus development in and around Bicester and Banbury. Policy BSC 1

sets out the district wide housing provision of 22,840, with 10,129 homes to be provided at Bicester.

- 4.24 Para C.32 sets out a clear vision for Bicester in 2031. Development of Gavray Drive will be a key component of delivering that vision including *delivering development that will increase Bicester’s self-containment, provide higher-value job opportunities and reduce the proportion of out-commuting; and provide for new development in accessible locations that will maximise opportunities for providing sustainable transport choices, for reducing traffic congestion and for reducing the proportion of out-commuting.*
- 4.25 Land to the north of Gavray Drive is allocated for development by Policy Bicester 13. 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.
- 4.26 The table below sets out the policy with a response to each criterion.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
Area: 23 hectares	This is included within the entire application site.
<i>Development Description: a housing site to the east of Bicester town centre. It is bounded by railway lines to the north and west and the A4421 to the east</i>	
Housing	
<i>Number of homes - 300 dwellings</i>	Up to 250 homes are proposed. The site is heavily constrained and contains a LWS, CTA and areas of flood risk. The proximity of the railway line also requires a suitable buffer on account of noise and air quality. Capacity analysis has identified up to 250 homes within appropriate densities.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
<i>Affordable Housing - 30%.</i>	30% affordable housing will be delivered as part of the S106 Agreement.
Infrastructure Needs	
<i>Education – Contributions sought towards provision of primary and secondary school places</i>	To be provided as part of the S106 Agreement.
<i>Open Space – to include general greenspace, play space, allotments and sports provision as outlined in Policy BSC11: Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation. A contribution to off-site formal sports provision will be required.</i>	As stated in Chapter 3, 17 ha (or 78% of the application site) is set aside as greenspace including play space. Off-site provision can be provided as part of the S106 Agreement, if required.
<i>Community – contributions towards community facilities</i>	This will be agreed with CDC and OCC as part of the Section 106 Agreement.
<i>Access and movement – from Gavray Drive.</i>	The site will be accessed via Gavray Drive.
Key site specific design and place shaping principles	
<i>Proposals should comply with Policy ESD15.</i>	The DAS seeks to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and a healthy place. The ES includes an assessment of cultural heritage impacts.
<i>A high quality development that is locally distinctive in its form, materials and architecture. A well designed approach to the urban edge which relates to the road and rail corridors.</i>	The application is submitted in outline only and the final design and materials are reserved matters. Nevertheless, an indicative masterplan demonstrates how the layout and design can meet the aspiration of this criteria.
<i>Development must avoid adversely impacting on the Conservation Target Area and comply with the requirements of Policy ESD11 to secure a net biodiversity gain.</i>	The ecology ES chapter assesses the impacts on the CTA. Biodiversity surveys are included in the ES which identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. No built development is proposed within the CTA. The chapter also sets out how a net biodiversity gain of in excess of 10% will be delivered.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
<i>Protection of the Local Wildlife Site and consideration of its relationship and interface with residential and other built development.</i>	No built development is proposed in the LWS. Access will be limited to paths through the LWS. An Ecological Mitigation Management Plan has been discussed with the ecological stakeholders and forms part of the application.
<i>Detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife corridors to protect and enhance biodiversity. The preparation and implementation of an Ecological Management Plan to ensure the long-term conservation of habitats and species within the site.</i>	The site has been subject of ecology surveys for many years. The ES chapter includes the results of these surveys and proposals where required. An Ecological Mitigation Management Plan has been discussed with the ecological stakeholders and forms part of the application.
<i>Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments.</i>	These are included in the ES.
<i>The preparation of a structural landscaping scheme, which incorporates and enhances existing natural features and vegetation. The structural landscaping scheme should inform the design principles for the site. Development should retain and enhance significant landscape features (e.g. hedgerows) which are or have the potential to be of ecological value. A central area of open space either side of Langford Brook, incorporating part of the Local Wildlife Site and with access appropriately managed to protect ecological value. No formal recreation within the Local Wildlife Site.</i>	The Open Space Parameter Plan shows the retention and enhancement of the sites existing features including the hedgerows and TPOs are retained. No formal recreation is proposed within the LWS, though restricted access through pathways has been discussed with all ecological stakeholders with further detail included in the ES.
<i>Provision of public open space to form a well connected network of green areas within the site, suitable for formal and informal recreation.</i>	17.51 ha of the site is set aside as open space including 3.75ha of informal and formal open space to include opportunities for dog walking, off lead and ball games.
<i>Provision of Green Infrastructure links beyond the development site to the wider town and open countryside</i>	The Open Space Parameter Plan shows Green Infrastructure links beyond the application site.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
<i>Retention of Public Rights of Way and a layout that affords good access to the countryside</i>	The existing PRow is retained on its current alignment. The Open Space Parameter Plan shows indicative routes to link to the PRow and onward beyond the site boundary.
<i>New footpaths and cycleways should be provided that link with existing networks, the wider urban area and schools and community facilities. Access should be provided over the railway to the town centre.</i>	As above. A network of routes seek to allow good access west across the railway to the town centre. Footpath and cycle provision will be provided throughout the application site with improvement along Gavray Drive, as required.
<i>A linked network of footways which cross the central open space, and connect Langford Village, Stream Walk and Bicester Distribution Park</i>	As above. A network of routes is proposed as shown on the Proposed Layout and Open Space Parameter Plans.
<i>Ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on downstream Sites of Special Scientific Interest through hydrological, hydro chemical or sedimentation impacts.</i>	The ecology and drainage chapters in the ES assess the potential for off-site impacts.
<i>A layout that maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods and enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities.</i>	As above. A network of routes is proposed as shown on the Proposed Layout and Open Space Parameter Plans.
<i>A legible hierarchy of routes to encourage sustainable modes of travel. Good accessibility to public transport services with local bus stops provided. Provision of a transport assessment and Travel Plan</i>	The Access & Movement Parameter Plan proposes a hierarchy of routes across the site. Bus stops will be provided on Gavray Drive. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are included with the application.
<i>Additional bus stops on the A4421 Charbridge Lane will be provided, with connecting footpaths from the development. The developers will contribute to the cost of improving local bus services</i>	Bus stops will be provided with connecting footpaths. Contributions to bus services will be delivered via the S106 Agreement.
<i>Provision of appropriate lighting and the minimisation of light pollution based on appropriate technical assessment.</i>	The LVIA submitted with the ES considers lighting. Further detail including luminance levels will be submitted with Reserved Matters applications.

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
<i>Provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity.</i>	Contribution to public art will be considered through S106 negotiations.
<i>Demonstration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures including exemplary demonstration of compliance with the requirements of policies ESD 1 – 5.</i>	An Energy Statement is submitted with the application. This explores all matters of sustainability and sets out the opportunities to be explored further and committed through Reserved Matters applications.
<i>Take account of the Council's SFRA for the site.</i>	This is considered in the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application.
<i>Consideration of flood risk from Langford Brook in a Flood Risk Assessment and provision of an appropriate buffer. Use of attenuation SuDS techniques (and infiltration techniques in the south eastern area of the site) in accordance with Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and taking account of the Council's SFRA.</i>	A Flood Risk Assessment is submitted with the application. This includes a surface water drainage strategy comprising a cascading mechanism along the northern edge of Gavray Drive west through landscaped areas. Land level changes are required west of the brook to allow suitable compensation ensuring residential development remains outside of the flood zone and without detriment to the ecological constraints of the site.
<i>Housing must be located outside Flood Zone 3 and the principles set out in Policy ESD 6 will be followed.</i>	All housing will be located outside flood zone 3.
<i>The provision of extra-care housing and the opportunity for community self-build affordable housing.</i>	CDC's pre-app response has confirmed that this will not be required on this site given existing commitments elsewhere in the town.
<i>An archaeological field evaluation to assess the impact of the development on archaeological features.</i>	This is included in the Cultural Heritage chapter of the ES.
<i>A detailed survey of the agricultural land quality identifying the best and most versatile agricultural land and a soil management plan.</i>	The land east of Langford Brook is not used for agriculture but is predominately subgrade 3b with a 1ha area of grade 2 (which will not be developed), the land to the west has been identified as subgrade 3b 'moderate' quality using the ALC system. Subgrade 3b is not BMV as defined by the NPPF. With the land being allocated in the Local Plan the impact of this loss has

Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive (re-adopted) Development	Response
	been considered fully as part of that process. Further details are provided in chapter 3.

4.27 The planning application seeks outline planning permission for the development of Gavray Drive West for up to 250 dwellings in conformity with the site specific Policy Bicester 13. This amount of development has been fully assessed in the Environmental Statement accompanying the application and been demonstrated to result in no significant adverse effects. Furthermore, the Design & Access Statement demonstrates how the form and layout of development and the disposition of land uses across the site responds to the specific place shaping principles in Policy Bicester 13.

4.28 The following general policies are also relevant.

Policy BSC 2 Effective and Efficient Use of Land; Policy BSC 3 Affordable Housing; Policy BSC 4 Housing Mix

4.29 Policy BSC 2 aims for new housing to be provided at a net density of no less than 30 dwellings per hectare. Policy BSC 3 requires 30% affordable homes, expected to comprise a 70% affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% intermediate affordable. Policy BSC 4 requires a mix of homes to meet requirements for housing need and ensure provision of socially inclusive communities, identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Cherwell Housing Strategy (2014).

4.30 The application proposals accommodate up to 250 dwellings with provision for affordable housing as part of the proposals. The tenure and mix of dwellings will be fixed through the s106 agreement and subsequent reserved matters pursuant to any outline planning permission.

4.31 The Density Parameter Plan shows densities ranging from up to 30 dph on land adjacent to open space up to 100 dph on the land closest to the town

centre. High density built form is considered an appropriate response to some of the site constraints including the railways whilst ensuring that the land is used efficiently to meet the capacity aspiration set out in the Local Plan.

BSC10: Open space, sport and recreation provision; BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation.

- 4.32 Policy BSC10 supports convenient access to open space, sport and recreation provision and seeks to ensure that new development provides sufficient quantity commensurate to the need generated by the proposals. The development provides green space for play, recreation and walking/cycling. Offsite contributions will be provided where required and discussed through S106 negotiations.

ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change; ESD 3: Sustainable Construction; ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management; ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 4.33 Policy ESD 1 and 2 seek to ensure development reduces the need to travel and encourages sustainable travel options, seeks reductions in carbon emissions, promotes low carbon/ renewable energy use and encourages the use of sustainable drainage methods. Policy ESD 3 encourages all new residential development to reflect high quality design and high environmental standards demonstrating sustainable construction methods. A Sustainability Statement is submitted with the application. The site is located close to the town centre and layout with footpaths and cycleways encourages movement via non-motorised means. Final design including materials will be for future Reserved Matters applications, however through the DAS and SS, principles are set which seek to amplify and commit future developers to build high quality and meeting all environmental standards applicable at the time.

- 4.34 Policy ESD 6 directs new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding in accordance with the Sequential Test as defined within the NPPF and requires development proposals to be accompanied by site

specific flood risk assessments to assess all sources of flood risk. Policy ESD 7 requires developments to use sustainable urban drainage systems for the management of surface water run-off. As outlined earlier in this statement, the FRA concludes that the application site is suitable for the proposed development in the context of the NPPF.

4.35 Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas and Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

- 4.36 Policy ESD 10 seeks to protect and enhance the biodiversity and the natural environment through the protection of trees, retention of features of biodiversity value and creation of features to enhancement biodiversity such as creation of wildlife corridors to ensure new habitat connectivity. The proposed layout has taken into account habitats and features of value at an early stage.
- 4.37 The ES chapter includes a biodiversity metric which demonstrates that the development will meet a target of at least a 10% net gain. An Ecological Management Plan accompanies the ES. This seeks to ensure that the long-term conservation of habitats and species within the site.
- 4.38 Policy ESD 17 seeks to ensure that green infrastructure is integral to the planning of new development. No built development is proposed within the CTA. It is proposed to provide biodiversity enhancements in this area, together with flood attenuation and play area on that part which lies west of Langford Brook.

ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

- 4.39 Policy ESD 13 seeks opportunities to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape and requires development to respect and enhance local landscape character. The Design & Access Statement demonstrates the evolution of the proposals, the development layout and structure as a whole has been strongly influenced by the landscape context and topographical features of the site. A detailed

landscape and visual impact assessment forms part of the ES and demonstrates that the scheme has been designed to fit within the wider landscape.

ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

4.40 Policy ESD 15 requires new development proposals to understand and respect an area's unique built, natural and cultural context by improving the character and appearance of the area and the way it functions; to support efficient use of land and infrastructure; to reinforce or re-interpret local distinctiveness through a contemporary design response; to respect local topography and landscape features to include skylines, significant trees and historic boundaries; to conserve and enhance heritage assets; to promote permeable and accessible development and promote high quality multifunctional streets to include pedestrian movement within the public realm; and to respect existing amenities for existing and future development. The potential effects on heritage assets have been considered at the masterplanning stage. Appropriate site investigations have been carried out.

Policy INF 1: Infrastructure

4.41 Policy INF 1 requires development proposals to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities. The application proposals accord with this requirement through delivery of the following:

- contributions to off-site junction improvements;
- a proportion of affordable housing;
- land and contributions as appropriate for education, sports provision and community facilities;
- green infrastructure including informal open space and landscape areas and children's play space; and
- sustainable urban drainage systems.

4.42 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.

4.43 The Developer Contributions SPD (2018) seeks to set out the Council's approach to seeking Section 106 planning obligations from new developments for the provision of infrastructure, community facilities and services.

5.0 MERITS OF THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The policies in the NPPF, taken collectively, constitute the definition of sustainable development. The proposed development of land at Gavray Drive accords with this definition by establishing a development that supports employment, the establishment of a vibrant and healthy community through a mix of housing and facilities reflecting need and by protecting and enhancing the natural environment through integration of existing habitats and landscape elements.
- 5.2 There are substantial factors supporting the OPA in terms of its sustainable location; supportive planning policy framework; delivery of housing contributing to the CDC's 5-year housing land supply; provision of infrastructure and high-quality approach to design. The scheme provides homes to meet local needs and supporting infrastructure that will enhance Bicester.

Location

- 5.3 The Council's adopted Local Plan clearly sets out a strategy that concentrates development at Bicester and Banbury and states that they provide the most sustainable and appropriate locations for the growth of the District. The principle of Gavray Drive as one of the most suitable locations to deliver housing within Bicester is well established and underpinned by a site specific allocation in the adopted Local Plan. Gavray Drive has been identified as a development site since 1996. The site is available and deliverable, benefitting from a sustainable location.

Supportive Local Policy Framework

- 5.4 Policy Bicester 13 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031, provides the policy basis for the proposals allocating Gavray Drive. It identifies site specific development principles to ensure that development respects the existing character and form of the local landscape, complements adjoining existing and proposed development and facilitates the delivery of infrastructure.

Housing Delivery

- 5.5 The Government has recognised the housing crisis in the country and in the NPPF made the case for growth and housing delivery to meet locally assessed housing need. The NPPF seeks to *boost significantly the supply of housing*. The development proposals form part of a locally derived strategy of growth that delivers this national agenda.
- 5.6 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014, demonstrates a shortfall in net housing completions within Cherwell, yet predicts that population growth will increase demands from all household types. In response to this, the Cherwell Local Plan seeks delivery of up to 22,840 dwellings within the District over the plan period up to 2031. CDC have a 4.7 year housing land supply. Approval of one of their own allocations will go some way to rectify this.
- 5.7 The NPPF flags the need to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and local needs. The proposed development would have a beneficial impact on the housing market, increasing housing stock and providing a mix of dwellings, including affordable housing.

Design Approach

- 5.8 The development layout and structure has been influenced by the landscape context and topographical features of the site. The arrangement of land parcels their associated uses, form and type of open space and route ways seek to respond to the established physical features within the site and enhance the sustainability of the proposals.
- 5.9 Retention of the LWS and CTA are fundamental principles of the application. Long term management is proposed as set out in the Ecological Management Strategy. This has been discussed at length with the Stakeholder Group (as evidenced in the SCI).

6.0 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS / S106 HEADS OF TERMS

6.1 The applicants will enter into a Section 106 agreement with CDC and OCC, agreement being conditional upon the grant of planning consent. An indication of the matters to be addressed in the S106 agreement are set out below and subject to negotiation.

DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS FOR SECTION 106 OBLIGATION

Effective Date:	The obligations are conditional upon the grant and implementation of the Planning Permission.
PLANNING OBLIGATIONS:	
Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space	To provide for long term management and maintenance of areas of open space play areas including the LWS and CTA.
Affordable Housing	30% proportion of Dwellings shall be Affordable Housing. Housing type and tenure to be agreed
Education	To agree contributions for primary and secondary FE as necessary.
Transport	To carry out highway improvements to include proposed accesses into the site and to provide contributions to other off-site highway improvements, as necessary.
Sustainable transport	Travel plan measures and public transport contributions to bring the existing bus service into the site
Community facilities	To make provision as appropriate and justified for the enhancement of existing or proposed facilities and children's play areas

Drainage	Provisions to ensure delivery of effective SuDS drainage system and maintenance of any ponds and watercourses.
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7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development of land at Gavray Drive West is in full accordance with the Government's aspirations for sustainable growth and fully reflects the core planning principles of NPPF.
- 7.2 The adopted Cherwell Local Plan allocates the land for residential led development under Policy Bicester 13. The proposals fully meet the site specific, and other relevant policies of the plan.
- 7.3 Development at Gavray Drive West could deliver up to 250 dwellings. The application complies with a requirement to provide the necessary infrastructure to support itself and to mitigate any impacts of development on existing communities. This will go some way to address the Council's lack of a 5-year housing and supply, by approving development on one of its own long held allocations.
- 7.4 In the context of the growth agenda and the pressing national and local need for housing growth, the application proposes a strategic residential extension capable of delivering new homes and supporting the planned growth of Bicester to support the wider growth objectives for the District. There are no significant and demonstrable impacts that outweigh the benefits of granting consent. We therefore invite CDC to grant planning permission for the proposed development.