

HAWKWELLVILLAGE

New Community at North West Bicester

Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of Hallam Land Management (the applicant) and summarises the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of proposals for an outline planning application for the development of land to the north west of Bicester for a residential led mix use development comprising up to 3,100 homes and associated uses, reported in an environmental statement submitted with the application. The application is submitted by Hallam Land Management, the strategic land and planning promotion arm of the Henry Boot Group of Companies.
- 1.2 The purpose of an EIA is to assess the likely significant environmental effects of a development proposal. These effects have been assessed as "adverse" or "beneficial"; and of "major", "moderate", "minor" or "negligible" significance, in accordance with recognised EIA methodology and applying professional judgement.
- 1.3 The "significance" of each effect takes into account both its "magnitude" and the "sensitivity" of the receptor affected. For example, a change of "large" magnitude affecting a receptor of "high" sensitivity would generally result in an effect of "major" significance. Conversely, a change of "small" magnitude affecting a receptor of "low" sensitivity would generally result in an effect of "minor" significance.
- 1.4 The full findings of this EIA are reported in an Environmental Statement (ES). This concise document summarises the main findings of the ES in non-technical language, for a wide readership.
- 1.5 The ES supports the outline planning application submitted to Cherwell District Council for the Proposed Development. Comments on the application should therefore be directed to Cherwell District Council. The significant environmental effects of the outline application have been considered and the principal environmental effects reported here relate to the outline application.
- 1.6 The ES is available on Cherwell District Councils website https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/115/planning/443/see-or-comment-on-a-planning-application
- 1.7 Copies may also be obtained on request from:

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1.8 Charges apply in relation to paper copies of the full ES as follows:

CD of the full ES: Free of Charge

Hard copy of Non-Technical Summary of ES: Free of Charge

Hard Copy of Main Text (Volume 1): £80.00

Hard Copy of complete ES (including Plans and Appendices): £250.00

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Site

- 2.1 The historic market town of Bicester has a population of 30,854 residents (census 2011). Local Planning Policy documents identify Bicester as one of two dominant towns within the district and it has been identified as an area of growth.
- 2.2 The Site is located on the northern edge of Bicester, 2.5km to the north west of Bicester Town Centre and almost 1km away from the small village of Bucknell. The site is well situated in relation to Bicester North Railway Station, which lies broadly 2.3km approximately 10-minute cycle from the centre of the site to the south. Approximately 3.4km or 15-minute cycle south of the site lies Bicester Village Railway Station. Bicester North Railway Station is on the Chiltern Main Line and services are operated by Chiltern Railways.
- 2.3 The Site encompasses Bucknell Road/Bicester Road and is bordered to the west by the London to Birmingham Railway, and to the south by the A4095. The predominate uses are agricultural land and farm buildings including those of its surroundings. To the east of the Site lies Elmsbrook, the first phase of the North West Bicester development. To the south the site abuts Bicester itself.
- 2.4 Two watercourses mark the boundaries of, or cross the site, merging into the River Bure which flows to the south.
- 2.5 The substantial majority of Site is allocated in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), adopted in 2015, which identifies the Site as a parcel within the North West Bicester allocation.
- 2.6 The northern boundary of the allocation in the Cherwell Local Plan is arbitrarily drawn having no relationship with any identifiable physical or landscape led boundaries on the ground. The application site extends beyond the allocation boundary for three principal purposes: a landscape led approach to employ existing field boundaries and/or definable features within the western part of the site, to accommodate additional primarily open green uses within the site as well as the photovoltaic systems (Solar Farm) to make a substantial contribution towards the delivery of sustainability aspirations and to provide certainty to the residents of Bucknell village that the NW Bicester development will not encroach further, as the green buffer creates an enduring edge to the development, with no built form against the boundary of the village. The revised boundary enables the establishment of a landscape led Master Plan which builds upon the existing landscape features of the site and a substantial expansion of green infrastructure.

2.7 The application site comprises some 177 hectares in total over 40% of which will be green infrastructure.

The Proposed Development

- 2.8 The outline planning application seeks planning permission for the following development:
 - Mixed Use Development of up to 3,100 dwellings (including extra care); residential and care accommodation(C2); mixed use local centre (comprising Commercial, Business and Service Uses, residential uses, C2 uses, Local Community Uses (F2(a) and F2(b)), hot food takeaways, public house, wine bar); employment area (B2, B8, E(g)); Learning and Non-residential institutions (Class F1) including primary school (plus land to allow extension of existing Gagle Brook primary school); Green Infrastructure including formal (including playing fields) and informal open space, allotments, landscape, biodiversity and amenity space; burial ground; play space (including Neaps/Leaps/MUGA); changing facilities; ground mounted photovoltaic arrays; sustainable drainage systems; movement network comprising new highway, cycle and pedestrian routes and access from highway network; car parking; infrastructure (including utilities); engineering works (including ground modelling); demolition".
- 2.9 Within the mixed use area and the employment area, permission is sought for some 9,000 sq metres of retail, commercial and community uses comprising:
 - "up to 2,490 sq m (GEA) of commercial uses within Classes E(a) retail; E(b) food and drink; E9(c) services and the following sui generis uses hot food takeaways, public house, wine bar";
 - "up to 3,750 sq m (GEA) employment uses with Use Classed E(g), B2 and B8"
 - Community uses, nurseries etc within the use classes described above;
 - Residential uses as part of a mixed use scheme within the mixed use area
- 2.10 The plan proposal includes up to 30% affordable housing. The final quantum and mix of affordable housing uses will be agreed in discussion with the Local Planning Authority. Important to the Master Plan for the application site is the framework provided by existing green infrastructure within the site and the provision of in excess of 40% green infrastructure across the Site.
- 2.11 The application for planning permission is made in outline with all matters reserved for future approval other than access. The details of the access arrangements for the development are to be approved as part of the application.

- 2.12 The location of the different land uses including residential, employment and other key land uses is shown on the Development Framework Plan which is included in Appendix 1 to this Non-Technical Summary. .
- 2.13 The main points of vehicular access to the development site will be via the A4095 to the south of the site and Bucknell Road where the provision of signalised crossing points and a pedestrian underpass, will result in the realignment of the road. The following access drawings are included within the outline application:
 - North West Bicester Link Road proposed signalised Junction 31 20300 SK
 T 007 Rev P3
 - North West Bicester Link Road proposed signalised Germender Way 20300
 SK T 001 Rev P3
 - Proposed signalised crossing of and access from Bucknell Road 20300 SK T
 011 Rev P1
 - Proposed Link to Northern (Elmsbrook) Development 20300 SK T 010 Rev
 P1
- 2.14 The consequence of the realigned Bucknell Road, together with the proposals for well-designed measures to manage traffic will actively reduce traffic along Bucknell Road.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Proposed Development is being brought forward against a backdrop of support for well-conceived, sustainable development proposals in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the longstanding local and national policy context supporting NW Bicester strategic allocation and to promote more sustainable living in new communities. Policy Bicester 1: in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 allocates a total of 390 hectares of land described as 'A new zero carbon mixed use development including 6,000 homes' and this site will play a major role in delivering the strategic growth set out in this policy and identified in Bicester during and beyond the Plan period.

4.0 SOCIO ECONOMIC AND HEALTH

4.1 Within the application area, no significant adverse socio-economic effects are predicted, taking into account the timely provision of supporting facilities as the development is built out. That timely provision would be secured by conditions and legal obligations attached to any grant of outline panning permission.

- 4.2 Moderate beneficial effects at a local and regional scale will be experienced during construction phases owing to the employment created. Major beneficial effects on local population and the provision of community and social infrastructure locally is predicted as well as on the housing provision owing to the overall level of new housing proposed. Major beneficial effects are also predicted to the labour market on a local to regional scale by virtue of the permanent direct and indirect jobs and employment created as a result of the development. Major beneficial effects on open space provision, education provision, retailing and community facility provision are also predicted, again taking into account the timely provision of such facilities as the development is built out. There is predicted to be a minor beneficial effect on crime and deprivation.
- 4.3 A health impact assessment is included in the ES and draws together relevant information in relation to community inclusion, healthy neighbourhoods, active lifestyles, protecting the environment, safety and wellbeing and new and converted housing provision. The development once operational has been designed to offer positive health impacts and to minimise and mitigate any negative impacts and would lead to beneficial impacts in all topic areas and does not identify any significant environmental adverse effects.

5.0 TRANSPORT

- 5.1 The transport effects of the proposals have been carefully modelled, along with other committed and planned development in and around Bicester to test the impact of the proposals. A sensitivity test has been undertaken to consider the cumulative impact of development including the two additional developments identified by OCC in the ES scoping response the Great Wolf leisure resort at Chesterton and the proposed Oxfordshire SFRI and logistics proposals at Baynards Green.
- 5.2 The Proposed Development includes new pedestrian and cycle routes connecting with the existing walking and cycling networks in the area, as well as providing for improvements to and/or contributions to support off-site walking and cycling links. A frequent bus service is proposed between the development and the town centre and a circular loop provided to and from the A4095. The Site is conducive to the creation of a sustainable development, with a range of everyday facilities and services lying within 'reasonable' walking distance and will benefit from a high level of connectivity to the wider NW Bicester development as well as the rest of the town. The strategy for sustainable travel measures to achieve modal share and containment of trip targets is fully detailed in the Framework Travel Plan.

- 5.3 This includes consideration of the effects during the construction phases and the likely construction traffic movements assessed. Minor adverse construction impacts have been identified but mitigation measures would be put in place through production of a Construction Traffic Environmental Management Plan that will manage the impact of Construction traffic and will include a lorry routeing agreement and regular wheel cleaning /dirt control.
- 5.4 Following the completion of the development various effects have been tested. This includes potential severance effects on existing movements and driver and pedestrian delay. The assessment of impacts has identified that there are a number of locations where adverse impacts may arise and there is a need to consider further mitigation to reduce the significance of these impacts. The introduction of speed reduction measures, widened footways/cycle routes and crossing facilities will minimise any severance effects. The impact of driver delay is anticipated to be increased on Banbury Road both north and south of the A4095 junction, given the increase in traffic in the area but which can be mitigated with the replacement of the roundabout junction with a traffic signalised cross roads in order to increase the junction capacity.
- 5.5 The realignment of the Bucknell Road as part of the transport proposals in the area, together with the provision of traffic management and/or calming measures on Bucknell Road, will effectively reduce traffic numbers and ensure the avoidance of local traffic impacts eg in Bucknell.
- 5.6 No major adverse impacts are considered likely following mitigation.
- 5.7 The principal cumulative effects need to be considered across the wider area. The impact of housing not being delivered at NW Bicester would be to place additional housing across the rest of the district, in less sustainable locations without the same high standard of non-car access to the town centre. This would result in additional demand for car travel as the non-car trips, particularly walking and cycling, will be severely reduced.

6.0 AIR QUALITY

6.1 Consideration has been given to the risks associated with the construction process in particular in relation to dust emissions but also to the management measures that can be employed to reduce emissions of dust and limit dispersion. Where dust emission controls have been used effectively, large-scale operations have been successfully undertaken without impacts to nearby properties.

- 6.2 A risk of impacts is possible at adjacent residential properties during unmitigated construction but appropriate mitigation measures have been identified and are proposed to be adopted in the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This has shown that during this phase of the proposed development releases of dust and PM₁₀ are likely to occur during site activities. However, through good site practice and the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, the impact of dust and PM₁₀ releases may be effectively mitigated, and the resultant impacts are expected to be Negligible.
- 6.3 Operational effects have also been considered in particular in relation to pollutants generated by traffic and other activities. Detailed dispersion modelling (using ADMS-Roads) has been undertaken to predict concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at the proposed development in the opening year (2031). The predicted concentrations are well within the relevant short and long term air quality objectives for the protection of health and therefore the proposed development will not introduce new exposure to poor air quality.
- Dispersion modelling has also been undertaken to assess the potential impact of operational traffic associated with the proposed development on NO₂ and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations at worst-case sensitive receptor locations. The impact on air quality at all locations is predicted to be Negligible. The cumulative effects are also predicted to be Negligible.

7.0 NOISE

- 7.1 Potential construction noise impacts are localised, and temporary in nature. CEMPs will be developed for the Site relating to controlling noise levels and construction working house. Taking this into account, it is expected to control the construction noise effects to be at worst Moderate adverse and short term. In most cases, the effects would be considered Minor adverse and short term. The temporary nature of construction work also means the significance of construction noise impacts to existing sensitivities is assessed as being low.
- 7.2 The potential post completion noise effects on existing sensitivities are limited to noise from road traffic. Taking into account other noise sensitivities near each road link, the impact is assessed as negligible or minor adverse. Within the site, the magnitude of noise effect is found to be Negligible for dwellings located within each parcel. This is below the threshold for a significant adverse effect. Mitigation may be required to dwellings on the outermost parts of the site closest to respective noise sources and with those measures in place, the impact on those dwellings will be Negligible.

7.3 The noise assessment for the operation of the Proposed Development has utilised traffic data that has incorporated all known cumulative developments in the locality of the Site and is incorporated in the assessment. The cumulative effect during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is also likely to be Negligible.

8.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 8.1 The Landscape baseline and effects and the Visual baseline and effects table are described in full in this chapter.
- 8.2 The Bicester Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment (2013) makes the judgement that the landscape of Bicester 1 (within which the site falls) is no more that "medium" landscape sensitivity, "medium" visual sensitivity, and "medium-low" in terms of overall landscape value. It concludes that Bicester 1 has "a medium-high" capacity to accommodate residential and commercial development.
- 8.3 The site and immediate area is not a designated landscape. It has no pronounced sense of scenic quality, tranquillity, and distinctiveness such that it sets it apart. The site is not subject to any cultural or ecological designations, and comprises common place arable fields with limited recreational value. The natural habitats of the site's watercourses, hedgerows and mature trees are of local landscape and ecological value.
- 8.4 The site's landscape character is influenced by the modern built edge of Bicester and Elmsbrook, and on-going and consented developments in this landscape as part of the North-West Bicester allocation will create further urbanising influences on this landscape.
- 8.5 It is assessed that the site is visually contained within the surrounding and wider landscape such that it has a comparatively limited visual envelope, and which given the scale of the site is restricted to a relatively localised area around it. The network of established and well treed hedgerows around the perimeter of the site, and vegetation within the surrounding local landscape restricts levels of visibility.
- 8.6 Development of this scale will inevitably have landscape and visual impacts. During construction, the effects on the landscape with primary design and mitigation measures embedded and the implementation of a CEMP to control and minimise effects would result in a Major-Moderate Adverse effect but temporary in nature.
- 8.7 Design and mitigation measures have been development to minimise impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity in the form of significant green

infrastructure provision; retention of habitats; limited loss of landscape features and delivery of new woodland, trees, hedgerows and greenspace. This would create a green framework of existing and new habitats to appropriately and sensitively integrate development into the landscape, as well as providing longer term environmental benefits for local landscape character, biodiversity and recreation. This would mean that whilst in year 1, the effect would be Major-Moderate Adverse, in year 15, the effect would be Moderate-Minor Adverse as the adverse effects would reduce over time with the maturing of the planting proposals. Given the well-contained nature of the site, its context along the settlement edge and through following appropriate and commonly used measures for lighting, the Proposed Development would also not result in any unacceptable effects on the night-time landscape.

- 8.8 In the medium to longer term, development provides landscape benefits through the creation of new green infrastructure, which includes a net gain in habitats and publicly accessible countryside.
- 8.9 The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development coming forward in conjunction with additional projects would result in varying degrees of change and effects on differing landscape and visual receptors. Through the baseline process and through an evaluation of the change that is proposed it is concluded that this landscape could absorb the proposed development -subject to design and mitigation measures implemented by the development- without giving rise to an unacceptable long term harm on landscape character and visual amenity. The development provides significant green infrastructure provision, which will provide environmental benefits

9.0 ECOLOGY

- 9.1 Turning to ecological impacts, the Site supports no designation for nature conservation. The closest designation Bure Park LNR which lies within 50m of Site to its west, connected by the River Bure, culverted below the separating main road and has the potential to be indirectly affected by construction works and by increased recreational pressure. Mitigation will be put in place to avoid and reduce construction effects, including through the implementation of appropriate protective and precautionary measures and working practices as described within a supporting CEMP, and through the provision of the Site's GI, such that none are considered significant, including when considered cumulatively. All other designated sites are considered to be sufficiently distant that significant effects would not be expected during or post construction.
- 9.2 The site is dominated by intensively managed farmland, and of consequent limited overall ecological value. Hedgerows and water courses provide habitat corridors

through this, which extend into the wider area. Hedgerows support mature and semi-mature trees and are a mix of higher and lower value features and a small number are considered to be species rich, with three considered to be of Importance under the Hedgerow Regulations 1991. They have limited associated ground flora. Watercourses are not of particular botanical interest. These features all provide a foraging and commuting network for local fauna, including bats and great crested newts. The vast majority of these are to be retained and incorporated into the GI, with only small scale losses/disturbance to accommodate access infrastructure mitigated by the green infrastructure (GI) proposals and assessed as not significant. Other habitats of greater interest, although still not particularly botanically diverse include a small area of broadleaved woodland, dense scrub south of Bucknell Road and a small pond, as well as compartment of species poor rough grassland in the north of the Site. These are all to be incorporated into the GI. The CEMP will ensue all retained habitats are protected during construction and that the effects are Negligible.

- 9.3 The Site supports a number of protected species, including bats, great crested newts, and badger as well as a range of notable bird species. The implementation of a CEMP during construction will ensure all effects are Negligible for these species. New more diverse habitats and linear features will be created to enhance foraging and movement opportunities for bats throughout the GI and a sensitive lighting regime put in place and Minor Positive effects are expected for bats once GI establishes.
- 9.4 A small-medium population of great crested newt (GCN) was recorded in the single pond on Site. Much of the suitable habitat will be retained and mitigation put in place to ensure their favourable conservation status is retained and potentially enhanced, during and post construction, through appropriate licenced works during construction and the retention and creation of the GI of value to newts ensuring that the effects on GCN will be Negligible.
- 9.5 Minor positive effects on general bird species are anticipated as result of the retention of the proposals with the retention of the majority of their foraging and breeding habitat and the creation of the GI. For six of the farmland specialists recorded, adverse effects at a local level could be expected which cannot be mitigated by the habitats within the GI, but are not considered to be significant alone, although are more significant up to a moderate level when considered cumulatively with farmland habitat losses associated with other developments.
- 9.6 There are no negative effects on any species or habitats of greater than minor adverse significance predicted prior to mitigation. Overall, the scheme brings the opportunity for significant biodiversity benefits and an overall beneficial residual

impact at the local level for some species. The Proposed Development will deliver a measurable net gain at the Site and for the local area, enabling a sensitively managed coherent habitat mosaic to be created, linked to off-site semi-natural habitats and contributing to biodiversity targets for a range of locally important habitats and species.

10.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE

- The potential impact on the archaeology and cultural heritage has been assessed. The archaeological evaluation has identified five areas of concentrated archaeological activity across the site; remains are susceptible to a range of impacts during the development process. Proposed groundworks associated with the development are anticipated to result in a high adverse magnitude of impact on the archaeological interest present on the site. For the archaeological interest of medium value this would lead to moderate impacts if no mitigation strategy were adopted. This is significant in EIA terms. However, mitigation of construction effects is possible through a programme of works and the preservation by record of deposits which will reduce the overall effects to minor adverse. Minor impacts for the archaeological remains which were identified to be of low value were identified. This is not significant in EIA terms. It is anticipated that there will be no operational effects on archaeological assets as all impacts would occur and be mitigated during the construction phase.
- The effects on the setting of the Listed Buildings of Church of St Laurence and Home Farmhouse have also been assessed as there would be a permanent impact caused by the change to the wider setting from an agricultural/rural to a residential/urban landscape and it has is predicted that the overall effects would be Negligible.
- 10.3 There is some archaeological receptors identified as being sensitive to cumulative impact but which is considered minor. The cumulative impacts on the Listed buildings would have a permanent but negligible impact.

11.0 WATER RESOURCES

11.1 The nature and significance of the potential effects on hydrology, drainage and water quality have been assessed. During the construction phase, potential impacts comprise of contamination of surface water and flooding and changes to baseline drainage hydrology. Following the implementation of mitigation measures, the assessments reported no likely significant adverse impacts are identified. Therefore, there will be a Negligible residual impact following mitigation as it can be effectively managed and controlled.

- 11.2 Operational impacts of offsite flooding, onsite flooding, contamination of surface waters from onsite activities and increase on foul drainage to the existing network have been assessed, and with the implementation of sustainable drainage systems a long term Minor Beneficial effect will result by improving water quality and reducing peak rates of run-off from the site. In relation to water quality, Minor Beneficial residual impacts are also anticipated. A full drainage system will be installed to control foul water collection and discharge and with mitigation, Negligible impact is predicted.
- 11.3 The site lies in an area of generally low flood risk and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The introduction of SuDS measures will ensure run-off is controlled using appropriate methods within the site boundary. The implementation of sustainable drainage systems within the site boundary will provide a long term beneficial effect by improving water quality and reducing peak rates of run-off from the site.

12.0 GROUND CONDITIONS

- 12.1 This chapter assesses the nature and significance of the potential effects in relation to ground conditions both during construction and post construction (operational). With the mitigation identified and through the adoption of best practice and a CEMP. No significant adverse effects are anticipated as part of the construction phase. No adverse residual effects are anticipated either.
 - 12.2 Likewise the assessments do not identify any likely significant adverse operational effects. No adverse residual effects are anticipated. Regulatory control applied to other developments will also ensure that the environmental effects from cumulative development will be Negligible.

13.0 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 13.1 This chapter describes the nature and significance of the potential effects on, or as a result of, climate change as a result of the Proposed Development. A CEMP will provide a robust basis for managing and mitigating any climate change effects from the construction phase of the proposed development.
- 13.2 The Proposed Development will be underpinned by an Energy Strategy which will consider that likelihood of the development making a significant impact on the environment and set out a strategy for energy sustainability through offsetting carbon emissions and steps to work towards a carbon zero development including the sustainable management of waste. Risks to the development of overheating

- and water stress will be addressed through a comprehensive solar master planning scheme and carefully considered green infrastructure network and embedded sustainable urban drainage systems.
- 13.3 The assessments reported do not identify any likely significant adverse effects on the development during construction or once operational. The implementation of passive and active sustainable features within the site boundary will provide a long-term beneficial effect through lowering emissions as well as reducing energy demand across the site. The environmental effects from cumulative development will be negligible and not significant.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- 14.1 This EIA has found that the Proposed Development would have few residual effects of more than minor significance, whether adverse or beneficial.
- 14.2 One area where substantial effects would arise would be in the positive socioeconomic impacts of the development. The application proposals will result in
 substantial and demonstrable benefits in terms of meeting the need for new
 homes in a sustainable manner, fostering economic development and further
 underpinning the sustainability of North West Bicester.
- 14.3 The potential for cumulative impacts arising as a result of the Proposed Development with development of additional and adjacent sites in the immediate areas, have been considered as part of the environmental assessments undertaken within this ES. The nature of the cumulative impacts have been set out in full and will for instance be related to traffic impacts. In this regard the Hawkwell Village proposals will make a positive cumulative impact by ensuring new housing development is well located in relation to the employment proposals and the planned development in the Cherwell Local Plan. The proposal represents a highly sustainable means of delivering the housing and related needs of the area.
- 14.4 In overall terms, the outcome of the EIA is that significant beneficial effects are substantial, significant adverse effects are limited and beneficial effects outweigh adverse effects.

Appendix 1: Development Framework Plan



