



HAWKWELL VILLAGE

New Community at North West Bicester

Planning Statement

December 2021



**Hallam Land
Management**

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CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	APPLICATION SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT	3
	Site Location.....	3
	Site Characteristics	3
	Designations.....	4
	Air Quality	4
	Arboriculture.....	4
	Heritage.....	4
	Drainage	5
	Landscape Character.....	5
	Ecology	6
	Agricultural and Soil Resources.....	7
3.0	PLANNING HISTORY	8
	North West Bicester	8
	Previous Application for Application Site.....	8
	Elmsbrook	8
	Improvements to Lords Lane and Howes Lane	9
	Other North West Bicester Applications – South West of London Marylebone – Birmingham Railway	10
4.0	APPLICATION PROPOSALS	13
	Land Use.....	13
	Layout	14
	Building Heights	14
	Vehicular Access and connectivity	14
	Green Infrastructure (GI)	15
	Sustainability and Zero Carbon	16
	Sustainable Drainage	16
	Ecology	17
	Phasing.....	17
	Stakeholder and Community Engagement	17
5.0	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	19
	Introduction.....	19
	Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2015).....	19
	Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Nov 1996)	20
	North-West Bicester Eco-Town Supplementary Planning Document (2016).....	21
	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	21
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT	24
	Principle of Development and Deliverability	24
	Housing need, mix and supply	24

Density and scale of development	26
Affordable Housing	27
Economic Development Strategy.....	28
Zero Carbon: Energy and Building Standards.....	30
Landscape and Green Infrastructure.....	32
Ecology and Biodiversity	33
Transport and Access	34
Noise.....	36
Drainage and Water Quality	36
7.0 DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS	38
8.0 CONCLUSIONS	40

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) on behalf of Hallam Land Management (HLM) in support of an outline planning application (OPA) submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC). In brief, the application seeks outline planning permission for a sustainable development of up to 3,100 dwellings, mixed use local centre and employment area, education uses, community and leisure facilities referred to as Hawkwell Village, on some 177 hectares of land to the north west of Lords Lane and north east of the railway line, and forms part of the North West Bicester Eco-Town allocation. Means of access is a matter to be considered as part of the application with all other matters reserved for subsequent approval.
- 1.2 The development is considered to constitute development which requires an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Scoping Opinion was sought from Cherwell District Council (CDC) in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, (as amended) and having regard to the criteria for determining the potential for significant environmental effects as set out in Schedules 3 and 4 of those Regulations. The Scoping Report is dated August 2021 and was submitted to the Council on 02 September 2021.
- 1.3 The formal Scoping Opinion under the EIA Regulations 2017 was received from the Council dated 7 October 2021 (REF: 21/03040/SCOP) and this submission takes into account its contents.
- 1.4 Engagement has taken place over a long period regarding development at North West Bicester. This OPA is submitted pursuant to that consultation and a further public engagement exercise which took place in October/November 2021 and which is summarised in this Statement and documented further within a Statement of Community Involvement. Hallam Land Management anticipated an ongoing programme of engagement with stakeholders.
- 1.5 The Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with all other elements of the application submission, including the Environmental Statement.
- 1.6 The full list of application documents and description of development is set out separately in the 'Description of Development' document.
- 1.7 This Planning Statement addresses the following:
- The site's location and physical context;
 - The proposed development;

- The planning history of the site and in relation to the allocation;
- The national and local planning policies that form the context for the proposal; and
- The application proposals in the light of those policies and in terms of principles of sustainable development.

2.0 APPLICATION SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Site Location

- 2.1 The Site is located on the north-western edge of Bicester. Bicester is a town and civil parish in the Cherwell district of north-eastern Oxfordshire. It was awarded Garden Town status in 2014 with North-West Bicester area also identified as a potential eco-town location in accordance with the then extant supplement to what was then Planning Policy Statement 1. The Site is some 2.5km to the north west of Bicester Town Centre which includes a full range of facilities including supermarkets, a doctor's surgery, independent High Street shops, a post office, pubs, restaurants as well as Bicester Retail Outlet Village. To the northwest is the 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. The station also offers sheltered, secure bicycling parking facilities by way of cycle stands which are monitored by CCTV; there is capacity for 65 bicycles. As such, there is the opportunity for journeys to the station to be made by bicycle for onwards travel by rail.
- 2.2 The Site includes Bucknell Road/Bicester Road and is bordered, to the south-west, by the London to Birmingham Railway, and to the south-east by the town ring road A4095 (Lords Lane). Land immediately to the north-east of the site is the subject of an outline application submitted for Firethorn Developments Ltd for up to 530 dwellings, open space, infrastructure and engineering works (21/01630/OUT).
- 2.3 To the north-east of the adjacent application lies Elmsbrook, the first phase of the North West Bicester development which is being built out and is well advanced with Primary school, Play, community and employment facilities operational. Beyond is the B4100 Banbury Road which links Bicester with Junction 10 of the M40 and the villages between including Caversfield and Bainton.
- 2.4 To the south, the Site abuts Bicester itself.

Site Characteristics

- 2.5 The site comprises some 177 hectares and forms part of a swathe of agricultural land that wraps around the north western edge of Bicester. Two farms are located within the part of the land to which the application relates (Lords Farm and Hawkwell Farm), both of which are to be retained by the landowners and are therefore excluded from the red line boundary of the application site. The site lies within the catchment of the River Ray, three tributaries of which flow through the site. The River Bure runs through the eastern part of the Site on a north-south axis before turning south to join a second watercourse (known as Langford

Brook) running through the southern part of the Site. The Bure then continues south through the Bure Park Nature Reserve and Bicester town.

- 2.6 The surrounding landscape is shaped by the River Bure, whilst within the site the topography is defined by the two watercourses. The site and the local landscape is comparatively flat in character with the local landform gently falling from west to east towards Bicester (98m AOD to 80m AOD on its eastern point close to the A4095).

Designations

- 2.7 The site is not subject to any national, regional or local landscape or ecological designations. The Environment Agency Flood Map identifies the area of land immediately adjacent to the River Bure as falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the remaining majority of the site falling within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.8 The Bure Park Nature Reserve, located approximately 60 metres to the south at the closest point, is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- 2.9 The nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the Ardley Cutting and Quarry located some 600 metres to the north west at the closest point. Beyond that are the Ardley Trackways (approximately 2km to the north west) and the Stratton Audley Quarries (approximately 2km to the east).

Air Quality

- 2.10 The site and surroundings are not located within any Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). NO₂ (Nitrogen dioxide) levels have however resulted in the designation of an AQMA in Bicester Town Centre (Bicester No 4 AQMA) – the closest AQMA to the site.

Arboriculture

- 2.11 A tree survey of the site and its boundaries has been undertaken. The site contains woodland belts and tree groups, such as along the A4095, the railway line which borders the site to the west and along the site's watercourses. The majority of the tree resource is assessed as being of moderate to low quality, although there are five trees (T1, T53, T70 and T115) that are judged to be of Grade A, High Quality from an arboricultural perspective. Of the total of 151 individual trees recorded in the Arboricultural Assessment, 13 are unsuitable for retention and 77 Category C (Low Quality/Value). There are no 'veteran trees' within the site. Immediately beyond the site are the wooded areas to the north (between the site and the village of Bucknell) and to the north-east. One mature ash tree is protected by a TPO and is located within the green space proposed within the development.

Heritage

- 2.12 The ES chapter has reviewed the potential effects on archaeological and heritage features. Geophysical surveys, and extensive trenching, previously carried out in relation to the

substantial majority of the site and historical records suggest that the archaeological assets are unlikely to be of more than medium value. The Heritage Impact Assessment appended to the ES Chapter sets out provision for a condition requiring a Written Scheme of Investigation. There is no Scheduled Ancient Monument located in or adjacent to the proposed site.

- 2.13 There are no Listed Buildings located within the site. Within the village of Bucknell, to the north, there are fourteen Listed Buildings/Structures which includes the Grade I Church of St Peter and the Grade II Listed, Trigger Pond Public House, and Bucknell Manor House. To the east, beyond development at Elmsbrook there is a Grade II Listed building at Home Farmhouse, and the Grade II* listing of the Church of Saint Laurence sited on the B4100.
- 2.14 To the south east of the site is located the Bicester Airfield Conservation Area.
- 2.15 The landscape within the site is typical as an arable landscape. The historic landscape is of low landscape value.

Drainage

- 2.16 The ES chapter on Water Resources is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment.
- 2.17 The principal watercourse in the area is the River Bure and its tributaries, which pass through the site through the central and eastern areas of the proposed development. There are a small number of ponds close to Hawkwell Farm, and a number of field drains.
- 2.18 The Environment Agency (EA) publishes floodplain maps on the internet (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk>). These maps show the possible extent of river flooding associated with a 1 in 100 year event (1% probability of occurrence), ignoring the presence of flood defences. Also shown is the possible extent of flooding arising from a 1 in 1,000 year event (0.1% probability).
- 2.19 The flood map indicates that the substantial majority of the site lies within flood zone 1. No built development is proposed within the very narrow areas of the site along the stream tributaries where there is a higher risk of flooding potentially associated with flood zones 2 or 3.
- 2.20 The development proposals are unlikely to have an adverse effect upon the achievement of environmental objectives established under the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Landscape Character

- 2.21 The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Statement as part of the ES chapter in order to consider the landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed development of the site. There are no landscape designations covering the site or

the immediate area. There is no relationship with the Cotswold AONB or any Historic Park or Garden or Conservation Area.

- 2.22 The site lies within an area of transition between the Cotswolds and Upper Thames Clay Vales National Landscape Character Areas (107 and 108 respectively). At County level, the site lies within the "Woodlands Estate Lands Landscape Character Area (Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study 2004) and within that the 'Middleton Stoney' Landscape Character Area.
- 2.23 The landscape analysis of the site, that is included within the Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, reveals medium-high capacity to accommodate residential and employment and other development.
- 2.24 The site is not considered to be a valued landscape within the context of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 2.25 The ES includes a chapter on Ecology and Biodiversity which identifies the key ecological features, effects of the development alongside opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposals and hence produce a net biodiversity gain. Equally the ES identifies the mitigation proposed including a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. A Landscape and Environmental Management Plan will be prepared and will be agreed with CDC through a planning condition. The LEMP will ensure the establishment and the continued long-term management of the various landscape habitats within the site.
- 2.26 Baseline studies to date have identified the following statutory designated sites within a 2km search area:
- Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI
 - Ardley Trackways SSSI
 - Stratton Audley Quarries SSSI and LWS
- 2.27 No other SSSIs are located within 2km (or indeed 5km) from the site boundary.
- 2.28 The River Bure and two of its tributaries flow through the Site before they enter Bure Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The LNR is located just to the south of the Site and it appears, at this stage, that the terrestrial habitats within the park are largely man-made and on soils that are nutrient-rich. The site is also subject to regular management to retain the mosaic of open grassland and scrub.
- 2.29 The Cherwell Local Plan and the Oxfordshire BAP (Ref 6-2) identifies Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) for the maintenance, restoration and creation of BAP habitats within the county. Those BAP habitats relevant to the Site comprise woodland, hedgerows and rivers.

The Site is not within or in close proximity to any of the identified CTAs; however, there are two CTAs located within 5km of the Development. The nearest CTA is the Tusmore and Shelswell Parks with Stoke Lyne Woodlands CTA, located approximately 1km to the north-west. This CTA is designated for its parkland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland), and associated habitats including large parkland lakes, ponds and wet woodland. The River Ray CTA, located approximately 2.5km to the south east of the Site, largely comprises lowland meadow and wet grassland habitats.

Agricultural and Soil Resources

- 2.30 An assessment of the agricultural value of the land was undertaken in relation to the substantial majority of the site as part of the previous application (14/01384/OUT). In summary, 74% was classified as Grade 3b, 20% as Grade 4, and 4.5 hectares as non-agricultural or not surveyed. Just 4.7 hectares (3%) was classified as Class 3a best and most versatile agricultural land, primarily along the stream corridors which will be retained within the proposed green infrastructures. There was no land in Grade 1 or 2.
- 2.31 All land along the northern boundary of the previous application site was classified as Class 3b or 4. The Soils Survey report which extended beyond the previous application site boundary and within the present application site confirmed that the soils are the same and therefore likely also to be classified as Class 3b or 4 and very limited prospect of the land falling within the definition of Best and Most Versatile Land (ie. Grades 1, 2 and 3a).

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

North West Bicester

- 3.1 The site is part of the North West Bicester Eco-Town allocation and since 2010, there has been several planning applications submitted to CDC for parts/parcels of, and for infrastructure across the site.

Previous Application for Application Site

- 3.2 The Proposed Development which is the subject of this application shares a substantial overlap with a previous yet current application for the development of the substantial majority of that part of North West Bicester located to the north east of the Marylebone – Birmingham railway line (but excluding the first phases of 393 homes known as Elmsbrook - see below) (14/01384/OUT). That site comprised an area of 155 hectares surrounding Hawkwell Farm and Lords Farm and the applicants were A2 Dominion Developments Ltd.
- 3.3 That application (14/01384/OUT) has the benefit of a resolution to grant planning permission although no section 106 has been agreed, and therefore the application remains to be determined. The application was for 2,600 dwellings, energy centre, primary school, and a range of uses to be accommodated in a local business hub and mixed use area. In total permission was being sought for some 5,220 sq m of business and commercial floorspace, some 2,770 sq m (GEA) community uses and 1,375 sq m of retail and restaurant uses.
- 3.4 The current application site, excludes a small part of that previous site (some 22 hectares of land to the north east of the stream in the north east corner of that site). That excluded land has since been the subject of a separate outline application (21/01630/OUT pending and submitted by Firethorn) seeking permission for up to 530 dwellings, open space, infrastructure and engineering works.
- 3.5 The proposed development in the current application also includes additional fields or parts thereof to the north of the previous application site. Consequently the proposed application site is some 177 hectares in size (previously 155 hectares).

Elmsbrook

- 3.6 In 2012, a hybrid application for the exemplar phase of North West Bicester Eco Town was approved, the first within the North West Bicester Ecotown allocation. Known as Elmsbrook, full planning permission was granted for 393 homes, energy centre, amenity space. Outline planning permission for nursery, community centre, retail, eco-business centre, post office, pharmacy, office accommodation, pub, and primary school (LPA REF: 10/01780/HYBRID). The applicants were A2 Dominion Group/P3Eco (Bicester) Ltd. The scheme is now substantially built out.

- 3.7 In July 2016, a full planning application (LPA Ref: 15/00760/F) was approved for a new Local Centre within the Elmsbrook scheme, comprising a Convenience Store (use class A1), Retail Units (flexible use class A1/A3/A5), Pub (use class A4), Community Hall (use class D1), Nursery (use class D1), Commercial Units (flexible use class A2/B1/D1) with associated Access, Servicing, Landscaping and Parking with a total GEA of 3,617 sqm. The applicants were again A2Dominion Developments Ltd. Development did not proceed and the planning permission has now expired. It is superceded by application LPA Ref: 19/01036/HYBRID (see below).
- 3.8 A new, hybrid, application for Phase 2 (the mixed use centre) within the exemplar phase was submitted in June 2019 by Barton Willmore LLP and supercedes the previous permission for the mixed use centre (LPA Ref: 15/00760/F). The application sought approval for full permission for Local Centre Community Floorspace (Use Class D1 with ancillary A1/A3), with a total GIA of 552 sqm, and 16 residential units (Use Class C3) with associated access, servicing, landscaping and parking plus application for outline consent comprising up to 3,000sqm (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5/B1/D1). The application was granted permission on 12 July 2021 (LPA Ref: 19/01036/HYBRID).
- 3.9 Adjacent to the southern boundary of the Elmsbrook development, a further outline planning application, submitted on behalf of SGR (Bicester)¹ Ltd was made in March 2018 - for up to 75 homes, pedestrian and cycle routes, creation of new access point from Charlotte Avenue, provision of open space, play space, allotments, orchard, parking and associated works (LPA Ref: 18/00484/OUT). The application, to the east of the present Proposed Development Site and abutting the Banbury Road, was withdrawn.

Improvements to Lords Lane and Howes Lane

- 3.10 The proposals in the Cherwell Local Plan for North West Bicester, included provision for changes and improvements to the existing orbital routes to facilitate the new development and, in particular, the integration of the development with Bicester, and across the NW Bicester site (including across the railway line).
- 3.11 On 21st August 2019 full planning permission was granted to Oxfordshire County Council for the construction of two new roads, a road crossing, and a bus link (LPA REF: 14/01968/F). The Description of Development is as follows: "Construction of new road from Middleton Stoney Road roundabout to join Lord's Lane, east of Purslane Drive, to include the construction of a new crossing under the existing railway line north of the existing Avonbury Business Park, a bus only link east of the railway line, a new road around Hawkwell Farm to join Bucknell Road, retention of part of Old Howes Lane and Lord's Lane to provide access to and from existing residential areas and Bucknell Road to the south and associated infrastructure".

- 3.12 The road construction and funding is currently being led by OCC who have progressed the design and technical works. The crossings under the railway have now been constructed.

Other North West Bicester Applications – South West of London Marylebone – Birmingham Railway

- 3.13 With regard to planning applications within the wider allocation, in January 2020, Portfolio Property Partners Ltd gained outline planning application for up to 1,700 residential dwellings (Class C3), a retirement village (Class C2), flexible commercial floorspace (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1 and D1), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre and land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2FE) (Class D1) (LPA REF: 14/02121/OUT). This application is known as Himley Village and comprises a substantial element of the land allocated for North West Bicester to the south west of the Marylebone – Birmingham railway. The site is bounded by Middleton Stoney Road to the south. The section 106 agreement, that forms part of the consent, makes provision for the permitted development to deliver the sports pitches necessary to meet the needs of the wider North West Bicester area. Within its mixed use area, the planning permission grants consent for 8,000 sqm of mixed uses with no more than 700 sqm of retail uses, 1,000 sqm of office use and 1,500 sqm of health facilities with hotel, pub, community, nursery and energy centre also permitted. A reserved matters application has been submitted by Countryside Properties.
- 3.14 Also to the south west of the railway line, but in this instance fronting Howes Lane, Albion Land Ltd gained outline approval, at appeal, in December 2017, for 9.45ha of employment land and some 4.5 ha of residential land (LPA Ref: 14/01675/OUT). The employment development approved comprised the erection of up to 53,000 sqm of B1, B2 and B8 (use classes) floorspace within two employment zones; parking and service areas to serve the employment zones; a new access off the Middleton Stoney Road (B4030); plus temporary access off Howes Lane pending the delivery of the realigned Howes Lane. No more than 150 dwellings are to be accommodated on the 4.5 hectares of residential land.
- 3.15 Prior to the granting of approval on appeal, an outline planning application (LPA Ref: 17/01090/OUT) was permitted by Cherwell District Council, on 7th August 2017 for the same quantum of B1, B2 and B8 (Use Classes) employment, including landscaping; parking and service areas; balancing ponds and swales; and associated utilities and infrastructure; construction of a new access off Middleton Stoney Road (B4030); temporary access off Howes Lane; internal roads, footways and cycleways (duplicating that permitted on appeal). However it excluded any residential development. It is not being implemented.
- 3.16 On 18th July 2019 permission was granted (LPA Ref 19/00347/OUT) to amend the previously permitted scheme (LPA Ref: 14/01675/OUT) which had been approved on appeal. The amendment grants consent for (i) an alternative temporary access arrangement and ii) an amendment to a Grampian condition attached to the Planning Consent, enabling the

employment development (but not the residential development) to come forward in its entirety prior to the completion of the highway works approved under LPA REF: 14/01968/F (see above), i.e. prior to the construction of what has been termed the Strategic Link Road (SLR). No change is made to the approved quanta of development. Reserved matters applications 19/00349/REM and 20/02454/REM have subsequently been submitted and approved in December 2020. A further application (20/03199/OUT) was approved in May 2021 such that the proportion of employment development that could be developed for B8 purposes was increased from 70% to 85% of the permitted floorspace.

3.17 Immediately to the south of the railway and west of the proposed new strategic link road, A2 Dominion South Ltd submitted an outline planning application for development of 51 hectares of land in 2014. The application – also part of North West Bicester development – is for up to 900 residential dwellings (Class C3), commercial floor space (Class A1-A5, B1 and B2), leisure facilities (Class D2), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre and land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2 FE) (Class D1) (LPA REF: 14/01641/OUT). In addition permission is sought for a secondary school (8FE) to serve the wider North West Bicester community. In terms of commercial elements the application includes the following parameters:

- Retail and leisure 2,035 sq m GEA
- Commercial and Business 2,425 sq m GEA
- Community uses including health centre (4,196 sq.m)

3.18 The application is yet to be determined (albeit enjoying a resolution to grant consent).

3.19 Finally, there remains some 50-60 hectares of land which is allocated for development within North West Bicester – to the north of the Himley Village approval – which is yet to be the subject of any application for planning permission, or indeed Screening or Scoping request. It is estimated that that land also has the potential to accommodate some 900 new homes.

3.20 The table below summarises the permissions and proposals as described above

LPA REF	Site	Uses
North West Bicester – Land north east of Marylebone-Birmingham Railway line		
14/01384/OUT Not Determined (Resolution to grant March 2015)	North West Bicester (155ha of current application site) (A2 Dominion)	Outline application for 2600 dwellings, commercial floorspace, social and community centres, land for energy centre, schools.
10/01780/HYBRID Permitted July 2012	Elmsbrook - Exemplar East of Application site	Full permission for 393 homes, energy centre. Outline permission for eco business centre, community uses, primary school and retail and commercial uses

19/01036/HYBRID Permitted July 2021	Elmsbrook Local Centre	Local Centre Community Floorspace (Use Class D1 with ancillary A1/A3) (552 sqm GIA); 16 dwellings; up to 3,000sqm (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5/B1/D1).
21/1630/OUT 20/03254/SCOP Pending Determination	Land abutting eastern boundary of application site (Firethorn)	Up to 530 dwellings
Infrastructure Commitments		
14/01968/F Permitted Aug 2019	Improvement of Lords Lane and Howes Road	New road from Middleton Stoney Road roundabout to join Lord's Lane, east of Purslane Drive, to include the construction of a new crossing under the existing railway line north of the existing Avonbury Business Park, a bus only link east of the railway line, a new road around Hawkwell Farm to join Bucknell Road.
North West Bicester – Land south west of Marylebone-Birmingham Railway line		
14/02121/OUT Permitted Jan 2020	Himley Village North of Middleton Stoney Road	Up to 1,700 new homes, retirement village, primary school, sports pitches, mixed use (8,000 sq m no more than 700 sq m of retail, 1,000 sq m of office use and 1,500 sq metres of health facilities
14/01675/OUT 19/00347/OUT 20/03199/OUT 19/00349/REM 20/02454/REM All Permitted Albion Land	Land adjoining Middleton Road and Howes Lane	150 homes 53,000 sq m of floor space to be for B1, B2 and B8 (up to 85% B8) (Up to 70% B1)
14/01641/OUT Undetermined (Subject to S106 Oct 2015)	Land north of Howes Road and Strategic Road Link	900 residential dwellings, social and community facilities (Class D1, 4196sq m)), energy centre, one new primary school (up to 2 FE), retail and leisure 2,035 sq m GEA; Commercial and Business 2,425 sq m GEA
Residual Land in Bicester 1 allocation.	Land north of Himley Village	50-60 hectares (circa 900 new homes)

4.0 APPLICATION PROPOSALS

Land Use

- 4.1 The Proposed Development incorporates residential, employment, health, community, education, local retail, commercial and leisure uses, set within a framework of green infrastructure.
- 4.2 Residential development would comprise up to 3100 dwellings, of a broad range of types and sizes including extra care and up to 30% affordable housing. This would extend to 74.35 hectares of the site. Density varies across the site with a higher densities anticipated along the primary street and around the local centre. There will be opportunities for lower densities fronting onto Bucknell and Bicester Road, retaining a rural character. A lower density for properties fronting the community park to the north and watercourse corridors, retaining an open character, is also likely.
- 4.3 A site totalling 2.22 hectares is identified to accommodate a new 2FE primary school and a site of 0.88ha is shown as primary school playing field to serve as a future expansion for Gagle Brook primary school in the Exemplar development. Land for a secondary school is set aside within application 14/01641/OUT to serve the wider NE Bicester development. The secondary school is understood to be intended to deliver 8 forms of entry.
- 4.4 A mixed use local centre is identified to the south of the site extending to 1.5 hectares accommodating commercial, business and service uses, within Classes E (a) retail; E (b) food and drink; E (c) services, the following sui generis uses; hot food takeaways, public house, wine bar, and local community uses (F2 (a) and F2 (b)). An employment area of 0.70hectares accommodating use classes E (g), B2 and B8 is also proposed. 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.
- 4.5 Green infrastructure would comprise retained and new woodland, village green, open green space, sports, recreation and play areas including LEAPS, NEAPS and a MUGA, country park, burial ground (4ha) and allotments and a community farm which would equate to in excess of 40% of the Site. At least half of the green space will be publicly accessible.

- 4.6 The northern part of the site accommodates ground mounted photovoltaic arrays measuring 10ha.

Layout

- 4.7 As the application is in outline form, there is no fixed design for the Site. With reference to the Development Framework Plan and Development Parameters, it is intended that a series of residential areas would be located on a connected network comprising of a primary route connected into the wider highway network. The primary street will be complemented by a permeable network of secondary streets plus tertiary routes shared surfaces and private drives. The local centre and commercial/employment areas are located to the south of the site adjacent to the railway line. The new 2FE primary school is also situated adjacent to the mixed use local centre and adjacent to the primary road network in the most accessible part of the site. The Gagle Brook Primary School is located immediately to the east of the site which is presently 1FE and land is proposed as part of the masterplan providing additional land intended to allow for the expansion of this existing primary school. The substantial majority of homes are located within 800 metres walking route of primary schools.
- 4.8 The layout and structure of the Proposed Development is the outcome of a landscape led design approach. The Green Infrastructure proposed is focused around natural corridors such as watercourses, streams, hedgerows and field boundaries as well as contributing to biodiversity and habitat.
- 4.9 The development has a robust urban structure, with a network of well-designed connected spaces and routes that prioritise the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. This will reduce the environmental impact of the development but will also contribute to the wellbeing, enjoyment and health of people promoting active travel and healthy lifestyles. Transects and illustrative visuals are included in the DAS to demonstrate the quality of development to be achieved on the Site.

Building Heights

- 4.10 Variation in building heights across the site will be appropriate to support the character of the new development.
- 4.11 Residential areas will have a maximum height of up to 12.5m and the mixed use area (schools, employment area) will be up to 14m.

Vehicular Access and connectivity

- 4.12 The realignment of the A4095 (Howes Lane) to form a Strategic Link Road is planned to serve the NW Bicester allocated site as a whole and to increase the network capacity and remove any barriers and constraints. The A4095 forms part of a ring road around Bicester and will allow future residents to drive around Bicester when travelling outside of the town.

- 4.13 Access is sought for approval as part of the application. The main points of vehicular access will be via the Strategic Link Road (realigned A4095) to the south of the site. The indicative layout also includes a network of connections including a link to the eastern edge of the site to allow for the potential for an access via a junction from the internal primary access through to the adjacent Elmsbrook site.
- 4.14 Access is also proposed from Bucknell Road where the provision of signalised crossing points and a pedestrian underpass, will result in the realignment of the road. The consequence of the realigned Bucknell Road, together with the proposals for well-designed measures to manage traffic will be to actively reduce traffic along Bucknell Road. and ensure the avoidance of local traffic impacts eg in Bucknell.
- 4.15 The railway line divides the site into two distinct areas which are connected via the provision of an underpass and bridge currently being constructed by Oxfordshire County Council and the network of connections also allows for the potential to link into existing routes and public rights of way enhancing access and connections with the existing communities of the town and with the future new communities in the adjacent parcels of development as part of a comprehensive development.
- 4.16 The application proposals include an access and movement network that facilitates movement by non-car modes. A primary route alignment is proposed within the site to accommodate all modes of travel including public transport. Good permeability, frontage and crossing points combined by a reduced speed limit will deliver an urban boulevard in the site. The site is also located in close proximity to bus routes of the existing bus services that pass through Bicester and well situated in relation to the rail network and high quality bus routes will be provided as part of the wider scheme facilitating frequent and direct bus connection to key destinations. A Framework Travel Plan also accompanies the application.
- 4.17 The site is in a sustainable location, well-related to the existing town of Bicester with a range of facilities and services there lying within a 'reasonable' walking distance and the entirety of Bicester is within cycling distance of the site. Proposed commuter/pedestrian routes within the road corridor and proposed leisure pedestrian/cycle routes within the GI will also promote active travel within the site. Given the location of the site, there is real opportunity to create a development that is sustainable and encourages journeys to be made actively.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

- 4.18 In excess of 40% of the total gross site area will comprise of green infrastructure of which over half will be publicly accessible. The high quality green and open spaces will be well managed and linked and well connected to the surrounding open countryside to facilitate easy access to the countryside and promote the opportunity for healthy lifestyles. The GI proposed is focused around natural corridors such as watercourses, streams, hedgerows and field boundaries providing further structure around the housing and commercial

development. It will provide a clear system of safe, accessible and attractive open and green spaces that respond to and enhance natural features across the site, and integrate with the existing settlement.

- 4.19 The application site extends beyond the allocation boundary to its north for landscape reasons: 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 and 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 infrastructure creates an enduring edge to the development. The 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.
- 4.20 The multi-functional GI will provide a range of green spaces which will be accessible for sports, play and recreation, walking and cycling, local food production in allotments, support wildlife and maximise biodiversity, contribute to urban cooling and reduce heat islands. It will include SUDS which are designed to respond to future extreme weather events and flood management whilst also integrated into the wider landscape and ecology strategy. The GI and Principles masterplan shows frontages to be designed onto the green spaces with design consideration towards natural surveillance without compromising landscape setting. Natural buffer zones are also provided to enhance the value of the landscape and which includes a network of paths and cycleways.

Sustainability and Zero Carbon

- 4.21 The site's aspect provides the potential for large-scale renewable energy generation. Carbon emissions will be offset through a range of measures including roof mounted Photovoltaic cells on each dwelling and other buildings and roof pitches can be oriented/aligned accordingly. Built form, density and massing can also reduce the potential for solar gain to generate energy. Any remaining carbon emissions will be offset through initiatives such as the ground mounted photovoltaic array (solar farm) now proposed, as part of careful masterplanning, and through carbon sequestering schemes (from GI, tree planting etc). As well as roof mounted Photovoltaics, the houses may be fitted with individual Air Source Heat Pumps, and will be designed efficiently, in line with future Building Regulations. Battery Storage is also being considered, alongside EV charging points.

Sustainable Drainage

- 4.22 Three water courses flow through the site within shallow valleys. The new SuDS network will extend through the wider open space network as integrated features including swales, rills and basins. The general approach of 'slow the flow' will be applied across the development, from individual buildings at the micro scale through to streets and neighbourhoods and upwards to the macro scale which considers the whole site. The SuDS network will capture

and reuse or store stormwater, improve its quality through natural filtration and treatment before discharging in a controlled way from the development. The controlled discharging of stormwater in this way will ensure that peak flow rates from the development will not be increased from the current greenfield conditions.

Ecology

- 4.23 The green and blue infrastructure frameworks have been developed together to maximise the benefits each can provide for the environment and wildlife. The extensive GI proposed comprises new planting and habitats alongside retained habitats which are connected to the ecosystems will provide for a mosaic of habitats for insects, animals and birds. Hedgerow removal and therefore, habitat loss and disturbance has been minimised through careful design of the development. This ensures that biodiversity enhancements can be secured and a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved at the Site.

Phasing

- 4.24 A resolution to approve development on a slightly smaller site (155ha) in this location was approved subject to Section 106. However, the S106 was never completed owing to issues with deliverability and viability.
- 4.25 This proposal is deliverable and it is envisaged that delivery will take place over a 12 year period with first completions in 2024 and development completion estimated around 2035/36.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- 4.26 The application is supported by a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which outlines and explains the approach that was taken to engage stakeholders and the local community as part of developing the proposals. Information on how the feedback received has informed the proposals and is included in the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.27 Details of the consultation were advised to, and comments and observations were invited from Bucknell, Caversfield and Chesterton Parish Councils, Bicester Town Council and ward members, Elmsbrook Community Organisation. The applicants have expressed to each party its commitment to ongoing engagement through the application process.
- 4.28 In September 2021, a formal request was made to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Scoping Opinion under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, (as amended). The request was accompanied by a Scoping Report which outlined the emerging development proposals, provided a description of the Site and considered the potential significant effects that are subject of the EIA. A Scoping Opinion was subsequently adopted by Cherwell District Council in October 2021. In formulating its Scoping Opinion, the Council

also consulted and received responses from a number of external bodies including the Environment Agency and Natural England.

- 4.29 To ensure the community and stakeholders have the opportunity to view and provide feedback on the proposals, a public consultation website was established in October 2021 was live between 25 October and 12 November 2021 and was kept live after that date.
- 4.30 This included a virtual exhibition section, online feedback facility and options to download the consultation materials. The website will remain online.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the prevailing development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 For the purposes of this application, the development plan comprises the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), adopted in 2015. Saved policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 remain part of the statutory Development Plan to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications. The saved policies are those that were originally saved on 27 September 2007 and which have not been replaced by policies within the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1). Appendix 7 of that Plan lists those policies that have been replaced.
- 5.3 A review of the Local Plan is currently being progressed to update some of the current local plan policies and looking to address the needs of Cherwell up to 2040. The next period of consultation 'Developing our Options' took place from 29 September 2021 – 10 November 2021.
- 5.4 Whilst the preparation of the local plan review continues, the adopted Local Plan is the principal planning policy document for the assessment of planning applications. This section sets out relevant statutory development plan policies and other material considerations and explores their position in relation to the development proposals.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2015)

- 5.5 The substantial majority of the Site is allocated in the adopted plan and identifies the Site as one parcel within North West Bicester Eco-Town strategic allocation. This was identified in Annex A of the Eco-towns PPS (2009) as one of the four potential locations for the development of an eco-town. The eco-town concept was to create and showcase more sustainable living in new communities. North West Bicester will play a major role in delivering the strategic growth identified in Bicester during and beyond the plan period.
- 5.6 Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town allocates the location of the North West of Bicester eco-town proposals which comprises a total development area of 390 hectares. The proposal is described as 'A new zero carbon(i) mixed use development including 6,000 homes'.
- 5.7 The policy details key aspects of development that is expected to be delivered across the whole of the North West Bicester development allocation including: employment, housing, infrastructure needs, monitoring, key site-specific design and place shaping principles and Section 6 outlines how the development complies with these requirements.

- 5.8 The Local Plan also includes policies for building sustainable communities and of particular relevance are policies BSC2, BSC3 and BSC 4.
- 5.9 BSC 2 which requires housing to make effective and efficient use of land at a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.10 Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing advises that all proposed developments that include 11 or more dwellings will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site. It goes on to say that all qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate housing.
- 5.11 Policy BSC4: Housing Mix requires a mix of homes to be provided to meet current and expected future requirements and to have regard to the Council's most up to date evidence on local market conditions. It also advises that housing sites of at least 400 dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 45 self-contained extra care dwellings as part of the overall mix. Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing (use class C3) for older people will be required.
- 5.12 The Local Plan includes policies for ensuring sustainable development which complement policy Bicester 1 in seeking zero carbon development and high environmental standards including policies ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions, policy ESD:3 Sustainable Construction and policy ESD 5: Renewable Energy.
- 5.13 Local Plan policy SLE4 sets out that new development should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, to deliver key connections and to support modal shift and which is also emphasised in Policy Bicester 1.
- 5.14 The Local Plan includes other relevant policies, including, for instance, design, landscape, open space and local standards (ESD13, ESD15, ESD17, BSC10 and BSC11) and infrastructure (INF1).

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Nov 1996)

- 5.15 There are policies originally saved on 27 September 2007 and which are still retained and remain part of the statutory Development Plan to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications. The retained policies are set out in appendix 7 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031) and those which are relevant to the determination of this application include:
- 5.16 Policy C15 advises that the council will prevent the coalescence of settlements by resisting development in areas of open land, which are important in distinguishing them. The policy

comments that each town or village has its own identity; it refers to particularly vulnerable gaps which does not include Bicester and Bucknell.

North-West Bicester Eco-Town Supplementary Planning Document (2016)

- 5.17 The NW Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) expands upon Policy Bicester 1 and provides a means of implementing the strategic allocation. It was informed by key elements of the NW Bicester Masterplan Vision and Objectives document prepared by A2Dominion in 2014. In 2009, the site at NW Bicester was identified as having potential as an eco-town location in the Planning Policy Statement (PPS): Eco-towns a supplement to PPS1. The Eco-town standards are carried forward into this SPD.
- 5.18 The vision for NW Bicester is for a high quality development, well integrated with the existing town, which provides homes, jobs and local services in an attractive landscape setting, conserves and enhances heritage assets including historic landscape features, increases biodiversity and addresses the impact of climate change. Infrastructure requirements will be future-proofed so that the development can adapt to change. Renewable energy generation from on-site sources will be a key element in making progress towards net zero carbon emissions from energy used in buildings on the site.
- 5.19 Although not development plan policy, the SPD sets out the standards it expects to be achieved by the proposed development. The document advises that developers will be encouraged to exceed these standards where possible and apply new higher standards that arise that reflect up to date best practice and design principles.
- 5.20 The SPD sets out development principles and requirements. Demonstration of how the scheme responds directly to these principles are covered in this planning statement where relevant but are provided within the Design and Access Statement as required.
- 5.21 Paragraph 1.20 of the SPD lists a series of relevant guidance which should be considered alongside the policy documents referred to above and which includes several design documents, which have been considered through the evolution of the design proposals, as set out in the DAS.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.22 The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, originally published in 2012, with the most recent version published in July 2021. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further guidance on the NPPF.
- 5.23 The NPPF (Paragraph 8) sets out the principle of sustainable development in terms of the pursuit of economic, social and environmental objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. A presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the NPPF (Paragraph 11) which, for decision taking, means

approving proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or that if the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF itself.

- 5.24 The NPPF, at part 5, supports the government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and Paragraph 62 expects the affordable housing requirement to be met on site in accordance with the local need identified by policy. This section also includes paragraph 73 which advises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Paragraph 73 (d) advises a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, and supporting rapid implementation should be considered.
- 5.25 Part 8 paras 92 to 103, states that decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. It highlights that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. It states that it is also important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
- 5.26 In terms of sustainable transport, Paragraph 110 urges that applications for development give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas, and secondly to facilitate as far as possible access to high quality public transport. Paragraph 103 acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in decision making.
- 5.27 In order to achieve appropriate densities, Paragraph 122 stipulates that development that makes efficient use of land should be supported. Paragraph 123(a) specifies that appropriate locations for increasing density include city and town centres and ‘other locations that are well served by public transport.’ Moreover, Paragraph 123(c) requires authorities to refuse applications which do not make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies within the Framework.
- 5.28 The NPPF at Section 12 seeks to achieve well-designed places and which is a key aspect of sustainable development. It refers to the preparation of design guides and codes providing a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local

facilities and transport networks and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. The NPPF at paragraph 131 highlights the importance contribution made by trees to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- 5.29 Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding and the transition to a low carbon future is part of the role of the planning system. Paragraph 154 advises that new development should avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and should help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, through its location, orientation and design. It expects compliance with local requirements and policies and also an assurance that risk of flooding is not increased elsewhere.
- 5.30 Planning decisions should also contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment as set out in NPPF Section 15 advising that valued landscape should be protected and enhanced, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is recognised and impacts should be minimised on biodiversity and net gains for biodiversity should be pursued and secured. New and existing development should not contribute to, or be put at unacceptable risk from unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution. Advice on conserving the historic environment is set out at Section 16.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development and Deliverability

- 6.1 This section of the Statement assesses the proposal against the Development Plan and then examines it in relation to the 'other material considerations' outlined above.
- 6.2 The principle for the development of the North West Bicester site was established initially through its strategic allocation in the CDC adopted Local Plan for 6000 new homes as defined in Policy Bicester 1. The policy criteria along with the supporting SPD, set principles for the uses and development of the site.
- 6.3 Application 14/01384/OUT relates to much of the land which is part of this application site. That application received a resolution to approve in March 2015 subject to completion of a Section 106. The NPPF and NPPG provide guidance on what is required for sites to be considered deliverable and refers to the need for a realistic prospect of that housing being delivered within five years. The S106 agreement has still not been signed and the AMR reports that in Oct 2020, the main residential developer A2 Dominion of parcels relating to 14/01384/OUT (2600 homes) and 14/01641/OUT (900 homes) will not now be taking their sites forward as intended and no longer acting as lead developer.
- 6.4 Hallam Land Management (HLM) are now taking on land relating to 14/01384/OUT for the proposed development. HLM have a strong track record in bringing forward land for a variety of developments allowing for the successful implementation of strategic developments and their involvement in this site should facilitate the much needed delivery of this key parcel of land in the overall strategic allocation.
- 6.5 This Site is a significant portion of the overall strategic allocation for development and will see the delivery of up to 3100 homes. The mix of uses proposed as part of the development will help to ensure unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum and achieves and increase in containment.

Housing need, mix and supply

- 6.6 The Local Plan seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and meet the objectively assessed need for Cherwell. Policy BSC1 of the Local Plan adopted in 2015 requires the delivery of 22,480 homes across the District in the plan period and sets the overall distribution across the District; with 10,129 homes to be provided at Bicester.
- 6.7 CDC is committed to working on an on-going basis under a legal Duty to Cooperate and joint work undertaken has revealed that Cherwell and other districts need to meet additional need for Oxford as it cannot accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary. This triggered a 'Partial Review' of the Local Cherwell Plan and its 'Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need' was formally adopted

as part of the statutory Development Plan on 7 Sept 2020. The Plan provides the strategic framework and sets out strategic allocations to provide Cherwell's share of the unmet needs of Oxford to 2031. This focuses development on a geographic area extending north from Oxford to south Kidlington, and along the A44 corridor to Yarnton and Begbroke. This approach specifically references that this avoids undermining the strategy of the existing Cherwell Local Plan and the delivery of planned growth at Bicester.

- 6.8 The district's assessment of housing need is based on the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 which indicates an annual requirement for 1,142 dwellings. CDC Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) reports 1,159 housing completions (net) during 2019/20, slightly exceeding the housing target. However, as a consequence of lower completions at the start of the Plan period, there is a 'shortfall' of some 1,664 homes for the period 2011 to 2020 which in part is due to this site allocation not being delivered as planned. This shortfall must be made up and therefore, progress on the delivery of key allocated sites is important in maintaining the supply of homes in the district to meet demand.
- 6.9 Delivery numbers for the strategic allocations are cited in the AMR with total delivery at NW Bicester Eco-Town Exemplar project element (phase 1) having delivered 225 dwellings (of the permission for 393 dwellings) over the period 2015-2020. The outstanding permissions at NW Bicester allocation are referred to in the AMR and account for a significant proportion of permissions in the system and which need to be delivered as planned.
- 6.10 The Local Plan Trajectory anticipates 1050 new homes being built at NW Bicester by April 2022, in addition to the 393 approved at Elmsbrook. None of those additional homes have been built or are under construction.
- 6.11 According to the Cherwell Annual Monitoring Report, dated December 2020, the District presently has a 4.8 year housing land supply for the period 2020-2025 and a 4.7 year housing land supply for the period 2021-2026 (commencing 1 April 2021).
- 6.12 As part of the Governments' housing and growth deal with Oxfordshire, since 2018, Oxfordshire has had to provide proof of a three-year land supply for planning purposes. However, the Ministerial Statement by Christopher Pincher of 25 March 2021 advised that from the date of the statement, Oxfordshire will need to revert to maintain a five-year housing land supply in accordance with the NPPF. Therefore, based on the latest available information (Dec 2020) the council now has a shortfall in the required housing land supply moving forward. This makes the timely delivery of the NW Bicester allocation and planned development in the system particularly important in order to improve the supply position.
- 6.13 The AMR 2020 sets out the anticipated latest trajectory of delivery of the NW Bicester allocation (phase 2) reporting 0 in 2021/22, 50 in 22/23, 150 in 23/24, 175 in 24/25 and 375 in 25/26 with a total projection of 2705 dwellings for this phase (in addition to 392 for phase 1) over the Plan period to 2031.

- 6.14 It is our view that the re-evaluated scheme for this parcel of the development can make a much needed significant boost and contribution to the supply of homes within and beyond the Plan period, but also will contribute to the 5 year supply helping the overall position of the district to address their shortfall. This aligns with the strategy of the Local Plan as well as the guidance set out in the NPPF.
- 6.15 The development will provide a range of house types and sizes to meet current and future requirements and local needs to create socially mixed and inclusive communities as required by policy BSC 4: Housing Mix.
- 6.16 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2014) provide a strategic mix of housing for Oxfordshire over the next 20 years. In accordance with policy BSC4, the development will have regard to its conclusions regarding the mix of homes; market housing 5% 1-bed units, 25% 2-bed units; 45% 3-bed units and 25% 4-bed units and also noting that there is a greater need for 3-bed properties in Cherwell. A mix will be agreed with the District Council through reserved matters applications. The new homes will be adaptable and provide flexibility in house design and size for residents to work from home. This will also allow the need to travel to be reduced leading to a reduction in carbon emissions from transport and require local services and facilities to support homeworkers. Consideration will also be given to the provision of self-build, co-housing, or other innovative forms of residential development that meets local housing needs.
- 6.17 The need to provide housing for the ageing population and those with care needs is also significant. The AMR records no extra-care dwellings completed during 2019/20. Extra care housing comprises self-contained accommodation for older and disabled people which enables independent living by providing a range of support facilities on the premises and 24-hour care services. It is expected that the site could provide an element of self-contained extra care dwellings as part of the overall mix in accordance with policy BSC4 and to help meet the significant need which exists. These are likely to be contained within the mixed use centre.

Density and scale of development

- 6.18 The number of homes proposed has been determined by undertaking a design led exercise to develop an illustrative layout to demonstrate the potential capacity that could be achieved, this has further informed the scale, appearance, landscaping and access on-site. Some iteration has been involved in this process to optimise both the framework and potential capacity whilst being cognisant of the wider constraint and opportunities to deliver wider benefits. The proposed density are likely to include areas of higher density in the mixed use centre and towards the centre of the site as well as along the primary road corridors with provision for lower densities towards the edges of the site. This enables an increased quantity of development of residential units in comparison to the proposal for 2600 in application 14/01384/OUT to around 3100 resulting in an efficient use of land as required by policy BSC

2. It also aligns with the NPPF advice of making efficient use of land but also optimising the potential of the site to accommodate the appropriate amount and mix of development (paragraph 130 e).
- 6.19 The AMR 2020 also looks at housing densities and records that during 2019/20, housing density on large completed sites (10 or more dwellings) is 29.9 dwellings per hectare (dph) which has increased from the previous year when it was 20.7dph. Policy BC2 of the Cherwell Local Plan seeks to secure the effective and efficient use of land and that new housing should be provided on net developable areas at a density of at least 30dph. The AMR 2020 (p36) records examples of completed sites at higher densities which includes at Banbury (60-62 Broad St (206dph), Slighte 18B Bridge St (112 dph), Neithrop House (58dph)(which have increased the average) and also on parcels at Graven Hill, Bicester (various densities).
- 6.20 The density of residential development still reflects its location within the site with higher density residential development along public transport corridors and adjacent to local centres as referred to in the SPD.
- 6.21 The scale of the development proposed is considered to be entirely appropriate for this location. The approach adopted provides for greater intensity of development and buildings of greater height within the centre of the site and along road corridors. Heights, massing and density of development is graduated and decreases towards the outer edge reflecting the character. Maximum residential heights are proposed to be 12.5metres which is also in scale with the emerging development at the Exemplar site and also in scale with the adjacent proposals submitted by Firethorn which proposed a range of development at between 12-16 metres. Heights of up to 14 metres would be appropriate in the mixed use and employment areas.
- 6.22 No details of design/appearance are submitted for consideration and approval at this stage but further design information is provided in the DAS which sets out the aspirations for the site and includes vignettes highlighting how development may come forward and delivering a positive sense of place and appropriate high quality of development in accordance with national and local policy and guidance.

Affordable Housing

- 6.23 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in 2021, states that to support the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 6.24 The NPPF requires that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be reflected in planning policies and that it is expected that where

the need for affordable housing is identified, it should be provided on-site. The NPPF expects at least 10% of the total number of homes in a major development to be available for affordable home ownership although strategic policy-making authorities are expected to establish a housing requirement figure and affordable housing figure based on local need.

6.25 Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF as 'housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers) and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); landlord is a registered provider; provisions included to remain at an affordable price.
- b) Starter homes: as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- c) Discounted market sales housing: sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value.
- d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: including shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy (including intermediate rent)'.

6.26 There were 446 net affordable housing completions during 2019/20 in Cherwell which is slightly lower than the previous year (507). The level of affordable housing completion has recently exceeded the Council's affordable housing target of 190 dwellings per year.

6.27 Local Plan Policy BSC3 seeks 30% of new housing on sites for 11 or more dwellings, to be affordable and expects provision of 70% as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate affordable homes. The SHMA conclusions on recommended mix for affordable housing comprises; 25-30% 1-bed units, 30-35% 2-bed units, 30-35% 3-bed units and 5-10% 4-bed units. Policy Bicester 1 requires 30% affordable housing on the strategic allocation of North West Bicester.

6.28 It is intended that the development proposes up to 30% affordable housing on site. The scale and mix of affordable housing will be agreed with the District Council to include consideration of: the mix and type of housing, the split between social rented and intermediate housing, the availability of social housing grant/funding and the percentage of affordable housing to be provided as permitted by policy BSC 3.

Economic Development Strategy

6.29 This section of the planning statement seeks to satisfy the requirement in policy Bicester 1 and SPD requirement 4 (a) for the applications to be supported by an Economic Development

Strategy for NW Bicester proposals demonstrating how access to work will be achieved and that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport.

- 6.30 An overarching Economic Strategy was prepared in 2014 by SQW Ltd which covers the whole of the allocation and which was produced to inform the preparation of the masterplan. That Strategy assumed a maximum of 6,000 dwellings and 10ha of employment area. It identified that at least 6,000 new jobs will be supported by the NW Bicester allocation as a whole in the following configuration; 4,600 jobs on site; over 1,000 local service jobs, created to serve the additional demand of the residents and businesses on NW Bicester, and located elsewhere in Bicester; and at least 400 jobs in firms in the target sectors, attracted to Bicester by the profile of NW Bicester and the related targeted marketing campaign, but which are better located on other strategic employment sites in the town.
- 6.31 Actions were proposed to support the creation of new jobs, homeworking, skills and objectives in Bicester and support local apprenticeship and training initiatives.
- 6.32 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OXLEP) has a role to champion Oxfordshire's economic potential, and finalised their Economic Development Plan and Action Plan in February 2021. This was prepared in response to the economic challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption caused to employment, trade and supply chains in specific parts of the economy and included up-to-date summary of economic baseline information.
- 6.33 It reports that relative to a pre-Covid-19 trajectory, over the next decade the Oxfordshire economy could expect to have in the region of 6,000 fewer jobs and reduced output by c£522million, although as a whole, the county has been hit less hard than the UK but has experienced a comparatively short but substantial impact in economic activity. Cherwell and Oxford have the potential to experience effects due to their reliance on the harder hit sectors; the visitor economy and service sector and due to higher baseline deprivation. The switch to home working has spawned a new localism which, depending on the Covid-19 trajectory, could have lasting impacts on commuting patterns, and the hierarchy of use between cities, market towns and villages. The 15-minute community concept was already built into the policy wording.
- 6.34 The Recovery Plan seeks to support the county's recovery through seizing the opportunities emerging from the pandemic, including growing existing and new sector strengths and transitioning towards a zero-carbon economy. The Action Plan comprises of four 'action streams' which includes developing further initiatives relating to improving the labour supply and reskilling, business support booster, tackling social mobility and economic hardship as well as attracting more investment. This also aligns with the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy: Our plan to rebuild published in July 2020.

- 6.35 The delivery of this scheme providing 3100 new dwellings will generate a labour force of 6,076 additional economically active residents of working age adding to the labour supply in the area also promoting economic growth and helping to address the skills shortage. The employed residents will generate a household income of approximately £218m annually (assumption of average Cherwell income of £35.9K) boosting the opportunity for local spend in the local and wider area contributing to economic recovery.
- 6.36 This development will provide homes which have an ability to provide flexible space for residents to work from home and reduce the need to travel meeting the behavioural changes which have developed as part of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.37 In addition, across the county limitations in supply of R & D space, housing and connectivity present constraints. The scheme proposes up to 3750sqm (GEA) of employment uses in classes E (g), B2 and B8 providing space to meet the demand and promoting economic growth in the local and wider economy. The flexibility of this space in addition to provision of employment uses also within the local centre will also provide opportunities for touchdown space or informal working space as part of an 'employment hub'. The provision of up to 2,490sqm (GEA) of commercial uses within Classes E (a) retail; E(b) food and drink; E9(c) services and sui generis uses hot food takeaways, public house, wine bar will generate spend and jobs.
- 6.38 The development, aligns with the concept of the 15 minute community, and includes a mix of uses including retail, commercial and community uses will help to secure the sustainability credentials of the scheme by ensuring unsustainable commuter and shopping trips are kept to a minimum and achieves an increase in containment. Community provision is focused in the local centre and which will establish a strong, viable and sustainable centre to the scheme to serve the development and other parts of the wider NW Bicester site.
- 6.39 Investment in developing the site will have significant economic benefits through the construction of the development as well as once it is completed and will contribute towards boosting economic growth and aiding the economic recovery of the district and county.

Zero Carbon: Energy and Building Standards

- 6.40 An expectation of Bicester Policy 1 and the SPD is for North West Bicester to be a zero carbon development which is defined that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole are zero or below. Renewable energy generation from on-site sources will be the key to making progress towards zero carbon emissions and an outline energy statement accompanies the application to set out the options available, and planned for, to help move towards net zero carbon.
- 6.41 The energy strategy identifies how the site will work towards achieving the zero carbon aspirations through a range of technology and design inputs. It reviews the technologies and

systems available to work towards delivering zero carbon homes and a sustainable development. It, with the climate change chapter of the Environment Statement, provides a comprehensive approach to climate change and adaptability.

- 6.42 The site's aspect provides the potential for large-scale renewable energy generation and therefore, carbon emission can be offset through a range of measures including roof mounted Photovoltaic cells on individual dwellings and other buildings (such as the local centre and schools) and roof pitches will be oriented/aligned accordingly where this is possible. Built form, density and massing will assist the potential for solar gain to generate energy. Any remaining carbon emissions will be offset through initiatives such as ground mounted photovoltaic arrays which are proposed as part of careful masterplanning and through carbon sequestering schemes (from GI, tree planting etc). Energy storage is also under consideration, alongside discussions over the Grid.
- 6.43 The policy as worded seeks homes that are capable of achieving a minimum of Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) as part of the expectation for the delivery of higher environmental standards at the site to act as a catalyst for future development to follow. However, at the time, the specification of the housebuilders product and technology available in the market meant this was difficult to achieve in the 2014 application. The CSH was withdrawn in 2015, with many national standards now integrated into the UK Building Regulations. The Future Homes Standard (FSH) due to be adopted, requires all new homes to have a 31% reduction in CO2 emissions from 2022 in comparison to current standards, with more significant changes due in 2025. Housebuilder products, specifications and technologies have moved on considerably and are more aligned to the aspirations of the policy.
- 6.44 A fabric first approach is likely to be an important element alongside renewable energy generation in order to progress towards net zero carbon (as part of government's wider strategy for achieving a national 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050). There is potential also for energy efficiency to be maximised including reducing overheating through appropriate orientation of buildings and by optimising natural daylight and reducing demand for lighting. Whilst detailed proposals are not available at outline planning stage, the statement sets out the means available for consideration in more detailed proposals that will accompany detailed schemes in due course. Home designs will seek to encourage more sustainable ways of living including space for cycle storage, provision for EV charging points, Smart home design. Low carbon heating initiatives specifically air source heat pumps are also part of the options to be included.
- 6.45 The Local Plan Monitoring Framework sets out the indicators and targets that have been developed to measure the effectiveness of the policy. However, the 2020 AMR advises that it has not been possible to collect data for the following indicators in relation to this aspect of the policy at this time: environmental standards of completed development at NW

Bicester; embodied impacts of construction to be monitored, managed and minimised; and sustainability metrics to be agreed and monitored.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- 6.46 In excess of 40% of the site is to be established as green infrastructure through the provision of a range of green spaces including open green space, SuDS and drainage, country park, village green, existing woodland, burial ground, sports, recreation and play areas including LEAP, NEAP, community farm and allotments. New footpaths and cycleways will be integrated throughout using circular loops and linear parks allowing easy access to the green spaces and countryside promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles. This provision meets policy BSC11 of the Local Plan, policy Bicester 1 and the specific design requirements outlined in the SPD (3, 9).
- 6.47 ES chapter 8 identifies and describes the nature and significance of the effects on landscape character and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development. This examines the landscape character of the area and the relevant reports and assessments with particular reference to the Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013) which explored the landscape and visual sensitivity and landscape value in relation to land around Bicester in the context of its potential to accommodate development including this site as part of Bicester 1.
- 6.48 The chapter also details the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Zone of Theoretical Influence (ZTV) which have been carried out and assesses that the site is visually contained within the surrounding and wider landscape such that it has a comparatively limited visual envelope.
- 6.49 The masterplanning of the development and the proposed landscaping and green and blue infrastructure has evolved to enable the proposals to respond positively to the landscape sensitivities in the surrounding area incorporating design and mitigation measures. These measures include the retention of mature tree groups and mature trees, established internal hedgerows and watercourse corridors; the introduction of compensatory native planting; the planting of additional broadleaved woodland, trees and hedgerows and the provision of appropriate green buffers and off-sets between built development and sensitive receptors. This will secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, through restoration, management or enhancement of the existing landscapes, features or habitats and the creation of new ones in accordance with Local Plan policy ESD11 and principles in the SPD.
- 6.50 The allocation in the plan appears to follow the shape of the inner ring road of Bicester rather than relating to any physical or landscape features on the ground and therefore, as drawn, it cuts through existing fields away from any boundaries. The development proposals adopt a landscape led approach resulting in an extension of the allocation site in order to respect

and align with field boundaries which are regular in their form and will create a logical, clear and robust edge for the development on the ground. The expansion of the site enables the accommodation of additional primarily open green uses within the site and the parameter plan illustrates how the development sensitively proposes informal green and open space, country park, burial ground, photovoltaic arrays and allotment/community farm as well as substantial areas of further planting at and towards this rural edge providing a soft edge to the countryside. A substantial area of structural landscaping that wraps around the western part of the site is also proposed. This supports the existing landscape character of the area and delivers a scheme responsive and appropriate to its setting and the urban edge.

- 6.51 Whilst the application site extends beyond the allocation boundary, the proposed treatment of this development edge will retain a visual and physical gap between the new development and the settlement of Bucknell preserving its character and identity in accordance with saved Local Plan policy C31. Moreover, as a consequence of mature trees and vegetation on the northern edge adjacent to Bucknell, there is a strong sense of separation between the site and village and very limited views of the site. Given that the site is influenced by adjacent housing in Elmsbrook, the site has a greater relationship with Bicester and does not play an important contribution to the settlement of Bucknell and therefore, would not harm its identity. The revised position of the NW boundary of the development site also provides certainty to the residents of Bucknell village that the development will not encroach further as the green infrastructure creates an enduring edge to the development. There will be no built form in the two fields that border the village resulting in an enduring green buffer.
- 6.52 Further landscape details will be provided as part of a future reserved matters scheme for this Site although a Green Infrastructure and Landscape Masterplan is submitted in support of this outline submission and discussed further within the DAS. The management of the green and blue infrastructure will play a key role in its future success and this will be subject to more detailed work in due course. The aspirations are for the management to be carried out in ways which benefit people, wildlife and the environment. Working within a flexible framework, management approaches can then be adapted to reflect changes in practice, technology, climate and societal needs. This secondary mitigation measure will be detailed in a Landscape & Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) which will be prepared and agreed with CDC through a planning condition.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.53 The Ecological Appraisal which is submitted in Chapter 9 of the ES alongside this application identifies the key ecological features on site and presents the opportunities for mitigation of construction and operational effects of development.
- 6.54 Hedgerows are the feature of most ecological value on site and the open space network has evolved around the existing hedgerows, most of which are retained where possible. Hedgerow removal and therefore, habitat loss and disturbance has been minimised through

careful design of the development. There will be a total unavoidable loss of 1.4km of hedgerows, equating to around 11% of the overall hedgerows on site but this will be mitigated in the long term by the creation of new species rich hedgerows and native trees within the GI throughout the built development, and the provision further biodiversity planting associated with the green and blue infrastructure. The majority of hedgerows and their existing trees are to be retained and will provide the basis of a network of smaller green corridors, linking with the main habitat corridors. The single pond supporting great crested newts will be retained and incorporated into an area of open space acting as a buffer, with green corridors (including swales and tussock grassland) extending from it and the relevant derogation licence will be sought from Natural England to ensure suitable protection measures are in place. The loss of large open fields will likely lead to some loss of breeding birds as well as the loss of overall availability of winter foraging resources for wintering birds; the full extent of impacts is assessed in chapter 9 of the ES. Mitigation measures for the loss of arable land include the provision of undisturbed species-rich grassland for foraging birds as well as ensuring birds are protected during nesting season.

- 6.55 New and additional hedgerow, tree and grassland planting will be supplemented with the creation of new aquatic and semi-aquatic habitats as part of SUDS and along the corridor to the watercourse providing additional biodiversity enhancement and placemaking. A conservation-led Biodiversity Management Plan will be provided for the development.
- 6.56 Overall, the ES provides details of the mitigation which is proposed through the green infrastructure which makes up in excess of 40% of the site to ensure that enhancements and a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved at the Site in accordance with NPPF advice.

Transport and Access

- 6.57 ES Chapter 5 identifies the effects in relation to Transport and Access and a Framework Travel Plan and Transport Assessment accompanies the application.
- 6.58 The proposed access points to the site, are as shown on the Development Framework Plan and are submitted for approval as part of this outline application.
- 6.59 The development has a robust urban structure, with a network of well-designed connected spaces and routes that prioritise the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport creating attractive, convenient and direct connections and which will be designed in accordance with the Masterplan and Manual for Streets (MfS). The substantial majority of homes are within 5 minutes walk (approx. 400m) of frequent public transport with internal bus stops designed to provide Real Time Information infrastructure and with shelters where possible. Homes are within 10 minutes (approx. 800m) of neighbourhood services helping to deliver containment of trips within the development and the local centres will also include access to public transport and cycle parking. Bus routes, and bus priority measures, will be provided, to facilitate frequent and direct bus connection to the rest of the development and

- to other key local destinations. This will ensure the site is properly integrated with the adjacent sites to form a cohesive sustainable extension to Bicester as envisaged by the site allocation. Most, if not all, of Bicester is located within 5 minutes cycle journey from the site.
- 6.60 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. The station also offers sheltered, secure bicycling parking facilities by way of cycle stands which are monitored by CCTV; there is capacity for 65 bicycles. As such, there is the opportunity for journeys to the station to be made by bicycle for onwards travel by rail.
- 6.61 The development will allow much of the future community's day-to-day requirements to be met locally, minimising its impact on the external highway network. This will also reduce the environmental impact of the development and the integration of active travel routes will also contribute to the wellbeing, enjoyment and health of people promoting healthy lifestyles. Further work has been undertaken to the framework for movement and access within the site including street hierarchy and inductive layout of primary streets and included within the DAS. This also explains how the movement principles will be realised in spatial and public realm terms.
- 6.62 A Framework Travel Plan is also included to support the submission to demonstrate how smarter travel choices will be encouraged to achieve traffic reduction and accelerate the development of more sustainable travel trends and delivering on a number of key objectives to encourage an appropriate modal shift. Electric and low emission vehicle infrastructure provision will be made as part of the proposals.
- 6.63 The TA sets out and analyses the trip generation from the development in line with the 'Decide and Provide' approach, as agreed with OCC, and which is vision-led and seeks to provide a preferred future of reduced car dependence through providing a development path best suited to achieving it. This demonstrates that the forecast development traffic can be comfortably accommodated within the previously approved highway network. Mitigation measures are set out in the TA to address the traffic implications on the local road network.
- 6.64 The consequence of the realigned Bucknell Road, together with the proposals for well-designed measures to manage traffic will be to actively reduce traffic along Bucknell Road and ensure the avoidance of local traffic impacts eg in Bucknell.
- 6.65 The proposals will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and will not create a severe residual cumulative impact on both the local and strategic highway networks in accordance with NPPF advice.

Noise

- 6.66 ES chapter 7 identifies and describes the nature and significance of the effects likely to arise in relation to noise and vibration as a result of the development and is also accompanied by an Outline Acoustic Assessment.
- 6.67 The SPD and policy Bicester 1 requires consideration and mitigation of any noise impacts of the railway line. It is also the identified source of vibration affecting the development site but as no development is proposed within 15m of the track alignment, there are no issues related to vibration. In terms of noise, a monitoring survey has been carried out to quantify the baseline conditions. These are expected to increase, albeit not significantly, due to the increase in traffic flow numbers arising from the development.
- 6.68 The application is at outline stage so exact positioning of buildings is not yet known. The Outline Acoustic Assessment proposes options for the mitigation of any noise in new buildings. With mitigation measures in place, the Assessment demonstrates that it will be possible to achieve the internal noise criteria expected and appropriate.
- 6.69 The ES concludes that it is expected for the majority of houses, it is possible to achieve internal and external noise criteria without any additional mitigation as the dwellings and their external amenity areas will benefit from screening provided by the outermost dwellings. For the outermost dwellings, noise levels are above the criteria and so mitigation measures include; the use of external building fabric and enhanced acoustic glazing to provide certain minimum level of sound insulation performance and provision of trickle ventilation to achieve the appropriate internal noise levels. The outline acoustic assessment also confirms the measures required to the non-residential buildings such as the school demonstrating that satisfactory internal noise levels can be achieved.
- 6.70 Noise during construction would be controlled and mitigated through measures set out in a Construction Environmental Mitigation Plan (CEMP)/Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) provided as part of a condition.
- 6.71 As such external amenity noise levels can be suitable controlled in line with advice in the NPPF and local policy requirements.

Drainage and Water Quality

- 6.72 ES Chapter 11 assesses the nature and effects on drainage and water quality and is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment assessing the likelihood of the development being affected by flooding or it increasing flood risk elsewhere as required by national policy.
- 6.73 The majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1, defined in terms of fluvial risk, as an area of Low Probability of flooding from flood events but also from other sources such as ground water, sewer and artificial water bodies. There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 adjacent to

the onsite watercourses. An assessment of water quality of the nearby watercourses are shown to have a moderate to good ecological and water quality.

- 6.74 Potential effects are examined and mitigation measures set out which includes; the use of temporary surface water run-off facilities; design of drainage to reflect the pre-development conditions as closely as possible (no exceedance of greenfield run off rates post development). The introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) measures take account of the potential accelerated run-off and avoiding increase in peak storm water discharge and consequential flood risk.
- 6.75 The outline SuDS scheme will be maintained by way of an appropriate management scheme to cover the lifetime of the development. These measures will satisfactorily mitigate against the potential significant effects in line with NPPF advice

7.0 DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

7.1 The NPPF (paragraph 57) advises planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

7.2 Paragraph 6.17 of the SPD refers to the adopted Local Plan (Policy INF1) which anticipates that developer contributions through legal agreements will include:

- Provision of affordable housing - the numbers, nature and tenure to be addressed through the agreement;
- Contributions to educational facilities
- Community facilities
- Sports facilities
- Management and maintenance of open space
- A burial ground
- Governance
- Sustainable lifestyle expectations
- Sustainable transport measures including bus services, off site highway schemes, pedestrian and cycle routes and
- Provision of SUDs

7.3 It notes this list is not exhaustive.

7.4 In addition to this, the SPD identifies that the S106/planning conditions for any proposed development schemes will need to consider and/or address the provision of, and/or contributions towards, a variety of services or facilities

7.5 This is noted by the Applicant and will be the subject of further discussion with CDC and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) along with any relevant consultees post-OPA submission.

7.6 Discussions around the 2014 planning application also identified a comprehensive package of junction enhancement schemes and traffic management initiatives, in addition to a number of strategic improvements to the highway network which will also, now, be the subject of discussion and agreement with OCC and CDC

- 7.7 Whilst the Applicant accepts that the proposed development will need to contribute to the costs of the wider delivery of the strategic allocation at North West Bicester, such contributions need to be proportionate and evidenced. They also need to take into account the financial constraints that such contributions put on the ability to deliver a viable development and the importance of being able to deliver a successful development. This is also recognised in the NPPF at paragraph 58.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the proposed development for up to 3100 homes, and a mix of commercial uses which forms part of the wider North West Bicester allocation.
- 8.2 The proposed development is being brought forward pursuant to adopted Policy Bicester 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan and the adopted SPD for North West Bicester and will see the successful and timely delivery of a significant portion of the overall site allocation, and which has been stalled for a number of years. This Statement has also considered whether there are material considerations which indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
- 8.3 The development will boost significantly much needed supply of housing to meet local needs and will contribute to helping fill the shortfall in being able to demonstrate a five year supply as well as providing much needed homes over the Plan period and addressing the shortfall in delivery at North West Bicester which is now some 1050 dwellings compared with the Local Plan Trajectory. The application will provide a mix of dwellings of type and tenure and up to 30% affordable homes. The mix and positioning of uses will provide for leisure, health, social care, education, retail, arts and culture and within walking distances to homes and employment which also help to enhance the sustainability of the scheme and reduce the need for unsustainable commuter trips. Overall, the development would comprise a substantial amount of natural and amenity green space (in excess of 40% of the total site area) and would deliver biodiversity net-gain.
- 8.4 The proposed development has had significant regard to reducing climate change through the measures to reduce carbon emissions, and designing the development. Modal shift will be encouraged through the design and construction of the buildings, layout of the development and the design solutions to be adopted. As such, it addresses the relevant planning policies on sustainable transport and climate change. The proposed development will deliver a new community that has sustainability at the heart of its design.
- 8.5 For all the reasons set out above, and in the application submission, the material considerations indicate a decision should be made in line with the development plan adhering to the principle of plan-led development. Therefore, it is our view that planning permission ought to be granted for the Proposed Development, with reference to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

