

4.0 Socio Economic and Health Effects

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter considers the nature and significance of any potential socio-economic and health effects likely to arise in relation to the changes to the Proposed Development. This chapter has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) and should be read in conjunction with the Socio Economic and Health Effects chapter 4 of the 2021 ES, also prepared by DLA and which remains extant unless superseded by the content of this addendum chapter.

4.1.2 Since the planning application was submitted, further work has been undertaken to address planning consultation responses received, and this has resulted in changes as set out in chapter 2 of this Environmental Statement Addendum (ESA). This chapter has been prepared to reflect changes to the proposals since the 2021 ES, and following comments received from Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Health Place Shaping team, Oxfordshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Sport England, and Cherwell District Council's Economic Growth Officer, in particular.

4.1.3 An updated Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is appended to this chapter **Appendix 4.1**.

4.1.4 Further to the 2021 ES submission, there are only a limited number of changes to the application proposals which might conceivably have an effect on the previous assessment of socio-economic and health impacts, the following in particular have merited further consideration in this update:

- Provision for a potential Private Hospital, and potential for care and extra care (use class C2) adjacent to the Local Centre.
- Provision of sufficient land to enable future expansion of the proposed new Primary School to 3FE if required (3.01ha site – increased from 2.2ha).
- Increase in land provided for the expansion of Gagle Brook Primary School (1.23ha – increased from 0.79ha).
- Increase in size of employment area to 0.9ha (from 0.7ha).
- Incorporation of a Mobility Hub within the Local Centre.
- Relocation and provision of additional play spaces to contribute to meeting minimum planning policy requirements (previously 1 NEAP and 4 LEAPS, now proposing 3 NEAPs and 7 LEAPs (plus LAPs to be provided in-parcel)).

- 4.1.5 The minor changes to the layout of the scheme, reflected in the Development Framework Plan (DFP) and Access Plans, are not considered likely to rise to any material effects on the scope of matters within this ES chapter, and accordingly do not warrant further assessment under this topic.

4.2 Regulatory and Policy Context

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

4.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated since the 2021 ES, with the most recent version published in December 2024. The key changes are summarised generally in chapter 3 of this ESA. There has been no material change in the policies relevant to this chapter from the July 2021 version which was considered in the 2021 ES. However, the following are noteworthy insofar as they add additional emphasis to certain socio-economic and health planning considerations:

- Regarding affordable housing, Paragraph 66 no longer refers to 10% as a minimum expectation of provision. Instead, planning decisions *“should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs.”*
- Paragraph 96(c) has been supplemented with wording that requires planning decisions to enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill health, especially where this would reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.
- Paragraph 97 is a new insertion that instructs Local Planning Authorities to refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets within walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre.
- Paragraph 100(a) now makes explicit reference to early years and post-16 facilities as carrying weight in decisions on planning applications.
- Paragraph 101 now contains additional emphasis that *“significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development.”*

National Planning Practice Guidance

4.2.2 Some elements of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) have been updated since the 2021 ES. It is considered that there have been no material changes, specific to socio-economic and health matters but to note; paragraphs in ‘Healthy and safe communities’ PPG in relation to hot food takeaways and litter was changed in August 2022. Other relevant sections including ‘Housing needs of different groups’ and ‘Housing for older and disabled people’ PPGs are unchanged since May 2021 and June 2019 respectively. The ‘Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space’ PPG is unchanged since 2014.

Local Policy

Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031

- 4.2.3 The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 (adopted 2015) is unchanged and remains the primary component of the adopted development plan.

Cherwell Local Plan 2042

- 4.2.4 Cherwell District Council (CDC) is preparing a new Local Plan. The consultation (Regulation 19) on the draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 was held between 19th December 2024 and 25th February 2025. The Submission Local Plan was approved by CDC Executive on 1 July 2025 and by Full Council on 21 July 2025, and was submitted for independent examination, on 31 July 2025. Officers prepared a Schedule of Proposed Changes and Minor Modifications which they consider would improve and update the draft plan in view of the representations received and updated evidence. These will be submitted for consideration by the Inspector at the examination and if appropriate may form the basis for future Main Modifications to the Submission Local Plan as recommended by the Inspector in order to make the plan sound and/or legally compliant. As such, at this time, only limited weight can be attributed to the emerging Local Plan as a material planning consideration.

North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document

- 4.2.5 The North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (adopted in February 2016) is unchanged and remains part of the adopted development plan.
- 4.2.6 There have been no updates to other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), or new SPDs adopted, or other Council guidance published, which are relevant to socio-economic matters, or which otherwise require further consideration as part of this chapter.

4.3 Assessment Methodology

- 4.3.1 The assessment methodology reported within the 2021 ES remains up to date. A revised assessment methodology is not required and therefore, the methodology outlined in the 2021 ES should be referred to.

4.4 Baseline Conditions

4.4.1 The baseline conditions assessed in the 2021 ES have been reviewed. Whilst more recent data has been published for some data sets (e.g. the 2021 Census), there have been no substantive changes to the majority of the baseline conditions which warrant further reporting or a change for the purposes of EIA.

Population, Housing and Affordability

4.4.2 Cherwell district remains a residential location with strong demand resulting in a growing population. Affordability remains a key issue.

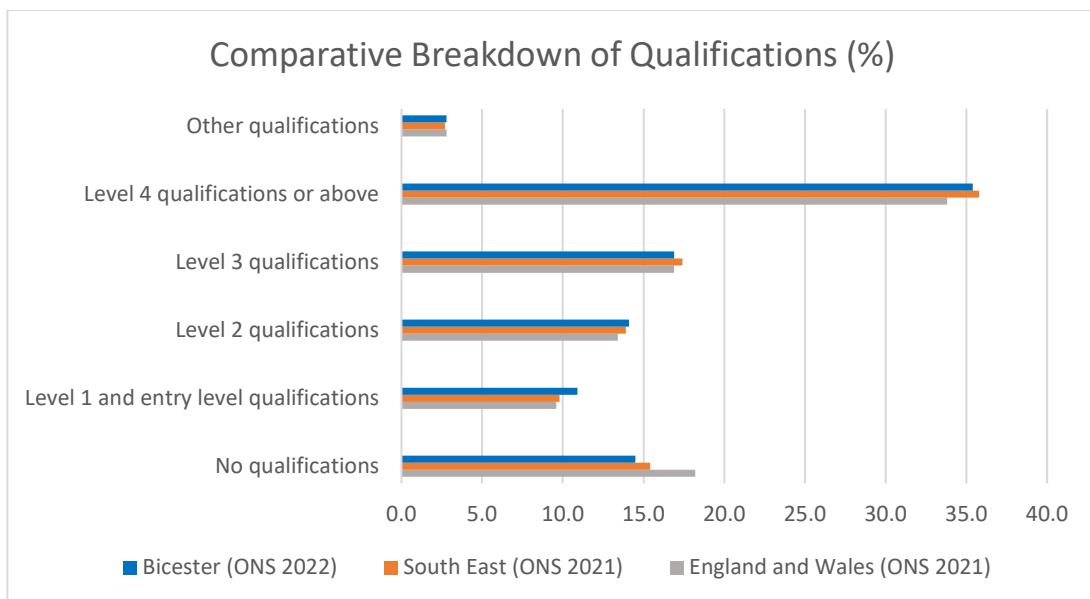
Employment

4.4.3 The proportion of the population in Bicester which is economically active remains slightly below that of Cherwell district, and broadly aligned with the wider regional and national averages.

Education

4.4.4 Census 2021 data shows that Bicester is more aligned (compared to the 2011 Census data) with regional and national averages in respect of qualification levels. **Table 4.4.1** details the qualification level of the population at the local, regional and national level.

Table 4.4.1: Comparative Breakdown of Qualifications (Bicester, South East and England)



4.4.5 The Oxfordshire County Council - Pupil Place Plan¹ has been updated and sets out the following forecast demand for school places.

Table 4.4.2: Bicester Forecast Demand for School Places

Forecast demand for place	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Reception	616	670	694	639	668	667
All primary (year 1-6)	3833	3870	3982	4097	4109	4133
Year 7	592	587	568	573	608	629
All secondary (year 7-11)	2865	2966	3012	3007	3066	3098

Health

4.4.6 Health and wellbeing measures² in Bicester compared to the England average remain broadly the same as set out in the 2021 ES chapter.

4.4.7 There are a number of GP practices, hospitals, dental facilities and social care facilities in close proximity to the site; there have been no changes to the facilities referenced in the 2021 ES.

Community Facilities

4.4.8 Bicester has a broad range of existing indoor community facilities, as set out in the 2021 ES. Other than the closure of the Co-op on Bucknell Road, there have been no changes to the facilities referenced in the 2021 ES.

Projected Future Baseline

4.4.9 The Cherwell District Summary published in March 2023³ forecasts the population of Cherwell increasing from 161,000 in 2021 to 185,500 by 2031 (+24,500 +15%). The population of Bicester and the surrounding area is expected to grow from 56,200 to 66,100 (+18%) by 2031.

¹ Pupil Place Plan (2023-2028) - Oxfordshire County Council

² Public Health England Local Health (2020)

³ JSNA Bitesize – Cherwell District Summary (March 2023)

- 4.4.10 The projected future baseline in respect of employment remains as set out in the 2021 ES⁴.
- 4.4.11 As set out in the 2021 ES, the proposed site forms part of the wider North West Bicester, the progressive implementation of which will result in new employment, services and facilities being introduced and available for use by the residents of this application.

⁴ Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021 - Vale of White Horse District Council and partners

4.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Effects

- 4.5.1 The construction effects in respect of socioeconomics remain as reported in the 2021 ES. These arise from construction related employment as a result of the delivery of the development over a number of years. Aside from direct construction job creation, there would also be indirect effects through the supply of materials from local businesses and the expenditure of wages in the wider locality, further resulting in additional indirect jobs.
- 4.5.2 The effect will be a large magnitude increase in employment which will be temporary in nature. Employment during the construction phase has a low sensitivity. On this basis, effects during construction are assessed as temporary, of local to regional scale, and as moderate beneficial.

Operational Effects

Effects on Population

- 4.5.3 The population increase from the Proposed Development in absolute terms remains as per the 2021 ES, since the number of dwellings has not changed. However, in percentage terms, due to the increase in the population of Cherwell since the 2021 ES (from 145,550 to 161,000), the increase has changed from 5.32% to 4.72%.
- 4.5.4 It remains unlikely this will be direct population growth in the district, as a proportion of the new residents will be intra-district moves.
- 4.5.5 The increase in population is still likely to increase spend in the local economy and lead to an increase in Gross Value Added (GVA), as well as result in an increase in economically active population within Cherwell District.
- 4.5.6 The increase in population will also still generate an increase in demand for services, but this continues to be balanced through the provision of new facilities and services as part of the Proposed Development to meet this arising need.
- 4.5.7 This continues to be considered a large magnitude of change, and as population change through the completion of the development is considered to have a high sensitivity, it continues to be the case that there would be a moderate beneficial effect on existing local population, and existing community and social infrastructure locally, as a result of the Proposed Development.

Effects on the Housing Market

- 4.5.8 The number of dwellings, and range of tenures, types and size of housing to meet different needs, remains the same as considered by the 2021 ES. The Proposed Development will still contribute to the Council's housing targets, housing land supply and housing delivery trajectory.
- 4.5.9 The magnitude of change in relation to housing provision including affordable housing continues to be considered large, and as the sensitivity of growth in housing is high, the level of new housing proposed is still considered to result in a major beneficial effect.

Effects on the Labour Market

- 4.5.10 The Proposed Development continues to include a mix of non-residential uses that will result in direct and indirect employment. Such uses comprise some 9,000sqm of retail, commercial and community uses comprising:
- up to 3,300sqm (GEA) (increased from 2,490sqm) of commercial uses within Classes E(a) retail; E(b) food and drink; E(c) services and the sui generis use such as hot food takeaways, public house, wine bar;
 - up to 3,750sqm (GEA) employment uses with Use Classed E(g), B2 and B8
 - health centre (Use Class E) – 650sqm
 - Local Community Uses, within Use Classes (F2(a) and F2(b) – estimated as up to 1,100sqm, in the Mixed Use Local Centre area.
- 4.5.11 Employment opportunities will also be created within the primary school proposed in the development (and now provided for up to 3FE) and as a result of the expansion of Gagle Brook primary school facilitated by the Proposed Development.
- 4.5.12 Estimates relating to job creation indicate that the application proposals could generate some 530 (an increase from 478 in the 2021 ES) gross direct (FTE) jobs on-site when the Proposed Development is complete and occupied, as set out in **Table 4.5.1**.
- 4.5.13 As was the case in the 2021 ES, there will be some additional direct jobs created in the Proposed Development over and above that set out in the estimate above. In particular, no allowance is made for employment associated with the management of Open Space, Sports, Recreation & Play Areas and Burial Ground, allotments.

- 4.5.14 Whilst this level of permanent direct employment continues to be considered to be of a large magnitude, it is also still recognised that not all the employees will be drawn from the local area or Cherwell District. A medium level of leakage from the local area continues to be some 25%. A small displacement effect may also still arise, but this is expected to be minimised as a result of many of the new employment opportunities serving the Proposed Development itself.
- 4.5.15 As was the case in the 2021 ES, aside from direct job creation, there would also be indirect effects through the supply linkage multiplier and the expenditure of wages in the wider locality (income multiplier).
- 4.5.16 A typical local composite employment multiplier of 1.1 can be applied to the FTE employment indicating that an additional 53 FTE (an increase from 48 in the 2021 ES) indirect jobs per year could be induced by the Proposed Development⁵ and a multiplier of 1.5 at the regional level indicating an additional 265 (an increase from 207 in the 2021 ES) indirect jobs beyond the local level.
- 4.5.17 As was the case in the 2021 ES, a small loss of employment will occur as a result of the loss of agricultural activity on the site.
- 4.5.18 The impact will continue to be a large magnitude increase in employment, which will result in an effect which is permanent in nature, of local to regional scale, and major beneficial.

Table 4.5.1: Estimate of Permanent Job Creation

	GEA (sqm)	GEA to NIA	NIA (sqm)	HCA Employment density (sqm per FTE)	Jobs (est.)
Local Centre Uses					
Retail, food and drink, services E(a), (b) and (c)	3,300	0.9	2,970	17	174
Employment uses E(g), B2 and Bb	3,750	0.85	3,188	15	212
Other Mixed use area uses	1950	0.9	1,755	35	50
Sub-Total	9,000				436
Other Employment					
Primary school onsite	630 pupils			1 job per 10 pupils	63
Extension of Gagle Brook	210 pupils			1 job per 10 pupils	21

⁵ For more information on multipliers please refer to English Partnerships' Additionality Guide, 2008

GRAND TOTAL					530
Local multiplier for additional indirect jobs (1.1)					53

Effects on Education Facilities

- 4.5.19 Since the number of dwellings, and range of tenures, types and size of housing to meet different needs, remains the same as considered by the 2021 ES, the Proposed Development is expected to generate the same number of pupils as anticipated by the 2021 ES.
- 4.5.20 There would be a large increase in the need for educational facilities through the Proposed Development, which would result in a major adverse effect on primary and secondary education facilities in the absence of any embedded mitigation in the form of additional education provision.

Effects on other Community Facilities

- 4.5.21 The effects in respect of community facilities remain as reported in the 2021 ES. These result from the population arising as a result of the Proposed Development increasing the pressure on existing community infrastructure. Conversely, the application proposals could support certain existing local community facilities where additional footfall or patronage would be beneficial.
- 4.5.22 The Proposed Development would prove a large magnitude of change in relation to community facilities. It is considered that community facilities have a medium sensitivity. Therefore, there would be a minor beneficial effect on existing community facilities when the pressure on some facilities is offset by the support given to other services – in the absence of mitigation.

Effects on the Provision of Open Space and Leisure

- 4.5.23 Since the expectant population, remains the same as considered by the 2021 ES, the Proposed Development is expected to generate the same requirements in respect of open space and recreation as anticipated by the 2021 ES.
- 4.5.24 The proposals for open space provision represent a large magnitude of change with the effect assessed as minor adverse in the absence of any mitigation (including the embedded mitigation in the design).

Effects on Retailing

- 4.5.25 The effects in respect of retailing remain as reported in the 2021 ES. These result from the population arising as a result of the Proposed Development having an effect on retail facilities within Bicester and surrounding villages located in proximity to the Application Site.
- 4.5.26 There would be a moderate magnitude of change and retail has a medium sensitivity. Therefore, there would be a minor beneficial effect on retailing in the absence of any provision within the site.

Effects on Community Safety and Deprivation

- 4.5.27 The effects on community safety and deprivation remain as reported in the 2021 ES. These arise from the creation of a new community and both daytime and nighttime population, as well as access to new facilities. In addition, the proposed level of new investment, new jobs and affordable housing would assist in improving the level of deprivation in Cherwell District.
- 4.5.28 The Proposed Development represents a negligible magnitude of change with a low sensitivity. Overall, there would be a minor beneficial effect on crime and deprivation.

Effects on Health

GP and Dental provision

- 4.5.29 The Proposed Development would create further demand for GP and dental health services. The consequences of such demand may either be additional pressure on services or support resulting in the delivery of additional facilities. The support provided by the increased population for new provision leads to an assessment of moderate benefit arising in relation to health service provision.

Healthy Lifestyle

- 4.5.30 As was the case in the 2021 ES, in relation to general standards of health, the proposed development will provide better standards of housing and facilities than the existing community, which will serve to achieve enhanced health and well-being outcomes.
- 4.5.31 The updated Health Impact Assessment provided at **Appendix 4.1** identifies a range of measures to assist in delivering healthy communities within the Proposed development.

4.5.32 It is expected that the Proposed Development will result in effects that are permanent, of local scale and of moderate beneficial significance.

4.6 Mitigation Measures

Embedded Mitigation in Proposed Development

Community Facilities

- 4.6.1 The Proposed Development includes retail, commercial and community uses which will help to reduce unsustainable trips by unsustainable modes and achieve an increase in containment. Whilst the proposed quantum of these has changed since the 2021 ES, this is not considered to result in any difference to the effect in EIA terms.
- 4.6.2 These uses are proposed to be located within the Mixed-Use area, the location of which has been amended slightly since the 2021 ES, but this still forms a strong, viable and sustainable local centre to serve the development.
- 4.6.3 The Proposed Development will continue to meet the needs arising from the new population at the Application Site, and result in indirect beneficial effects including additional jobs and economic activity and use of the on-site facilities by surrounding existing populations.

Education

- 4.6.4 In relation to primary education, the Proposed Development will enable the delivery of up to 630 places within the proposed new primary school (which will provide 2FE, with sufficient land to enable future expansion to 3FE if required), and a further 210 places at Gagle Brook primary through the provision of land to allow its expansion from 1FE to 2FE. The additional primary school places proposed substantially exceeds the potential requirement for additional primary school places generated by the Proposed Development, more so than assessed by the 2021 ES.

Open Space and Recreation

- 4.6.5 The open space and recreation provision embedded within the Proposed Development remains broadly as described in the 2021 ES. Whilst the amendments to the Proposed Development have resulted in slight changes to the boundaries and extents of open spaces, the overall quantum remains in excess of 40% of the Site (some 80 hectares), which greatly exceeds the expectation of 38.1 hectares set out as a result of policy BSC11 of the Local Plan, Policy Bicester 1 and the specific design requirements outlined in the SPD (3, 9).

- 4.6.6 Amendments to the Proposed Development have included an increase in provision of additional play spaces to contribute to meeting minimum planning policy requirements (previously 1 NEAP and 4 LEAPS, now proposing 3 NEAPs and 7 LEAPs (plus LAPs to be provided in-parcel)).

Retail

- 4.6.7 As was the case in the 2021 ES, the Proposed Development is still expected to include some elements of retail use, which would be available for the new residents of the Application Site, as well as other residents within the defined primary catchment area. Whilst the quantum of retail, commercial and community uses has increased slightly, this continues to be deemed to be sustainably proportionate to the size of the application.

Health

- 4.6.8 The amendments to the Proposed Development include the explicit specification of the inclusion of a health centre (albeit this was not precluded by the scheme assessed by the 2021 ES). This will assist in meeting the needs of the new resident population of the site, as well as improve access to services for existing residents within the wider surrounding area.

Mitigation of Construction Effects of Development

- 4.6.9 As per the 2021 ES, no specific mitigation measures are proposed as no significant adverse effects are predicted.

Mitigation of Operational Stages of Development

- 4.6.10 As per the 2021 ES, as no significant adverse effects are predicted, no specific mitigation measures are proposed beyond those built into the Proposed Development.

4.7 Residual Effects

Construction Effects

4.7.1 The residual effects remain as set out in the 2021 ES.

Operational Effects

4.7.2 The residual effects remain as set out in the 2021 ES.

4.8 Cumulative Effects

4.8.1 The cumulative effects remain as set out in the 2021 ES.