

APPENDIX 4 – SITE SEARCH ASSESSMENT

Site Availability in Cherwell District Council

1. The following sets out the assessment of the Site Search as required by Policy SLE1.
2. SH need a site of 20 Ha in order to accommodate the proposed development.

Site Search – Strategic Sites

3. Table 1 below sets out the strategic employment sites allocated within the Cherwell Local Plan 2015-2031 (Part 1). The suitability and availability of each of the strategic employment allocations to accommodate the SH (Siemens Healthineers) operation has been assessed.

Table 1: Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 – Allocated Strategic Employment Sites

| Policy | Site | Included in Site Assessment | Comment |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bicester Allocated Site | | | |
| Bicester (BIC1) | Bicester Planning Policy North West Bicester Eco-Town | Yes | Marketing name: Axis 9, Bicester Developer: Albion Land Site area: 10ha. Use Classes B1 with limited B2 and B8. The site is now fully built out and let to Arrival and The Menu, both local occupiers. As the site is fully developed, it is not large enough to accommodate the SH operation. |
| Bicester (BIC2) | Graven Hill | Yes | The employment land extends to 26ha. The scale of the remaining land, 18.68ha, after the parcel of land for the approved Barrus development (c7.32ha) has been deducted would not accommodate the SH operation. Even if the whole site were available, the irregular shape could not accommodate the specific SH layout. |
| Bicester (BIC4) | Bicester Business Park | Yes | Site area: 29.5ha. No available supply for B8. Now known as Bicester Office Park. The remaining 13.01ha is too small and has an irregular shape making it impossible to accommodate the scale of the SH operation. |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bicester (BIC10) | Bicester Gateway/Catalyst Bicester | Yes | Site area: 18ha. Use class B1 Business Uses. High tech knowledge industries. No available supply of B8 space. The site is too small to accommodate the scale of the SH operation. The site is already majority developed by Albion Land. |
| Bicester (BIC11) | Employment Land at North east Bicester | Yes | The site is known as Link 9 and is fully built out with no available allocated employment land. |
| Bicester (BIC12) | South East Bicester | Yes | 23.15ha of employment land - 6.66ha available as part of the consented Wretchwick Green site and 16.49ha that forms the Symmetry Park logistics park. Symmetry Park include Units A1 and A2 (occupied) Units B (currently being fitted out by OCADO), which leave 6.75ha of remaining land which is being built out as a 270,000 sq ft unit. Neither the undeveloped land within Wretchwick Green (6.6ha) nor Symmetry Park (6.7ha) are large enough to accommodate the SH operation. |
| Banbury Allocated Site | | | |
| Banbury (BAN6) | Banbury 6: Employment Land West of the M40 | Yes | Also known as CM40, the employment land has now been fully built out and let to occupiers including Pro Drive and Arrival. The remaining 10.3ha of undeveloped land within the allocation is located within Flood Zone 3b where development is precluded. This land has been reserved for biodiversity mitigation for the adjoining development located within South Northamptonshire Council. |
| Banbury (BAN15) | Employment Land North East of Junction 11 | Yes | Site area: 13ha. The site is not large enough to accommodate the SH operation. |

| Rural Areas | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Villages 5 | Former RAF Upper Heyford | Yes | <p>Employment on the allocation will be provided by the retention of the existing buildings already in commercial use. These include buildings on the historic air field that lies within a Conservation Area and would not be appropriate for re-use/demolition for the SH operation or large scale B8.</p> <p>In addition, the site is too small to accommodate SH.</p> <p>The allocation includes a further 13.4ha of employment land. This area is not large enough to accommodate the SH operation.</p> <p>New large B8 proposals would not be considered compatible with Heritage/Conservation Area.</p> |

Taking in turn each of the sites to be assessed:

North West Bicester (Albion Land) (Planning Policy Allocation BIC1)

4. This is a new zero-carbon mixed use development totalling 390 ha of land, 10 ha of total land allocated expected to provide for employment uses within the Plan period. Outline planning permission was submitted by Albion Land and granted on appeal (APP/C3015/W/16/3163551) for a mixed-use development of residential and B1, B2 and B8 on land off Howes Lane, known as Axis 9, Bicester. A further planning application was submitted May 2017 for the employment provision and approved in September 2017 (17/01090/OUT).
5. The site has been fully developed in two phases. The Reserved Matters for Phase 1 that includes the south eastern half of the site was approved in September 2018 (19/00347/REM). The layout includes 5 large scale and 7 small scale units which have all been let/sold. All 10ha of land allocated for employment use has been approved and construction has commenced. Phase 1 and 2 are complete and Phase 3 is under construction and is now also let to Arrival and The Menu.

The employment site at North West Bicester is not available for SH operation.

Graven Hill (Planning Policy Allocation BIC2)

6. Planning approval was granted for the redevelopment of the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) site to the west of Bicester in October 2011 (11/01494/OUT). The development consists of a mixed-use scheme comprising 1,900 dwellings, primary school, community hall and local centre, public house, 2,160 sqm of B1 (b), 2,400 sqm of B1 (c), 20,520 sqm of B2, and up to 66,960 sqm of B8 employment space. The MoD is undergoing a phased withdrawal of its operations as redevelopment of the site takes place.
7. A planning application was submitted in 2018 (18/00325/OUT) to vary several conditions of the approved scheme. A further planning application was submitted in August 2019 to vary conditions 2 (plans) and 28 (phasing) of Planning Approval 18/0325/OUT. The planning application was in direct response to Barrus seeking to move into Units D1 and D4 in the Graven Hill Site in July 2020. The planning application was approved in January 2020.
8. The original outline planning permission refers to the provision of a new junction to the employment site (known as the Perimeter Road) and a realignment of the existing access road, the southern relief road within the site. The provision of both is uncertain at the moment; delay in the provision of this infrastructure could further delay the development of the employment land meaning there is no certainty that the operational deadline for the development is achievable.
9. Further, the amount of Use Class B2 included within the approved outline planning application that sets the parameters in which the site will be developed (11/01494/OUT) includes 20,502sqm of Use Class B2. The scale of the Use Class B2 within the overall site would not accommodate the SH operation.
10. The approved employment land extends to 26ha. The area of the site that has approval for the Barrus site extends to 7.32ha. The remaining 18.68ha will not accommodate the SH operation.
11. It is understood that an owner occupier has committed to purchase the entire commercial element of Graven Hill for their operation. This further reinforces the lack of options at the site for SH.

The employment land within Graven Hill site allocation is too small to accommodate the SH operation.

Bicester Business Park (Planning Policy BIC4)

12. The site area extends to 29.5ha and is now known as Bicester Office Park. Policy BIC includes B1 (a) office use, with up to 6,000 jobs being created. Nearly half of the allocation has already been permitted and built out, and includes the Tesco superstore and surface water attenuation for Bicester Village.
13. Outline planning permission was granted in May 2020 for office development and research and development floorspace (17/02534/OUT) on a 13.1ha parcel of land to the south and east of the A41 and Oxford Road, adjacent to the Tesco superstore. The majority of the floor space approved was for the allocated B1(a) (office) with a small amount of floor space for B1 (b) (Research and Development).

This development is anticipated to generate between 2600 and 4000 jobs dependent on the nature of the future occupants and the extent of Use Class B1 (b) development. The quantum of job generated is much less than anticipated from the allocation policy (6,000).

14. The SH Use Class B2 would be contrary to Policy BIC4 and would have to be justified. It's unlikely that the Council would support Use Class B2 within this allocation, bearing in mind the reduced anticipated job creation from the BIC4 allocation as a whole, that has been further reduced by the mixed-use Tesco approval.

The employment land at Bicester Business Park is too small to accommodate, and is not suitable for the SH operation.

Bicester Gateway (BIC10)

15. The site area is 18ha and is allocated for B1 use with an anticipated creation of 3,500 jobs. The site has permission for a hotel that has been constructed (17/02557/REM). The remaining land (Phase 2) was granted planning permission for B1 development and a Health and Racquets Club in May 2020 (19/01740/HYBRID). The site extends to 15.8ha of which 6.6ha accommodates the Health and Racquets Club. To compensate for the loss of B1 floor space, a further planning application was approved in May 2020 (19/01746/OUT) for 4.6ha of B1 employment space.
16. As is the case for Bicester Business Park, the SH Use Class B2 would be contrary to Policy BIC10 and would have to be justified. It is unlikely that the Council would support a Use Class B2 on this site due to the impact of the reduced job generation.
17. Even if the 9.2ha (15.8ha - 6.6ha) of approval 19/01740/HYBRID and the additional unallocated 4.6ha were added together, the scale of the sites would not accommodate the SH operation.
18. ***The remaining employment land at Bicester Gateway is too small to accommodate, and is not suitable for the SH operation.***

Employment land at North East Bicester (BIC11)

19. The site extends to 15ha. Outline planning permission was approved for 48,308sqm of employment land (Use Class B1, B2 or B8) (15/01012/OUT). Two Reserved Matters applications (17/0712/REM and 17/01289/RM) for the eastern part of the site have been approved and 9 small scale employment units have been built out. A further planning application (18/00584/RM) for the remainder of the western part of the site for a further 2 units (Unit 1A 11,479sqm and Units 1B 15,982sqm) has been approved and are under construction.

The remaining employment land at North east Bicester is too small to accommodate the scale of the SH operation.

South East Bicester (Planning Policy Allocation BIC12)

Wretchwick Green

20. Planning Policy (BIC12) includes a mixed-use development of 1,500 dwellings and 40ha of employment space known as Wretchwick Green and has a resolution to grant planning permission subject to the signing of the S106 agreement (16/01268/OUT).
21. Policy BIC12 includes the following Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 (primarily B8 uses). The quantum of employment development included within the Policy has been significantly reduced from 40ha to 23.15ha as shown on Table 4 below.

Table 2: Bicester 12 Policy Requirement

| Bicester 12 Employment Provision | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bicester 12 Policy Requirement | 40 ha |
| Wretchwick Green (16/01268/OUT) (resolution to grant) | 6.66 ha |
| Symmetry Park Phase 1 (consented and partially constructed/occupied) | 16.49 ha |
| Total Current Provision | 23.15 ha |
| Deficit of employment provision | 16.85 ha |

22. The scale of the employment land included in the approved Wretchwick Green site subject of the resolution to grant application 16/01268/OUT (6.66ha) is not large enough to accommodate the SH operation.

Symmetry Park

23. Tritax Symmetry has been working with the Council to bring forward almost all of the remaining employment land allocated within the policy (16.49ha) approved under the outline planning permission 16/00861/HYBRID (up to 62,708sqm of B8 employment floor space). The employment site is separated into Zone 1 that benefits from full planning permission and Zone 2 from outline planning permission. The units within Zone 1, Unit A and Unit A1, have been constructed and are occupied.
24. A planning application (18/00091/F) was approved in July 2018 for Unit B within Zone 2 comprising 14,200sqm of logistic floor space within Use Class B8, 929sqm of ancillary B1 (a) offices and associated infrastructure. A further planning application for Unit B that included changes to the yard area to facilitate OCADO was approved in March 2021. Works are progressing, OCADO will be occupying Unit B shortly.
25. The remaining land to be developed extends to 6.75ha and benefits from 2 extant planning approvals for a single Unit C (24,898 sq. m) and an alternative scheme for two smaller units, Unit C1 and C2 (15,267sqm and 7,719sqm). The larger Unit C (24,898 sq. m) is now under construction. The scale of the site and the approved units will not accommodate the SH operation.

The remaining employment land at the Symmetry Park site, is too small to accommodate the scale of the SH operation. Even if both the available employment land, Wretchwick Green (6.66ha) and Symmetry Park (6.75ha), were added together, the land area would still be too small to accommodate the SH operation.

Employment Land West of the M40 (Banbury 6)

26. This strategic site is located to the east of Banbury and extends to 35ha of mixed employment land and includes the erection of up to 115,107sqm of either Use Class B8 or a mixture of Use Class B2 and B8. The site has either been built out, occupied or under construction.
27. The remaining 10.3ha of undeveloped land within the allocation is located within Flood Zone 3b where development is precluded. This parcel of land has been safeguarded for biodiversity mitigation.

The employment land west of the M40 has been built out, occupied or under construction and so not available. The remaining 10.3ha of land (safeguarded for biodiversity gain) is not suitable or available for development.

Employment Land North East of Junction 11 (Banbury 15)

28. This strategic site to the east of the M40, extends to 13ha and is allocated for mixed employment use. Planning permission was approved in July 2020 for commercial development (19/00128/HYBRID) for up to 33,110sqm of flexible Use Class B2, B8 and ancillary B1 office (Full for up to 2 units) and up to 16,890sqm of flexible Use Class B2, B8 and ancillary B1 office (Outline Planning Permission for up to 2 units).
29. Construction has commenced for the 2 units subject to the approved full part of the HYBRID application. The scale of the site, together with the scale of the units would not accommodate the SH operation.

The employment land included within the allocation north east of Junction 11 is too small, and not available to accommodate the SH operation.

Former RAF Upper Heyford (Villages 5)

30. This is a mixed-use allocation of 520ha that includes a small area of around 120,000sqm metres of employment use. A Hybrid planning application submitted in May 2018 (18/00825/HYBRID) has a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a S106 agreement.
31. Most of the employment on the allocation will be provided by the retention of the existing buildings in commercial use. These include buildings on the historic air field that lie within a Conservation Area and would not be appropriate for re-use/demolition for the SH operation.

32. The allocation includes a further 13.4ha of employment land. The proposed development includes up to 35,175sqm of employment space, consisting of 6,330sqm of Use Class B1a Office, 13,635sqm of Use Class B1 b/c, 9,250sqm of Use Class B2 and 5,960sqm of Use Class B8.

The employment land included within the allocation is too small to accommodate the SH operation.

33. There are a further 5 employment sites that are allocated within the Non-Statutory Local Plan 1996. The sites are too small to accommodate the SH operation.

- Banbury Cross Business Park (0.4 ha)
- Land east of railway/north of Waterworks Lane, Banbury (2 ha)
- Bicester Park, Aura Brooks Phase 2 (0.56 ha)
- Adderbury (3.36 ha) - Brymbo Ironworks, Hook Norton (0.73 ha)
- PA Turneys, Weston on the Green (1.9 ha)

Committed Sites

34. Other committed sites (those with planning permission and a likelihood that the development will be delivered within 3 years) were identified through those planning applications determined through the Cherwell District Council Planning Committee. The following developments were identified. None of the Sites had the capacity to accommodate the SH operation.

Table 3: Assessment of Committed Sites

| Planning Ref | Location | Description | Notes | Suitable/available |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18/01333/F | Bicester Heritage Buckingham Road Bicester (Forms part of Planning Policy BIC8 Former RAF Bicester) | Extension to existing Technical Site to provide new employment units comprising flexible B1(c) light industrial, B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage or distribution) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, together with associated access, parking and landscaping. | The site extends to 1.6ha. The remainder of the Site is allocated for heritage tourist development. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required. |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18/02160/F | Part Of OS Parcel 0083 North Of 89 Cassington Road Yarnton | Redevelopment of part of the site with new purpose-built buildings for B1 and B8 use including provision for access onto Cassington Road | The Site area is 0.72ha. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required/ Use Class not compatible. |
| 19/02708/OUT | Bicester Heritage Buckingham Road Bicester | Outline: - Provide new employment units comprising B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial), B8 (Storage) and D1 (Education) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, with all matters reserved except for access | The site area is 10.08ha. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required |
| 20/00247/F | Land South East of Town and Country Scaffolding Ltd Tramway Road Banbury | Erection of three B1 (c) light industrial units | The site area is 0.54ha. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required. |
| 19/02081/F | Land Adj. to Unit E25 Telford Road Bicester | Erection of four Class B2 units of varying sizes with associated car parking and landscaping - Resubmission of 19/00545/F | The site area is 0.8ha. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required |
| 20/02139/F | E P Barrus Ltd Launton Road Bicester OX26 4U | Demolition of existing VOSA buildings and the erection of two new commercial building | The site area is 0.6ha. | Not suitable – will not accommodate the scale of development required |

35. A site assessment has been undertaken to identify potential existing sites of 20ha within the settlements of Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington. No employment sites are available of the scale required in the urban areas of these settlements.

36. Further investigation on potential sites within the rural area that may be suitable and available has been undertaken by a review of the Cherwell Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (February 2018). The rural employment sites that the Council considers suitable for employment use range from 0.8ha to 11ha, none of a scale to accommodate the SH operation.