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Symmetry Park, Bicester, Phase 3

Transport Assessment

For Tritax Big Box Developments Ltd

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Issued by	Hydrock Consultants Limited Northern Assurance Buildings 9-21 Princess Street Albert Square Manchester M2 4DN United Kingdom	T +44 (0)161 804 5550 E manchestercentral@hydrock.com hydrock.com
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Prepared by		Paul Skipper BSc (Hons) GradCIHT
Checked by		Vassil Pavlov BEng (Hons) MSc MCIHT
Approved by		Sam Denby BA (Hons) MSc CMIHT

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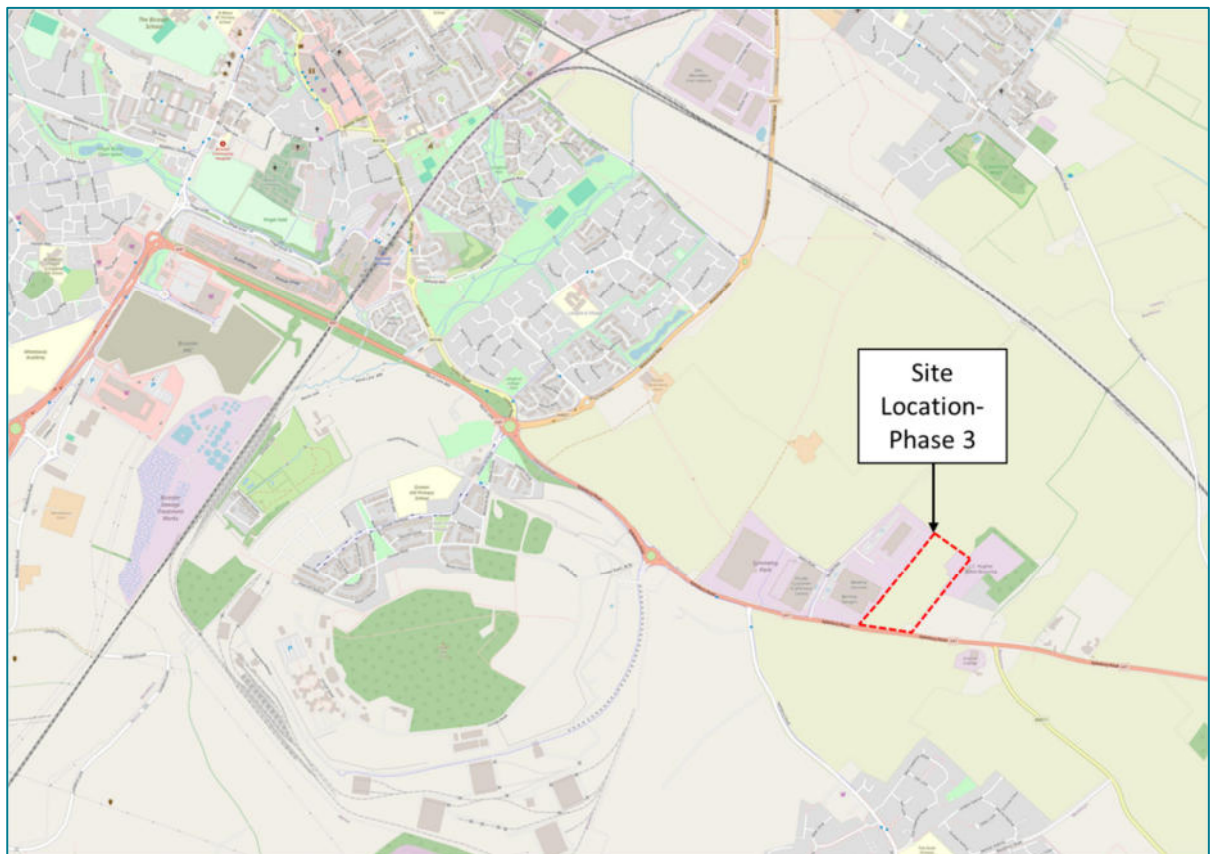
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Planning Application

- 1.1.1 Hydrock has been instructed by Tritax Big Box Ltd to prepare a Transport Assessment [TA] in support of a full planning application for a proposed logistics development at Symmetry Park, Bicester.
- 1.1.2 The application being prepared is a speculative one and proposes a 2-unit scheme. The units are referred to as E and F comprising a Gross External Area [GEA] of 25,856 sqm (or 278,311 sq.ft) and constitute Phase 3 of the existing Symmetry Park development.
- 1.1.3 The site location is illustrated in **Figure 1.1** below.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



Source: OpenStreetMap©

1.2 Planning History

- 1.2.1 The site is identified for development in the emerging Cherwell District Council Local Plan Review 2040: Bicester Vision 2040 Consultation Draft (Regulation 18), which was published for public consultation in September to November 2023, as a preferred employment site allocation as an extension to the existing Symmetry Park at Bicester Phases 1 and 2. The draft allocation is for employment uses E(g)(i)/(ii)/(iii)/B2/B8 floorspace (Site Reference LPR21B).

- 1.2.2 Adjacent to the site is the phase 1 Symmetry Park, Bicester development. A summary of the planning history of Phase 1 is set out below.
- 1.2.3 Hybrid planning consent was granted in 2016 (16/00861) and is separated into Zone 1 (units A1 and A2) that benefits from full planning permission and Zone 2 (units B and C) from outline planning permission (referred to as the Outline Consent). Units A1 and A2 within Zone 1, have been constructed and are occupied.
- 1.2.4 The hybrid application was supported by a comprehensive Transport assessment [TA] prepared by Peter Brett Associates (ref. 32765/5501/TA) providing details of the proposed new access arrangements and sustainable travel improvements.
- 1.2.5 A planning application (18/00091/F) was approved in July 2018 for Unit B within Zone 2, comprising 14,200sq.m of logistic floor space within Class Use B8, 929sq.m of ancillary B1(a) offices and associated infrastructure. Planning approval (19/00388/F) was granted in July 2019 for a single unit, known as Unit C comprising 29,350sq.m of logistics floor space, Class Use B8, 1,688sq.m of ancillary Class Use B1(a) offices, and associated infrastructure on the remaining parcel of land within Zone 2. (Referred to as the Full Consent)
- 1.2.6 A Transport Technical Note [TN] prepared by Hydrock was submitted in January 2018 in support of, application 18/00091/F, outlining the above details and concluding that there are no cumulative traffic and transportation issues arising from the changes in the development quantum.
- 1.2.7 A further planning application (20/00530/F) was approved in June 2020 for a DPD Parcel Depot on land contiguous with the northern boundary of the approved 2016 HYBRID application. The DPD Parcel Depot consists of 4,635sq.m of Class Use B8, 592sq.m of Class Use B1(a) office, a customer collection facility, 112 sq.m, staff mess pod, 142 sq.m, and associated infrastructure. Access to the DPD Parcel Depot is off Morrell Way.
- 1.2.8 In support of the proposals a Transport Statement [TS] was prepared by Hydrock and submitted in February 2020. The document (ref: 10942-HYD-XX-XX-RP-TP-4001-P03) outlined the details of the development proposals concluding that there are no traffic and transportation issues arising from the generated volumes of development traffic. Unit D has been constructed and fully occupied.
- 1.2.9 To facilitate the Ocado operation, a planning application (20/03404/F) for engineering works to extend the service yard of Unit B was approved in March 2021. The proposed works to the yard extend into the approved Unit C site area; as such, the form of the approved Unit C cannot be delivered.
- 1.2.10 A TA was prepared by Hydrock in November 2020. The document (ref: 13411-HYD-XX-XX-RP-TP-4001-P05) presented a cumulative impact assessment and concluded that there are no traffic and transportation issues arising from the additional volumes of development traffic. Having been constructed previously, unit B is now also fully occupied.

- 1.2.11 Full planning permission for 23,195sqm of logistics floor space within Class B8 (21/01330/F) was granted for Unit C in July 2021.
- 1.2.12 A TS was prepared by Hydrock, confirming that the anticipated trip generation associated with the proposals would present a reduction against the previously approved levels. Unit C has now been constructed and is also fully occupied.

1.3 Purpose of Report

- 1.3.1 This TA has been developed in accordance with the now superseded DfT document "Guidance on Transport Assessment" [GOTA] (2007) and gives due regard to the NPPG "Transport Evidence in Plan Making" document.
- 1.3.2 It sets out the transport matters relating to the development site and provides details of the development proposals, including an assessment of the predicted traffic flows, the corresponding impact on the surrounding highway network and matters associated with accessibility and connectivity.
- 1.3.3 The report seeks to conclude that the proposed development can be accommodated without detriment to the operational capacity or safety of the local highway network and that it can be suitably accessed on foot, by cycle and by local public transport services.

1.2 Scope of Assessment

- 1.2.1 The scope of assessment has been agreed following email correspondence with Oxfordshire County Council [OCC].
- 1.2.2 A copy of the scoping discussions is shown in full within **Appendix A**.

1.3 Structure of Report

- 1.3.1 This report comprises seven sections, including this introduction:
 - » Section 2 offers a site description and review of existing conditions;
 - » Section 3 considers the national and local transport policy;
 - » Section 4 assesses the sustainable accessibility of the site;
 - » Section 5 outlines the development proposals;
 - » Section 6 presents the trip generation and traffic impact of the development;
 - » Section 7 summarises the results of the junction capacity assessments; and
 - » Section 7 sets out the summary and conclusions.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Site Location and Description

- 2.1.1 The site is located to the south-east of Bicester, approximately 3.5km to the south east of the town centre. The A41 provides direct access to the A34/M40 Junction 9 via the south of Bicester, which continues to link to the M25, and also the M42 south of Birmingham. The A41/M40 interchange is approximately 7km miles to the west, whilst Oxford is 25km south-west via the A34.
- 2.1.2 In a broadly rectangle shape, the site is presently unoccupied and bounded to its northern and eastern extent by existing farmland and Bicester Caravan and Leisure caravan dealer. Along its western by Unit D, Unit A1, Unit A2, and other industrial warehouse units that form part of the greater Symmetry Park estate and on the southern boundary by the existing A41.
- 1.3.2 The site is identified for development in the emerging Cherwell District Council Local Plan Review 2040: Bicester Vision 2040 Consultation Draft (Regulation 18), which was published for public consultation in September to November 2023, as a preferred employment site allocation as an extension to the existing Symmetry Park at Bicester Phases 1 and 2. The draft allocation is for employment uses E(g)(i)/(ii)/(iii)/B2/B8 floorspace (Site Reference LPR21B). As such, it is considered that the Site is more connected to the urban fringe of Bicester than the open countryside.
- 2.1.3 The site is accessed from the A41, via Morrell Way which was constructed to serve the wider Symmetry Park development. The A41 provides direct access to the A34/M40 Junction 9 via the south of Bicester, which continues to link to the M25, and also the M42 south of Birmingham. The A41/M40 interchange is approximately 7km miles to the west, whilst Oxford is 25km east via the A34.

2.2 Local Highway Network

A41

- 2.2.1 The A41 is predominantly a rural principal road. To the east, the A41 extends to Aylesbury and on to the M25 providing connectivity with Greater London. To the west, the A41 forms a roundabout with the B4100 London Road, A4421 and Gravenhill Road North providing connectivity to Bicester town centre via the B4100 London Road to the north; M40 Junction 9 via the A41 Oxford Road to the west; and the consented former MOD redevelopment site (located to the south-west of the Site on the other side of the A41 carriageway), via Gravenhill Road North to the south. The A41 Oxford Road and M40 Junction 9 also form a roundabout with the A34 which provides connectivity to Oxford (south westerly direction from the Site).
- 2.2.2 In the vicinity of the Site, the A41 is a single two-way carriageway with street lighting and is governed by a 40mph speed limit. The carriageway width is approximately 10m between the approach to the B4100 London Road/ A4421/ A41/ Gravenhill Road North roundabout and Ploughley Road, narrowing to approximately 7m between Ploughley Road and the B4011.

- 2.2.3 Due to the nature of the road, its characteristics vary along its length. When leaving the site and travelling west no footways are present along the A41. However, Between the site access and Ploughley Road a 3m footway is provided on the northern side, this has been widened from 1m as part of the pedestrian improvements carried out for the Symmetry Park development. A newly established signalised junction with pedestrian crossings has been installed at Ploughley Road from the A41. This improvement has also extended the length of the 3m footway and provides a crossing to the 3m footway on the southern side of the A41 after Ploughley Road junction.
- 2.2.4 Previously they were ghost island right turn lanes along the A41 facilitating right turn manoeuvres on to Pioneer Road, Ploughley Road and the B4011. Improvement have taken place with a priority controlled roundabout junction at Pioneer Road, and now a signalised junction at both Ploughley Road and the B4011.
- 2.2.5 There is a low railway bridge over the A41 to the east by the junction with Station Road which has a height restriction of 4.5m.
- 2.2.6 **Figure 2.1** overleaf illustrates the A41 in the vicinity of the site eastbound.

Figure 2.1: A41 in Vicinity of Site



Source: Google Maps©

- 2.2.7 The site is accessed off Morrell Way via an intersection with A41. The junction features a ghost island arrangement with channelling splitter island on the site access arm. Morrell Way, which serves as access to Symmetry Park, has a 7.3m wide carriageway and is governed by a 10mph speed limit.

2.3 Wretchwick Green

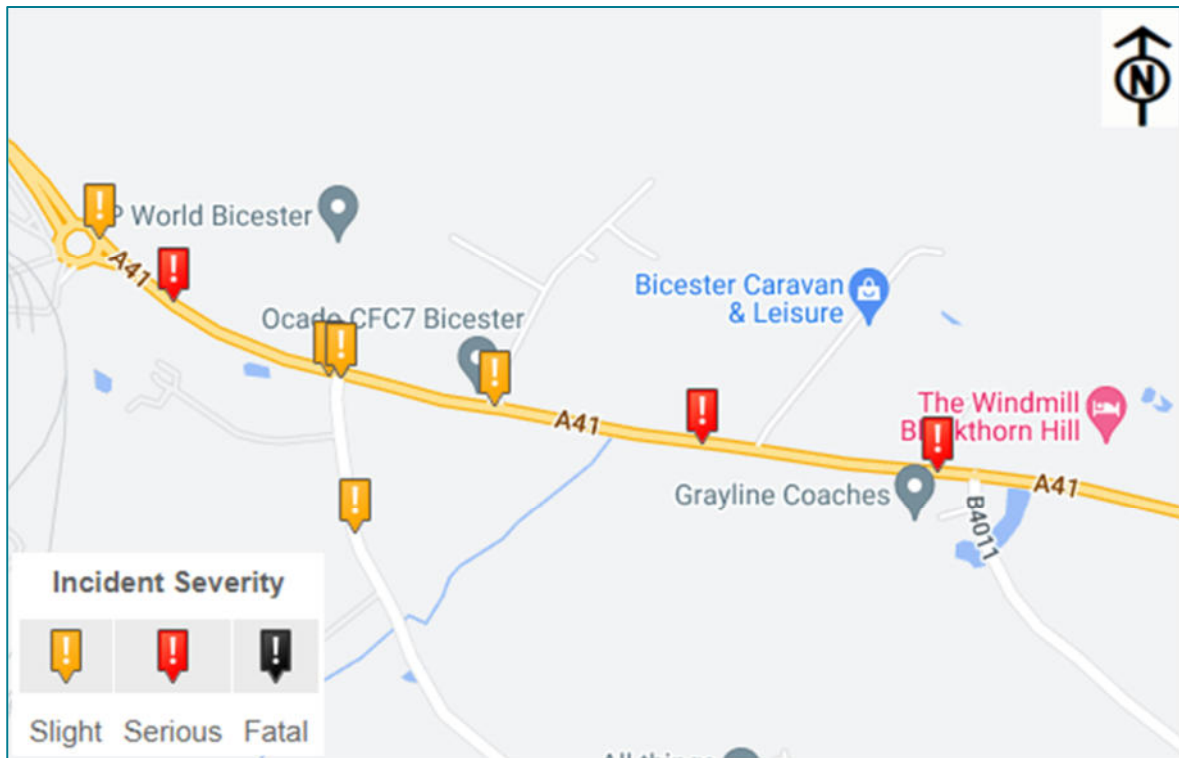
- 2.3.1 It is also important to consider the proposed Wretchwick Green development in the context of the local area. The proposals are for:

- 2.3.2 *"Outline application with all matters reserved apart from access for residential development including up to 1,500 dwellings, up to 7ha of employment land for B1 and/ or B8 uses, a local centre with retail and community use to include A1 and/ or A2 and/ or A3 and/ or A4 and/ or A5 and/ or D1 and/ or D2 and/ or B1, up to a 3 Form Entry Primary School, drainage works including engineering operations to re-profile the land and primary access points from the A41 and A4421, pedestrian and cycle access, circulation routes, related highway works; car parking; public open space and green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems."*
- 2.3.3 When delivered the development is expected to transform pedestrian and cycle connectivity in south east Bicester, by providing enhanced footways and cycle links, integrating with existing public rights of way and cycle routes.
- 2.3.4 As part of the approved Symmetry Park development a 10.0m green corridor has been constructed through the site with a proposed link with Wretchwick Green to the north. Further links will be delivered following full build out of the development.

2.4 Accident Data

- 2.4.1 The DfT document "Guidance on Transport Assessment" states that:
- 2.4.2 *"Critical locations on the road network with poor accident records should be identified. This is to determine if the proposed development will exacerbate existing problems or, if proposed, whether highway mitigation works or traffic management measures will help to alleviate the problems".*
- 2.4.3 This subsection considers the accident record within the local study network to establish if there are any specific highway safety issues that need to be considered. Figure 2.2 illustrates the accident plot in the vicinity of the site for the most recent 5-year period, as obtained from OCC.

Figure 2.2: Local Highway Network Accident Record



Source: Crashmap ©

- 2.4.4 The Personal-Injury Accidents (PIAs) recorded within the study area are obtained using the most recently available five-year data (1st January 2018 - 31st December 2022) available from OCC. Examination of the PIA data revealed that nine accidents have occurred within the study area in the vicinity of the site during the five-year period, out of which six were slight and three were serious.
- 2.4.5 The yearly breakdown is summarised in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Accident Data Summary

Year/Severity	Slight	Serious	Fatal	Total
2018	1	1	-	2
2019	3	1	-	4
2020	-	-	-	-
2021	1	-	-	1
2022	1	1	-	2
Total	6	3	-	9

- 2.4.6 From the above it is evident that the accident record within the vicinity of the site is modest, particularly considering the heavily trafficked A41 distributor road.
- 2.4.7 It is also worth noting that there have been no fatal accidents within the study network during the analysed period and no accidents have been reported in 2020.
- 2.4.8 While the accidents are unfortunate, they do not indicate any specific highways safety issues that warrant consideration. It is Hydrock's view that the occurrences are arbitrary and can be attributed to random fluctuations, circumstantial factors and driver behaviour as the main causes and therefore do not give rise to a material concern.

3. TRANSPORT POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Preamble

- 3.1.1 In order to assess the proposals and develop a transport access strategy for the proposed development, it is necessary to review both local and national transport planning guidance.
- 3.1.2 The following sections outline the relevant policy and guidance documents in respect of the proposed development.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's policies for delivering sustainable development through the planning system. Local authorities are required to take these policies into account when formulating local development plans and when determining planning applications.
- 3.2.2 The most recent NPPF report was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied at a local level. The NPPF is a significant material consideration in plan making and decision taking.
- 3.2.3 Paragraph 108 seeks to encourage opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use. This is supplemented by paragraph 109 which states that development should be focused in sustainable locations and offer a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 3.2.4 Development proposals should also give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and facilitate access to high quality public transport. The needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility should also be addressed (paragraph 116).
- 3.2.5 Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 3.2.6 Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport movements; conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable road users should be minimised through effective layout design.
- 3.2.7 Having regard to the above objectives, the proposed site access strategy includes measures to connect the site with the adjacent community and sustainable travel network, including existing public transport services. This TA considers the accessibility of the site by all modes and proposes a layout and access strategy that seeks to maximise the use of sustainable modes.

The NPPF was recently subject to a consultation which concluded on 24 September 2024. This consultation sought views on proposed reforms in order to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system.

3.3 Planning Practice Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in Decision-Taking

- 3.3.1 In March 2014, the Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] in conjunction with the Department for Transport [DfT], released advice on when transport assessments and transport statements are required, what they should contain (which is intended to assist stakeholders in determining whether an assessment may be required) and, if so, what the level and scope of that assessment should be.
- 3.3.2 The advice reflects current Government policy promoting a shift from the 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning to one more focused on sustainability. The document focuses on encouraging environmental sustainability, managing the existing network and mitigating the residual impacts of traffic from the development proposals.

3.4 Manual for Streets [MfS]

- 3.4.1 Manual for Streets (March 2007 and Sept 2010) supersedes Places Streets & Movement and Design Bulletin 32. Manual for Streets should now be used where 85th percentile monitored traffic speeds are less than 37mph.
- 3.4.2 The Manual deals with first principles in respect of what a street is for. It outlines five principal functions, namely:
 - » Place;
 - » Movement;
 - » Access;
 - » Parking; and
 - » Drainage and utilities.
- 3.4.3 A sense of place encompasses a number of characteristics, namely, local distinctiveness, visual quality and human interaction. Of the five functions, place and movement are the most important in determining the character of streets and should be considered together, as opposed to in isolation.
- 3.4.4 In new developments, Manual for Streets highlights those locations with a relatively high place function would be those where people are likely to gather and interact with each other, such as the town centre.
- 3.4.5 In section 3 – the design process highlights that the design of a scheme should follow the user hierarchy shown in **Table 3.1**:

Table 3.1: User Hierarchy (taken from Table 3.2 of MfS, March 2007)

Consider First	Cyclist
	Public transport users
	Specialist service vehicles (e.g. emergency services, waste etc.)
Consider Last	Other motor vehicles

3.5 Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot

3.5.1 Various walking distances are quoted in the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's (CIHT's) "Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot". **Table 3.2** (taken from Table 3.2 of the document) sets out the acceptable walking distances in various contexts:

Table 3.2: Acceptable Walking Distances

Criteria	Town Centre (m)	School / Commuters (m)	Elsewhere (m)
Desirable	200	500	400
Acceptable	400	1,000	800
Preferred Maximum	800	2,000	1,200

3.6 Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050

3.6.1 The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) outlines a clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. The plan is to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The policies included in the LTCP are the tools that the council believe are necessary to achieve this. The vision outlines a clear long-term ambition for transport in the county and underpins the policies in this document stating:

"Our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision is for an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive. It will tackle inequality, be better for health, wellbeing and social inclusivity and have zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries. It will also enhance our natural and historic environment and enable the county to be one of the world's leading innovation economies. Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice."

3.6.2 In order to track delivery of the vision and key themes the LTCP has identified a set of headline targets:

By 2030 the targets are to:

- » Replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire
- » Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week

Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50% By 2040 our targets are to:

- » Deliver a net-zero transport network
- » Replace or remove an additional 1 out of 3 car trips in Oxfordshire

By 2050 the targets are to:

- » Deliver a transport network that contributes to a climate positive future
- » Have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries

3.6.3 In order to deliver these benefits a new approach is required that prioritises walking and cycling. LTCP will put this approach into practice through our transport user hierarchy. The transport user hierarchy translates our vision into policy and sets the direction for the rest of the LTCP. The hierarchy clearly outlines the order in which we will consider different modes of transport in policy development and scheme design. It identifies that the priority is to enable and encourage walking, cycling, public and shared transport use.

Policy 1

3.6.4 The council will develop, assess and prioritise transport schemes, development proposals and policies according to the following transport user hierarchy:

- » Walking and wheeling (including running, mobility aids, wheelchairs and mobility scooters)
- » Cycling and riding (bicycles, non-standard cycles, e-bikes, cargo bikes, e-scooters and horse riding)
- » Public transport (bus, scheduled coach, rail and taxis)
- » Motorcycles
- » Shared vehicles (car clubs and carpooling)
- » Other motorised modes (cars, vans and lorries)

3.6.5 The transport user hierarchy will ensure that future schemes consider walking, cycling, public and shared transport before the private car. This will deliver infrastructure that enables people of all abilities to travel without being dependent on a car. This approach will reduce the private car's dominance and develop a more balanced transport system. It will also ensure that we consider human health and well-being first, creating attractive environments for people to walk, cycle and spend time in. The hierarchy recognises that private cars will still play a role in Oxfordshire's future transport network. The hierarchy does not mean that every future scheme will be in relation to walking, cycling or public transport. Instead, it recognises that many existing streets have been designed around the private car which create environments that are not welcoming for people and do not support a variety of travel modes.

3.6.6 The council recognise that the hierarchy is a simplification and different modes will be more appropriate in certain locations. These more localised decisions will be taken through the area transport strategies. The hierarchy provides us with a clear, agreed position to help with that process.

3.7 Bicester Area Strategy

3.7.1 The Bicester Area Strategy serves to support the Local Plan. The document states:

"Enhancing access to the strategic transport network and making it easier for people to travel between homes and jobs is critical in accelerating and accommodating future growth in Bicester. Investment in core transport infrastructure will boost the attractiveness and desirability of Bicester as a place where businesses want to locate and grow, and where people want to live and work."

3.7.2 The council's key initiatives include the provision of highway infrastructure which effectively reduces current and predicted transport congestion in Bicester, the increase in highway capacity on perimeter routes to make these attractive to employment and longer distance traffic thereby reducing the strain on the town centre and central corridor, accommodating proposed strategic rail initiatives, including East West Rail and plans for electrification, and a possible future Rail Freight Interchange, and the strengthening of the town's walking, cycle and bus networks to reduce congestion, improve air quality and ensure good links to local employment opportunities, amenities and transport hubs.

Policy BIC1

3.7.3 Policy BIC1 seeks opportunities to improve access and connections between key employment and residential sites and the strategic transport system by:

- » Increasing capacity at Junction 9 of the M40 and supporting plans to improve Junction 10
- » Delivering a strategic perimeter route around the town is the key component of this strategy
- » Working closely with partners to facilitate the delivery of proposed strategic rail initiatives, especially East West Rail
- » Working with the rail industry and developers to deliver solutions at the Charbridge Lane and London Road railway level crossing
- » Supporting the proposals to secure a potential freight interchange at Graven Hill and working with the district and developers to achieve this
- » Working with developers to improve the A41 Oxford Road, including enhancements to the Pingle Drive junction, new site accesses, new bus stops and footpath and cycleway improvements
- » Creating a Park & Ride facility adjacent to the A41, close to the Vendee Drive junction
- » Providing measures to reduce congestion through the central corridor (from Kings End (B4030) to the 3-arm Field Street, Buckingham Road and Banbury Road roundabout)
- » Implementing focused enhancements to the A4421 (between the junctions with Bicester Road and Launton Road)
- » Improvements to the Buckingham Road / A4221 junction
- » Increasing capacity at the Howes Lane / Bucknell Road junction and approaches
- » South East Link Road

Policy BIC2

- 3.7.4 Policy BIC2 seeks to work with strategic partners to develop the town's walking, cycling and bus networks and links between key development sites and the town centre and railway stations by:
- » Enhancing pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to the two railway stations, in particular Bicester Town Station
 - » Improving Bicester's bus services along key routes
 - » Significantly improving public transport connectivity with other key areas of economic growth within Oxfordshire
 - » Providing improved public transport infrastructure
 - » Providing new sections of urban pedestrian and cycle routes to better connect residential developments with the town centre and key employment destinations
 - » Public realm improvements in Bicester Market Square and The Causeway
 - » Securing green links between proposed development sites on the outskirts of the town and existing Public Rights of Way, providing a series of leisure / health walks

Policy BIC3

- 3.7.5 Policy BIC3 seeks to get the most out of Bicester's transport network by investigating ways to increase people's awareness of the travel choices available in Bicester by:
- » Undertaking travel promotions and marketing measures
 - » Developing a coordinated parking strategy in partnership with Cherwell District Council
 - » Discouraging undesirable routing of traffic by developing a signage strategy

3.8 Cherwell Local Plan (2011 - 2031)

- 3.8.1 The Cherwell Local Plan addresses the future of transport in the region through ensuring that a series of challenges are met in order to deliver sustainable development and communities.
- 3.8.2 The document makes reference to the rapid growth of Bicester in particular as a major employment centre and emphasises the importance of new development integrating and interacting with existing neighbourhoods, being accessible from those neighbourhoods by non-car modes of transport, and providing for a range of uses and dwellings that will contribute to delivering mixed and cohesive communities and accommodating the projected growth.
- 3.8.3 A key objective of the council is to reduce out-commuting and provide sustainable transport choices that would make a significant difference to Bicester's environment. The document places emphasis on the amount of traffic on the roads, which has accelerated in recent years as a result of waves of new housing, high levels of out-commuting and the draw of developments such as Bicester Village.

- 3.8.4 Traffic congestion problems affect not only Bicester's living environment but also its historic environment in and around the town centre. The Local Plan seeks to address such issues through the implementation of specific highway measures such as Junction 9 improvements and a south-west perimeter road, but also by making Bicester more self-sufficient. The provision of transport initiatives, including delivering new strategic highway improvements including those on peripheral routes are seen as a tool for securing substantial gains for the centre of the town by reducing the flow of through traffic.
- 3.8.5 Highway constraints such as traffic congestion in the town centre and at King's End / A41 and the need for improvements to M40 Junction 9 and the Bucknell Road / Howes Lane junction within the town are identified as key environmental challenges facing Bicester.
- 3.8.6 The council's vision for Bicester in 2031 includes the construction of some 10,000 new homes and the final phases of the North West Bicester Eco-Town development. The delivery of large-scale development projects gives rise the consideration for providing new development in accessible locations and encouraging a shift to more sustainable modes of travel with the aim of reducing traffic congestion and the proportion of out-commuting.

3.9 Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040

- 3.9.1 The Bicester Vision 2040 Consultation Draft will be a new Local Plan to meet Cherwell's needs, protect its environment and secure sustainable development. The consultation draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 was prepared to prompt discussion and feedback on new planning policies to guide the delivery of sustainable development across the district. The consultation took place between Friday, 22 September 2023 and Friday, 3 November 2023. Once the Plan has been adopted, it will replace the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (which was adopted in 2015).
- 3.9.2 The Site is identified in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (Regulation 19) Proposed Submission Plan, which was published on 4th November 2024, and is due to go out for public consultation in December 2024. The Site is identified as a preferred employment site allocation and an extension to the successful Symmetry Park Phases 1 and 2. The allocation is for employment uses E(g)(i)/(ii)/(iii)/B2/B8 floorspace (Site Reference BIC 5).

3.10 Parking Standards

- 3.10.1 Appropriate parking standards are also recommended for all new developments to reflect demand and simultaneously encourage alternative travel choices.
- 3.10.2 Oxfordshire County Council presents the parking standards for new developments, consistent with its Local Transport Plan.
- 3.10.3 The council recognises the need to promote sustainable travel and as such, the following extract from the parking standards aims to reflect current demand whilst striving to limit overprovision and discourage out of town developments. The standards

given are maximum values for vehicle parking provision and minimum values for cycle parking provision. These are summarised in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Car Parking Standards

Specific Land Use	Vehicular Standards	Accessibility Parking	EV Parking	Minimum Cycle Standards
B8 Storage - Commercial Warehousing	1 space per 300sqm	6% of all vehicle parking spaces	25% of all vehicle parking spaces (minimum)	1 space per 250sqm for staff and 1 space per 500 sqm for visitors.

- 3.11 Car parking that is over provided for will not be accepted. For car parking where daily usage is shown to be lower than previously assessed from site-wide monitoring, development sites will be encouraged to repurpose such areas. Repurposing may include conversion of areas for active travel measures or benefit the local community and employees through landscaped / biodiversity improvements.
- 3.12 As set out in **Table 3.3**, the type of land use will determine the maximum amount of commercial / employment vehicle parking per development site. Should a reduction in parking provision be proposed, each application will be individually assessed on its merits, but must be based on the following criteria:
- » Trip rates (including base and forecast mode shares) associated with the development accounting for the vehicular trip rate reductions in accordance with the requirements set out in OCC's 'Implementing Decide & Provide: Requirements for Transport Assessments' document
 - » The policies in OCC's LTCP, notably the transport user hierarchy (Policy 1), which requires that development proposals give primacy to walking, cycling and public transport, and the LTCP targets to reduce dependence on the private car
 - » The specific user group of employees / visitors of the site (including shift patterns),
 - » Location and risk of displaced parking.
- 3.12.1 The number of spaces for operational vehicles i.e. Light Goods Vehicles (LGV) and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) may also be calculated using the same methodology above or compared to vehicle operating licences for similar buildings / operations.
- 3.12.2 While non-residential developments are expected to provide a minimum level of active charging points (25% of all vehicle parking spaces), in designing this type of infrastructure, there is a need to consider the likely parking behaviour i.e. expected duration of people's stays which may affect the number of 'active' spaces.
- 3.12.3 In designing provisions for disabled users parking at non-residential developments, where the total number of parking spaces exceeds 200 spaces, consideration must be

given to providing less than 6% of spaces for disabled parking to ensure there is not overprovision of spaces.

- 3.12.4 The developer of a site proposal is responsible for ensuring high quality facilities are provided on site for the proposed use, including cycle parking, staff changing, washing and storage facilities.
- 3.12.5 Any planning submission must be supported with details of the site's operation once it is in use, whether the site stores vehicles not in use, the frequency of vehicles visiting the site for deliveries, or the type and size of vehicles using the site.

4. SUSTAINABLE ACCESSIBILITY

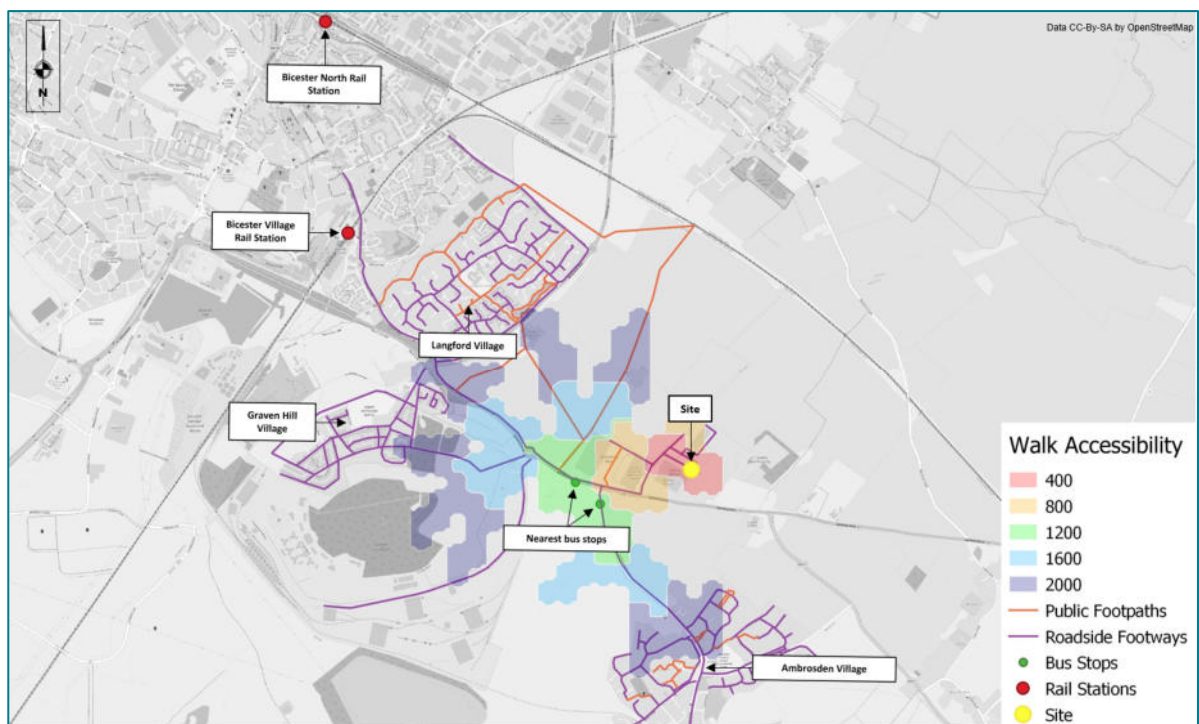
4.1 Access on Foot

- 4.1.1 Walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km. The guidance on the preferred maximum walking distances to amenities is given in the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation [CIHT] document 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' (2000).
- 4.1.2 In terms of commuting journeys by foot, the desirable distance is 500m, the acceptable distance is 1km and the preferred maximum is 2km. However, the distance that people are prepared to walk depends upon many factors; there are obvious physical factors such as age, health and disabilities, along with factors concerning the quality of the route and the environment.
- 4.1.3 In relation to shorter trips in particular, the CIHT publication Planning for Walking (section 2.1) states that "across Britain about 80% of journeys shorter than 1 mile are made wholly on foot."
- 4.1.4 Manual for Streets [MfS] emphasises this advice, stating that "walkable neighbourhoods should have a range of facilities available within 800m." However, this distance is not regarded as the upper limit for walking journeys, and MfS uses the principle that walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km in length.
- 4.1.5 The location of development is within reach of the public transport network which, is particularly important in terms of encouraging travel by this mode and supporting the viability of public transport services.
- 4.1.6 The local highway network provides a shared footway/cycleway on the northern side of the A41 adjacent to the site, delivered as part of the previous phases and offering good pedestrian connectivity to the existing footways along the A41 and the eastern side of Ploughley Road. All other sections of the highway network in the vicinity of the site and further afield, with the exception of the A41 between B4100 London Road/ A4421/ A41/ Gravenhill Road North roundabout and B4030/ A41/ Oxford Road roundabout, provide footways which facilitate pedestrian movement and offer a logical progression towards the pedestrian traveller's journey towards local residential areas.
- 4.1.7 In addition, Wretchwick Green has proposed some pedestrian measures:
- » A network of pedestrian footways and footpaths across the Wretchwick Green site.
 - » A hierarchy of internal routes placing walking as the most important mode with each part of the network providing appropriate pedestrian provision.
 - » The principal road network – including the main link road (Wretchwick Avenue) will have a 30mph limit, but lower category roads within residential areas will be designed for speeds of up to 20mph.

- » Formal crossing points to be provided within the development at key pedestrian intersections with the road network – including close to the school and within the local centre, which will straddle the main link road.
- » A series of pedestrian crossings will be provided at the proposed access points onto the A4421. A total of four stand-alone crossings are proposed.

4.1.8 **Figure 4.1** below provides an extract of the indicative 2km walk catchment plan using GIS software - Basemap's Visography (TRACC) program which provides sustainable travel mapping. A copy of the full 2km walking catchment is provided within Figure 1 of **Appendix A**.

Figure 4.1: 2km Walking Catchment



Source: OpenStreetMap ©

4.2 Access by Cycle

4.2.1 It is widely recognised that cycling can act as a substitute for short car journeys, particularly those up to 5km in length. This is consistent with the statement in LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design (paragraph 2.2.2) that states:

"two out of every three personal trips are less than five miles in length – an achievable distance to cycle for most people, with many shorter journeys also suitable for walking."

4.2.2 Experienced cyclist will often be prepared to cycle longer distances for whatever journey purpose.

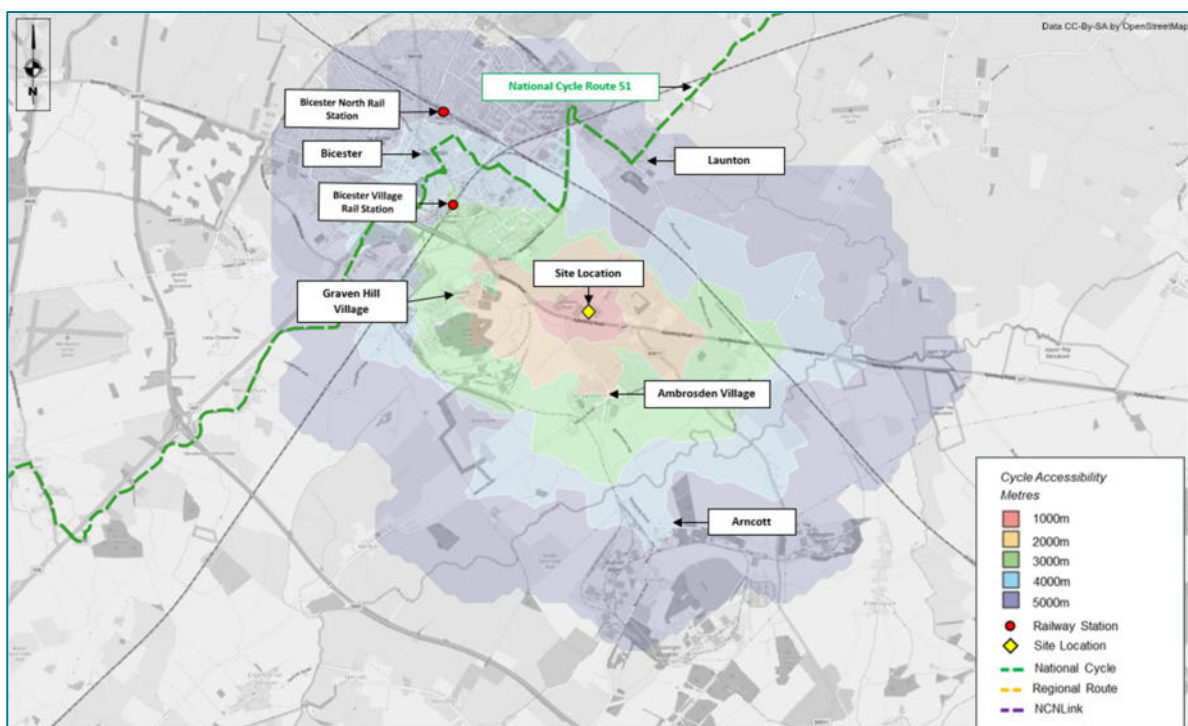
4.2.3 The general topography surrounding the proposed development site is reasonably flat, which encourages staff of the proposed development to travel by cycle. There is a

national cycle route in near proximity to the site. The main national cycle route is briefly described below:

- » National Route 51 passes through Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex. The section between Harwich and Colchester forms part of the North Sea Cycle Route, also known as EuroVelo 12.

4.2.4 **Figure 4.2** below provides an extract of the indicative 5km cycling catchment plan, again using GIS software - Basemap's Visography (TRACC) program, and is equivalent to a typical cycle time of 15-20 minutes. A copy of the full walking catchment is provided within Figure 2 of **Appendix A**.

Figure 4.2: 5km Cycling Catchment



Source: OpenStreetMap ©

4.2.5 **Figure 4.2** further illustrates that the Bicester Village Rail Station and Bicester North Rail Station are within an accessible cycling distance, again providing opportunities to travel further afield using linked trips.

4.2.6 Cycling would therefore be a viable mode of transport for staff travelling to and from the site.

4.3 Access by Bus

4.3.1 There are two bus stops located within 800m of the development. This provides access to a wide range of services that include destinations to Bicester, John Radcliffe Hospital, and Manorsfield Road. Services are operated by Stagecoach, Oxford Bus, and

4.3.2 A map illustrating the location of the bus stops is provided in **Figure 4.3**, whilst the frequency of the service is summarised in **Table 4.1**. For simplicity and to avoid double