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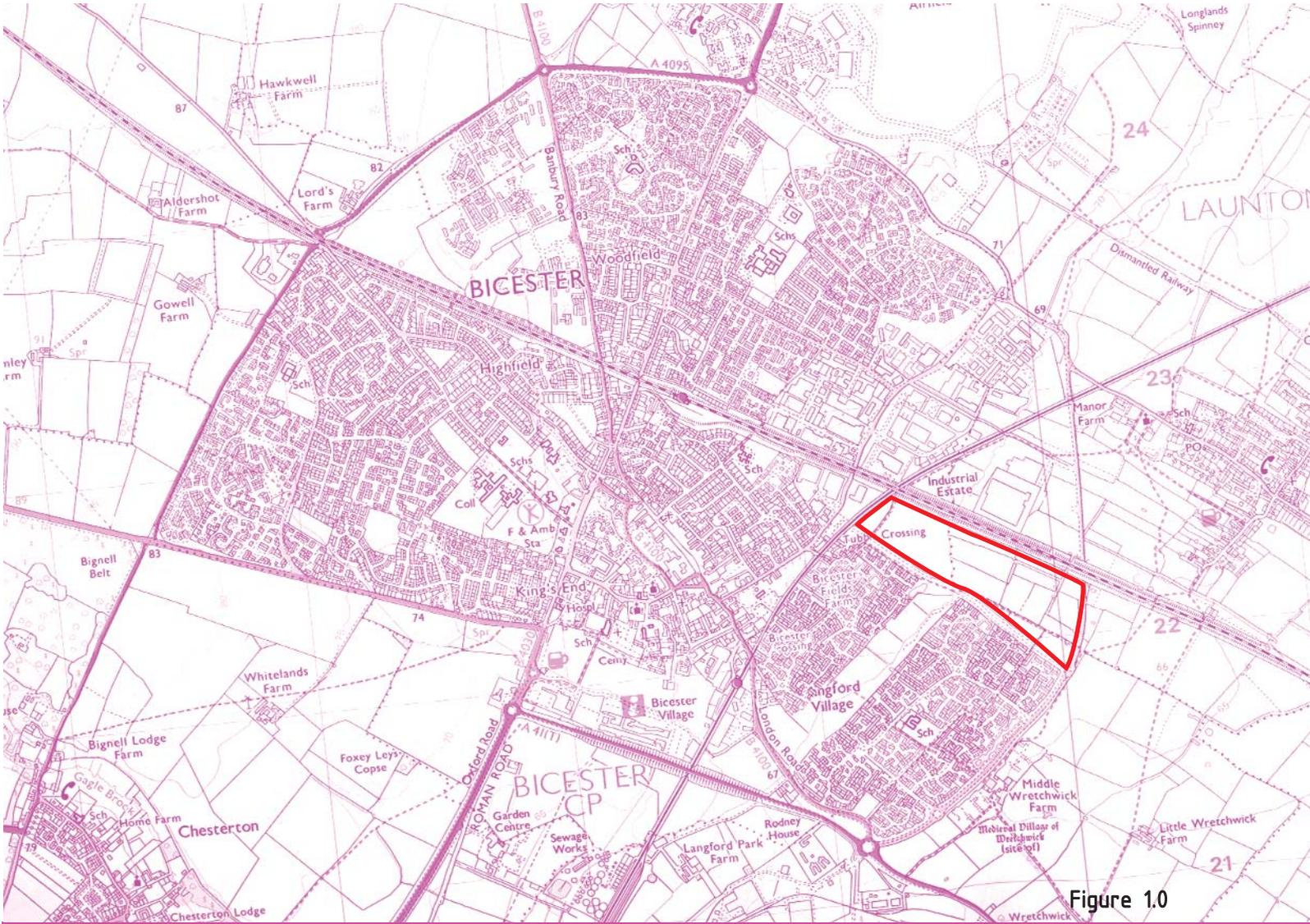


Figure 1.0

# 1.0

## Introduction

This Planning and Design Statement is submitted in support of an outline planning application for residential development of Land North of Gavray Drive, Bicester. The site has been allocated for development since 1987. The total area of Gavray Drive extends to some 24.5 ha. The whole site is within the built up area of Bicester. A location plan is included as Figure 1.0.

## Outline Planning Application

This Statement forms part of a suite of documents comprising an Environmental Statement, Transport Assessment and Report of Consultation. The outline planning application is submitted on behalf of Gallagher Estates and has been prepared by:



David Lock Associates - lead consultant and agent for the outline planning application



Arups - Built Environment



Colin Buchanan and Partners - Transport



Communique - Public Consultation



CPM - Environment Planning and Design



Roger Tym and Partners - Economic Appraisal

## Town Developer Role

This Statement includes the Development Framework for Land North of Gavray Drive and provides the context for the formulation of any unilateral undertaking and/or legal agreement relating to physical and community infrastructure. Gallagher Estates will act as *town developer*. This role requires a long term commitment that only substantial development companies can provide and sustain. Working in close consultation with the local planning authority, the town developer will be responsible for securing the implementation of high quality development in accordance with a master plan and vision for the entire development. The town developer will fund and construct all infrastructure requirements and resolve related planning obligations. Gallagher Estates will place emphasis upon:

- quality of the built form;
- provision of the infrastructure;
- long term management arrangements to maintain long term development quality.



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## Purpose of the Planning and Design Statement

This Statement does not constitute a formal part of the planning application but is submitted as supporting information. Its purpose is to:

- explain the development rationale (demonstrating why the site should be developed for residential uses as was proposed in the Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft) rather than the employment uses proposed in the Pre-Inquiry Changes;
- demonstrate that residential development of Gavray Drive accords with the wishes of Bicester residents that have emerged from two extensive consultation events organised by Gallagher Estates;
- consider the complex policy background to the site;
- set out the guiding Development Principles;
- demonstrate how the principles of sustainable development will be incorporated within the development; and
- outline the implementation programme.



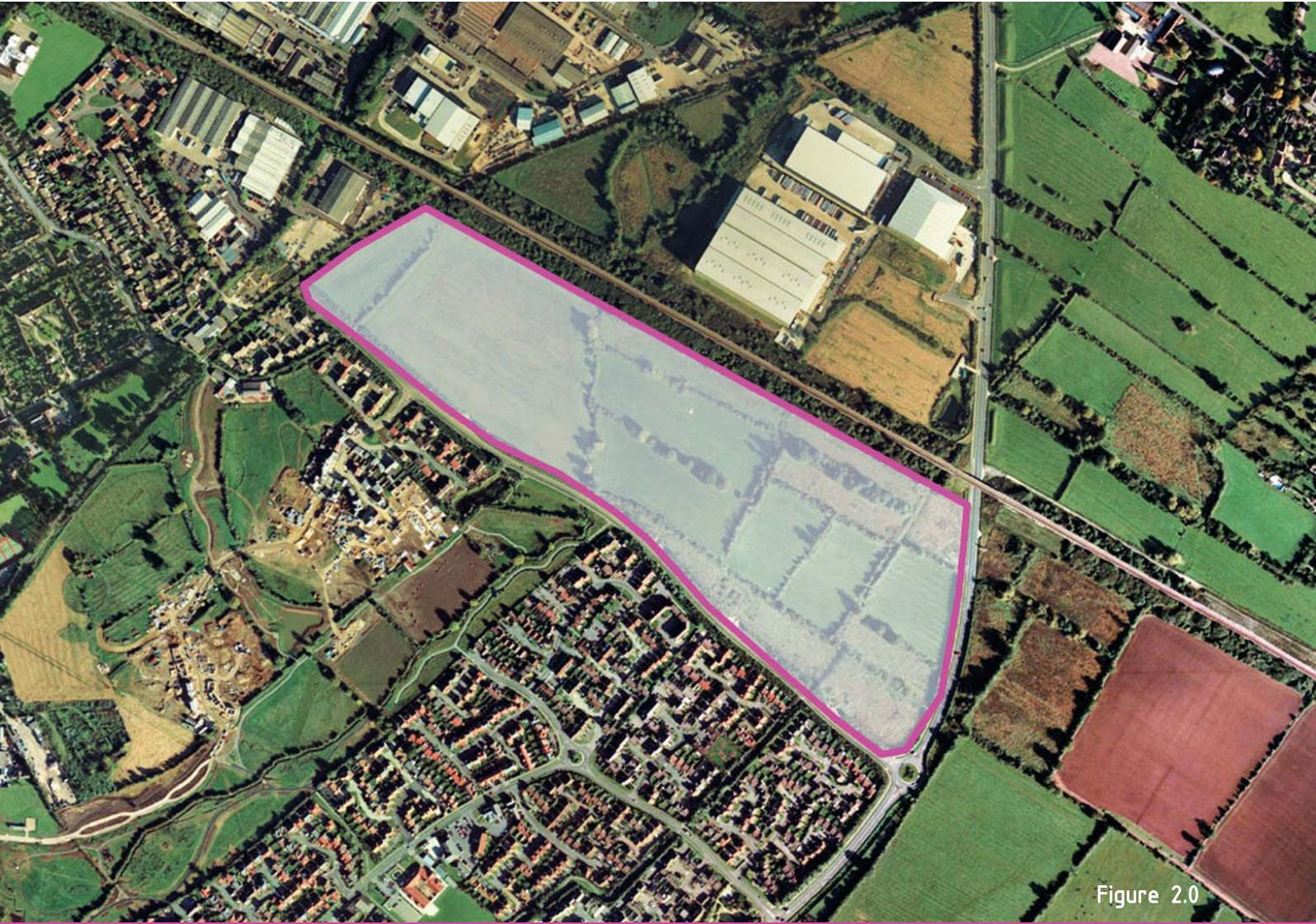


Figure 2.0

## 2.0 Development Rationale

This section sets out the reasons why Gallagher Estates are promoting a residential development strategy for Land North of Gavray Drive and pursuing a planning application at this time. A more detailed consideration of the uses is set out in Annex A.

## Residential Development

Both Central Government (ODPM and the Treasury) and the Regional Planning Body (SEERA) wish to see more housing constructed in the South East. Housing output in Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Bicester has consistently failed to meet planned targets. This underperformance has been exacerbated by a prolonged Local Plan Review process. The Local Plan has now been abandoned and this is likely to cause further delays in the production of housing in a high demand area. Further protraction of the plan production programme will impact upon the delivery of all housing allocations in Bicester and accelerate the growing shortage of affordable housing. The South East Plan is currently being prepared and the Sub Regional Strategy for Central Oxfordshire considers the option of expansion of towns beyond the Oxford Green Belt in the period up to 2026.

Cherwell District Council (CDC) now places great reliance on the allocation at South West Bicester to deliver housing growth for the town. Essentially this is a one site strategy for Bicester that is vulnerable to a number of risks. There is strong opposition to the principle of development in this location which remains untested at a local Plan inquiry.

### *The Demonstrable Lack of Demand for Employment Space in this Location:*

In 1995/6 market interest was expressed by Unipart for an automotive pressing plant. The site was allocated for employment uses at that time but the planning application was refused due to potential noise impact on neighbouring houses and the adverse effect on the ecology of the site. Since this application no formal approach has been made to Gallagher Estates to use the land for employment uses. There is no evidence to suggest that a new planning application for a manufacturing use or large footprint employment use would receive a different response. The site is still actively advertised in a publication produced by Cherwell District Council titled *Major Sites for Commercial Development* and subject to marketing initiatives by the Cherwell - M40 Investment Partnership. Gallagher Estates have responded positively to any interest received, but there is no demonstrable demand for employment development in this location.



### *The Plentiful Provision of Employment Land and Premises in Bicester:*

There is a large supply of second-hand industrial/warehouse buildings in Bicester equivalent to about seven years supply based on recent rates of take up. The remaining phases of Bicester Distribution Park represent a one year supply of new build premises. There are some 29 hectares of potential land (excluding Gavray Drive) for B class development in the town as allocated in the Local Plan. This land could accommodate some 143,670 m<sup>2</sup> of buildings which might generate 3,420 new jobs.

Including land north of Gavray Drive, on current rates of new build completions in Bicester this represents 13 year's of development potential. There is no evident shortage of potential B class space or buildings constraining growth of the local economy in Bicester. The principal constraint to attracting more investment in new businesses in Bicester is the availability of an appropriately skilled supply of labour.

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### *The Site's Clear Suitability for Residential Development:*

The site is evidently the last component of Langford Village and will complete the South East quarter of the town as defined by the intersecting rail lines. It is within the urban envelope of Bicester, and within convenient walking and cycling distance of the town centre. There are no major environmental constraints to residential development. Residential development will be designed to respect ecological, landscape and hedgerow features. Conversely, it would be almost impossible to physically configure employment units to respect such constraints. In particular, B2/B8 development would destroy the intimate pattern of hedgerows within the site and the traffic generation would be detrimental to the adjacent residential development on the south side of Gavray Drive. Landscape and physical development constraints are clearly visible on the aerial photograph included as **Figure 2.0**.

Planning Policy Guidance advises that B2/B8 development is most appropriately located in town centres where it contributes to wider sustainable development and transportation objectives. Gavray Drive is not in a location that is attractive to the private sector. Extensive marketing of the site has failed to generate demand for the site. Any large scale B1 development is best located either within the town centre or on the south side of Bicester where it will be prominent and enjoy good accessibility to the M40.

### *Draft PPG3 (July 2003):*

Paragraph 42 of draft PPG3 indicates that some local planning authorities (LPAs) have allocations of land for employment uses ...“which cannot be taken up over the lifetime of the development plan”. Gavray Drive is a prime example of such a site that is a vital source for housing. Guidance urges that all LPAs review non-housing allocations and consider whether some of this land might be better used for housing. CDC clearly concluded at the Revised Deposit Draft of the Local Plan that Gavray Drive should be allocated for housing, consistent with Government guidance. In circumstances where there is a clear need to accelerate the pace of residential development the advice contained in draft PPG3 should be followed and housing development at Gavray Drive be permitted.

### *Views of the Local Community:*

Promotion of Gavray Drive by Gallagher Estates started in January 1999 when CDC invited submissions on the Local Plan Review. Prior to the review, Gavray Drive was allocated in the Adopted Local Plan for employment uses. Gallagher Estates have undertaken two public consultation exercises to ascertain the views of Bicester residents on the future use of the site during the Local Plan review process. The scope and outcome of those consultations are summarised below.

#### *February 2001:*

In February 2001 Gallagher Estates distributed over 10,000 leaflets in Bicester and surrounding villages seeking the views of local residents. During the subsequent six weeks 397 leaflets were returned. This represents a 3.8% rate of return and a 10.6% rate of return from Langford Village. For an unsolicited mail shot this is considered to be a particularly high rate of response especially as the majority of respondents were positive in their comments.

It is evident from this survey that only 4.5% of the respondents supported the allocation of the site as an employment site. In contrast, 95.5% supported the potential allocation of the site for a mixed residential development.

Of additional relevance to the future planning of the site was the message, mentioned by 86.9% of the respondents, that basic local facilities such as primary health care (doctors and dentists), a local primary school and local facilities such as shops and a community meeting place are seen as missing from the local community. Delivery of any of these components is only possible in the context of a residential scheme.



# Public Consultation Event June 2004 Langford Village Community Centre

June 2004:

In June 2004, a further public consultation event was held in Langford Village Community Centre outlining the proposals. The full results of the survey can be viewed in the Report of Consultation that is submitted in support of the outline planning application.

#### The Report of Consultation:

In May 2004, more than 16,000 leaflets were distributed to households and businesses in Bicester and the surrounding villages inviting local residents to an exhibition. The exhibition held on 5th June 2004 in Langford Village Community Centre worked through the proposals, identified the need for a residential led development on the site identified the retention and promotion of the County Wildlife Park and the land reserved for the rail chord.

Representatives from Gallagher Estates, David Lock Associates, Colin Buchanan and Partners, CPM, Roger Tym & Partners and Communiqué were on hand to answer general and detailed technical questions.

202 visitors took the opportunity to visit the exhibition, and 128 completed questionnaires and left comments. In addition, a website [www.gavraydrive.co.uk](http://www.gavraydrive.co.uk) contained the exhibition and a comments form for residents unable to attend the exhibition. Analysis of the completed feedback forms was undertaken by the Electoral Reform Services, who provided a locked ballot box at the exhibition.

A large majority of respondents - 85% - supported the proposals set out in the leaflet and the exhibition, with or without reservations. Answering a specific question about the type of development, 80% wanted mainly residential development whilst under 8% agreed with the employment uses now proposed by CDC in the Pre-Inquiry changes.

## Planning Application Strategy

Gallagher Estates wish to pursue a residential scheme on the site. A Development Framework Plan is described in **Section 5.0**. This shows current intentions for the whole site and how a primary school might be sited in the western portion in accordance with the views of residents as expressed in the June 2004 Consultation Exercise. Gallagher Estates are content to accommodate the rail chord on the site to facilitate strategic rail transportation improvements. However, the proposals for both a new station and multi modal transport interchange are not supported because there is no business case, committed funding or programme for their delivery. Similarly the Launton Road/ Gavray Drive link is not supported because there is insufficient space between the railway line and Launton Road to achieve a bridge across the tracks that would comply with normal design standards in terms of vertical alignment and gradient.



## 3.0 Planning Policy Context

The evolution of planning policy relating to Gavray Drive is tortuous and the Local Plan has now been abandoned. The key events are recorded below. Gallagher Estates are clear that the best use of the site is for a residential development that can deliver much needed housing within a reasonable timeframe. If these twin objectives are to be met the planning application route is the only available choice.



Figure 3.0

## Key Events

The key events are:

- Land North of Gavray Drive was first allocated in the Local Plan for employment use in 1987 but when a real development proposal emerged it was refused as the environmental impact was seen to be unacceptable.
- The employment designation was maintained in the First Deposit Consultation Draft Local Plan (December 2000).
- In response to representations by Gallager Estates and others, to the Deposit Draft Local Plan CDC produced a Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan (September 2002) that allocated Land North of Gavray Drive primarily for housing, with ancillary education and transport uses. (A extract from proposals map is reproduced above in Figure 3.0).
- The Pre-Inquiry Changes now identify Land North of Gavray Drive as an employment led allocation with land reserved for proposed recreational use and a retained County Wildlife Site. Land is also reserved for a Proposed Multi Modal Transport Interchange and land is safeguarded for Connecting Rail Line (Rail Spur).
- In December 2004 Cherwell District Council abandoned the review of the Local Plan and will start preparing their Local Development Framework (LDF) in 2005. The Development Plan for the district remains the adopted 1996 Local Plan.

Planning policy for Gavray Drive has vacillated in terms of land use. An outline planning consent for residential development would bring both certainty and clarity to an unsatisfactory situation. This is the most appropriate use, one for which there is strong market demand and the option that enjoys significant community support.



## Policy Guidance for Residential Development

Cherwell District Council gave considerable thought to how the site should be developed for residential purposes (565 dwellings) in the Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan September 2002. The allocation was defined in Policy H12a and paragraph 3.102 is reproduced below.

POLICY H12A PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NORTH OF GAVRAY DRIVE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THEY:

PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR THE WHOLE OF THE LAND PROPOSED FOR DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROPOSALS MAP BETWEEN GAVRAY DRIVE AND THE BIRMINGHAM TO MARYLEBONE RAILWAY LINE AND EAST OF THE OXFORD TO BLETCHLEY LINE AND COMPRISING THE RANGE OF LAND USES REFERRED TO IN THIS POLICY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND USES SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP

PROVIDE FOR AN AVERAGE NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY CONSISTENT WITH POLICY H3;

PROVIDE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES H5 AND H7;

PROVIDE FOR EDUCATION AND LIBRARY FACILITIES COMMENSURATE WITH NEEDS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP;

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND RECREATION FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY USE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECREATION POLICIES IN THE PLAN INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF THE RECREATION LAND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP;

PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN APPROPRIATE RANGE OF LOCAL SHOPPING FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS

PROVIDE FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES NEEDED TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT;



INCORPORATE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE WALKING CYCLING, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT AS THE PREFERRED MODES RATHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR;

INCORPORATE PROPOSALS TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT;

INCORPORATE STRUCTURAL PLANTING AND LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS TO MITIGATE THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT;

INCORPORATE ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGNS AND TECHNOLOGY THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT;

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY IMAGINATIVE DEVELOPMENT THAT IS LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE IN ITS FORM MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURE;

WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE SITE

PROVIDE THE SITE INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP TO ENABLE THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY CARE HOME FACILITIES

RESERVE LAND FOR THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY TR29 AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND THE LAUNTON ROAD/GAVRAY DRIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINK IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY TR26(III)

Paragraph 3.102 supports Policy H12a, part of the paragraph states

*"It is intended that this area will be developed so that it will be integral with the existing Langford Village and Bicester Fields Farm developments to the south"*

The Development Framework for Gavray Drive has been developed in response to this considered guidance, the comments received during the two consultation exercises undertaken by Gallagher Estates and the complex planning policy background created by the Pre - Inquiry Changes to the Local Plan and abandonment of the local plan review.



## 4.0

### Guiding Development Principles

The overriding design objective for Gavray Drive is the successful completion of Langford Village as an integrated and sustainable residential quarter of Bicester. The completion of Langford Village emerged as a strong objective of local residents during the June 2004 consultation exercise.

## Site Context

The site is located on the eastern side of Bicester. It is bounded by Gavray Drive, the Birmingham to Marylebone rail line (Chiltern Line), the Oxford to Bletchley rail line (currently used as a freight line) and Bicester's eastern by-pass. Beyond the road and rail infrastructure bounding the site, recent residential development has occurred to the south, in Bicester Fields Farm and Langford Village. The town centre of Bicester is located to the west; it offers a range of commercial, retail, employment and residential activities. North of the Chiltern Line is the Bicester Distribution Park which comprises large footplate B8 distribution units.

## Urban Design Principles

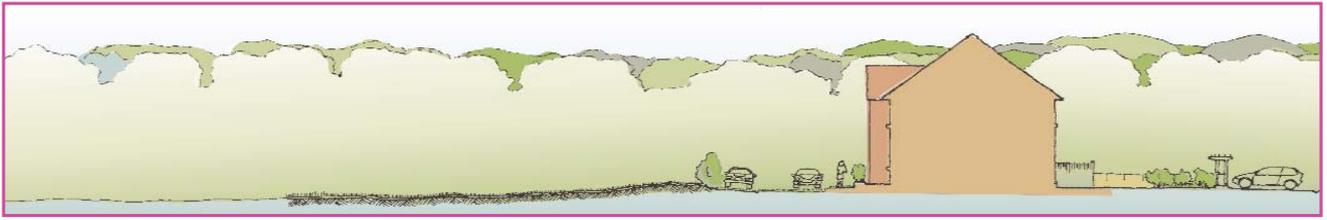
The scheme is based on certain key urban design principles. These are considered below.

### Character and Form:

The character and form of the scheme will reflect the later phases of Langford Village. Variety will be an inherent quality, occurring in streets, spaces and buildings to add richness to the built environment. This approach can readily be applied to a contemporary design style. The scheme will be built at urban densities, averaging about 35 dph. The cross sections overleaf demonstrate how an indicative development form can be achieved.



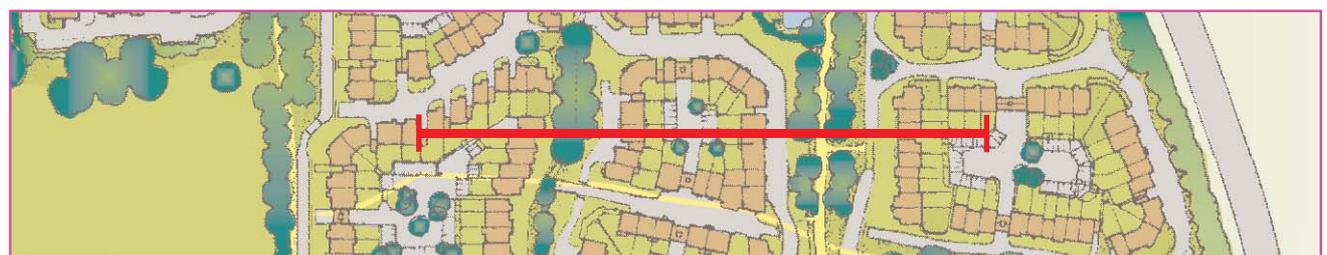
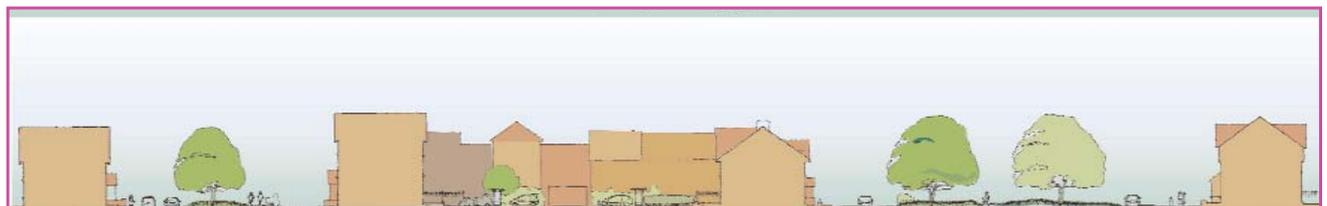
### CROSS SECTION 1 - Fronting the County Wildlife Site



### CROSS SECTION 2 - Across the street and retained trees



### CROSS SECTION 3 - Looking through the built form





#### **Movement:**

The street will become the natural place for interaction and activity. Each street will contribute to the creation of a comprehensive street network. The street network will be permeable with all streets connected to another street. Mews will lead off from the main street. The same concept of permeability will be applied to the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

#### **Continuity and Enclosure:**

Public realm and private space will be well defined throughout the scheme, ensuring that residents are able to enjoy the privacy and tranquillity offered by their homes. Conversely, the streets and open space will become the focus for activity and interaction. This urban form requires a development response that distinguishes public and private space, is legible and requires no form of policing. A continuous built frontage around the edge of the block is fundamental to achieving this. In such perimeter blocks, buildings are placed to front the street and form a defined building line.

#### **Legibility:**

Application of the built form objectives will create an urban environment that is easily understood. Specially designed buildings will mark important corners and formal groupings of buildings will signal the entrance gateways.



### **Traffic Management:**

Traffic management will be achieved using a variety of techniques. The Development Concept Plan depicts streets with an urban character to encourage lower vehicle speeds. Homezone principles will be applied where appropriate. Within Home Zones speeds will be limited by design and inference to 20mph.

### **Bus Services:**

The integration of public transport into the built environment and the lifestyles of those living and working on the site will encourage a cleaner and safer environment. All houses will be within 400m of a bus stop. Consideration has also been given to extending Chilton Railways taxi and bus services.

### **Sustainability:**

Environmental sustainability will impact at many different levels. Various elements of the urban form, such as a permeable network and pedestrian/cycle friendly streets will encourage sustainable travel. This will help reduce the impact of emission levels, fuel consumption and air quality. The principle of flexibility in the built form is fundamental to the ability to reuse and recycle buildings, thus avoiding demolition and the use of further resources in reconstruction. The well connected street network and perimeter blocks are sufficiently robust to withstand urban evolution. Buildings can be replaced when necessary without the need to redevelop the remainder of the block or reorganise the street system.

Detailed design will use building techniques and material sources that allow for greater sustainability. Greater energy efficiency and reduced depletion of finite resources will be central to the development, achieved through the exploitation of the best modern technology. Water conservation and environmentally safe methods of water treatment have the potential to be promoted at all levels, from the provision of rain water butts to the installation of water filtering systems within the landscape.

### Constraints:

The Scheme has a number of constraints and opportunities which have formed the basis of the layout.

The principal constraints on the site are:

- County Wildlife Site
- Existing ponds
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Flood plain
- Footpaths

Each of these constraints have been incorporated within the development framework. For example all the trees with TPOs, ponds and the footpaths will be retained and incorporated within the development.

Many additional features will also be added to complement the green nature of the development, including the retention of planting along the boundary with the eastern bypass, the surface treatment of the footpath and the incorporation of additional ponds within the County Wildlife Site.

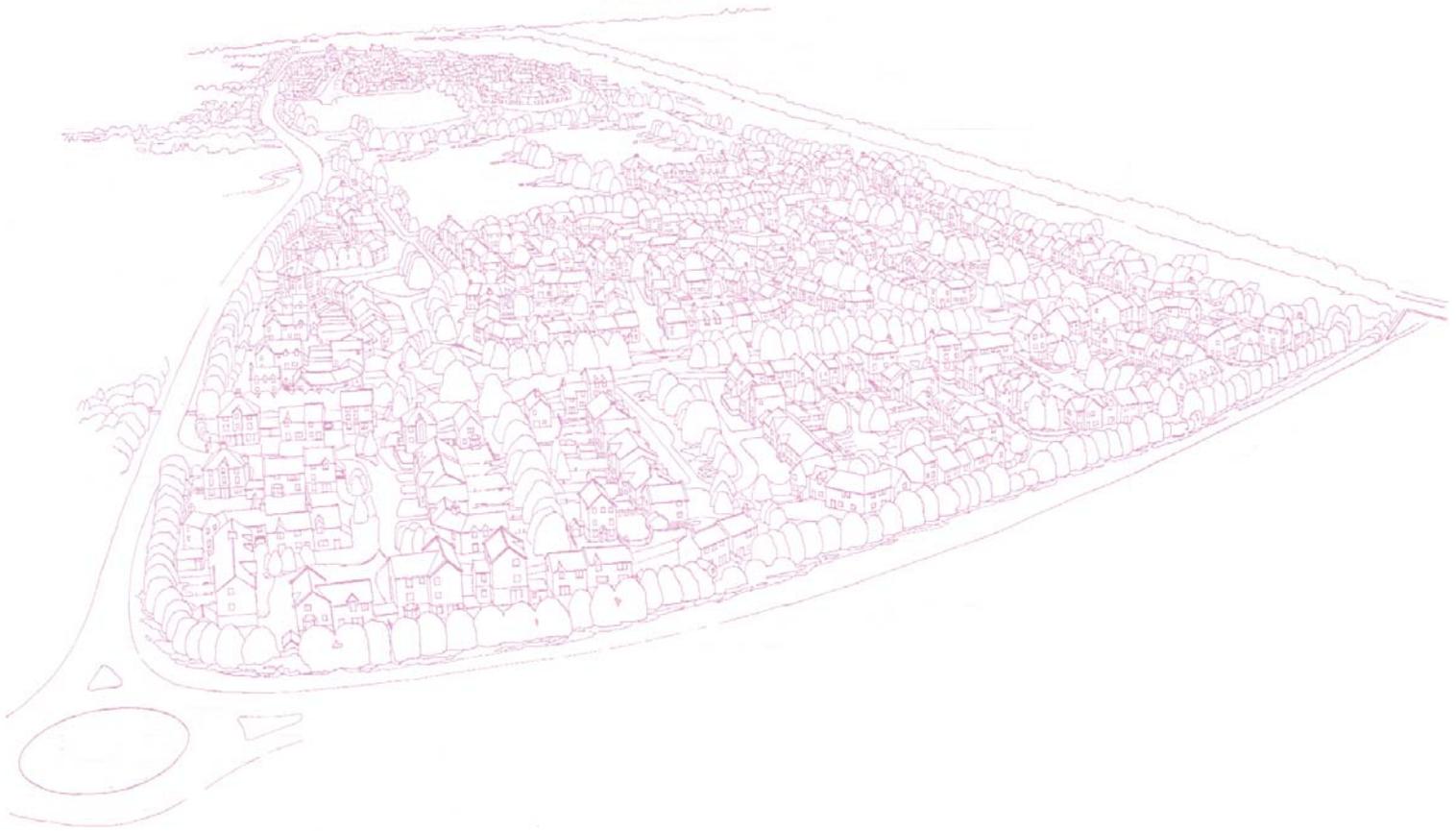
The retained County Wildlife Site, and green fingers within the development will assist in breaking up the urban form, ensure that the development respects and incorporates the ecological features on the site and strengthens the connectivity between Langford Village and Bicester Distribution Park.

Additional footpaths and cycle ways will be included linking each part of the scheme, and improving the links with and between Langford Village and Bicester Distribution Park.



## 5.0 Development Framework

This section explains the Development Framework for the whole of Gavray Drive.



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## Development Framework Plan

The Development Framework in **Figure 4.0** shows two main sectors of residential development separated by a large area of open space which is largely the retained County Wildlife Site. In addition to residential development the Western Sector will include land reserved for a primary school and the rail chord wanted by Chiltern Railways to link with the Bletchley - Oxford line thereby creating scope for Oxford - Marylebone services. The location of the primary school reflects the wishes of many visitors to the public consultation event held in June 2004. The development will make use of the existing access points on the north of Gavray Drive. The site is entirely contained by road and rail infrastructure. The Chiltern Rail embankment provides a particularly marked physical backdrop to development and the obvious point of separation between residential uses and the employment uses to the north. The indicative layout addresses the edges of the site in considerable detail.

A network of footways will link across the central open space, crossing the Langford Brook and connecting the Western and Eastern Sectors. The layout plan facilitates the strategic footpath link on the west of the site connecting the site to land north of the railway line. The Development Concept Plan complements the existing network of hedgerows and trees. These existing natural features will form the basis of the structural landscape framework.

# Development Framework





Figure 4.0

# Development Concept





Figure 5.0

## Development Framework Components

The key components of the proposals are set out below.

Land Uses	residential (around 500 units) County Wildlife Site open space structural landscape site for primary school site reserved for community facilities  land reserved for rail chord
Vehicular Access	points off Gavray Drive
Pedestrian Links	Langford Village Stream walk Bicester Distribution Park

## The Scheme

The scheme will deliver some 500 residential units, retain existing open space and incorporate a County Wildlife Site. The area covered by the outline planning application is 24.5 ha.

### Movement & Highway Infrastructure

The Western and Eastern sectors are based on a looped vehicular circulation system connecting to Gavray Drive. Access is taken from Gavray Drive off the existing access positions. There is no direct vehicular connection between Gavray Drive and Langford Village. Gavray Drive is in effect the main distributor road for the site. Designed to accommodate development on the site, Gavray Drive has the capacity to accommodate all the development proposed. In response to the public consultation exercises surface improvements and traffic calming measures will be introduced along Gavray Drive.

### Pedestrian & Cycle Routes

Development of Gavray Drive will complete the Langford Village development. Strong pedestrian and cycle connections will ensure that residents from both sites can move freely across Gavray Drive and travel between the town centre and the Langford Village centre.

## Open Space

Significant areas of public open space will be provided as part of the development. This will include areas for formal and informal play. The major space is centrally located straddling Langford Brook. This central space is also a County Wildlife Site and will be managed accordingly. It will provide an area of major open space for all adjoining residents.

## Landscape Structure

There are significant hedgerows within the site. New structure planting will reinforce the framework of existing vegetation where appropriate. Species will be selected to optimise habitat creation and ecological diversity. Planting along the main roads and gateways to the site will include a proportion of ornamental species to ensure year round interest.

Hedgerows and mature trees will be retained, where possible, within the development. Generally, retained hedgerows will not form garden boundaries and will be managed to enhance their wildlife value. Preferred locations for retained hedgerows are in association with public footpaths, cycleways or areas of public open space.





## Development Framework – Supporting Strategies

The physical Development Framework is supported by a number of strategies covering related issues.

### Affordable Housing

Some 30% of the housing on Gavray Drive will be in the affordable category. A key objective is to integrate all tenure groups. Housing at Gavray Drive must address the needs of households across all age ranges and reflect income distribution in the wider community. The affordable housing element of the scheme should encompass the following groups:

- families with children;
- older people;
- younger people and couples; and
- key workers

Affordable housing should not be distinguishable. Tenure mixing within of blocks could see the following mix of uses:

- private/key worker/shared ownership;
- key worker/shared ownership; and
- key worker/affordable rented.

### Natural Environment

At least six new ponds will be incorporated within areas of open space but outside the floodplain. In addition to the creation of new ponds, existing retained ponds will be restored as set out in the Ecology Construction Method Statement.

The long-term management of retained and new ponds will be secured through the implementation of measures set out in the Wildlife Management Plan.

Trees protected by TPO have been retained as part of the Development Framework. It also includes extensive areas of retained open space outside the County Wildlife Site.

### Ecology

Detailed measures to protect habitats and species during the construction phase will be set out in an Ecology Construction Method Statement. In addition a Wildlife Management Plan will be developed to ensure the long-term conservation of habitats and species within the site.



### *Hedgerows and Trees*

The Wildlife Management Plan will include measures to manage and maintain the retained hedgerows within the site over the long-term. The Wildlife Management Plan will also include measures to raise public awareness of the ecological interest of the new development.

### *Reptiles and Amphibians*

A method statement will be developed as part of the Ecology Construction Method Statement, in consultation with English Nature, to protect reptiles from being killed and injured as a result of the construction works. A similar statement will be prepared for amphibians to provide protection during the construction works and secure the conservation status of Great Crested Newts within the site and locality. The Method Statement would form part of the DEFRA licence application for Great Crested Newts.

The receptor site will be prepared in advance of the translocation in order that the translocated newts can be accommodated. The preparations will involve the excavation of at least six new ponds, the restoration of existing ponds and the provision of permanent artificial hibernacula and refugia.

### *Bats*

In advance of any tree removal or surgery works, a bat roosting survey will be undertaken. If any bats are present the works will be undertaken under DEFRA license. The provision of new pond habitats and landscape planting will provide supplementary foraging habitat for bats, which will partly mitigate the loss of foraging habitat.

During the construction and operation phases, the use of artificial lighting within and adjacent to retained habitats will be minimised. Where required, the lighting will be directional to avoid light spillage.

### *Invertebrates*

The development retains a significant area of open space that will be managed for nature conservation benefit and the invertebrate fauna will benefit indirectly. It is expected that this will ensure that the populations of rare and notable species will be retained within the site.



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### Archaeology

There are no known features of exceptional archaeological importance within the site, but the archaeological resource of the area is diverse. Special care will be taken to prevent adverse impacts on unknown archaeological remains.

### Noise

Careful land use planning is the primary means of mitigating the effects of road traffic noise from the rail lines and by-pass. Sensitive properties will be sited outside areas of PPG 24 category NEC 'C'.



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### Air Pollution

Sensitive site users (including residential development and schools) will be located outside areas of significant air pollution. This approach follows the Air Quality Management Regulations 2000.

### Surface Water

The proposed surface water drainage system has been agreed with the Environment Agency (EA) as part of a comprehensive scheme for Langford Village as a whole.



## 6.0

### Designing the Urban Form

This section deals with streets and spaces in more detail, setting out design measures required to achieve good place making. The main function of the street will be as a place for people. The relationship between the street, or space, and the buildings which frame it is important. Other street functions, including traffic and pedestrian and cyclist movement must be addressed.

## Home Zones

Drawing on the Dutch 'Woonerf' concept, these streets will allow localised traffic access to homes. Pedestrians will dominate these streets, and there will be scope for play space and street planting. Home Zones will be characterised by:

- shared pedestrian and vehicle space created across the full width of a street and the use of a single surface material, indicating to all users that space is shared;
- deliberate restraint on traffic movement, reducing the vehicle path in any one place to the minimum width required for emergency vehicles (3m);
- small groupings of play equipment as integrated street features;
- street trees and planting beds to enhance the quality of the street scene;
- fixed seating arranged in small groups to encourage community interaction;
- small designated areas for on-street parking; and
- emphasis on a comfortable and human scale residential environment.

## Types of Space

Public spaces enrich the urban environment, providing opportunities for activity and visual interest. The Development Framework identifies a series of formal spaces. Opportunities exist to create other types of public space:

- small formal spaces created by deliberately increasing the setback of one or several buildings in a street;
- small planned spaces at street junctions; and
- pavement widening created by a curved building line creating an informal space.



## Animating the Street

There is a strong relationship between the nature of the front façade of a building and the degree to which the street is animated and active. The frequency of entrances from buildings onto the street is of particular importance. Fenestration enlivens streets. Active streets can be secured through:

- buildings having their main public access from the street frontage;
- outbuildings, including garages, remaining behind the main building line;
- integrated porches, steps and other entrance features are encouraged - these may protrude forward of the building line if they reflect the style and context of the building;
- wider areas open space along the street and mews can be actively used for seating, tables and displays to enliven the street;
- where boundary walls and fences are constructed to areas forward of the building line, they should not reduce the potential for interaction and surveillance; and
- some higher walls may be used for side gardens where these are located at corners, and where they add more interest and enclosure.

## Crossroads and Junctions

Crossroads and junctions facilitate movement and contribute to place making. They are key components in helping people to find their way around, particularly when they have distinguishing features such as notable buildings, landscaped spaces or interaction with a major route. A permeable street layout will ensure a frequency of junctions and crossroads, which will assist in reducing traffic speed and driver caution.



## Place Making

The opportunity to use junctions and crossroads to enhance place making should be optimised throughout the development. In addition to public spaces there are a variety of subtle methods through which this could be achieved:

- landscape statements such as small open spaces with groupings of notable trees, boundary hedge planting, hard landscaped corners with seating;
- important buildings directly addressing the corner, taller buildings, buildings abutting the highway, interesting and careful use of materials, small groupings of buildings and buildings set back within landscape setting; and
- other structures such as interesting garden walls or small pieces of public art (free-standing or attached to buildings).

## Perimeter Blocks

A perimeter block is capable of accommodating different house types. The minimum dimension is established to ensure spatial standards. The maximum dimension is set to ensure permeability by avoiding overly large urban blocks. The interiors of the blocks will add a special dimension to the urban environment. Each block may contain an internal garden court providing a high quality amenity space for the occupants of the block. This approach removes cars from the street scene, without creating unattractive and insecure parking areas. It is applicable to Homezones where a reduction in car movement in streets will create a safer environment. Block interiors should be designed with the following in mind.

**Character** - the internal areas will be private and shared gardens; parking and garaging must not dominate.

**Landscape design** - will be of high quality to emphasise the garden element; internal courtyards are an opportunity to create secure multi-use space enriching the enjoyment of residents.

**Security** - entry to internal courtyards will be limited to residents only.

**Refuse Storage and Collection** - refuse storage should be accommodated inside the rear of individual plots to retain amenity.



### Car Parking

There are several ways of accommodating parked cars on the scheme.

#### On-plot parking:

Residents may prefer a property where they can park on-plot via the frontage. This is most likely to apply to the lower density areas. Integral garages are discouraged.

#### On-street parking:

In high density areas some car parking may be on street. The design of groundscapes within Home Zone areas will constrain numbers so that parked cars do not dominate the scene.



### Garden court parking:

Residents should be able to gain easy and secure access from the rear of their property to their cars. Such parking spaces can be plot-related (adjoining the rear garden) or on plot (located behind a gate on the plot boundary). In the latter case the hardstanding area can provide a flexible garden space when not occupied by a car. Garden Courtyard parking will be particularly useful in Homezones where building forms are connected and achieve street enclosure.

### Playspace

The playspace strategy for the scheme will operate at different thresholds:

- Local Areas for Play (LAPs) - will be incorporated within perimeter blocks and garden courts. Most Home Zones will accommodate many of the functions of a LAP.
- Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) - will be sited within the central areas.



## 7.0 Building in Sustainability

Gallagher Estates, acting as town developer, require all individual schemes to demonstrate how their development proposals incorporate sustainability measures. The following schedule indicates the range of measures that could be employed.

## Sustainability Measures

- Energy efficient homes (NHER rating of 10 and SAP rating of 100).
- Daylighting and solar gain strategies.
- Passivent natural extract ventilation systems to facilitate the recovery of energy from extracted air.
- Eco labelled white goods; for example those with a very low energy consumption.
- Detailed design features in homes, for example, multiple kitchen bins to encourage recycling.
- Rainwater harvesting; the collection and storage of rainwater for garden watering, toilet flushing and so forth can greatly reduce water consumption.
- Application of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems); application of these techniques can reduce rainwater run off and preclude flooding downstream of the site.
- Scheme to encourage walking and cycling.
- Encouragement of mixed use development and home working in order to reduce the need to travel and thereby reduce energy demands.
- A 'fully wired' community with technology in all homes to encourage 'teleworking'
- EGE Intranet, with real-time bus information.
- Measuring and continually improving performance with respect to the main environmental impacts.
- Reporting openly on any impacts and progress towards meeting environmental goals.
- Encouraging suppliers to improve their own environmental performance.

## Eco Homes

The whole scheme will be assessed on the BRE Eco Homes system. Eco Homes considers the broad environmental concerns of climate change, resource use and impact on wildlife; it balances these against the need for a high quality of life and a safe and healthy internal environment

## Orientation

Designers should maximise solar collection in their detailed layout designs. This entails arranging dwellings within 15° or so of an east-west axis. Windows to habitable rooms should have a southerly aspect and be larger than those in northerly elevations. Aspirations for energy conservation and solar gain must be balanced against the requirement to develop attractive and lively streets which are enlivened by fenestration.



## 8.0 Implementation

Gallagher Estates, fulfilling the town developer role, will be responsible for the construction of all key elements of site infrastructure. Cherwell District Council will require legal agreements on some aspects of the development.

## Legal Agreements

It is anticipated that the following elements will be incorporated in a legal agreement:

- provision of affordable housing;
- provision and timing of off-site road infrastructure;
- provision and timing of open space and
- contribution to social and educational facilities.

## Management of Public Spaces

The major public spaces (principally the County Wildlife Site) will be transferred to an appropriate body which will be vested and charged with sufficient funds to implement and manage an approved landscape scheme. Funding of the Trust will be levied from a ground rent on all properties throughout the scheme.

## Annex A: Strategic Arguments

## STRATEGIC ARGUMENTS

### Background

1. Policy H1 of the current Oxfordshire Structure Plan sets targets for additional housing provision required in Oxfordshire between April 1996 and April 2011. In total, 35,500 additional dwellings (net) are required, of which Cherwell Borough has an allocation of 11,250 (net). Of these, 4,200 are to be provided in Bicester.
2. In the intervening period since the adoption of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, housing completions in the County, Cherwell District and Bicester have consistently failed to match planned targets. This is in the context of a new version of RPG 9 which provides for slightly higher housing output for Oxfordshire in the period after 2001 and the following recent central Government initiatives:
  - Publication by ODPM of the Communities Plan (February and June 2003)
  - Publication by ODPM of Consultation Draft changes to PPG 3 in July 2003
  - Publication by the Treasury and ODPM of the Barker Report<sup>(1)</sup> in March 2004 together with a commitment to address its recommendations over the next year
3. The under supply of new housing in Bicester can be contrasted with increasingly urgent Government initiatives to increase the quantum of housing development, especially in the South East. The issues raised by the development of this 20 hectare site highlight a host of matters which ODPM and the Barker Report, and SEERA also, are trying to address. Gavray Drive could provide some 500 dwellings and can therefore be considered to be a "large site" in housing terms. A significant proportion of potential housing output in the South East will come forward via large sites and thus ODPM is concerned about constraints affecting the delivery of large sites. Failure to accelerate their delivery will impede ODPM's Communities Plan objective of progressing action programmes to speed up housing output where under-delivery is occurring.
4. Gallagher Estates has been seeking to progress the development of Gavray Drive since January 1999 when Cherwell District Council invited submissions on the Local Plan Review. The relevant history can be very briefly summarised as follows:
  - Gavray Drive was first allocated in the Local Plan for employment use in 1987. There has been very little market interest in developing the site despite it being marketed.
  - In 1995/6 market interest was expressed by Unipart for an automotive pressing plant. However, despite the site's zoning this application was refused due to the potential noise impact on neighbouring houses and the adverse effect on the ecology of the site.
  - Despite refusing the Unipart application for reasons which underline why the site is unsuitable for employment use, Cherwell District Council (CDC) sought to continue

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<sup>1</sup> Review of Housing Supply: Final Report - Recommendations, March 2004

the employment zoning in the First Deposit Consultation Draft Local Plan (December 2000).

- In response to representations to the First Deposit Local Plan, CDC produced a Second Deposit Draft Local Plan in September 2002 which allocated the Gavray Drive site primarily for housing, with ancillary education and transport uses.
  - Since the September 2002 Second Deposit Draft Local Plan CDC has vacillated over its Local Plan proposals for Bicester. Eventually CDC decided to revert its allocation for Gavray Drive back to the First Deposit Local Plan allocation in response to a report on Bicester Airfield.
5. Gavray Drive is not a suitable employment site. Were it so there would have been market interest for a site which has been on the market for over 15 years. Moreover, the Council would not have refused planning permission for the only B2 type company that has shown any interest in developing at Gavray Drive.
  6. Gavray Drive is entirely suitable for housing development as has been previously accepted by CDC when it decided to allocate the site for housing in the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan. There can be no argument that it is not suitable and that it could contribute to the increased level of house building in the South East.
  7. The reasons why Gallagher Estates has decided to promote a planning application at this stage are threefold. First, it is clear that there is no market interest in taking up a site of this scale and in this location for B class development. Second, central Government and regional policy initiatives have recently placed a far greater emphasis on enhanced housing provision in the South East, especially in areas such as Cherwell District which continually fail to achieve planning targets. Third, despite over five years of Local Plan review, CDC is still at least two years away from being able to adopt a Local Plan. In these circumstances it is consistent with Government guidance for an application to be considered at the current time.

### **Strategic Justification For Housing Development**

8. We now set out in more detail the justification for early development of Gavray Drive.

#### *Central Government and Regional Guidance*

9. Central Government has become increasingly concerned at the extent of undersupply of housing, both nationally and in the South East, where the number of housing completions has been 5,000 per annum less than planned targets. In the South East, the quantum of new houses in recent history has been significantly less than the rate of household formation<sup>2</sup>.
10. ODPM's more recent position on this under performance is set out in the July 2003 publication "*Creating Sustainable Communities: Making It Happen – Thames Gateway and the Growth Areas*". This highlights the fact that the provision of more housing in areas

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Communities: Building For the Future, p.10

where under-delivery is occurring is a priority and that the Government Office for the South East has set up a Housing Completions Task Force to help tackle this problem.

11. The Interim Barker Report, published in December 2003, indicates that in the South East, completions are a third less than the rate of projected household formation and 15 per cent less than planned targets. The Treasury and ODPM published the Final Barker Report in March 2004. This recommends an increase in the supply of housing to be released. Against a national baseline level of 125,000 private sector completions in 2002/3 the report investigates scenarios of an **additional** 70,000 - 120,000 private sector completions p.a.
12. At a Regional level SEERA is in the process of preparing its revisions to RPG 9. In October 2002 a report was taken to the SEERA Planning Committee which concluded that positive steps were being taken to increase housing supply and tackle the short fall, and that the Regional Assembly, together with other partners, is considering the need for further targeted advice and assistance in particular problem areas.
13. It is quite clear that both Government and SEERA are determined to increase housing output in the South East, and there is a clear existing policy requirement to do so. This applies equally to areas such as Oxfordshire and Cherwell as well as the Growth Areas.  
*Underperformance In Oxfordshire and Cherwell*
14. Oxfordshire is undershooting its RPG9 (2001) housing target of 2,430 dwellings p.a. by some 4 per cent.
15. Cherwell's performance is far worse. The District's annual requirement 1996-2011 derived from the Oxfordshire Structure Plan is 750 dwellings. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02 (three years) 1,754 dwellings were completed in Cherwell at an average of 585 dwellings per annum. This is 22 per cent less than the County Structure Plan target which is already 3 per cent less than the current RPG 9 requirement.
16. This pattern of underprovision is also replicated in Bicester where the annual completion rate of 261 dwellings from 1996 to 2003 is 7 per cent less than the planned requirement of 280 dwellings. There is therefore a very major under-provision of new housing in Cherwell and Bicester, with both undershooting the Structure Plan target by some 22 and 7 per cent respectively.

*Need For Immediate Action*

17. There is an evident need to achieve an immediate step change in the pace of housing output in Cherwell and Bicester. This cannot wait for two years or more whilst there is continuing debate regarding the Local Plan, as there will always be a time lag of 3-5 years before local policies can begin to take shape on the ground. If it is concluded that no new allocations can be brought forward it is highly probable that there will be no increase in housing output in Bicester for **at least** five years from the date of this application.
18. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan ran until 2001 and is now three years out-of-date. Its policies and targets do not reflect the changes in national and regional planning policy guidance which has been issued since 1996. Given the urgency of the regional requirement to increase the rate of housing development there would be a conflict with

Government's objectives if proposals which are in all other respects perfectly acceptable are continually delayed simply because CDC has failed to adopt a Local Plan to replace one which is out of date.

*Acceptability of Gavray Drive For Housing*

19. Gavray Drive is a suitable housing site for the following key reasons:

- It is located within the urban envelope of Bicester within a convenient walking or cycling distance of the town centre and major existing employment areas.
- The principle of developing this site is not in doubt; it has been accepted in the Local Plan that it is appropriate to develop here.
- The nature of the site is conducive to residential development which can be accommodated in a way which respects existing landscape and ecological features.
- There are no environmental or any other constraints to residential development other than the flood plain which can be accommodated within the open space allocation on the site.

*Unacceptability of Gavray Drive For Large Scale Employment*

20. The Gavray Drive site is inappropriate for B2 and B8 uses for the following reasons:

- It is adjacent to existing housing; the noise created by B2/B8 use together with the height, scale and bulk of B2/B8 buildings would be detrimental to a residential environment.
- The traffic generated on Gavray Drive itself by B2/B8 activities would be detrimental to the adjacent residential environment.
- Large scale B2/B8 development would impinge on the wildlife interest on the site and it would not be possible to maintain an acceptable habitat for the crested newts.
- Large scale B2/B8 development could not be provided without destroying trees on the site which are the subject of TPOs.
- It is poor planning to focus further B2/B8 development in the north east quadrant of Bicester near the largest concentration of B2/B8 development in Bicester. A more balanced distribution of employment uses is more appropriate, reducing congestion during peak journey to work periods.

21. For B1 development Gavray Drive is an inappropriate location for four principal reasons:

- Both PPG1 and PPG6 indicate that office and B1 uses and those which attract a large number of people should be concentrated in town centre locations that are well served by public transport. Given that office and B1 uses are likely to generate a substantial number of jobs there are potential sites in Bicester Town Centre which better accord with this guidance.
- Draft Planning Policy Statement 1 and Draft Planning Policy Statement 6 further suggest that office and B1 uses are more appropriately located in town centres, in order to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development. Furthermore, Draft PPS 6 notes that jobs and services should be located in town centres wherever possible and appropriate.
- Gavray Drive is not appropriate for large scale B1 development for many of the same environmental/ecological reasons that B2 development is not.
- Fundamentally, Gavray Drive is in the wrong location to attract investment in large scale new out of town B1 space; the preferred location in Bicester which would be fully supported by the market is alongside the A41 on the Local Plan zoned site which is prominent, visible and with easy access to the M40.

*Absence of Need For Employment Development*

22. There has been no market interest in developing employment uses at Gavray Drive because Bicester is well supplied with employment space, with supply outstripping demand. This is illustrated in the table below.

	<i>New space</i>	<i>Second hand space</i>
Demand (per year) based on last 5 years	8,377 m <sup>2</sup>	7,463 m <sup>2</sup>
Current supply (m <sup>2</sup> )	28,313 m <sup>2</sup>	27,037 m <sup>2</sup>
Current supply (years)	3.4 years	3.6 years
Future supply from development sites (m <sup>2</sup> )	113,420 m <sup>2</sup>	n/a
Future supply from development sites (years)	13.5 years	n/a

23. There are four sites (excluding Gavray Drive) at Station Approach, Bicester Airfield, east of the A41 and at the A41 hotel/leisure site which are capable of supporting some 113,420 m<sup>2</sup> of built B class space.
24. If we apply the typical take-up rates shown above it can be seen that the current second hand/refurbished B class stock represents 3.6 years' worth of demand. The current supply of new space represents 3.4 years of demand and the four identified sites would support 13.5 years' worth of demand. In total, therefore, there are potentially more than 20 years supply of new and second hand employment space in Bicester.
25. There is no evidence that demand in Bicester has been constrained by a lack of potential supply. Furthermore there can be no realistic market justification for CDC seeking to plan for more than 10-15 years' worth of demand. Certainly it is not Government policy that CDC should seek to do so.

*July 2003 Consultation Draft PPG 3*

26. PPG3 requires local planning authorities which have employment allocations that cannot realistically be taken up over the lifetime of the plan to review their non-housing allocations when preparing development plans and to consider whether some of this land might be better used for housing. The consultation draft changes to PPG 3 indicate that applicants for planning permission for housing on land allocated for employment uses in development plans should expect "sympathetic handling of planning proposals" where there is no need for the land to be allocated for employment use.
27. CDC has not undertaken a rigorous appraisal of the demand for employment land nor has it considered realistically the extent to which Gavray Drive is suitable for this use. In circumstances where there is a clear need to accelerate the pace of housing development, there is a strong presumption that the guidance set out in the existing and proposed changed PPG 3 should be followed and housing development at Gavray Drive should be permitted.
28. We consider that the Council has not sought to examine the realistic extent of demand "over the life time of the development plan". It relies upon an approach which seeks to exactly match the projected working population in a Bicester labour market area with an equivalent number of jobs.
29. There is no national or regional planning policy guidance to support an approach which seeks to achieve an exact match between the number of jobs and the workforce in a town as small as Bicester. Such an approach also ignores the realities of Bicester's location and market position. Bicester does not perform a major service centre role, being overshadowed by larger towns. Furthermore, it is so accessible to other major employment centres that it will be difficult for Bicester to progress to any notional concept of full self-containment.

### **Conclusions**

30. It is clear that housing completions in Oxfordshire, Cherwell District and in Bicester have consistently failed to match planned targets. This is at odds with regional and national policy and guidance which is seeking to bring forward new housing development, especially in the South East.
31. Despite its allocation for employment use, the site at Gavray Drive is not suitable for B Class uses. There are a number of site specific obstacles to development of Gavray Drive for employment uses, and other, more appropriate sites exist elsewhere which provide more than 20 years' worth of space for employment use. Gavray Drive is, however, a suitable site for housing. Its location within the urban envelope of Bicester and its site specific characteristics are compatible with residential development.
32. We conclude that the allocation of the Gavray Drive site for employment uses is inappropriate and recommend that it be revised in order to permit residential development.