

Gladman Developments Limited
Land West of White Post Road, Banbury
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
July 2015



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Chapter 1: Introduction
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by a specialist consultancy team. It relates to an outline planning application (OPA) to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for a residential development on 17.53ha land creating up to 280 new homes at Land West of White Post Road, Banbury (as defined on the Site Location Plan Appendix 2.1). The Parameters Plan (Appendix 2.2) shows the outline of the development and a written description for the Project is provided within Chapter 2 of this ES.
- 1.1.2 This ES reports the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development. EIA is a process whereby the environmental effects of a proposed development are rigorously assessed. It enables potentially “significant” environmental effects to be identified and appropriate mitigation measures to be proposed, removing or minimising potential adverse effects.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this opening chapter of the ES is to outline the background to the proposals, explain the scope of the ES and set out its structure.
- 1.1.4 This ES forms part of the OPA for the Proposed Development. The OPA is accompanied by a series of reports and drawings which are as follows:

OPAD1	Application Forms and Ownership Certificate	GDL
OPAD2	Site Location (Red Line) (drawing)	Aspect
OPAD3	Framework Plan (drawing)	Aspect
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OPAD17 Archaeological DBA	ARS
OPAD18 Geophysical Survey Report	ARS
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OPAD21 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment	Regeneris
OPAD22 Energy Statement	GDL
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OPAD24 Topographical Survey Drawing	JLP

1.1.5 A screening request was made to CDC (Ref: 15/00040/SO) on the 14 May 2015 to determine if the proposal would constitute EIA development. The screening request considered that proposed development should be classed as an Urban Infrastructure Project under Paragraph 10b, Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

1.1.6 The Local Planning Authority issued their screening opinion on 3 June 2015 (Appendix 1.1), and concluded that an EIA would be required as:

“Having regard to paragraph 3 of schedule 3, the cumulative impact of such a development on wider and local landscape character, the special character and appearance of the Bodicote Conservation Area, community infrastructure and particularly local traffic flows (through Bodicote, along Wykham Lane and in Banbury itself) are likely to be significant, have a high probability of occurring and would be of a permanent nature. Consequently the LPA considers that by virtue of the scale, nature and location of the proposed development it would, in combination with other planned and committed developments, have a significant urbanising effect on the environment which can only be properly assessed by the submission of an Environmental Statement”.

1.1.7 Accordingly the ES addresses the cumulative impact of development on wider and local landscape character and the local highway network, the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Bodicote Conservation Area, community infrastructure and local traffic. The ES will also cover Archaeology, Built Heritage and Socio-Economics.

1.1.8 The following topic areas are covered within the ES:

- Development Proposals
- Planning Policy Context
- Consideration of Alternatives
- Landscape and Visual
- Archaeology, Built Heritage and Bodicote Conservation Area.

- Traffic and Transport
- Socio-Economics
- Cumulative effects.

- 1.1.9 Matters of ecology, flooding and air quality (amongst others) are not considered to be significant and have not been addressed. The matters are addressed in separate reports which have been prepared to accompany the OPA.
- 1.1.10 The site lies to the south of Banbury town centre and to the north west of Bodicote. The site forms part of an emerging allocation, Banbury 17. An application has been submitted for the parcel of land directly to the west of the project site, which was accompanied by an ES and was submitted on 17 November 2014. This application is yet to be determined.
- 1.1.11 The application site itself comprises three parcels of land, a large rectangular arable field to the west, a medium sized rectangular arable field located centrally and an irregular shaped small tract of land to the eastern most interface with White Post Road. The land cover in this tract of land is pasture with scattered parkland trees. Its irregular shaped northern perimeter is defined by the boundary with two large detached properties, one being Salt Way Day Nursery the other being a private residence.
- 1.1.12 Immediately south of the application site eastern land parcel lies a large recreational ground with Bodicote Village Hall occupying its south eastern corner.
- 1.1.13 Immediately south of the application site central land parcel is Banbury Cricket ground whose access is off White Post Road via a curvilinear driveway lined with avenues of purple leafed specimen trees, this driveway being within the application site.
- 1.1.14 Wykham Lane bounds the cricket ground to the south with residential properties aligning its northern carriageway segregating the lane from the recreational and cricket grounds.
- 1.1.15 The largest westernmost farm field of the site has a rectangular plot of allotment gardens to the south western corner with informal access off Wykham Lane. It should be noted that the application site does not include these allotments. The northern boundary is defined by the Salt Way, with existing residential units beyond, which therefore remain largely unaffected by these proposals.

1.2 THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 1.2.1 The procedure to establish the requirement for an EIA is established by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, [The EIA Regulations].
- 1.2.2 The EIA Regulations require that any proposed development falling within the description of a "Schedule 2 development" within the meaning of the Regulations will be required to be subject to an EIA where such development is likely to have "significant" effects on the environment, by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location (as screened under Schedule 3).

1.2.3 As established by the Screening Opinion (Appendix 1.1), the proposed development is deemed to be EIA development under Schedule 2, Section 10(b) of the EIA regulations and falls within the 'urban development projects' category and requires an Environmental Statement. An EIA to consider the likely significant effects of the Project has therefore been undertaken.

1.2.4 The ES has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and in particular Schedule 4, which sets out the information for inclusion within an ES. The PPG¹ advises that:

There is no statutory provision as to the form of an Environmental Statement. However, it must contain the information specified in Part II of Schedule 4, and such of the relevant information in Part I of the Schedule 4 as is reasonably required to assess the effects of the project and which the applicant can reasonably be required to compile. It may consist of one or more documents, but it must constitute a single and accessible compilation of the relevant environmental information and the summary in non-technical language'

1.2.5 In conformity to the EIA Regulations this ES reports on the findings of a systematic assessment of any likely "significant environmental effects" of the proposed development. To this end, and as required by the EIA Regulations, the ES includes the information referred to in Part II of Schedule 4, as presented below:

- (1) A description of the development comprising information on the site, design and size of the development.
- (2) A description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects.
- (3) The data required to identify and assess the main effects which the development is likely to have on the environment.
- (4) An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects.
- (5) A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 4 of this Part.

1.2.6 In addition the ES includes such information as outlined in Part I of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations; that which is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development and which the applicant can, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment, reasonably be required to compile.

1.2.7 Each environmental issue will be considered in the following way:-

- A description of baseline conditions;
- A description of the project proposals;

¹ PPG, Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 4-033-20140306

- A description of the likely significant effects of the project resulting from:-
 - (a) The existence of the Project;
 - (b) The use of natural resources;
 - (c) The emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste;
- A description of cumulative effects;
- Mitigation envisaged to address any significant adverse effects is listed.

1.2.8 The ES describes the likely significant effects of the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations. The effects resulting from the proposed development have been assessed, and the results of any likely significant effects reported. If particular effects receive no express mention within individual chapters, this is because they have been judged as having no significance.

1.3 SCOPE OF STUDIES

1.3.1 A screening opinion was received from CDC on 3rd June 2015 (Appendix 1.1). The screening opinion states that the application falls within Schedule 2 development, and having regard to the characteristics of the development, and its close relationship to a number of sites (explained below), the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal represents EIA development and therefore will require an EIA.

1.3.2 This OPA seeks permission for 280 dwellings, comprising a small element of the south of Salt Way – east emerging allocation (Banbury 17) that collectively will deliver some 1,345 dwellings. In addition, a smaller allocation of some 150 dwellings is proposed at south of Salt Way – west (Banbury 16).

1.3.3 On the western side of Bloxham Road, allocation Banbury 16 seeks to provide 150 dwellings. However, planning permission has been granted for 350 dwellings, a significant increase on the total allocation (14/01188./OUT).

1.3.4 Draft Policies Banbury 16 and 17 of the Cherwell Local Plan: Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications to the (Submission) Local Plan (August 2014), comprise the emerging policy framework for Banbury south west. The EIA has had appropriate regard to the likely future existence of the wider south west Development Area. In particular, the transport assessment (chapter 8) takes account of modelling of the traffic effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other elements of the proposed south west Banbury allocations, such cumulative effects are also reported in for instance the LVIA.

1.3.5 The Development Proposals chapter (Chapter 3) provides a comprehensive statement covering the nature of the Project and will collectively address all component parts of the proposal, including sustainability and design quality. It relates directly to the companion Design and Access Statement which support the OPA. Consideration is given, within the relevant ES chapters, to the effects of the proposals on green infrastructure.

1.4 CONSULTATIONS AND BASELINE INFORMATION

1.4.1 Baseline studies were conducted and the results used to inform the design process. Details of these studies are given in subsequent ES Chapters, and where appropriate copies of the surveys are included within the appendices accompanying this ES. The Parameters Plan (Appendix 2.2) has evolved in response to the baseline studies, pre-application advice from CDC and the public consultation exercise.

1.5 PREDICTED EFFECTS

1.5.1 Significant environmental effects are assessed by accepted methods as applicable. In cases such as visual resources, where the effects cannot be scientifically measured, specific criteria and thresholds have been used in accordance with published guidance. The potential effects of the Project are predicted by an assessment of the interaction of the Project with the baseline conditions. In general the likely significant environmental effects are considered in terms of whether they are:

- beneficial or adverse;
- direct;
- short, medium or long term;
- temporary or permanent;
- primary or secondary; and
- Cumulative.

1.5.2 Cumulative effects may be broadly defined as the effects of this Project when assessed cumulatively in the context of other future projects. They may result from:

- temporary or permanent effects;
- the interaction of different effects over time;
- a number of effects at different locations, not necessarily significant individually, but which collectively may constitute a significant effect;

1.5.3 The significance of the predicted effects are assessed for the development of the site from construction phases to completion taking into account the following matters:

- importance of environmental assets;
- sensitivity of the environment;
- extent and magnitude of effect;
- duration of effect;
- reversibility of effect;
- international, national, regional and local standards;
- accordance with planning policy;
- inter-relationship of effects;
- Project proposals.

1.6 PROJECT DESIGN AND ENVISAGED MEASURES

- 1.6.1 The proposed development includes measures (both design and operation proposals) to either ameliorate any otherwise adverse environmental effects or to enhance positive effects.
- 1.6.2 The significance of the predicted environmental effect, taking account of these measures (the residual effect), is set out in the statement of effects. An overview of the significant environmental effects is presented in Chapter 9 of the ES.
- 1.6.3 In June-July 2015 a public consultation exercise was undertaken, including publication of press adverts, a dedicated website and distribution of approximately 600 leaflets to neighbouring households and businesses (as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the OPA). The Applicant also wrote to the Bodicote Parish Council and Banbury Town Council on 23rd June 2015 informing them of the proposed residential development, a copy of the leaflet was enclosed.
- 1.6.4 Feedback from interested parties were considered and incorporated in the emerging Framework Plan proposals where possible.

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Chapter 2: Location and Site Description
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 This chapter of the ES provides a description of the Application Site and its immediate context. As required, more detailed descriptions of the site, its surroundings and specific features are provided within the relevant topic chapters

2.2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.2.1 Appendix 2.1 identifies the Application site. The site is 17.53 hectares and comprises three parcels of agricultural land.
- 2.2.2 The Site is located to the west of White Post Road, the main route to Bodicote from Banbury and to the north of Wykham Lane to the south of the settlement of Banbury within the Parish of Bodicote. The site is located approximately 1.7km to the south of Banbury centre, with access taken from White Post Road which forms the eastern boundary of the site. On the opposite side of White Post road, is the Bishop Loveday C of E Primary School and Cherwell District Council Offices.
- 2.2.3 White Post Road connects to the A4620, which provides a route into Banbury to the north and south east to the settlement of Adderbury. Junction 11 of the M40 is located some 3.5 km north east of the site, which provides access to Birmingham to the north and Oxford and London to the south.
- 2.2.4 To the immediate north of the Site lies the Salt Way, an attractive tree lined footpath and cycle way and non-designated heritage asset, beyond which lies Banbury's urban fringe with the residential properties of Sycamore Drive, part of the Easington Area. The residential area of Easington provides the residential context north of the site, and is an estate style development largely dating from the 1960-70's. Development is typical of this era with a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows fronting streets and cul-de-sacs.
- 2.2.5 To the north east of the site lies one of Banbury's major employers, Horton General Hospital, as well as a Sainsbury's supermarket.
- 2.2.6 To the south, the site extends to Wykham Lane, with Banbury Cricket Club forming the south eastern boundary. Beyond the Cricket Club is the village of Bodicote. To the south of the site, beyond Wykham Lane, are open agricultural fields.
- 2.2.7 Beyond the site area to the west lies open countryside primarily used for agricultural purposes, with the A361 beyond. The A361 is one of the main strategic routes into Banbury, and connects Banbury with Bloxham to the south. The area of land immediately to the west of the Site is part of the Banbury 17 allocation, and is currently the subject of a live planning application, reference: 14/01932/OUT for up to 1,000 dwellings, retail, community uses and primary school. As demonstrated on the Parameters Plan and illustrative Development Framework Plan, a spine road/link road will be provided linking the two sites and connecting the A361 Bloxham Road to the A4260 Oxford Road.

2.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.3.1 The site is 17.53 hectares and comprises three parcels of agricultural land, the site location plan is provided at Appendix 2.1.
- 2.3.2 The application site itself comprises three parcels of relatively flat land sloping down to the southern boundary with Wykham Lane, a large rectangular arable field to the west, a medium sized rectangular arable field located centrally and an irregular shaped small tract of land to the eastern most interface with White Post Road. The land cover in this tract of land is pasture with scattered parkland trees. Its irregular shaped northern perimeter is defined by the boundary with two large detached properties, one being Salt Way Day Nursery the other being a private residence.
- 2.3.3 This area of the site has a high concentration of trees of high quality, which from an Arboricultural perspective are of high quality. This includes mature specimens of beech, English oak, sycamore and common lime, which have large crowns and contribute a high visual amenity to the surrounding area. The remaining tree stock on site comprises mostly of young to semi-mature groups of trees that are situated within the field hedgerows that demarked the separate field parcels.
- 2.3.4 Immediately south of the application site eastern land parcel lies a large recreational ground with Bodicote Village Hall occupying its south eastern corner.
- 2.3.5 Immediately south of the application site central land parcel is Banbury Cricket Ground whose access is off White Post Road via a curvilinear driveway lined with avenues of purple leafed specimen trees, this driveway being within the application site.
- 2.3.6 Wykham Lane bounds the cricket ground to the south with residential properties aligning its northern carriageway segregating the lane from the recreational and cricket grounds.
- 2.3.7 The largest westernmost farm field of the site has a rectangular plot of allotment gardens to the south western corner with informal access off Wykham Lane. It should be noted that the application site does not include this plot of allotments.
- 2.3.8 Salt Way is culturally significant at a local level as a non-designated heritage asset, being a medieval trade route. It is also significant as a wildlife corridor and as a recreational amenity being part of the Sustrans network as well as a restricted byway. To the north of the Salt Way is the residential area of Easington, which is part of the Urban Area of Banbury.
- 2.3.9 There is currently no public access into the application site, apart from a public footpath which runs through the middle of the westernmost field.
- 2.3.10 There are no listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, battlefields or conservation areas within or adjoining the application site. There are a number of listed buildings that sit within close proximity to the site, including Wykham Farmhouse to the west of the site, the Church of St John the Baptist and a number of others within the Bodicote Conservation area, the boundary of which lies circa 350m from the site.

Chapter 3: Development Proposals (The Project)
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3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 This chapter of the ES describes the Proposed Development. Some details are addressed in the sections of topic-specific chapters, where appropriate. The totality of the Proposed Development is described across this chapter, the topic specific sections and the supporting outline application documents.

3.1.2 The project will constitute a high quality residential development complete with associated open space requirements to meet the community needs as part of a cohesive green infrastructure development. It is anticipated that the development will deliver up to 280 new homes, together with children's play space, youth games court, land for a cricket pitch and amenity green spaces. Further details can be found within the Design and Access Statement submitted with the OPA.

3.2 FORM OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

3.2.1 The planning application has been made in outline, with details of scale, specific layout, design and landscaping reserved for future consideration. The means of access will be considered as part of the outline application, and is covered in more detail within the supporting transport assessment and access plan submitted with the OPA. The application seeks to establish the principle and main parameters of the scheme.

3.2.2 As the planning application has been made in outline, with matters of design detail, scale and layout reserved for future consideration, the ES cannot be specific regarding the final development. A copy of the illustrative parameters plan for the proposed development can be found at Appendix 2.2.

3.3 THE PARAMETERS PLAN – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1 The Parameters Plan (Appendix 2.2) sets the location and scale of the proposals, which can be summarised as:

- **Amount** - The net developable area is 8.3 hectares for residential development providing up to 280 dwellings, 30% affordable and 70% open market housing. The development will provide a mix of house types and tenures, offering a mix of open market housing ranging from first times homes to larger family homes in line with current guidance and need.
- **Density** - The layout of the development would be carefully considered to achieve average density of around 35 dwellings per hectare.
- **Scale** – The proposed buildings will be 2-2.5 storeys in height (approximately 7.5-10.5m high) and reflect similar footprints, style and vernacular to the existing properties within Banbury and Bodicote to ensure the bulk and scale of the built form is appropriate to its urban fringe location.
- **Appearance** - Traditional building materials and vernacular will reference the localised context and assist in ensuring that the proposals relate well to the character of the

neighbouring urban context and wider setting of Banbury, creating a modern interpretation that will be explored further at the detailed design stage.

- **Open Space** – The formal public open space provision has been divided into two main areas located in the eastern and southern site areas. The proposed publically accessible open space consists of a total of approximately 8.02ha (approximately 45% of the total site area), and incorporates formal footpaths and areas of amenity to provide areas for informal recreational activities and to enhance biodiversity. The areas of open space include strategic landscaped zones incorporating native tree and shrub planting to the boundaries and perimeters of the open spaces to reinforce the existing site boundaries and further contribute to the local landscape. Amenity green space will also provide opportunities for informal recreation and the provision of naturalised areas is to be promoted to offer habitat opportunities for wildlife, in keeping with the findings of the Ecology Assessment, and will be included within the new native planting areas and adjacent to the retained vegetation to the site boundaries. The public open space areas will include informal recreation set within a landscaped context. Onsite equipped play areas, a Youth Games Court and provision of land for a cricket pitch are also included within the proposals.
- **Landscaping** - the areas of open space include strategic landscaped zones incorporating native tree and shrub planting to the boundaries and perimeters of the open spaces to reinforce the existing site boundaries and further contribute to the localised landscape. The majority of trees of value identified in the Arboricultural Assessment will be retained.
- **Sustainability** - Sustainable construction methods and energy efficiency will be adopted at the detailed design stage. This will promote a high standard of build and construction for the development in accordance with Best Practice Standards. The current illustrative layout allows for an attenuation pond on the southern site boundary which aims to mimic greenfield runoff rates.
- **Access** - The Proposed Development, through sustainable design, aims to minimise the effects of the private car on the highway network and to encourage greater use of other transport modes. More detail is provided within the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan which are submitted separately with the planning application and Chapter 8 of this ES. A new access arrangement is proposed off White Post Road, via a priority controlled junction. Pedestrian and Cycle Access will be taken from White Post Road, Saltway and Wykham Lane, a key objective of the Proposed Development is to improve connectivity between the site and the wider footpath network.

3.4 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

3.4.1 The proposals have been developed to ensure that a carefully considered and sensitive development approach is achieved. From the outset the proposals have sought to respond to and where possible enhance the existing features which characterise the Site and its immediate setting.

3.4.2 The Proposed Development is based on a set of design objectives drawn from national and local urban design policies and from good practice. The objectives also reflect the results of the stakeholder engagement and public consultations. These objectives include:

- Delivery of a high quality, sustainable residential layout which will create an attractive new community and can be integrated into the existing urban edge;
- Delivery of up to 280 new dwellings, including policy compliant affordable housing and a range of property types and sizes.
- Retain and incorporate existing boundary trees and hedgerow planting and improve biodiversity where possible;
- Respecting the visual amenities of the wider landscape setting, the scheme should be visually attractive, respecting the context, form and type of existing built form and building styles evident within the local area;
- The creation of a robust and appropriate development edge which provides a sensitive transition between the proposed development and the wider countryside setting;
- Provision of an integrated network of public open spaces forming part of a strong green infrastructure. Incorporating opportunities for extensive new landscaping to retain and further add to the existing green infrastructure and Public Rights of Way.
- Provision of a vehicular access link to adjacent development to the west of the application site;
- Create a 'place' which is designed for people and is easy to understand and move through, with quality 'communal' streets providing good pedestrian and cycle linkages both within the site and beyond;
- Promote sustainability through the design and construction process, reducing energy consumption and minimising waste;

3.4.3 These issues are examined in more detail within the design and access statement accompanying this planning application.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION, PHASING, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- 3.5.1 It is expected that the approach to construction and the approach to the future management and maintenance of the proposed development are likely to be matters governed by condition. The applicant will develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the site prior to construction, thereby ensuring that any potential environmental effects are within suitable standards or mitigated where no standards exist.
- 3.5.2 Establishment of tree planting will occur early on to ensure that the green infrastructure is robust to limit any visual impact.
- 3.5.3 It is envisaged that the open space resources created by the Proposed Development would be managed and maintained by an independent management trust/company. It is understood that CDC does not seek to adopt such amenities.

Chapter 4: Planning Policy Context
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 This chapter of the ES sets out the relevant planning policy context against which the development proposals should be considered. Policy matters relating to EUIA have been covered within Chapter 1 of the ES, this chapter identifies all of the relevant local and national planning policy and guidance. An analysis of how the scheme complies with planning policy is contained in the Supporting Planning Statement, which has been produced by Gladman Developments Ltd, and is submitted in support of the planning application.

4.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.2.1 The Government published and brought into force the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27 March 2012 following an extensive period of consultation and revision. At its core is a presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan making and decision taking. Paragraph 2 makes clear that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions:

“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise [in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990]. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions”.

4.2.2 The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government’s key objectives of facilitating economic growth and securing sustainable development. These overarching policies seek to integrate the needs of planning and transport whilst focussing development in the most appropriate locations, thereby protecting and enhancing the environment. The NPPF forms a significant material consideration in the determination of the application.

4.2.3 Within the opening section of the NPPF, the role of the planning system is made clear with the focus on the contribution planning should make towards the achievement of sustainable development, which is defined as having three dimensions, namely economic, social and environmental. It specifically states:

- **An economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **A social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **An environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.”

- 4.2.1 Importantly, these roles should not be undertaken in isolation but should be seen as mutually dependent. The NPPF¹ states that “...to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system”.

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.2.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. For decision taking this means²:

*“Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted”.*

Delivering Sustainable Development

- 4.2.3 To deliver sustainable development, the NPPF sets out guidance under 13 policy areas. The policy areas and policies most relevant to the application proposals are summarised below.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.2.4 The NPPF promotes sustainable transport³ stating that all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- *The opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*
- *Improvements can be undertaken within the transport networks that cost-effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe”.*

¹ NPPF, Paragraph 8

² NPPF, Paragraph 14

³ NPPF, Paragraph 32

Delivering a Wide Choice of Quality Homes

4.2.5 This section of the Framework builds on the guidance in PPS3 to meet the Government's key housing objective "to boost significantly the supply of housing". Paragraph 47 sets out how LPAs should achieve this boost in the supply of housing, including a requirement to:

"identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land"

4.2.6 Paragraph 49 provides further guidance on both how this should be achieved and how applications should be considered if it is not:

"...Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

4.2.7 To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes which create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should⁴:

- Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;
- Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and
- Where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution to make more effective use of the existing housing stock.

4.2.8 The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as extensions to existing villages and towns. Working with the support of their communities, local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development.

Requiring Good Design

4.2.9 The government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Paragraph 57 sets out the importance of planning positively for the achievement of high quality inclusive design

⁴ NPPF, paragraph 50

for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

4.2.10 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and the NPPF requires planning decisions⁵ to aim to ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

4.2.11 Paragraph 64 prescribes that permission should be refused for development of poor design.

Promoting Healthy Communities

4.2.12 The NPPF encourages developments to facilitate social interaction and the creation of healthy and inclusive communities⁶. Well integrated and accessible community facilities and public spaces can positively enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. To support this, LPAs should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development to achieve places which promote:

- *Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas”.*

4.2.13 Paragraph 73 states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of existing and future communities.

⁵ NPPF, paragraph 58

⁶ NPPF, paragraph 69

- 4.2.14 Paragraph 75 also requires planning policies to protect and enhance public rights of way and that Local Planning Authorities should seek opportunities to provide better access and links to facilities for users.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.2.15 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF places an emphasis on protecting valued landscapes, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible and preventing unacceptable levels of pollution.
- 4.2.16 Paragraph 118 states that when determining planning applications, LPAs should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by, amongst other things, encouraging opportunities to incorporate biodiversity around new developments.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 4.2.17 Paragraph 126 to 141 details the NPPFs approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 4.2.18 Paragraph 128 prescribes that when determining applications, LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.
- 4.2.19 The Framework at paragraphs 131-134 prescribes how any impacts on heritage assets should be considered in the planning balance. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 135 makes clear that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in the determination of the application.

Viability

- 4.2.20 Paragraph 173 requires that Local Planning Authorities take into account viability and deliverability in determining applications. It states:

“Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing landowner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable”

Making Planning Decisions

4.2.21 The NPPF at paragraph 168 states that LPAs should approach planning decision in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. Paragraph 187 states that authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. LPA's should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions for the area.

4.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3.2 The development plan for the site comprises the saved policies of the Cherwell District Local Plan (1996). However, the new Cherwell Local Plan will be adopted shortly after the submission of the application subject to suggested main modifications, and will become the adopted development plan. The developments accordance with local and national policy is explained in greater detail in the planning statement submitted with the application.

Cherwell District Local Plan (1996)

4.3.3 The statutory adopted Development Plan for Cherwell District Council comprises the saved policies from the Cherwell Local Plan (adopted in 1996), originally intended to cover the period up until 2001. A number of policies are still relevant and 'saved' until the Council's Local Development Framework that will replace the adopted Cherwell Local Plan is in place (likely to be during the determination of the application).

4.3.4 Policy C1 and C2 seek to promote the interests of nature conversation and ensure the protection of sites of local nature conservation value, whilst Policy C5 seeks to protect the ecological value and rural character of Salt Way.

4.3.5 Policy C7 seeks to prevent harm to the topography and character of landscape by requiring development to take into account changes in slope level and not to detract from important views.

4.3.6 Policy C13 seeks to preserve areas of high landscape value. Policy C14 seeks to retain important trees, woodland and hedgerows and ensure that new planting uses species native to the area.

4.3.7 Policy C15 seeks to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

4.3.8 Policy C25 and C26 seeks protection, enhancement and preservation of sites and/or settings of important archaeological features and scheduled ancient monuments.

4.3.9 Policy ENV1 seeks to ensure the amenities of the environment and neighbouring residents are not unduly affected by development.

- 4.3.10 Policy H5 sets out a target affordable housing provision of 20% in Banbury, subject to viability of the scheme.
- 4.3.11 Policy R12 requires the provision of 2.43 ha of public open space per 1,000 population.
- 4.3.12 Policy TR1 that requires provision of highways improvements and/or additional public transport.

Cherwell Local Plan 2031: Submission Document (2014, as amended by Main Modifications and the Inspector's Report)

- 4.3.13 CDC submitted their emerging Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 31st January 2014 for formal Examination. Examination Hearings were suspended by the Inspector on 9th June 2014 for six months to:

'... enable the Council to put forward proposed modification to the plan involving increased new housing delivery over the plan period to meet the full, objectively assessed needs of the district, as required by the NPPF and based on the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (undertaken by GL Hearn March 2014).' ([CDC website](#))

- 4.3.14 The Council consulted on modifications to the Submission Cherwell Local Plan including a revised housing requirement, modified Policies Maps, an update to the Sustainability Appraisal and a range of other supporting documentation between August and October 2014. The modifications included a new plan period (2011-2031) to reflect the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA, with an increased housing requirement from 16,750 dwellings in the submission version of the Cherwell Local Plan between 2006 and 2031 (i.e. 670 dpa) to 22,840 dwellings between 2011 and 2031 (i.e. 1,142 dpa).
- 4.3.15 CDC submitted its proposed modifications to the Submission Local Plan (Part 1) on 21st October 2014, and examination hearings resumed between the 9th and 23rd December 2014 with the Local Authority taking forward their full objectively assessed needs figure of 22,800 dwellings; their midpoint figure as shown in the Oxfordshire SHMA 2014.
- 4.3.16 In a report from the Inspector dated 9th June 2015 it was acknowledged that subject to the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix the Cherwell Local Plan satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in the NPPF. The intention of the Council is to present the Plan to Members at a meeting on 20th July 2015 in the hope for adoption.
- 4.3.17 The spatial strategy of the Plan is to manage growth within the district and focus the bulk of growth in and around the settlements of Bicester and Banbury. As such it is clear that Banbury will make a substantial contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the district. Policy BSC1 sets out the district wide housing provision, to provide for at least 22,840 homes over the plan period (some 1,140 dwellings per annum), with some 7,139 homes to be provided at Banbury.

- 4.3.18 The proposed Main Modifications propose development, south of Salt Way, and bounded by White Post Road to the east, extending to Crouch Farm to the west, known as south west Banbury. Policy Banbury 16 (south of Salt Way -west) and Policy Banbury 17 (south of Salt Way -east) will collectively deliver up to 1,495 dwellings as part of a number of local communities with strong links to Banbury town centre, to bring forward affordable housing, a new primary school and local centre and other infrastructure benefits. The application site is identified as part of the Banbury 17 allocation.
- 4.3.19 Policy Banbury 17 - south of Salt Way-east allocates land for up to 1,345 dwellings, of which up to 280 will be delivered through this proposed development. Directly adjacent to this proposed site, an outline application for up to 1,000 dwellings is currently awaiting determination by the Council. The adjacent site is providing a local centre, primary school and associated community facilities, as well as the route for the spine road which is an integral requirement of Policy Banbury 17. The north western parcel of the allocation has been granted outline and reserved matters approval, for 145 dwellings (12/00080/OUT and 14/01225/REM).
- 4.3.20 The Policy also sets out a number of key site specific design and place shaping principles to guide development of the entire allocation. A joint comprehensive masterplan, covering the entire allocation, has been produced in response to the policy requirement of Banbury 17. A detailed analysis of the compliance of the proposal with the policies of the soon to be adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031) is provided in the planning statement submitted with the application.

Affordable Housing

- 4.3.21 The development proposal includes the provision of up to 84 affordable homes, equating to 30% of the total number of units. This level of affordable housing provision would be in accordance with Local policy requirements and would help CDC to meet local housing needs.

4.4 SOCIO-ECONOMICS

- 4.4.1 A socio-economic assessment has been prepared by Regeneris Consulting and assesses the socio-economic impacts of the development. This document is submitted as part of the planning application. It concludes that there are several significant benefits arising from the scheme, including:
- Investment in construction of £36.1 million.
 - 130 FTE jobs on average per annum over the duration of the build programme.
 - Opportunities for local job seekers to find employment within the construction industry.
 - Increased household spending within Banbury of £2.37 million, rising to £2.59 million across Cherwell District as a whole.
 - Continued support to local businesses, during the construction and operational phases of the scheme.
 - An estimated 450-480 economically active residents either in work or actively seeking work.

- A stimulus to housing sales allowing local property market movement.
- CDC will receive a new homes bonus payment of £2.1 million over a six year period following the completion of the development.

4.4.2 The limited impact of the Proposed Development on community infrastructure will be addressed as part of the Section 106 agreement, which whilst needed to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms, will be a benefit of the scheme.

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Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives
Land West of White Post Road, Banbury
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
July 2015

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 A statutory requirement for inclusion in an ES is the reporting of the consideration of alternatives in the development of a proposal. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES is required to provide:

'An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an identification of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects.'

5.2 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

- 5.2.1 The opportunity to consider alternative sites to the Proposed Development is strongly influenced by the allocation of the site as part of the proposed wider south-west extension of Banbury, defined as south of Salt Way – east in the soon to be adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2031. The site was allocated, as part of the Strategic Development: Banbury 17 for 1,345 units in the Cherwell Local Plan: Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications to the (Submission) Local Plan (August 2014).
- 5.2.2 The Spatial Strategy for Cherwell District, as outlined within the Illustrative Submission Local Plan, states that *"Most of the growth in the district will be directed to locations within or immediately adjoining the main towns of Banbury and Bicester... Banbury will continue to grow, albeit to a lesser extent than Bicester, in accordance with its status as a market town with a rural hinterland."*
- 5.2.3 Given the Plan's evidence base which includes comparative site assessments for the district's growth, which include the Options for Growth Document (2008), and the Cherwell Local Plan Sustainably Appraisal (2013), the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity (September 2013), the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Addendum (August 2014) and Sustainability Appraisal Addendum for Main Modifications (2014) which underpin the allocation of the Proposed Development site, it is not considered necessary to consider potential alternative sites around the town in this EIA. The PPG¹ makes clear that an applicant does not have to consider alternative sites.
- 5.2.4 The Cherwell Local Plan Submission Draft (2014) states at paragraph C.103 that the majority of housing growth will take place at the edge of the settlement in sustainable locations. Paragraph C.104 notes that although a significant amount of housing growth is anticipated and allocated in Banbury, it is tightly constrained by its landform, with the River Cherwell Valley and flood plain to the east, steep sided valley and villages to the west and rising landform and heritage constraints to the north. The site represents a significant opportunity to provide a carefully designed urban extension of Banbury that will allow the successful delivery of the Banbury 17 allocation.
- 5.2.5 In terms of potential alternative designs of the Proposed Development, these are limited by a range of existing Site constraints, including access requirements, and the requirement for a link road to serve the wider Banbury 17 allocation, need to respect the visual amenities of the wider landscape

¹ PPG Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 4-041-20140306

setting, ensure no coalescence with Bodicote and protecting the setting of the Salt Way and Crouch Hill.

- 5.2.6 The design of the scheme has evolved through consultation with CDC, key stakeholders and the public and the findings of the series of studies that make up the EIA. A detailed description of the development proposals is presented in Chapter 3: The Proposed Development.