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# North West Bicester Exemplar Local Centre

## Planning Statement

Prepared on behalf of A2Dominion Developments Ltd

April 2015

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of A2Dominion Developments Ltd ('the Applicant') in respect of land to the north west of Bicester covering an area of some 0.6405 hectares north west of Lords Lane within the Exemplar part of North West Bicester (NW Bicester) (LPA reference 10/01780/HYBRID) ('the Site'). The Site falls within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council ('the Council') (CDC) and forms part of the NW Bicester Eco-Town proposals as identified in the emerging Cherwell Local Plan.

1.2 The principle of the development of an Eco Town at North West Bicester is identified in the Supplement to PPS1: 'Eco Towns'. The NW Bicester proposal represents the largest single opportunity within Cherwell District, and more specifically Bicester, to provide for much needed new housing to meet the needs of the residents of Bicester and Cherwell as a whole in the context of the ongoing substantial shortfall in housing land supply. To support this housing growth, services and facilities also need to be provided. NW Bicester provides an opportunity to establish a new, mixed use and sustainable community designed to achieve high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency in line with the Planning Statement: Eco-Town, A Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (July 2009) ('the PPS1 Supplement').

1.3 The application, which this Statement is submitted supports, seeks Full planning permission for:

**"Development of a new local centre comprising a 503 sqm convenience store (Use Class A1), 444 sqm of retail units (flexible Use Class A1/A3/A5), 664 sqm pub (Use Class A4), 523 sqm community hall (Use Class D1), 869 sqm nursery (Use Class D1), 614sqm of commercial units (flexible Use Class A2/ B1/ D1) with associated access, servicing, landscaping and parking."**

1.4 The principle of the development of a local centre, providing retail and related uses is established by the extant grant of permission for the Exemplar phase (Reference 10/01780/HYBRID), the area of which includes the Site, which is consistent with this extant and implemented permission.

### **NW Bicester Exemplar**

- 1.5 The Exemplar phase is the first phase of the wider Master Plan for NW Bicester Eco-Town. Planning permission was granted in July 2012 (LPA Reference 10/01780/HYBRID) for the Exemplar which lies in the northern part of the NW Bicester Eco-Town area ('the Exemplar'). The Exemplar comprises 393 new homes, land for a new primary school as well as local facilities such as shops and a nursery along with the eco-business centre. Full planning permission was secured for the residential element of the planning application and outline permission for the commercial uses. The permission is accompanied by a Section 106 agreement.
- 1.6 The Eight Schedule (Para 1.1 and 1.2) of the Section 106 Agreement for the Exemplar planning application sets out the following obligations in relation to the delivery of the local centre:

**“Will submit a planning application to the District Council for the Retail Store and the Community Hall within 12 months of the Implementation of the Development or by the Occupation of 100 Dwellings (whichever is sooner) and will not cause or permit more than 100 Dwellings to be Occupied until a planning application for the Retail Store and Community Hall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Council.”**

**“Will submit a strategy for the marketing of the Retail Store to the District Council for approval in conjunction with the planning application for the Retail Store submitted pursuant to paragraph 1.1 above and in any event within 12 months of the Implementation of the Development or by the Occupation of 100 Dwellings (whichever is sooner) and will not case or permit more than 100 Dwellings to be Occupied until the strategy for the marketing of the Retail Store has been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Council.”**

- 1.7 Development commenced on the Exemplar on 28 April 2014. This planning application is submitted to satisfy these legal obligations and has been prepared in consultation with CDC.

## **NW Bicester Master Plan**

1.8 In accordance with the PPS1 Supplement (Criteria ET 20), a Master Plan has been prepared for the NW Bicester Eco-Town area and was submitted to the Council in March 2014 with additional/ amended information submitted in May 2014. The Master Plan responds to the PPS1 Supplement and the Master Plan Brief (November 2013). The aim of the brief was to reflect the terms of the PPS1 Supplement to the specific example of NW Bicester and the aims and aspirations of the community, Council and developer. It sets out the vision for NW Bicester.

1.9 The Master Plan was formulated through a series of 'workstreams' which provided for focused debate and review of key elements of topics. The outcome of the workstreams was a number of strategies that in turn have informed the Master plan and/ or have been submitted as part of the Master Plan submission. These strategies include:

- Access and Travel Strategy;
- Community Involvement and Governance;
- Energy Strategy;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Economic Baseline;
- Economic Strategy;
- BIMP6 01 NW Bicester Masterplan Framework Rev B;
- BIMP6 02 NW Bicester Masterplan Framework Green Infrastructure Framework Rev A;
- BIMP6 03 NW Bicester Masterplan Movement and Access Framework Rev A;
- GI and Landscape Strategy;
- Residential Strategy;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Strategic Environmental Report;
- Social and Community Facilities and Services Strategy;
- Transport Strategy;
- Vision and Objectives Document;
- Water Strategy.

- 1.10 The Masterplan Framework Plan (BIMP6 01 Rev B) identifies the Local Centre in the Exemplar.
- 1.11 Following public consultation undertaken, it is anticipated that the Council will adopt the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document in July 2015, subject to the Local Plan Inspector's Report.
- 1.12 Following submission of the Master Plan, A2Dominion has submitted three planning application to CDC relating to land at NW Bicester. Each application has been prepared in accordance with the submitted Master Plan. Please find details of these applications set out below along with their current status:
1. Application One (LPA Reference 14/01384/OUT): North east of the railway line and north west of Lords land for up to 2600 new homes and facilities. This application secured resolution to grant on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015;
  2. Application Two (LPA Reference 14/01641/OUT): South west of the railway line and north of Howes Lane for up to 900 new homes and facilities. This application is pending determination with CDC;
  3. Application Three (LPA Reference 14/01968/F): Strategic road link to realign Howes Lane. This application is pending determination with CDC.
- 1.13 This application relates to part of the Master Plan area and is consistent with the Master Plan insofar as it relates to the Application Site. As stated, the Master Plan sets out the vision for NW Bicester which when taken together, will deliver a sustainable development.
- 1.14 This Planning Statement sets out a description of the proposals, site, surroundings and relevant designations, the planning policy context, the case for development and how the proposals accord with the PPS1 Supplement and Master Plan and therefore constitute sustainable development. The Statement is structured as follows:
1. Detailed description of the proposals;
  2. Site, surroundings and relevant designations;
  3. Planning policy context;

4. Case for development; and
5. Summary and conclusions.

### Planning Approach

1.15 To inform the design of a viable commercial centre, the Applicant appointed Meeson Williams Phillips, agency consultants. Having reviewed the proposals approved as part of application 10/01780/HYBRID, it became apparent that the quantum and mix of uses would not create a viable/ vibrant local centre. Having taken on board advice given by Meeson Williams Phillips, the mix and quantum of proposed uses has been adjusted. The proposals now fall outside the parameters approved as part of the Exemplar application. A summary of the variations is set out below:

<b>Extant Permission Uses</b>	<b>Extant Permission (GEA) (10/01780/HYBRID)</b>	<b>Proposed Uses</b>	<b>Proposed (GEA)</b>
Nursery (Use Class D1)	350 sqm	Nursery (Use Class D1)	869 sqm
Community Hall (Use Class D1)	350 sqm	Community Hall (Use Class D1)	523 sqm
Retail Convenience Store (Use Class A1)	595 sqm	Retail Convenience Store (Use Class A1)	503 sqm
Retail Other (Use Class A1)	175 sqm	Retail Other (Use Class A1, A3, A5)	444 sqm
Pub (Use Class A4)	190 sqm	Pub (Use Class A4)	664 sqm
Commercial (Use Class B1)	1,100 sqm	Commercial (Use Class A2/ B1/ D1)	614 sqm

1.16 Officers have advised that the proposals could not be dealt with under Reserved Matters and required a new planning application. A separate planning application has therefore been prepared.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

1.17 The original Exemplar application (LPA Reference 10/01780/HYBRID) constituted Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') development, falling within Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended).



- 1.18 The Exemplar planning permission requires details of the Local Centre (reserved matters) to be submitted to CDC within three years of the date of planning permission.
- 1.19 The Section 106 Agreement requires planning applications for the retail store and community hall, which comprise part of the Local Centre, to be submitted within 12 months of implementation. The Eight Schedule of the Section 106 also sets out timescales in which different elements of the Local Centre must be delivered. Triggers are set out below:

**“Will Service and Substantially Complete the Retail Store prior to the Occupation of 250 Dwellings and will not cause or permit more than 249 Dwellings to be Occupied until the Retail Store has been Serviced and Substantially Completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the District Council;**

**Will Service and Substantially Complete the Community Hall in accordance with the Community Hall Specification and to the reasonable satisfaction of the District Council as evidenced by the issue by the District Council of a Certificate of Practical Completion prior to the Occupation of 250 Dwellings and will not cause or permit more than 249 Dwellings to be Occupied until the Community Hall has been Serviced and Substantially Completed in accordance with the Community Hall Specification and the District Council has issued a Certificate of Practical Completion in respect of it;**

**Will Substantially Complete the Offices, Nursery and the Ancillary Retail Stores prior to the Occupation of 350 Dwellings and will not cause or permit more than 349 Dwellings to be Occupied until the Offices, Nursery, and Ancillary Retail Stores have been Substantially Completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the District Council.”**

1.20 In summary, the Exemplar planning permission requires details of the Local Centre to be submitted to the Council for approval. In the Section 106 Agreement this is expressed as an application for planning permission. Having discussed the matter with Cherwell District Council, Officers have advised that the application constitutes a ‘Subsequent Application’ as defined in the EIA Regulations 2011 (as amended):

**“Subsequent application” means an application for approval of a matter where the approval—**

**(a) is required by or under a condition to which a planning permission is subject; and**

**(b) must be obtained before all or part of the development permitted by the planning permission may be begun;”**

1.21 We invite the Council to screen the application on this basis.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

2.1 The proposals, within a total site area of 0.6405 hectares, can be summarised as follows:

1. Provision of 869 sqm of floorspace to be used as a nursery (Use Class D1) fronting onto the Spine Road comprising two storeys with an associated garden and terrace;
2. Provision of 503 sqm of floorspace to be used as a convenience store (Use Class A1), located on the ground floor;
3. Provision of 523 sqm of floorspace to be used as a community hall (Use Class D1) located above the convenience store on the first floor, fronting onto the Spine Road;
4. Provision of 444 sqm of floorspace to be used for retail (flexible Use Class A1/ A3/ A5) to be split into five units, three north of the Spine Road (83 sqm, 81 sqm and 82 sqm) and two south of the Spine Road (106 sqm and 92 sqm) to be located on the ground floor;
5. Provision of 401 sqm of floorspace to be used as a pub (Use Class A4) located at ground floor with an associated garden;
6. Provision of 263 sqm of floorspace to be used as a pub/ restaurant (Use Class A4) located at first floor, above the pub;
7. Provision of 614 sqm of floorspace to be used as commercial premises (Use Class A2/ B1/ D1) split into four units south of the Spine Road (74 sqm, 151 sqm, 157 sqm and 233 sqm);
8. 38 public car parking spaces and 24 staff car parking spaces;
9. 38 covered staff cycle parking spaces, 24 covered public cycle parking spaces and 44 uncovered public cycle parking spaces.
10. All commercial buildings will be constructed to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent';

11. Development as a whole to be 'true' zero carbon (taking into account regulated and unregulated energy as defined in the PPS1 Supplement) to be achieved through a range of measures including high performance building fabric, reduced energy consumption, renewable and low energy carbon energy generation;
  12. Aspiration to water neutrality (as defined in the PPS1 Supplement) and provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems ('SUDS');
  13. New roads and pedestrian footpaths designed to give priority to sustainable modes of transport.
- 2.2 We understand that Cherwell District Council will be submitting a separate planning application for the Eco-Business centre located within the Local Centre.

### 3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 A full description of the Application Site and surroundings is set out in the Design and Access Statement (Document 04). This provides a description of the Site, its characteristics, constraints, opportunities and surroundings.
- 3.2 In summary, the Application Site comprises some 0.6405 hectares of land to the north of Lords Lane, north east of the railway line, in the Exemplar site. The Site falls within some 400 hectares of land identified for development as the NW Bicester Eco-Town. The Site falls within the area subject to the Exemplar planning permission which has been implemented. Surrounding the Site are fields that form part of the wider Eco-Town area, including those to which Application 1 relates.
- 3.3 To the south of the Site is Lords Lane which comprises part of Bicester's ring road (A4095). To the east of the Site is Banbury Road (B4100) which links Bicester with Junction 10 of the M40 and surrounding villages in between, such as Caversfield and Bainton.

#### Designations

- 3.4 The Site and surrounding areas are not subject to any specific designations, save for the identification of the Site for development in the emerging local plan.
- 3.5 There are no Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) designated either on or adjacent to the Site. Likewise, no part of the Site is identified as either a Special Policy Area (SPA) nor as a Ramsar site. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) nor international sites within the Application Site. The nearest SSSI is the Ardley Cutting and Quarry located some 2km to the east of the Site.
- 3.6 The Site is not subject to any national, regional or local landscape or ecological designations. The Environment Agency Flood Map identifies the Site as falling entire within Flood Zone 1.
- 3.7 The Bure Park Nature Reserve, located approximately 750 metres to the south of the site at the closest point, is the designated as a Local Nature Reserve ('LNR').

- 3.8 The Site is not subject to any Local Plan designations as set out in the Proposals Map 1996.

### **Planning History**

- 3.9 In July 2012, the Applicant secured planning permission for the Exemplar site for the following:

**“Development of Exemplar phase of NW Bicester Eco Town to secure full planning permission for 393 residential units and an energy centre (up to 400 square metres), means of access, car parking, landscape, amenity space and service infrastructure and outline permission for a nursery of up to 350 square metres (use class D2), a community centre of up to 350 square metres (sui generis), 3 retail units of up to 770 square metres (including but not exclusively a convenience store, a post office and a pharmacy (use class A1)), an Eco-Business Centre of up to 1,800 square metres (use class B1), office accommodation of up to 1,100 square metres (use class B1), an Eco-Pub of up to 190 square metres (use class A4), and a primary school site measuring up to 1.34 hectares with access and layout to be determined.”**

## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### The Development Plan

- 4.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('PCPA') requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for this Site comprises the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996.
- 4.2 Material to the consideration of this application are the following policy documents: Planning Policy Statement: Eco-Towns, A Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 2009 ('PPS Supplement') and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 ('NPPF').
- 4.3 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and with it the majority of Planning Policy Statements were replaced. This did not include the PPS1 Supplement which remains extant in relation to NW Bicester. The Council's Local Plan was adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF confirms that, from March 2013, policies within existing local plans should be afforded weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

### Policy Designations

- 4.4 NW Bicester is identified in the PPS1 Supplement as an Eco-Town location (see Annex A).
- 4.5 In terms of Local Plan designations, these are set out in Cherwell's Proposals Map November 1996 (Inset Map 2). The Proposals Map does not identify any local plan designations on the Site.

### Cherwell Local Plan November 1996

- 4.6 The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in 1996. It was originally envisaged that the Local Plan would cover the period to 2001 (page 1). In 2007 relevant policies were 'saved' by direction of the Secretary of State.

- 4.7 The Local Plan has exceeded its specified period (i.e. up to 2001) by over 10 years and, whilst the NPPF allows weight to be given to relevant policies accordingly to their degree of consistent with the NPPF, the Local Plan is considered to be out of date. A new Local Plan has been progressed. This was subject to Examination in December 2014 and has yet to be adopted. Thus for the purpose of this application, it is considered that in policy terms, the proposals ought to be assessed primarily against the PPS1 Supplement and NPPF.

#### **Emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2006 – 2031**

- 4.8 The emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2006 – 2031 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 January 2014. Examination in public commenced on 3 June 2014 and was subsequently suspended on 4 June 2014 for a period of 6 months to allow Cherwell DC to put forward modifications to the plan involving increased housing delivery to meet the full, objectively assessed needs of the District (see Inspector's Note No.2 – 09/06/14). The Examination hearings resumed in December 2014. Cherwell District Council is currently awaiting the Inspector's Report.

#### **Draft Bicester Master Plan August 2012**

- 4.9 In August/ September 2012, the Council consulted on the draft Bicester Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') prepared by White Young Green ('WYG'). This relates to the town of Bicester as a whole. The Master Plan SPD aims to set out the vision for Bicester and how change will be managed to provide for an enlarged and vibrant town with an expanded role within the region. The Master Plan refers to NW Bicester as an 'eco-development' for 5,000 homes. A further draft was scheduled for consultation in Summer 2014 but has not yet been published.
- 4.10 The adoption of this Master Plan as SPD is dependent upon adoption of the Local Plan. The Council is currently awaiting the Inspector's Report on the Local Plan. It would be open to the Council to adopt the Master Plan as an interim, non-statutory document. However, this application is submitted in advance of adoption as interim guidance or SPD and as such falls to be considered against the provisions of the PPS1 Supplement, NPPF and other material considerations.



**Planning Policy Statement 1 Supplement: Eco-Towns July 2009**

- 4.11 On 5 March 2015, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning announced in a written ministerial statement that the Planning Policy statement: Eco-towns – A Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 is cancelled for all areas except North West Bicester. As such, this application will still be considered against the provisions of the PPS1 Supplement.
- 4.12 The PPS1 Supplement on Eco-towns sets out a range of minimum standards which aim to ensure that Eco-Towns are exemplars of good practice and sustainable living (see paragraph 3). The PPS1 Supplement on Eco-Towns sets out a range of minimum standards which aim to ensure that Eco-Towns are exemplars of good practice and sustainable living (see paragraph 3). North West Bicester is identified as an Eco-Town location at Annex A and, inter alia, capable of delivering a minimum of 5,000 homes (ET 2.2). The standards within the PPS1 Supplement provide the framework within which these proposals have been developed and against which they ought to be assessed. Appendix 1 sets out an assessment of these applications and the Master Plan against the various criteria set out in the PPS1 Supplement. The proposals, the subject of this application, are consistent with the Master Plan. The Master Plan satisfies the criteria set out in the PPS1 Supplement.

**North West Bicester Master Plan**

- 4.13 Standard ET 20 of the PPS1 Supplement envisages each Eco-Town having an overall masterplan which demonstrates how the Eco-Town standards will be achieved. The North West Bicester Master Plan was submitted to the Council in March 2014 and amended in May 2014. This is the product of over five years' consultation and engagement between the Applicant, the Council, Oxfordshire County Council, key stakeholders and local residents. The Council has been invited to adopt the Master Plan as supplementary planning guidance.
- 4.14 We understand that the Council seeks to adopt the North West Bicester Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') in July 2015.

## **National Planning Policy Framework March 2012**

- 4.15 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') provides national planning guidance and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development, the three inter-related dimensions of which are identified as economic, social and environmental (paragraph 7). The presumption in favour of sustainable development is to be seen as a 'golden thread' running through plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 14). It is our position that consistency with the PPS1 Supplement will satisfy the tests for sustainable development as set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF and accordingly, the presumption in favour of the grant of planning permission.

### **Overview**

- 4.16 The adopted Local Plan is out-of-date and there is no up-to-date Local Plan document sufficiently advanced to address the housing needs of the District. That said, NW Bicester is identified in the emerging Local Plan to provide for approximately 6,000 new homes. We would suggest that the primary planning documents that the application falls to be considered against are the NPPF and the PPS1 Supplement. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined at paragraph 7. Moreover, the PPS1 Supplement sets out a range of criteria against which the proposals for NW Bicester should be judged. This application is consistent with the submitted Master Plan and the Master Plan satisfies the criteria set out in the PPS1 Supplement as summarised in the Sustainability Statement (Document 09).

## 5.0 CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The NPPF published March 2012 introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the planning system has a number of roles to play in achieving sustainable development:

- 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 co-ordinating 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.

5.2 In our view the proposed Local Centre at the Exemplar will deliver sustainable development as defined by Paragraph 7 of the NPPF:

### **Economic Role**

5.3 The application proposal seeks to provide a Local Centre for the NW Bicester Exemplar site, in an accessible and sustainable location. Furthermore, the scheme provides high quality employment space. The proposed development will provide local services/ facilities to the local community, including jobs (i.e. in the employment space and during construction).

**Social Role**

- 5.4 The quantum and mix of uses proposed as part of the Local Centre will create a vibrant and viable commercial centre for the use of the local community. Furthermore, the Local Centre includes community uses such as a Community Centre, providing high quality space for communal activities, developing social cohesion.
- 5.5 The design of the proposed development has evolved through discussions with Officers, local residents and local groups to provide a well considered scheme.

**Environmental Role**

- 5.6 The scheme provides services and facilities in an accessible location for NW Bicester residents, encouraging visitors to travel to the Local Centre via sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.7 The scheme will be built to Eco-Town standards with the aim of achieving BREEAM Excellent, providing energy efficient and highly sustainable building. The scheme will also be true zero carbon as defined in the PPS1 Supplement. Furthermore, high quality landscaping is proposed as part of the scheme, introducing green space into the proposed Local Centre.

## 6.0 CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: LAND USE AND DETAILED MATTERS

6.1 The matters raised by the proposals can be split as matters of principle and matters of detail as follows:

### Matters of Principle

- Proposed Land Use
- Retail Impact
- Job Creation
- Design

### Matters of Detail

- Energy and Sustainability
- Transport and Highways
- Ecology
- Flooding and Drainage
- Waste

### MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE

#### Proposed Land Use

6.2 The PPS1 Supplement identified NW Bicester as one of five Eco-Towns across England in July 2009. One of the PPS1 requirement for Eco-Towns (ET13) is:

**“Building sustainable communities is about providing facilities which contribute to the well-being, enjoyment and health of people. Planning applications should include a good level of provision of services within the eco-town that is proportionate to the size of the development. This should include leisure, health and social care, education, retail, arts and culture, library services, sport and play facilities and community and voluntary sector facilities.”**

- 6.3 A2Dominion secured planning permission for 393 dwellings and a local centre as part of the NW Bicester Exemplar site in July 2012 (reference 10/01780/HYBRID). The local centre comprised the following uses:

Use Class	Quantum
Nursery (Use Class D1)	350 sqm
Community Hall (Use Class D1)	350 sqm
Retail Convenience Store (Use Class A1)	595 sqm
Retail Other (Use Class A1)	175 sqm
Pub (Use Class A4)	190 sqm
Commercial (Use Class B1)	1,100 sqm

- 6.4 This extant and implemented permission is material to the consideration of this application. Since the approval of the Exemplar in July 2012, considerable work has been undertaken on NW Bicester. A Masterplan for NW Bicester has been prepared and submitted to Cherwell District Council. The Council has recently consulted on the document and hopes to adopt it as an SPD in Summer 2015. This Masterplan identifies the Site as a Local Centre (see page 17). This is reflected in Cherwell District Council's emerging Local Plan (February 2015), which identifies NW Bicester as a strategic housing allocation with "*local centre hubs*". Emerging Policy Bicester 1 goes to state: "*Mixed use local centre hubs to include employment (B1(a), A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1 and D2)*".
- 6.5 The principle of redeveloping NW Bicester as an Eco-Town was established through the PPS1 Supplement. The principle of a Local Centre in this part of NW Bicester has been set through the Masterplanning process and the Exemplar planning permission (10/01780/HYBRID), which were prepared in accordance with the PPS1 Supplement. This is an appropriate location for the proposed Local Centre.

- 6.6 As set out previously, the Local Centre mix and quantum of uses has been amended following the input of local agent consultant Meeson Williams Phillips. Please find a breakdown of the proposed uses below:

Use Class	Quantum
Nursery (Use Class D1)	869 sqm
Community Hall (Use Class D1)	523 sqm
Retail Convenience Store (Use Class A1)	503 sqm
Retail Other (Use Class A1, A3, A5)	444 sqm
Pub (Use Class A4)	664 sqm
Commercial (Use Class A2/ B1/ D1)	614 sqm

- 6.7 Having considered the current local economic market, it has been advised that the approved Local Centre (10/01780/HYBRID) would not have delivered a viable and vibrant Local Centre. Having consulted with potential operators, Meeson William Phillips have proposed a revised mix, quantum and layouts. This planning application has been informed by these discussions. Meeson Williams Phillips has prepared a Business Case in support of this application which justifies the changes to uses within the Local Centre. We consider these proposals, provide the optimum Local Centre scheme based on the market without competing with town-wide facilities. The scheme includes a range of high quality community services and facilities, including a local Community Centre and will contribute to the well-being, enjoyment and health of people at NW Bicester, in accordance with the PPS1 Supplement.

### **Impact on Existing Retail**

- 6.8 The NPPF states that:

**“When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sqm).”**

- 6.9 The scheme comprises 3,617 sqm of commercial development outside of designated town centres in adopted local planning policy. Accordingly, a Retail Impact Assessment has been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP and submitted in support of this planning application. The Retail Impact Assessment concludes that the Class A1 convenience and comparison goods floorspace is small in scale and is intended to meet the local needs of residents of the wider NW Bicester scheme.
- 6.10 In this respect, it has been demonstrated that it can be entirely supported in expenditure terms by the new residents of the North West Bicester scheme. Along with the other Class A floorspace, the proposed development will provide locally accessible retail and service facilities to serve residents of the development but are not of a scale that is considered likely to compete to any material extent with existing provision in Bicester or draw trade into the development to any substantial degree. The Site therefore represents the most sequentially preferable location to accommodate the proposed retail floorspace and accords with the submitted Master Plan.

### **Employment Provision**

- 6.11 ET10 of the PPS1 Supplement requires the following:

**“An economic strategy should be produced to accompany planning applications for eco-towns that demonstrate how access to work will be achieved. The strategy should also set out facilities to support job creation in the town and as a minimum there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport.”**



6.12 The Economic Strategy prepared by SQW for the Exemplar (and for the full NW Bicester Development) responded to and supported the Eco Towns criteria. The Exemplar included 393 homes and a variety of business and social uses. The Economic Strategy for the Exemplar phase explained how it would generate around 430 new jobs based on the previous Local Centre mix (10/01780/HYBRID). As part of this planning application, an updated Economic Strategy has been prepared and submitted. Having considered the revised uses and floorspaces proposed within the Economic Strategy, SQW has concluded that the proposals would create 433 jobs when assessed on the same basis, (please refer to the submitted Economic Strategy for a full breakdown of forecast jobs). We therefore consider that the proposed Local Centre remains in accordance with the PPS1 Supplement in terms of job provision.

### **Design**

6.13 Paragraph 57 of the NPPF states it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Furthermore, Paragraph 63 of the NPPF attributes great weight to 'outstanding and innovative design' in deciding planning applications.

6.14 ET12 of the PPS1 Supplement states that the built and natural environments are an important component in improving the health and well-being of people. Well designed development and good urban planning can also contribute to promoting and supporting healthier and more active living and reduce health inequalities.

6.15 The Site does not fall within a conservation area, nor are any listed buildings within or in close proximity of the site. The proposed development would provide a high quality scheme which compliments the surrounding Exemplar development. Proposals have been informed through a detailed analysis of the site, including opportunities and constraints, and consideration of the wider landscape and townscape.

- 6.16 The overall architecture of the local centre has taken earlier concepts into account with the idea of the arcade being carried through to accompany a modern design. The two buildings are in similar form and mirror each other in a general sense. Each building consists of a central two storied section with taller 'book ends'. Both elevations provide a vehicle entrance which provides access to car parking and services.
- 6.17 The Design and Access Statement, which accompanies this planning application, identifies the opportunities and constraints presented by the existing site and the local area and how the proposals for the site have developed in response to these. A detailed review of the evolution of the design approach is included within the Statement. This sets out the varying factors that have influenced the design approach and the careful consideration given to ensuring that the proposals are appropriate to the character of the area and also that they provide for high quality commercial floorspace that contributes to the NW Bicester Exemplar site.

## **MATTERS OF DETAIL**

### **Energy and Sustainability**

- 6.18 The PPS1 Supplement defines zero carbon for the purposes of eco-towns as (ET 7.1):

**“Over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole are zero carbon or below.”**

- 6.19 The Application is accompanied by an Energy Strategy and Sustainability Statement. The Energy Strategy identified how the scheme responds to the PPS1 requirement and adopts the strategy already implemented on the Exemplar Phase site; which includes adoption of energy efficiency measures within the building design, connection to the district heating network (to be powered by the adjacent energy centre) and incorporation of solar PV on roofs and canopy cover of the northern car park.

- 6.20 The Sustainability Statement includes BREEAM pre-assessment of the buildings which demonstrate that BREEAM Excellent can be achieved.

### **Transport and Highways**

- 6.21 Reducing the need for residents to travel and improving sustainable travel choices is a key component of the PPS1 Supplement. Standard ET 11.1 aims for eco-towns to be designed to give priority to walking, cycling and public transport using techniques such as filtered permeability, with all homes located within 10 minutes of public transport and neighbourhood services.
- 6.22 Travel plans are to be provided with planning applications which demonstrate how 50% of trips originating from the eco-town can be made by non-car modes (with potential to increase to 60%), how 'transport choice messages' will be provided from first occupation and details of how the carbon dioxide impact of transport will be monitored (ET 11.2). Evidence is to be submitted with planning applications for eco-towns to show that the eco development will not increase congestion on existing roads (ET 11.3) and, where electric car schemes are to be included, evidence that sufficient 'energy headroom' has been provided to meet the higher electricity demand without compromising the zero carbon objective (ET 11.4).
- 6.23 The Application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. The Transport Assessment is based on the methodology agreed for the adjacent application for 'Land North of the Railway' which has a resolution to grant (LPA Reference 14/01384/OUT). The Travel Plan for the whole Exemplar development is already approved and this will remain as the Travel Plan for the Local Centre.
- 6.24 The proposals comprise 60 car parking spaces including 37 public spaces, 23 staff parking spaces.
- 6.25 Car parking is lower than the Cherwell maximum standards in recognition that NW Bicester is an Eco-Town and must promote sustainable forms of transport in order to meet the PPS1 Travel Plan target (50% of trips originating from the Eco-Town to be made by non-car modes). A parking accumulation demonstrates that the provision is adequate for forecast demand.

- 6.26 104 cycle parking spaces are proposed, including 38 staff and 66 public spaces. All staff cycle parking spaces are covered and 24 public cycle parking spaces are also covered. Furthermore, there is a bus stop on the eastern end of the street. Cycling, walking and public transport are therefore heavily promoted.
- 6.27 The transport assessment demonstrates that the forecast traffic from the development is lower than that assessed in the original approval for the Exemplar. As a result no further traffic assessment has been required.

### **Biodiversity**

- 6.28 Eco-towns are to aspire to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and not result in harm to designated nature conservation sites or SSSI (ET 16.1) with planning application supported by a strategy for conserving and enhancing local biodiversity (ET 16.3). This Application is accompanied by an Environmental Compliance Report that identifies the biodiversity baseline and enhancements. This has identified that in 2010, prior to works commencing on the Exemplar phase, the site supported improved grassland; and that in April 2015 the site was used as a material storage and laydown area and no grassland vegetation remained. The hedgerow that is adjacent to the southern boundary has been retained with a buffer zone and protective fencing installed during the construction. This fencing would be maintained to ensure that the hedgerow remains protected during the construction phase of the Exemplar Local Centre. The habitat enhancement measures for the hedgerow that form part of the consented scheme for the Exemplar phase would not be affected by the Exemplar Local Centre.
- 6.29 A Biodiversity Strategy has been developed to ensure that biodiversity has been incorporated into the design of the Exemplar Local Centre to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. This includes:
- Green- Sedum (stonecrop) roofs;
  - Invertebrate hotels incorporated into walls;
  - Bat boxes/bat brick incorporated into walls; and
  - Swift boxes/features incorporated into the nursery wall.

### **Flooding and Drainage**

- 6.30 Standard ET 18.1 aims for eco-towns to reduce and avoid flood risk wherever practicable. There is an expectation in the PPS1 Supplement that all built development within eco-towns will be located within Flood Zone 1, with land within Flood Zone 2 used for open space and informal recreation and no development, except water compatible development, within Flood Zone 3 (ET 18.2).
- 6.31 All development on this Site takes place in Flood Zone 1. A Flood Risk Assessment is submitted in support of the proposals which finds that the location of buildings within Flood Zone 1 and the maintenance of surface water run-off rates do not exceed agreed existing greenfield run-off rates, through the implementation of SuDS, and will not therefore increase the risk of flooding to the Site or elsewhere.

### **Waste**

- 6.32 Planning applications for eco-towns are required by Standard ET 19.1 to be accompanied by a 'sustainable waste and resources plan, covering domestic and non-domestic waste'. This is to include targets for residual waste, recycling and landfill diversion and how this will be monitored and maintained, details of how the development has been designed to facilitate achievement of the waste and recycling targets, consideration of using waste locally as a fuel source, and means of ensuring no construction, demolition or excavation waste is sent to landfill. This application has been developed having regard to the PPS1 Supplement.
- 6.33 Achieving zero construction waste to landfill is a key requirement and has been actively promoted through the design process; and will continue to be so through both materials selection and construction. As part of this, using locally sourced material with high recycled content; along with careful management, ordering and storage of material stock will be important to prevent wastage. Onsite reuse and recycling of materials throughout the construction period will also minimise waste.
- 6.34 The Contractors selected to deliver the Exemplar Local Centre will belong to the Considerate Construction scheme, and in addition, the site will be submitted to the BREEAM assessment and award scheme to monitor the developments sustainability through improved environmental quality and social performance.

- 6.35 Minimising waste during the lifetime of the Exemplar Local Centre will follow the waste hierarchy of reduction, reuse and recycling of materials and products. Each commercial operation will be required to produce a waste management plan to identify how the targets are to be achieved. In line with the Waste Regulations 2011, there will be a requirement on all commercial premises to separate waste paper, metal, plastic or glass for recycling.
- 6.36 An ambitious recycling target of 70% will be set for the development. As well as bin types and sizes will be allocated according to the type of premises. Commercial waste reduction will be undertaken based on the type of enterprise and the type of waste produced. Retail / business units and the proposed education centres are likely to have a high percentage of paper and card which is able to be accommodated.

## 7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 A2Dominion secured planning permission for 393 dwellings and a Local Centre as part of the NW Bicester Exemplar site in July 2012 (reference 10/01780/HYBRID). This extant and implemented permission is material to the consideration of this Application. Furthermore, the Site has been identified as a Local Centre through the Masterplanning process for NW Bicester, which will shortly become a Supplementary Planning Document. We therefore consider that the principle of a Local Centre in this location has been established.
- 7.2 This Application seeks to amend the Local Centre as approved as part of Application 10/01780/HYBRID. These amendments have been informed by work undertaken by Meeson Williams Phillips, to ensure the delivery of a Local Centre which is both vibrant and viable. The mix of uses and quantum proposed are similar to that approved as part of the Exemplar planning permission. Furthermore, having considered the revised uses and floorspaces proposed within the Economic Strategy, SQW has concluded that the proposals would create 433 jobs when assessed on the same basis (previously 430 jobs).
- 7.3 These amendments to mix and quantum have been assessed through the Retail Impact Assessment submitted as part of this application. The Retail Impact Assessment concludes that the Class A1 convenience and comparison goods floorspace is small in scale and is intended to meet the local needs of residents of the wider NW Bicester scheme. In this respect, it has been demonstrated that it can be entirely supported in expenditure terms by the new residents of the North West Bicester scheme. Along with the other Class A floorspace, the proposed development will provide locally accessible retail and service facilities to serve residents of the development but are not of a scale that is considered likely to compete to any material extent with existing provision in Bicester or draw trade into the development to any substantial degree. The Site therefore represents the most sequentially preferable location to accommodate the proposed retail floorspace and accords with the submitted NW Bicester Master Plan.

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