

# NW Bicester Outline Application 1

Design & Access Statement

August 2014



north  
west  
bicester

azdominion

THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW

north  
west  
bicester



FARRELLS

BARTON  
WILLMORE



## **Application 1 -**

Land to the north of the railway line and A4095  
Lord's Lane and west of B4100

## **Project Team**

### **Client**

A2Dominion

### **Masterplan Team**

Farrells

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SQW

Remarkable

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### Glossary of Terms

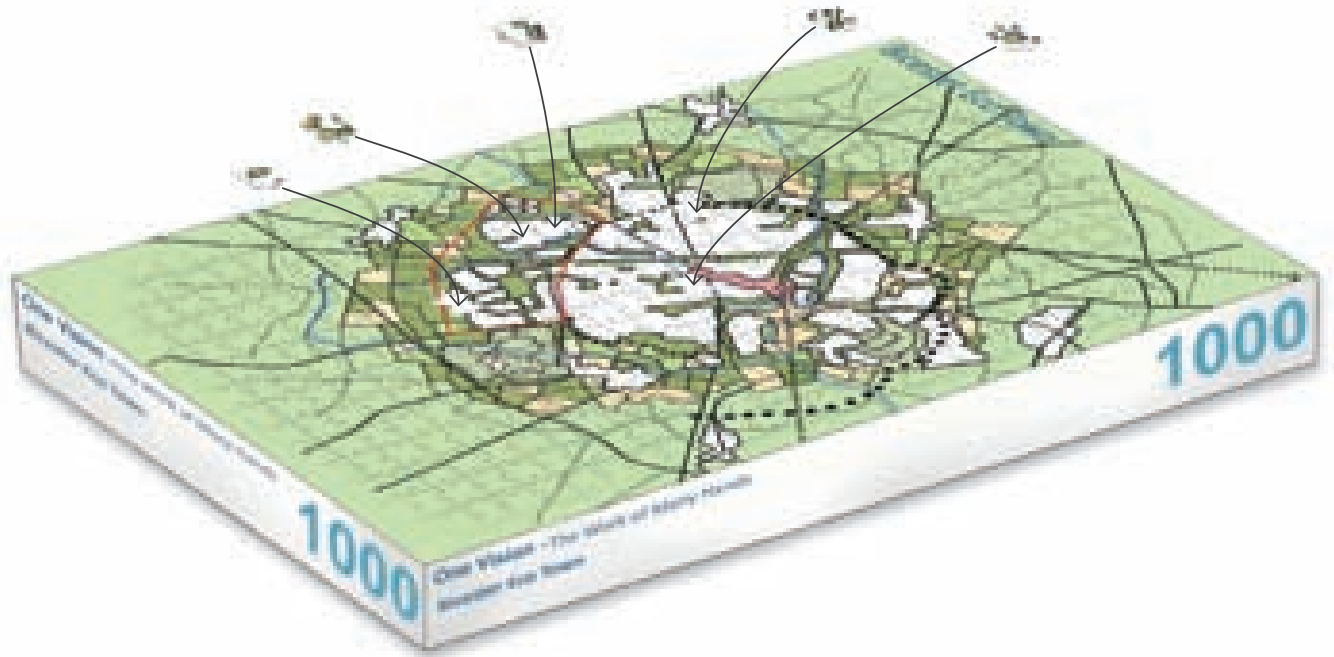


# 1 Introduction

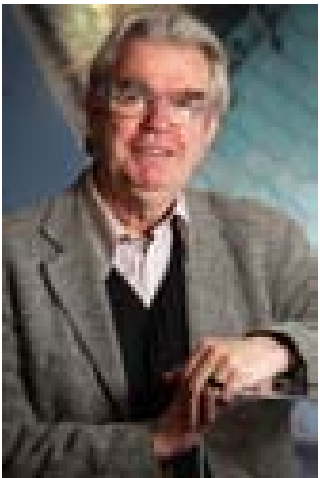
## Introduction by Sir Terry Farrell

I am delighted to present this vision for NW Bicester. This ambitious vision, in line with the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision, will strengthen the existing town's economic and community infrastructure, and will set the highest environmental standards, exceeding any similar scale development in the UK.

Eco Bicester will succeed when NW Bicester and the existing town, correctly planned, are one whole place, which is greater than the sum of the parts. The growth of an existing town with environmental credentials and a quality of place will have far reaching potential and implications for the lives of residents, workers and visitors alike. Unlike the "new town" approach which only includes a fraction of the urban population, NW and Eco Bicester will be an example for many other communities to follow.



**“NW Bicester and Eco Bicester will be a pioneering example for many other communities to follow”**



Sir Terry Farrell, CBE

## 1.1 The Vision for NW Bicester

**The Vision for NW Bicester is to create a place and a community which is led by landscape and seamlessly integrates with the existing community in Bicester as well as the rural countryside, to provide new homes, employment facilities within a community structure that demonstrates and achieves the highest level of environmental performance of any similar scale development, in a manner that integrates and benefits the wider town.**

The NW Bicester masterplan creates a new landscape led community; that integrates green and blue infrastructure with the existing historic town and communities. This results in creating a 'complete place' and a continuous human landscape which not only provides new green spaces, parks, allotments, sports facilities, a nature reserve, a country park and a riverside landscape for the new community but more importantly increases, the provision of and access to, green spaces, amenity facilities and the countryside; for existing residents of Bicester.

The existing rural farmland which is on Bicester's doorstep is private and not widely accessible to the general public, by strengthening links, improving and upgrading footpaths and the addition of new public footpaths and river and woodland walks, access to the countryside is improved for all and the existing assets including the Bure Stream and existing woodland and hedgerows to the north west of Bicester can be enjoyed by Bicester residents.

In creating a Vision for NW Bicester and Eco

Bicester, guidance will be drawn from the 'Supplement to PPS1 ET 1.1' which states that;

*Eco-towns should develop unique characteristics by responding to the opportunities and challenges of their location and community aspirations*

The Masterplan is intended to set out the framework for the future NW Bicester development.

This Supporting Statement for the NW Bicester Application has been prepared by Farrells on behalf of A2Dominion.

The main purpose of this Supporting Statement is:

- To provide a concise description of the key issues and the evaluation that informed decisions leading to the current design
- To provide comprehensive information on the proposals in terms of urban design, public realm, access and circulation, landscape and implementation.
- To put in context illustrative proposals that show design solutions for the outline masterplan.

The statement has been prepared with regards to the requirements CABE guidance "Design and Access Statements".



**NW Bicester Masterplan Site in the Context of Bicester**





## 1.2 NW Bicester Masterplan

### Overview and Status

**Following the identification of the land to the North West of Bicester as a proposed site for an Eco-Town by Cherwell District Council (CDC) with support from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Bicester Town Council (BTC), in 2008, NW Bicester was announced by the Government as one of four potential Eco-Towns in the UK, as reflected in the supplement to PPS1 Eco Towns.**

**A2 Dominion is one of the country's leading registered providers of high quality housing in the UK and are performing the role of lead promoter for the NW Bicester masterplan. A2 Dominion are also developing the exemplar phase and has further land interests throughout the masterplan.**

The land to the north of Bicester ('NW Bicester') is generally in agricultural use, and is located outside of the existing A4095 ring road. The site perimeters are approximately 1.5km from the town centre and 0.5km from the villages of Bucknell and Caversfield. The site is surrounded by roads on three sides and is crossed in the middle from North West to South East by the London to Birmingham railway, Bucknell Road and a bridle path.

The search area identified for NW Bicester in the emerging local planning policy framework is approximately 400 hectares.

The development at NW Bicester is planned to be zero carbon and to build a new community of up to 6,000 homes, as well as new employment

opportunities and attractive amenities all built to be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

This application represents the second application by A2 Dominion at NW Bicester; planning permission has been secured for the first exemplar phase of the development and will provide 393 homes, a new primary school, local shops and offices, an Eco-business Centre and attractive public spaces, connected with a network of green spaces leading to the existing countryside.

The development will be well integrated with the rest of Bicester and its rural landscape; providing an incremental and gradual development, over the next 20 years and beyond to support Bicester's future.

The masterplan is intended to set out the framework for the future eco town. The masterplan responds to the master plan brief and has been submitted to the Council.

The masterplan has been prepared having regard to requirements of the PPS1 supplement 'Eco Towns', adopted and emerging local planning policy and related documents and the masterplan brief. The masterplan proposals take advantage of the valuable existing features on site (e.g. water courses, established vegetation and bridleways and footpaths), and links the existing urban edge of Bicester to its surrounding rural hinterland.

To date, a number of fundamental principles have been established for the masterplan, including:

Providing up to 6,000 homes.

Ensuring a mix of affordable housing is

included.

Ensuring 40% of the overall eco town comprises of open spaces and green landscape infrastructure.

Creating 1 job per home within a sustainable travel distance.

Achieving a zero carbon energy standard for all buildings.

Achieving a shift from car use (to below 50%) to other more sustainable travel.

Ensuring homes are built to a minimum of Code 5 for sustainable Homes level and BREEAM excellent standards.

Making the best use of technologies in energy generation

To allow for future climate change adaptation by incorporating forward thinking technologies and design

Providing real time energy and travel monitoring in every home

Ensuring high levels of energy efficiency in the fabric of the buildings and their design

To provide primary schools located within 800m of all homes

To enable and encourage local food production

Attaining a net gain in local bio-diversity

Aspiring to water neutrality

Creating a management program to ensure

zero waste goes in to landfill during  
Construction

Making a commitment towards a Local  
Management Organisation

This application is consistent with these objectives and the development aims to achieve more sustainable ways of living through low carbon lifestyles. The proposals will be developed around local centres to provide facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents and opportunities for employment and to create a focus for community and assist in creating a sense of place. The development will promote walking, cycling and use of public transport over the use of the private car.

In formulating the proposals, regard has been had to the wider vision for Bicester ('Eco Bicester') and the relationship of the proposals for Bicester as a whole as set out in the emerging White Young Green master plan and the emerging policy framework.

## Process and Iteration

The PPS1 Supplement requires the preparation and submission of a masterplan (ET20). The master plan is the result of continued iteration and has been informed by extensive consultation and engagement.

The identification of land to the north west of Bicester as an Eco Town, in response to the Government's initiative, was promoted by the

Council. Halcrow undertook initial work in June 2009, which identified a broad rectangular area of land to the north of Howes Lane and Lords Lane. The area of land has been carried through the emerging local planning policy framework and represents the 'area of search' for the masterplan.

Following the publication of the Supplement to PPS1 and the confirmation of the status of land to the north west of Bicester as a potential eco-town, A2Dominion promoted the 'Exemplar' development of 393 new homes, together with a new primary school and social and community facilities, and employment and retail accommodation. The formulation of the 'Exemplar' application was undertaken in tandem with the preparation of the master plan.

Following the grant of permission for the exemplar phase in 2012, A2Dominion continued with the preparation of the master plan. At the same time, the Council instructed White Young Green to prepare a master plan (Bicester Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document Draft Consultation, August 2012) for the whole of Bicester and has prepared and now submitted its local plan (Cherwell Submission Local Plan 2006-2031). A masterplan brief was prepared and agreed with the Council to guide the process. This brief sets out the Council's aims and objectives and the issues arising. It too is an iterative document with the latest draft being agreed in November 2013.

The formulation of the master plan was arranged through a series of work stream groups, the topic areas reflected the key areas and matters to be addressed and acted as the forum for discussion and review.

Each workstream comprised relevant stakeholders and consultees. The output of the workstreams

formed 'strategies' which serve to underpin the master plan as now presented. These strategies are submitted in support of the masterplan.

Wider consultation and engagement continues. A2Dominion maintain a dedicated website and publish regular newsletters. A series of workshops were held with Members and key officers and stakeholders. In addition to a series of community based events, a wide ranging consultation exercise was held in December 2013. The results of which and further details of the consultation exercise are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

The masterplan prepared by A2Dominion has been submitted to the Council with the invitation that the Council has regard to the masterplan in considering subsequent planning applications. It is of course for the Council to determine the status of the masterplan and the weight to be attached in any decisions.

The Council is now consulting upon the masterplan with a view to preparing non-statutory planning policy. This application is consistent with the masterplan and in essence seeks outline permission for part of the masterplan.

## 1.3 Masterplan Brief

A masterplan brief has been prepared with the Council and this has served to guide the formulation of this masterplan, in the context of wide ranging and continuing consultation and engagement.

### **The NW Bicester eco development masterplan will seek to:**

- Extend the town with 6000 zero carbon homes.
- Provide a place where people can live with very low carbon footprints and within environmental limits, showcasing what a sustainable future can look like.
- Enable the countryside to infiltrate the development with green open spaces linked into Bicester town.
- Encourage the integration of new and existing communities with shared services and infrastructure.
- Create landscape as the primary infrastructure working with the laws of nature.
- Link communities with the sites history creating local centres around existing farmsteads.
- Create renewable energy production harnessed locally.
- Retain existing businesses.
- Create new employment with emphasis on innovation, training and eco business opportunities.
- Disperse employment and community facilities across new local centres.
- Provide integrated transport links throughout the site and into the existing town centre and rail stations.
- Ensure that all parts of the site are within

400m walking distance of a regular bus route.

- Humanise the ring road by creating crossing and frontage designed to the scale of people not cars.
- Distribute community and service facilities within close walking distances of all housing.

### **The Masterplan green infrastructure will seek to:**

- Provide 40% of development site area as green infrastructure.
- Provide a series of linked open spaces between the 2 hubs / villages.
- Create green linkages with the wider countryside and communities.
- Create connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians with strong links to the existing town and surroundings.
- Provide a strong framework for the green infrastructure with existing, topography, water courses and habitats.
- Retain existing hedgerows for habitats and amenity space integrated with the new green spaces.
- Engage with key stakeholders is to determine how various GI uses are distributed.
- Provide a net increase in the biodiversity of the area.
- Create allotments to grow food locally.

of land for a cemetery to meet existing and future town requirements.

In addition, the Council requests a provision



## 1.4 Scope of Applications

The vision and objectives and evidence base that form the Masterplan were submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in March 2014, for consideration with an addendum in May and June 2014, incorporating additional technical assessments. The role of the masterplan is to provide a foundation and policy for future planning applications within NW Bicester. A2Dominion is now promoting, on behalf of participating landowners, two outline planning applications within the Masterplan.

Application 1 – approximately 155 hectares to the north of Lords Lane

Application 2 – approximately 51 hectares to the north of Howes Lane

There will be a separate planning application for an A4095 NW Strategic Link Road which will provide an improved route around the NW of Bicester and link through the NW Bicester development. This proposal is integrated into the Access Strategy for the application.

Whilst limited weight should be attached to the draft Local Plan, it is noted that North West Bicester is identified as a strategic allocation to provide approximately 5,000 new homes, of which at least 1,793 new homes are to be delivered within the Plan period (see draft policy Bicester 1).

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

In August/ September 2012, the Council consulted on the draft Bicester Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') prepared by White Young Green ('WYG'). The 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 is to be published for consultation Summer 2014.

The adoption of this Master Plan is dependent upon adoption of the Local Plan. As examination and, as a result, adoption of the Local Plan has been delayed, this will likewise delay adoption of the Master Plan as SPD. 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**

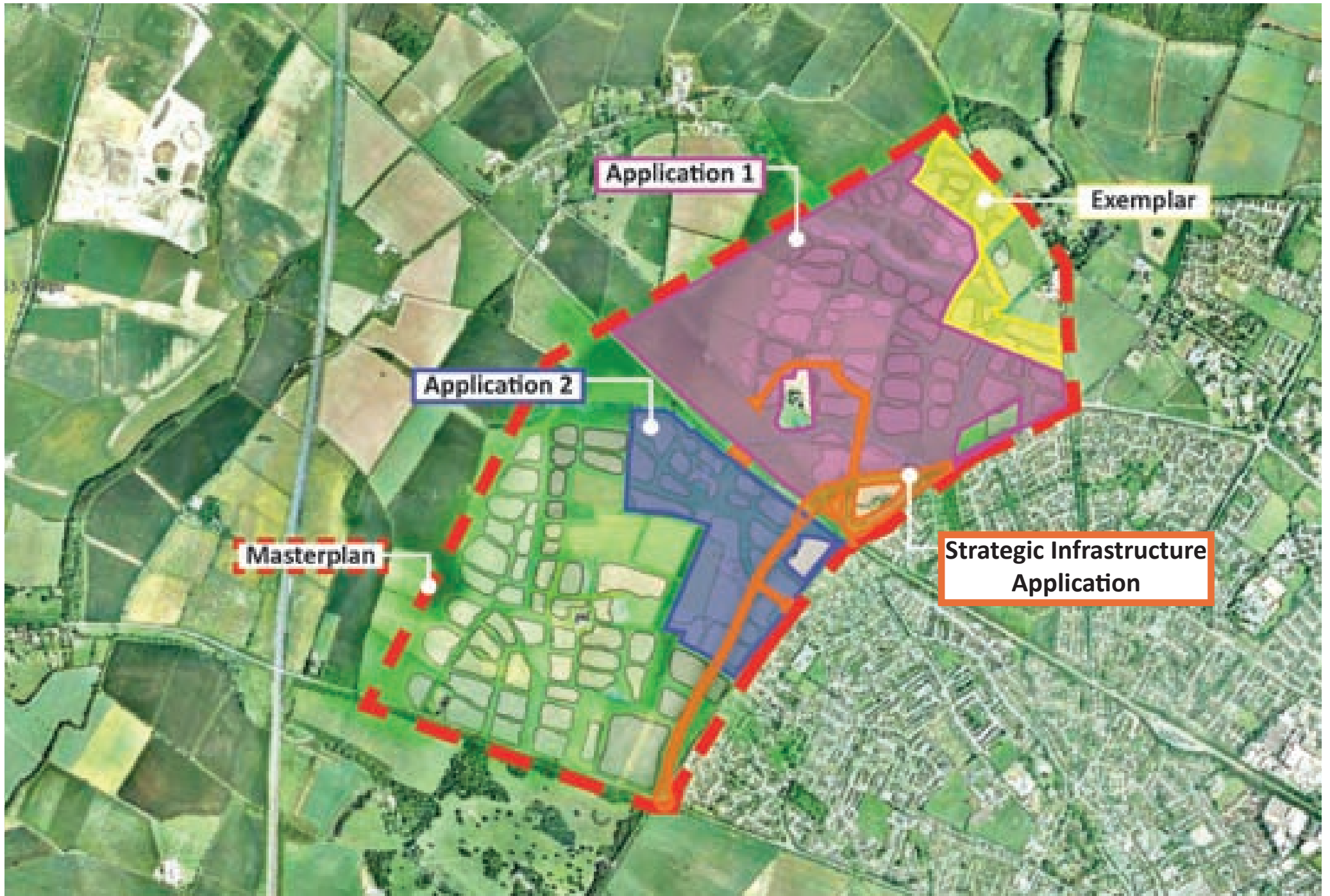
The PPS1 Supplement on eco-towns sets out a range of minimum standards which aim to ensure that eco-towns are exemplars of good practice and sustainable living (see paragraph 3). North West Bicester is identified as an eco-town location at Annex A and as, inter alia, capable of delivering a minimum of 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**

Standard ET 20 of the PPS1 Supplement envisages each eco-town having an overall master plan 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.

The Council's Local Development Scheme ('LDS') provides a timetable to adoption of the North West Bicester Master Plan with initial consultation June/ July 2014, review and preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') July/ August 2014, further consultation August/ September 2014 and adoption February 2015. This application has been prepared in accordance with the submitted North West Bicester Master Plan which, in turn, was prepared in accordance with the PPS1 Supplement.



# 2 Masterplan Context

## 2.1 Bicester Historical Context

### **Social History: Bicester today and in the future – a place which continues to be shaped by its history**

The settlements that formed, what is known today as Bicester, historically followed a pattern of moving up hill out of the river flood plains to higher ground. The town over time has made a shift to the North West of its historic centre. It is a continuation of this natural progression that sets out the concept for NW Bicester.

The Romans built the first settlement which lies south of Bicester, as it is located today. The fort of 'Alchester' was on the confluence of the Gagle Brook and the Bure stream; at a roman crossroads near to 'Graven Hill', a rare high point in the flat landscape (figure 1). When Roman 'Alchester' fell into disrepair, around 400AD; the Saxons moved the settlement up hill, out of the flood plains and the second fort of 'Bernecestre' grew on the border between Mercia and Wessex in a strategic location near to the Roman roads, using Graven Hill as a vantage point for military defence (fig 2). 'Bernecestre' thrived for 600 years and was destroyed by a Viking raid in 912AD.

The 11<sup>th</sup> century settlement again moved up hill, growing around two medieval manor houses (fig 3 & 4a), which form the core of today's historic town centre. The two manors of Kings

End and Market End grew on the opposite banks of the Bure stream and were supported by 200 tenant farmers who farmed the burgage plots around the Manor houses (fig 5). As the success of these manors grew and farming began to prosper, 'the Causeway' was built between the two manors bridging the Bure stream. Land to the North was used for agriculture with market fields next to the streams for irrigation and fertile ground (fig 6).

The town grew northwards, with settlements forming around the Bure tributaries and around natural springs that fed water towers which supported the rail network. Streams now provide the corridors for green infrastructure in Bicester, providing green for recreation and natural habitats.

Kings End and Market End were granted market charters in 1377 and 1406; substantial houses were built along 'the Causeway' and Sheep Street was built to bring sheep to the Market Square.(fig 4b) Sheep Street provided a route for sheep and agricultural products to be transported from the fields in the north of Market End. These medieval routes still form the street patterns of Bicester today.

Following the field enclosure act in the 1800's, ownership boundaries shifted and Kings Inn Farm and a later quarry, diverted the top of Sheep Street - two parallel lanes became one lane which extended to Bucknell (fig 6).

Bicester remained as an historic market core surrounded by farms and small manors until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when it gradually began to expand its centre with large footprint uses growing to the North West of the town centre core – with a school and the workhouse. This lopsided growth was further confined by the

introduction of the railways in 1830 and 1906 with more accessible land becoming available for development to the North West of the town centre (fig 7).

Bicester, since Roman times has had an association with the military. During WW1, the RAF opened an airfield in Caversfield as a training base, this grew in importance in WW2 and was supported by the Ministry of Defence's largest ordnance depot, to the south of the town (fig 8). The influx of military personnel in the town, and of evacuees from London during the war saw the need for housing increase and the town grew toward the current ring road with new housing estates from the 1960's (fig 9).

As the town moves North West, next to be developed are the market fields, subdivided into two by the railway and the river, the pattern of two centres in Bicester forms the concept for the NW Bicester– joining 2 places (fig 11).





**1**    **2 ROADS, 1 FORT**    AD 50 - 500



**2**    **2 KINGDOMS, 2 FORTS**    400 - 1100



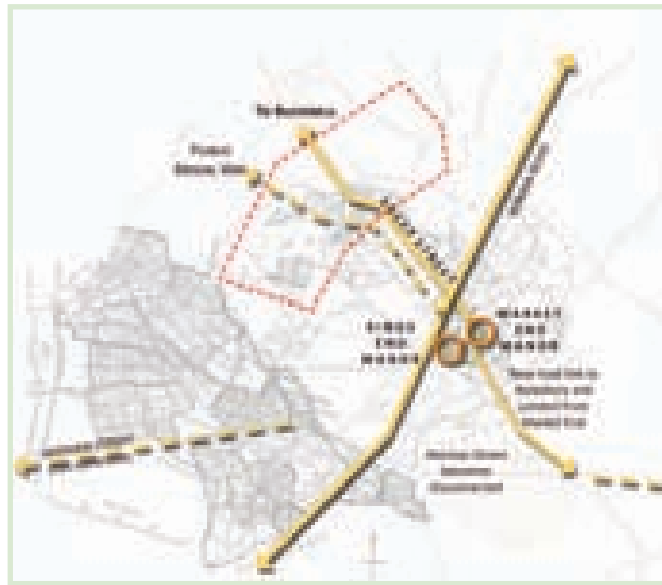
**3**    **2 MANORS**    900 - 1100



**4a**    **2 MANORS**    1100 - 1700



**4b**    **2 MARKET CORES**    1100 - 1700



**5**    **2 MARKET CORES**    1100 - 1700



6

**2 TRADITIONS -  
RURAL + URBAN**



7

**2 RAILWAYS**

1830 - 1910



8

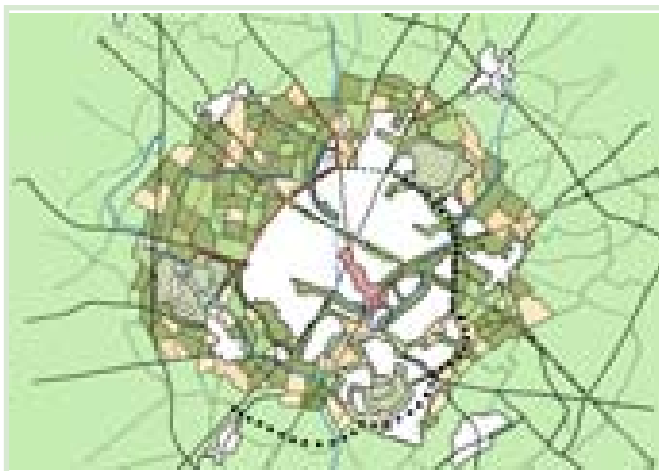
**2 MILITARY BASES**

1910 - 1960



9

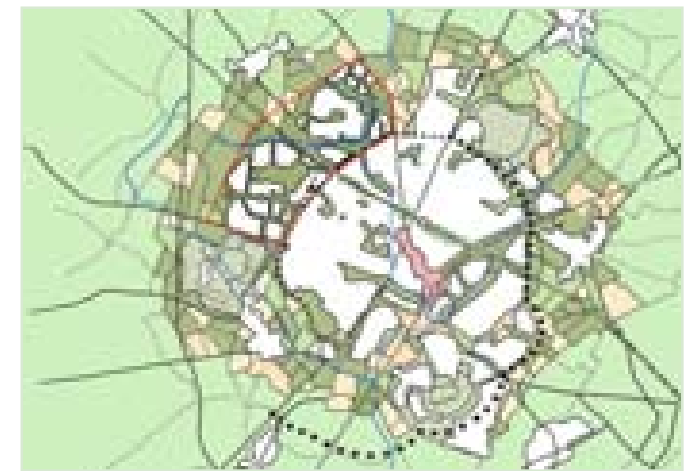
**2 ZONES:  
RURAL + EXPANDING TOWN**



10

**2 PARTS:  
DIVIDED BY A RING ROAD**

1980 - 2013



11

**JOINING 2 PLACES:  
FOR A COMPLETE ECO BICESTER**  
2010 - 2040



**JOINING 2 PLACES:  
FOR A COMPLETE ECO BICESTER**

2010 - 2040

## 2.2 Masterplan Site Context

### 2.2.1 Geology

This is broadly described as having a rolling landform, with underlying limestone geology, characterised by a distinctive pattern of woodlands and mixed farmland - much of which is associated with 18<sup>th</sup> Century parkland. Most recently, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004), places the site within 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Character Type, with the following key characteristics (Ref 1-4):

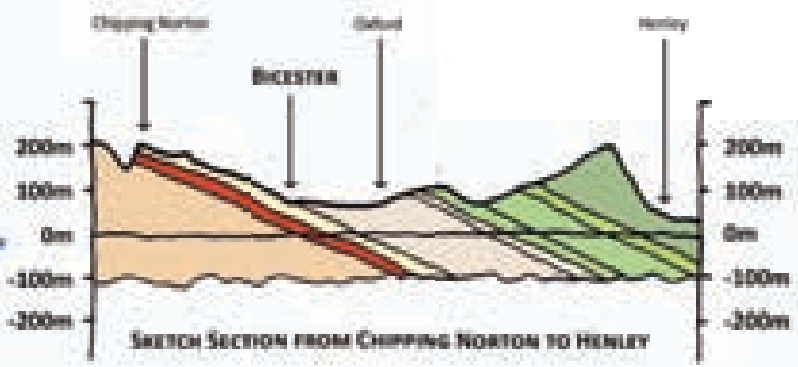
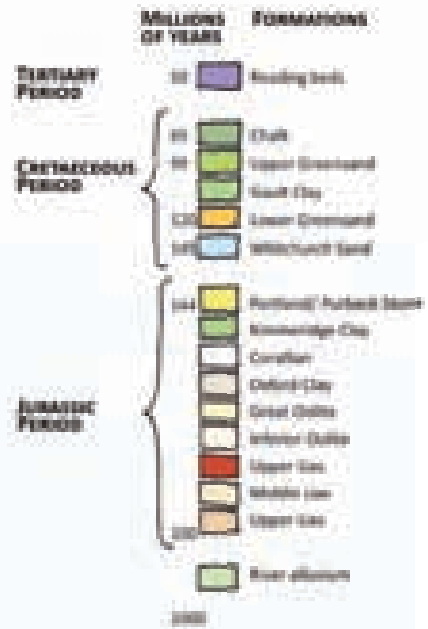
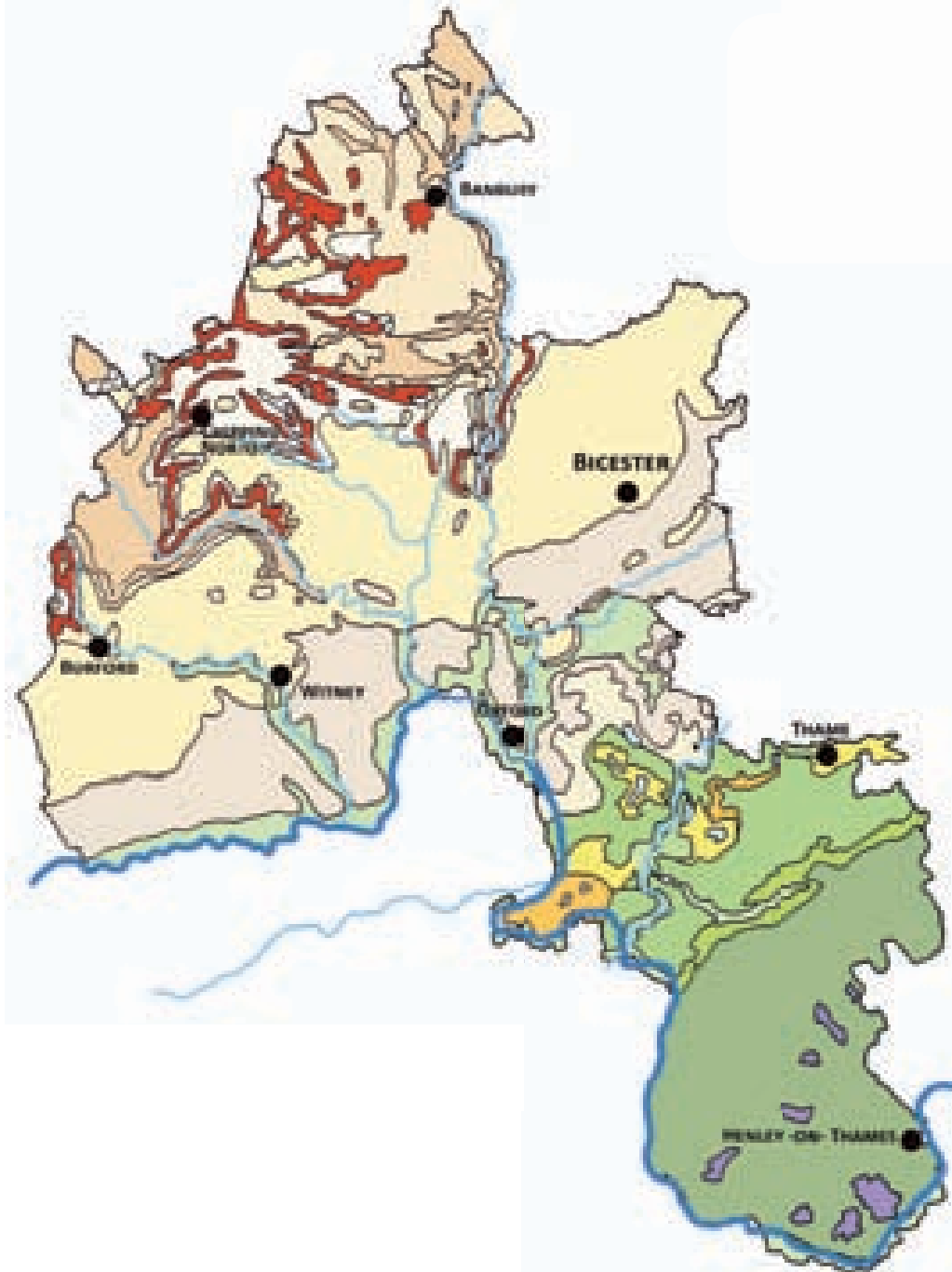
- *'Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.'*
- *'Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.'*
- *'Large parklands and mansion houses.'*
- *'A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.'*
- *'Small villages with strong vernacular character.'*

**Geology, landform and drainage:** The geology in the area around Bicester and further south is dominated by Oxford Clay. Landform is gently rolling, with the streams of local springs flowing through small valleys.

**Landcover:** Mixed farmland is the dominant landcover, with arable farming forming the principal use and pasture generally on the steeper slopes. This is a well-wooded landscape with blocks of woodland and corridors of trees bordering valley streams. Fields are generally enclosed by hedgerows, with established ash and oak hedgerow trees also contributing to the wooded character of the landscape.

**Settlement and communications:** Settlement is characterised by scattered farmsteads generally with strong vernacular character, reinforced by features such as stone walls and stone buildings with stone or clay tiled roofs. The surrounding agricultural land is generally characterised by a geometric pattern of medium to large fields. Bucknell Road, a minor country lane, links Bicester with the village of Bucknell, to the north, and the A4095, B4030 and B4100 provide the wider transport/communications network at Bicester's northern edge. A bridleway runs through the centre of the site, connecting Bicester with open countryside to the north. Overhead power lines and a railway line, mostly on embankment, also traverse the area.

# Geography and Geology



## 2.2.2 Boundaries & Adjacent Context

The site is located within four parish boundaries, Bucknell, Caversfield, Bicester and Chesterton

### **South east to Ring Road A4095**

The south east site boundary of approximately 2.5km is formed by the A4095 Ring Road in part Howes Lane and part Lords Lane. The site is adjacent to existing residential areas and Bure Park. The existing residential areas have a mix of social and community facilities with connections to the town centre by foot and cycle paths.

### **South east to Lords Lane**

The part of site facing Lords Lane extends for approximately 1km from the railway bridge crossing and Bucknell Road to the Banbury Road roundabout to the north. There are three existing access roads to the existing Bure Park residential area to the east of Lords Lane. A continuous footpath and cycle path is provided on the south east side of Lords Lane within landscape screening between the road and residential area. The west of Lords Lane are hedgerows concealing the existing farms and an existing access lane to Lords Farm.

### **South east to Howes Lane**

The part of the site fronting Howes Lane extends for approximately 1.5km from the junction with Middleton Stoney Road in the south to the railway bridge crossing and Bucknell Road on the north. There is a single existing access road to the residential area to the south east and the majority of the existing housing has rear gardens facing the ring road. On the north west side of Howes Lane there are hedgerows screening the farmland and an existing

industrial estate with an access to Howes Lane approximately south 200m from the junction with Bucknell Road. There is a bridle path crossing the site from west to east which is accessed from Howes Lane approximately 50m from the junction with Bucknell Road.

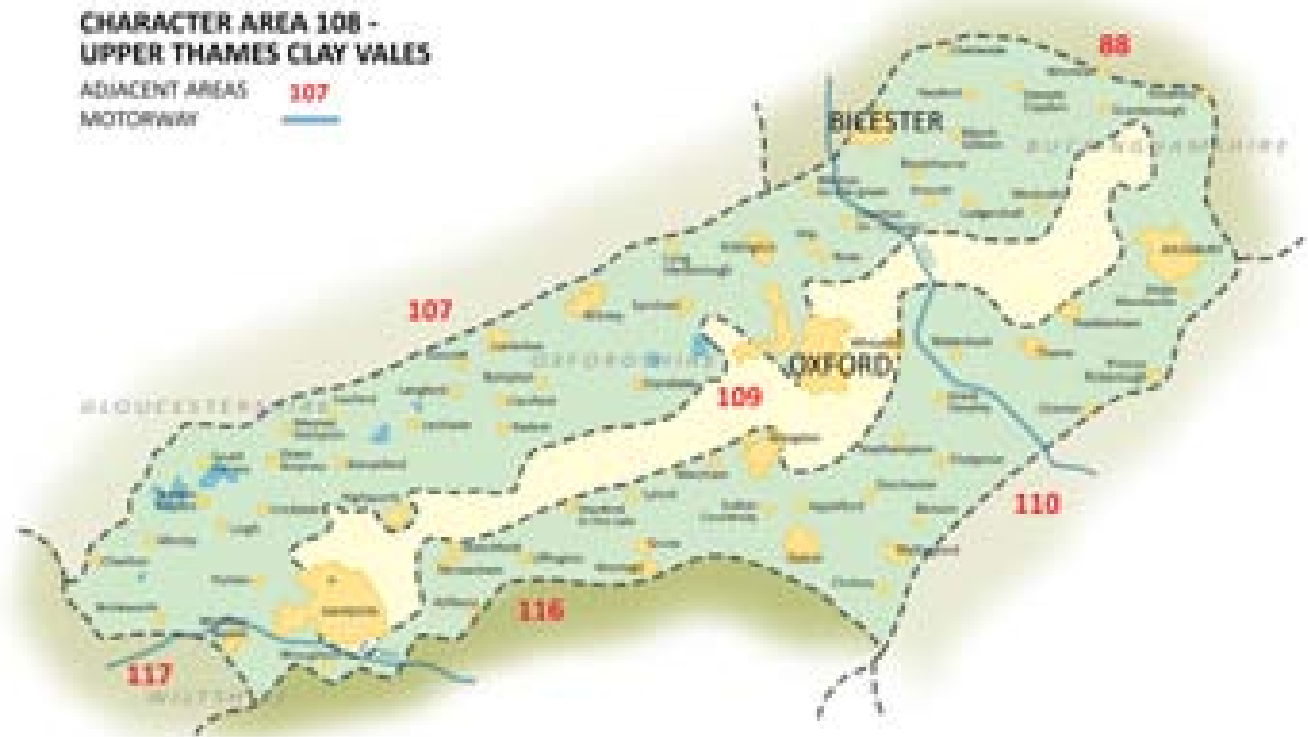
### **South west to Middleton Stoney Road**

The southwestern boundary of the site is formed by the Middleton Stoney Road B 4010 which runs from west to east into Bicester town centre. On the south side of the road is estate woodland. Both sides of the road are enclosed with mature hedgerows. On the north side are the existing access lane to Himley Farm and-

-- house. An existing high level electricity cable crosses the site and runs approximately parallel to Middleton Stoney Road.

### **North East to Banbury Road and Caversfield**

The northern eastern boundary of the site is formed by the Banbury Road B4100 which runs from north to south into Bicester town centre. On the north east side of the road the historic Caversfield Lodge and St Laurence Church are set within woodland estate landscape and bounded by stone walls. On the west of Banbury Road is located Home Farm with existing hedgerow and farm buildings fronting the road. To the north of the farm the site is open to view



from the road with an existing farm access lane. Further north the existing hedgerows conceal the site and merge with the woodland to the north. Further east approximately 0.75km is the village of Caversfield linked with an existing lane adjacent to the Home Farm.

### ***North West to open farmland***

The north western boundary between Middleton Stoney Road and the railway is open farmland subdivided by existing field boundary and hedgerows and wherever possible these will define the proposed western extent of the development. The existing bridle path crosses into the site through the western boundary alongside a stream flowing from west to east. The existing Crowmarsh farm which is adjacent to the site to the north is accessed by a farm lane which crosses over the railway towards Bucknell Road. An existing high level electricity cable crosses the site and runs approximately parallel to the north west boundary 200m within the site. Further to the west is the M40 which run north south approximately 300m to 1200m from the site perimeter.

### ***North to open farmland and Bucknell***

The north boundary between the railway and Banbury Road is open farmland subdivided by existing hedgerows and wherever possible these will define the proposed northern extent of the development. Further to the north is the existing village of Bucknell sited along a village lane of 1km length running across a ridge running south west to north east approx and approximately 0.75km from the perimeter of the site. The north boundary is crossed by Bucknell Road running from north west to south east into the centre of Bicester. There is a stream crossing

the boundary flowing towards the south east. Existing public footpaths from Bucknell cross the fields to the north of the site and join the surrounding roads without crossing the site.

### ***Railway embankment***

The existing railway between London and Birmingham crosses the site in a north west to south east direction and subdivides the site into approximately two equal halves. The railway is on an embankment approximately 6m high on the south perimeter of the site as the railway crosses over Bucknell Road and Lords Lane with steel girder bridges. The railway embankment is landscaped with some trees on lower slopes. Midway across the width of the site the railway crosses an existing stream which has been diverted into a culvert. The railway changes from embankment to approximately level with the site at the north perimeter because of the sloping land and soon becomes a cutting as it crosses under the Bucknell village lane and M40.

### ***Bucknell Road***

Bucknell Road crosses the middle of the site site from north west to south east into and is initially parallel to the railway, then converging to create a wedge shape piece of land and finally crossing the ring road and under the railway towards centre of Bicester. There is an access lane from Bucknell Road to the existing Hawkwell Farm in the middle of the site and the stream crossing under the road.

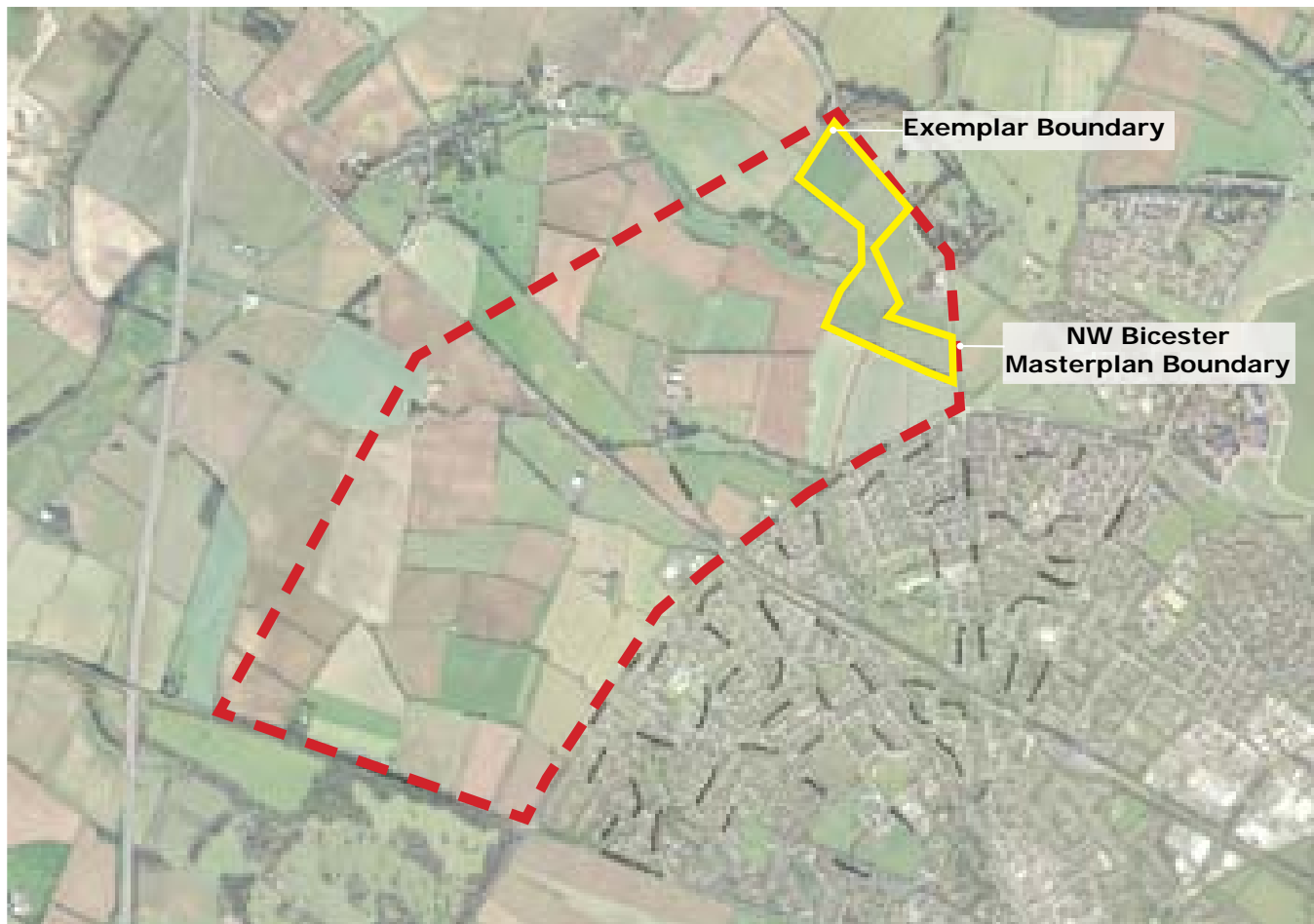
## 2.2.3 Topography and Natural features

### Contours and Gradients

The site is sloping generally from north west to south east with a height above ordnance datum at the highest from approximately 95m AOD to the lowest at 75m AOD. The general slope of approx 20m in 2km creating average gradients of 1 in 100. There are streams which cross the site flowing from west to east to join the River Bure which crosses the eastern part of the site flowing south towards Bicester town centre. The increased slopes adjacent the streams create local gradients of up to 1 in 15.

### Water Courses

The overlay of the streams subdividing the general slopes creates distinctive characters in different parts of the site. The northern part of the site is subdivided by streams into 4 distinct parts, the largest area is a regular shape of approximately half the area, whilst the remaining three areas are wedge shaped formed against the existing routes. The southern part of the site is more generally sloping to the south and less influenced by the stream topography with a stream crossing the north corner and a stream emerging in the east to flow south under Howes Lane. In the earliest strip field pattern of farming the streams were generally used to access the fields. The streams provide important habitats and are the location of most of the larger groupings of trees which add to the character of the site. The streams and associated habitat will therefore be a significant factor to be taken into account and a defining feature and opportunities to create character in the masterplan layouts.



NW Bicester Masterplan Site



Natural features and topography



Parish boundaries



### **Hedgerows**

There are approximately 28km of existing hedgerows enclosing farming land in field sizes from approximately 3 to 10 hectares. The ecology and habitat survey has established that whilst there is a range of hedgerow quality from species rich and species poor, the hedgerows are the most significant contributor to the biodiversity of the site.

### **Woodlands**

There are areas of existing species rich woodland in the masterplan site. In the north there is an area of 2 hectares adjacent to the stream and a disused quarry. In the centre of the site there is an area 0.5 hectare of woodland close to Hawkwell Farm and Bucknell Road. Both the above woodlands are large groups of trees adjacent the streams combining with additional trees in smaller grouped along their length. Because the streams were part of the historic routes to strip fields, these woods will both reflect the original settlement pattern and are established corridors of biodiversity. In the south of the site there is a woodland belt of approx 3.5 hectare which has been planted in recent years to screen Himley Farm. The woodland has some existing value and is an opportunity,

Adjacent the site there are areas of existing woodlands.

- Caversfield Lodge has a large area of woodland to the north east.
- Woodland To the south of B4030
- Woodland to the north adjacent to Bucknell

There are opportunities to create linkages between areas of woodland through landscape corridors in the masterplan.



Existing Topography and Water Courses



Existing Habitat Constraints

## Place Making and Character Areas

It is important that NW Bicester feels like a place, with a set of coherent identities and characters.

The existing site and its rural and urban context is made up from a number of landscape character areas comprising of rural and arable farmland, existing housing estates, Caversfield, Bucknell, Bignell House and Park, Home Farm, Bure Park, the existing historic town centre, the railway, river and M40 corridors. Each of these character areas have many differing characteristics, amongst them; species of trees, ratios of green to urban space, vernacular architecture and materials, habitats and ecologies, micro climates, populations and so on.

The existing site was surveyed in 2010 to assess the existing landscape character and the local context. Refer to Hyder drawing 'Site landscape character assessment 18-08-2010' for further details. The characterisation can be broken down into the following categories;

**A - Caversfield Valleys and Ridges** - land to the east of the Bure stream and west of

Caversfield. This character area encompasses Home Farm and the rolling landscape and valley sloping down to the Bure stream.

**B - Bucknell Ridge** - high land contained on all sides by Bucknell village, Bucknell Road and the Bure stream.

**C - Bucknell Valley Corridor** - corridor between the existing bridle way and Bucknell Road, includes the existing railway line.

**D - Himley farmland slopes** - farmland between Bignell Park and the bridle way Characterised by a grid of existing hedgerows.



A - Caversfield - St Laurence Church



B - Bucknell Ridge

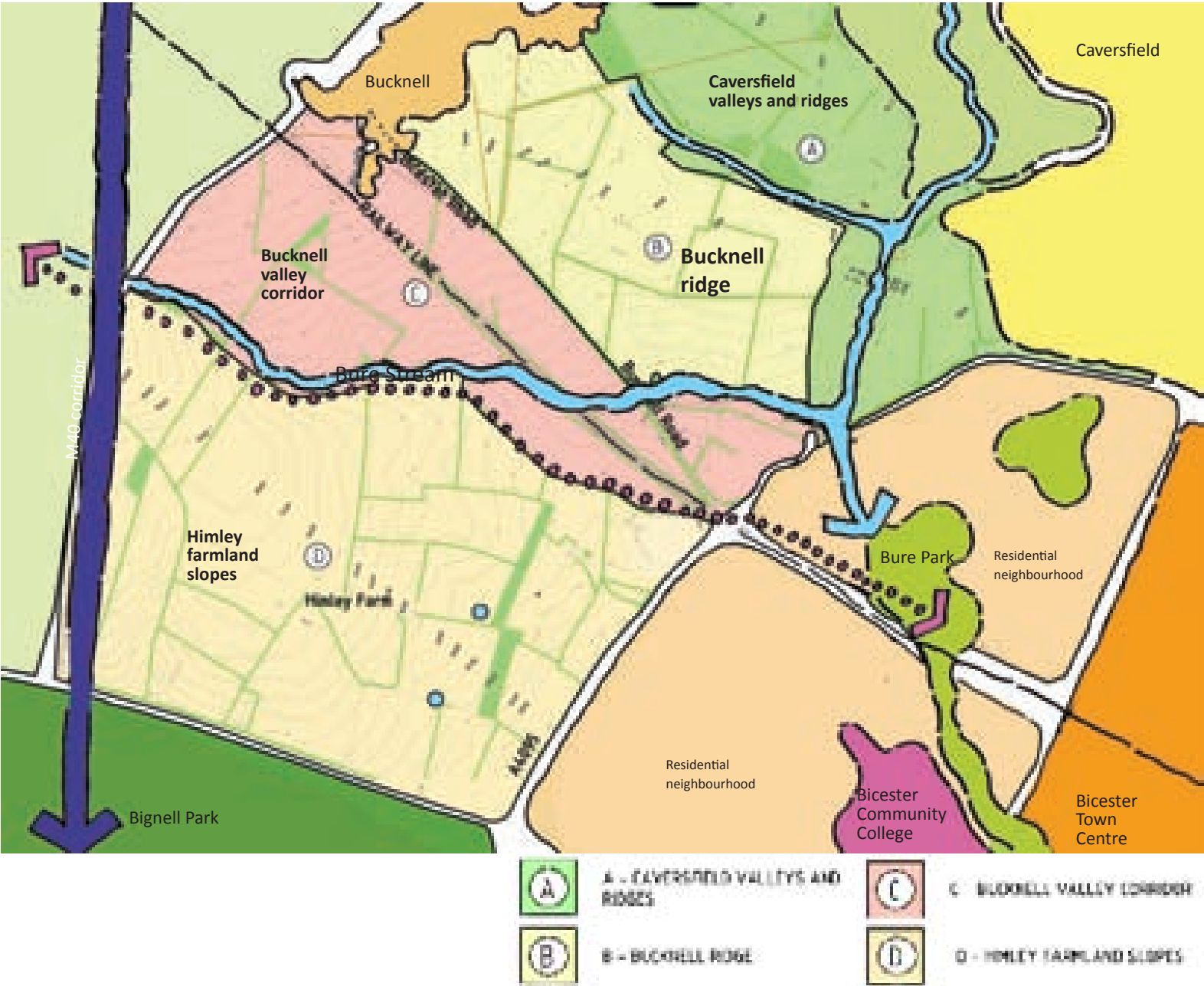


C - Bucknell Valley Corridor



D - Himley farmland slopes, Himley Farm

Character Areas in Local Context



## 2.3 Public Consultation Process and Design Evolution

The masterplan and exemplar schemes have been developed in conjunction with the consultant team using a series of workstream-based workshops to discuss subjects such as design and sustainable construction, green infrastructure, transport and access, energy, waste and water, employment, training and local community facilities. The workshops have been attended by key stakeholders to allow for input at early stages and in turn to assist in the development of the proposals.

### Consultation and Engagement

A2Dominion and the project consultant team have consulted and engaged with the community and stakeholders through workshops, exhibitions and specific events. Traditional methods of consultation, meetings and briefings have been supported by online information, ensuring different ways for people to access information. In addition, consultation events have been publicised in the media, providing the local community with details of the emerging masterplan and more importantly, the opportunity to participate and inform the masterplan process.

Consultation undertaken in 2010 included;

- Open Planning Week (OPW)
- Public drop-in sessions
- Community masterplanning workshop
- 'Testing Ideas' events

- Exemplar pre-application consultation
- CABE Design Review

These events helped inform the early masterplan prior to further engagement with key community and political stakeholders.

Following previous consultation as outlined above, A2Dominion embarked on a further programme of stakeholder and community consultation in order to inform the masterplan proposals for NW Bicester. This included;

- Identifying and involving a key Bicester stakeholder group in three workshops held April, July and September 2013 - the workshops tested the masterplan brief ahead of taking the draft proposals out to wider public consultation
- CABE Design Review
- Communication by A2Dominion and CDC with Interim Management Board (IMB) group members
- Attendance at informal community events such as Freecycle Live in 2013 to increase early general awareness of the project and gauge informal responses and feedback
- A dedicated drop-in event for Howes Lane residents in November 2013
- Public exhibitions held on 6 and 7 December including stakeholder previews on 5 December
- Updating the dedicated NW Bicester website with supporting materials and information relating to the masterplan and consultation events

- An informal drop-in event held in December 2013 at Emmanuel Church, Bure Park
- Further engagement in January and February 2014 – this included follow up contact with key interest and hard to reach groups to offer meetings and briefings and identify future opportunities for involvement with the project
- Visits to The Cooper School and Bicester Community College, providing students with the opportunity to provide feedback on the masterplan and indicate ways they would like to be kept updated and involved as the project evolves.

Wider awareness of the project has also been achieved through other community events organised by A2Dominion such as educational visits and annual community events such as the Bike Day.

The Masterplan, which is now with CDC for consideration, and the proposed applications are shaped through consultation by A2Dominion in December 2013 and June 2014. Full details of all of A2Dominion's responses to the key issues raised in respect of the Masterplan can be found on the project's website but an overview of the leading areas is detailed below:

*Green space* As a result of the feedback, the Masterplan now includes community allotments, plays areas across the housing areas, and space for a centrally located community farm.

*Housing densities* - the type of homes planned and their broad positioning was well received. Whilst a small proportion raised concerns over

density, A2Dominion consider the approach adopted is highly suitable for the site's edge of town location.

Community Facilities - The proposed locations of key community facilities such as schools were broadly supported. The school locations have been given careful consideration to enable them to strategically serve the wider masterplan area. Other key facilities such as doctor surgeries or community halls have also been worked up in close collaboration with Cherwell District Council and are strategically located to serve the wider masterplan area.

- **Key Components:**
- From an early stage, it became clear that a number of key components were fundamental to the formulation of the masterplan:
- **Spatial Strategy and Green Spaces:** At 40% of the total site area, the green spaces provide the opportunity and a challenge to create the sense of place that the team desired. It became clear that the green space strategy was fundamental to the success of the masterplan;
- **Schools and Facilities:** There is a clear need to provide local services and facilities to meet the needs of future residents, in a manner that provides a focus for the community, that does not challenge or undermine the existing town and that is commercially attractive;
- **Employment:** The PPS1

Supplement requires the provision of 1 job per home within sustainable travel distance. This presents again a challenge and opportunity to develop an employment strategy that is integrated with the wider economy of Bicester and is sufficiently ambitious to reflect the evolution of NW Bicester;

- **Access and Transport:** The development must ensure safe access but in a manner that prioritises sustainable modes, which integrates with Bicester as a whole;
- **Provision of New Homes:** There is a need to provide for the optimum level of new homes in a manner that ensures that the needs of the community are met and that the use of land is efficient and will result in a place of quality and character.
- These five key elements have been tested and developed since 2010, with the benefit of the exemplar application (now permission). As our thinking has evolved, so has the masterplan.
- Summary of Main Changes from December 2013 Consultation to Current NW Bicester Masterplan
- The proposed NW Bicester masterplan incorporates the main principles illustrated in the December 2013 NW Bicester

masterplan consultation, which have been developed further as follows:

- The alignment of the new "Urban Boulevard" has been amended slightly further west taking into account topography and highway layout constraints crossing under the railway. Bus loops and bus only links are introduced to benefit bus transport.
- Footpath and cycleways are identified on the direct routes to key destinations. Four locations for primary schools are provided with a second location added north of the railway, which shortens walking times and improves containment of trips within the masterplan.
- The secondary school and public sports pitch's locations slightly changes to increase housing and improve connections adjacent to the local centre and the Urban Boulevard.

CABE Design Review has been involved from the early stage of the masterplan in 2010, helping establish the principles of development in the context of the EcoTown supplement of the PPS1 closely linked to the Eco Bicester proposals to support and benefit the existing community and infrastructure.

During 2011 further Design reviews assisted the local authority, client and designers achieve the high quality of design required

for the detailed Exemplar phase and established the principles of the emerging masterplan.

The NW Bicester team have reviewed recent progress with CABA Design Reviews in July 2013 and May 2014. CABA have commented the masterplan is moving in the right direction and applauded the thinking that has informed the scheme in the context of the requirements of the EcoTown supplement of the PPS1 with continuing commitment from local authorities, agencies, clients, and the design team.

In June 2014, A2Dominion undertook consultation in support of two outline planning applications for approximately 518 acres of the Masterplan, along with a strategic infrastructure application.

The June event was held at the same Town Centre location as previously used for the Masterplan consultation in December 2013, Unit 3, Crown Walk, Bicester. It included a dedicated stakeholder preview session held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> open to the public on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June. The event;

- Further raised awareness and understanding amongst key audiences
- Provided stakeholders with an update on the NW Bicester Masterplan progress
- Enabled A2Dominion and the project team to 'report back' on the previous public exhibition feedback outcomes
- Ensured stakeholders could provide

views to the team and encouraged feedback in relation to the applications

- Prior to consultation taking place, the proposed community engagement activities were discussed with CDC officers. This followed the previous preparation of a community engagement programme that was shared with officers to confirm the intended approach, methodology and key activities in respect of the Masterplan stakeholder and engagement programme.

### The Next Steps

- Further meetings have taken place with a local Bicester ward member for the community neighbouring the development site, Bucknell Parish Council and Bicester Town Council. A2Dominion has also continued to attend and update the Bicester SDB with progress of its applications.
- A further update newsletter summarising the exhibition feedback and responses will be issued to the community and stakeholders. The project website will also be updated to include a copy of the update newsletter, consultation report and a summary of responses.
- Communication with stakeholders will continue to help further inform the outline proposals once submitted and in preparation for the next stages of

the applications.

- In addition, further consultation will take place relating to detailed elements of the outline applications to be submitted to CDC.



2013 Public Consultation



Bike Day 2013



NW Bicester Masterplan 2010



NW Bicester Masterplan Proposed 2014



Green Street School Competition 2012



2013 Masterplan workshop

## 2.4 Response to Context

### Spatial Structure and Form

NW Bicester will create a series of new places, adding to the quality of the urban realm and integrating existing Bicester with the new development and communities. Our approach has been to create an overlay of great new spaces, providing the new landscape required to meet the challenges in making NW Bicester a key part of the Eco Bicester. This goes further than mitigation.

New urban places will be created. Bicester at present has two existing high streets, one in the historic market town core and a 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial version in Bicester Village. The NW Bicester high streets and urban places will be a mix of identifiable places of a predominantly residential character with some commercial and community uses to create a balance. The four new urban places created will be: the boulevard, the exemplar high street, the cross and the square. These places will be mixed use at the edges close to the existing town creating places for social focus between new residents, local people and visitors. The cross will be a key place at the centre of NW Bicester masterplan, and a gateway where routes cross from under the railway and across the Bure stream.

Four new green places will be created: parks, village greens, green lanes and the green loop. New housing will be grouped around existing landscapes enhanced with new green open spaces and new local urban streets and squares. New parks will be created adding to the existing Bicester town green space connected with a network of green lanes. A network of green lane cycle and walking routes will be created with a

combination of direct links between green areas and key destinations and looping interconnected routes which will allow residents and local people to explore the wider landscape.

Green lanes will make direct shortest route of travel an advantage for foot and cycle connections to the town centre and key connectors, such as train stations, schools and employment areas. Direct links will be provided for frequent bus services providing an advantage in time and accessibility over car use.

#### Howes Lane and Lords Lane

A range of options were assessed to arrive at the best access strategy for the Howes Lane/ Lord's Lane corridor and access for the Masterplan when considering the whole range of factors. Each option assumed a single carriageway of lower speed than the existing route but included the removal of the existing junction constraints near the railway. A route was selected and developed and is incorporated into the Masterplan and will be provided in detail as part of the separate planning application for the A4095 NW Strategic Link Road.

#### The Surrounding Communities

The creation of the masterplan relies on the successful connection of existing Bicester; its existing countryside, historic town centre, retail and business areas and existing housing developments; with NW Bicester creating a holistic place.

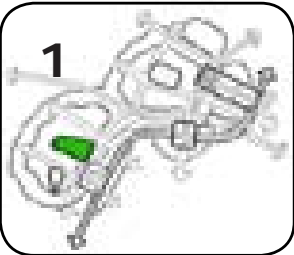
The success of the development relies on successful local connections to the rural countryside, with NW Bicester acting as an

intermediary between the rural countryside and urban town.

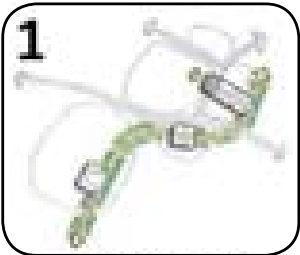
This includes integrating with existing small communities and villages as well as making the countryside more accessible to existing residents.



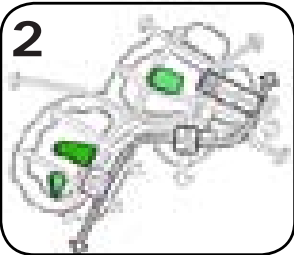
4 Urban + 4 Green Places = Figure 8



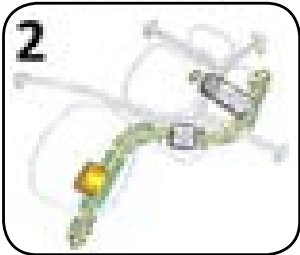
The Park



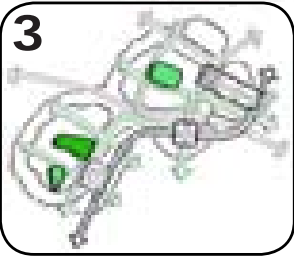
The Boulevard



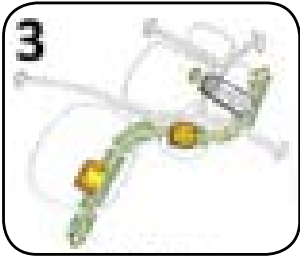
+ Village Greens



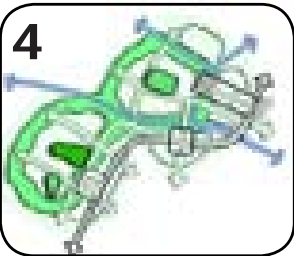
+ The Square



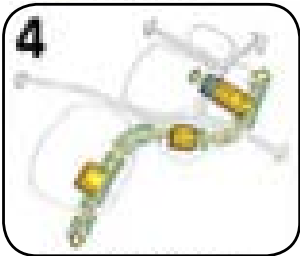
+ Green Lanes



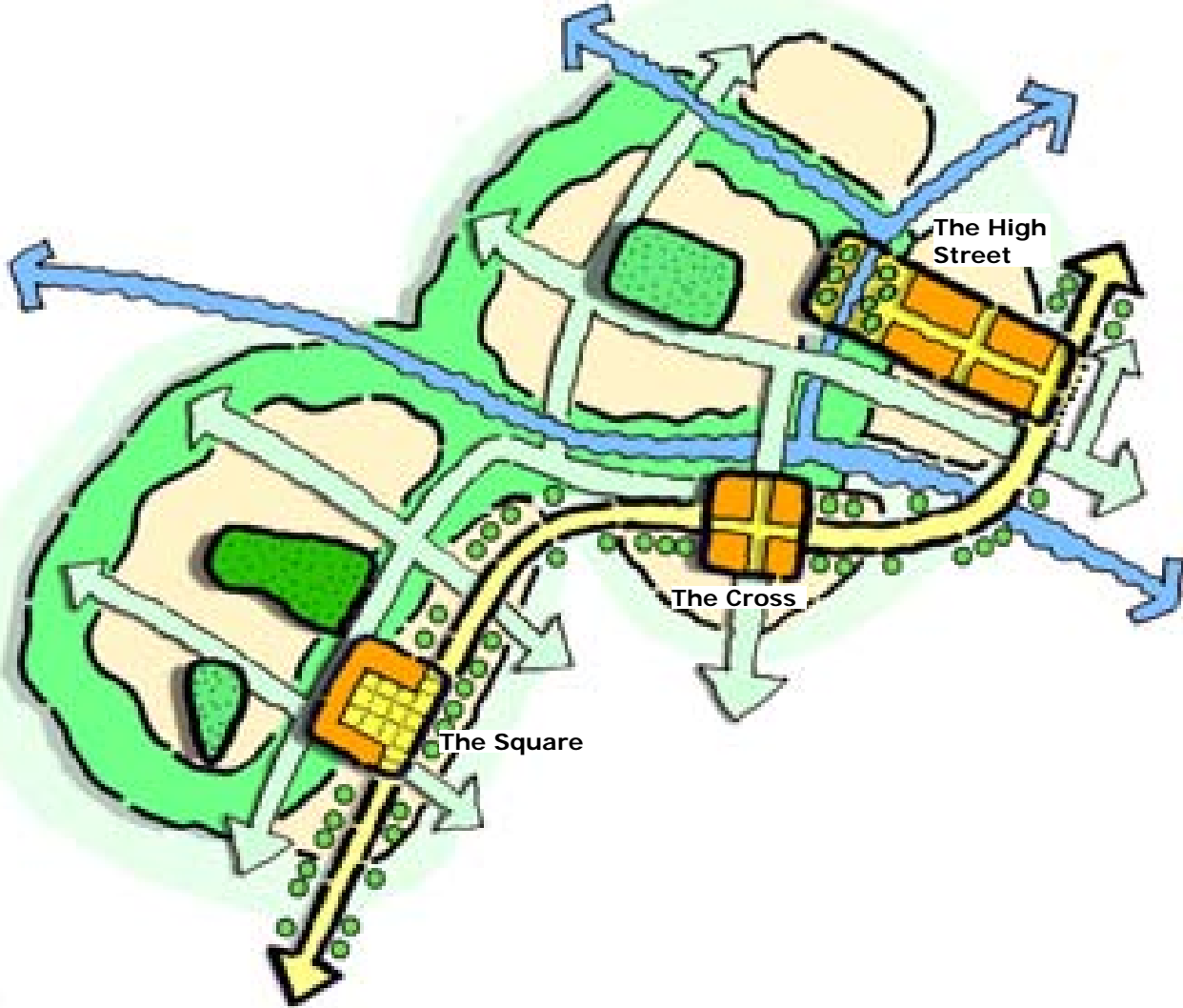
+ The Cross



+ Nature & Water Loop



+ The High Street



## Proposed Character Areas

The existing arable farmland which is historically related to a landscape of small villages and farms creating a network to provide food for the town centre market. The surrounding communities and villages have played a large part in Bicester's development to date. Local communities include the nearby villages of Bucknell and Caversfield- historic manor estates and the existing estates in Bicester south of Howes and Lords Lane.

By creating a set of new character areas and breaking the masterplan down into areas which are complimentary to existing Bicester, relate to and take influence from the existing landscape characters and retained natural features, we can begin to grow new places which are more site specific and pose less impact on the landscape. This will ensure that the development feels like a special place which is heavily influenced by its location and rural heritage.

The proposed character areas go hand in hand with the proposed density. The boulevard forms a linking road which connects all of the local

centres and hubs - from the local centre on the south of the boulevard to the central gateway and onwards to the local centre in the exemplar.

The local village centres and high streets provide the opportunity for higher densities - to create an urban scale with amenities and mixed use accomodation with flats, in street fronting four to five storey buildings.

The permeability of the high street extends through perpendicular lanes, a typical village urban typology; with terrace houses and mews housing courts fronting onto the cross lanes with pedestrian links to the development towards the rural edge and the existing town.

# Proposed Character Areas





# Chapter 3 Contents

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3.1.2 Habitat

3.1.3 Landscape & Character

3.1.4 Levels & Topography

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3.2.2 Trees to be Removed

3.2.3 Landscape Buffers

3.2.4 Open Space Strategy

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3.2.6 Movement & Access

3.2.7 Framework Plan

### 3.3 Use

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3.5.2 Building Heights

### 3.6 Design

3.6.1 Local Centres

3.6.2 Street Character

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3.6.4 Parking

3.6.5 Sustainability

## 4.0 Glossary of Terms

# 3 Application Design

## 3.1 Context

### 3.1.1 Existing Surrounding Context

#### Introduction

The character of the existing landscape heritage and the site specific landscape features within the application site has had a significant bearing on the evolution of the design concept and in the formulation of a more detailed landscape strategy. Consequently, this chapter sets out the physical context of the existing landscape before examining how its analysis has influenced the design process.

#### Location

Application 1 relates to land to the south west of the Exemplar, north west of Lords Lane and north east of the railway line. The Site forms part of a swathe of undulating agricultural land that wraps around the north western boundary of Bicester.

The south eastern boundary of the Site is currently denoted by the town ring road (A4095 known at this point as Lords Lane).

To the north east of the Site is the B4100 (Banbury Road) which links Bicester with Junction 10 of the M40 and the villages between including Caversfield and Bainton. The south west boundary is marked by the railway line with Bucknell Road, leading to Bucknell in the north west, running through the south western part of the Site.

#### A rural, farming context

The application site is set within an existing rural farming context on the edge of urban Bicester, as such, as well as other existing infrastructure, there are a number of existing farms near to and surrounded by the application site, however none of these farms fall within the redline or make up part of the application site.

The site has a rich farming history, being once part of the Market End estate and with direct historic links down to the market square and Sheep Street. Local farms include;

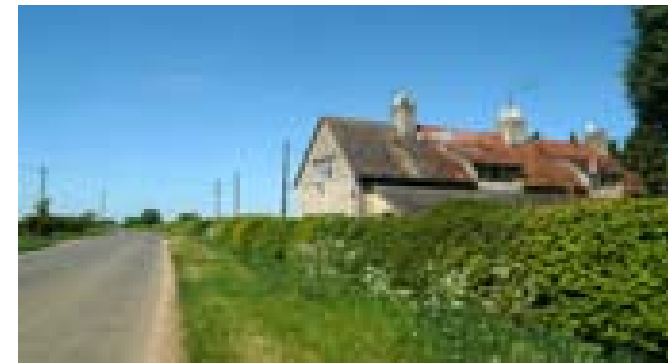
**A - Hawkwell Farm** – accessed from Bucknell Road, is not included in, but is surrounded by the application site.

**B - Home Farm** – Adjacent to the application site, the existing farm buildings already provide employment, through a number of existing business units

**C - Lords Farm** – accessed from Lords Lane, is not included in, but is surrounded by the application site.

**D - Aldershott Farm** – Adjacent to the application site, on the south of the railway

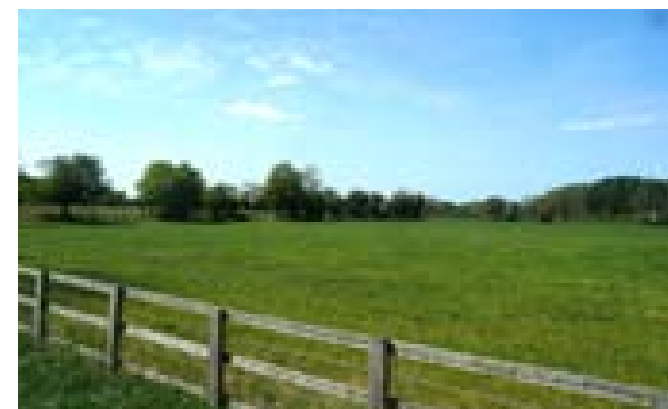
In most cases, the existing farm buildings will be retained to provide diversity of an existing set of uses, character and heritage. Hawkwell Farm and Lords Farm are included in the masterplan for mixed use.



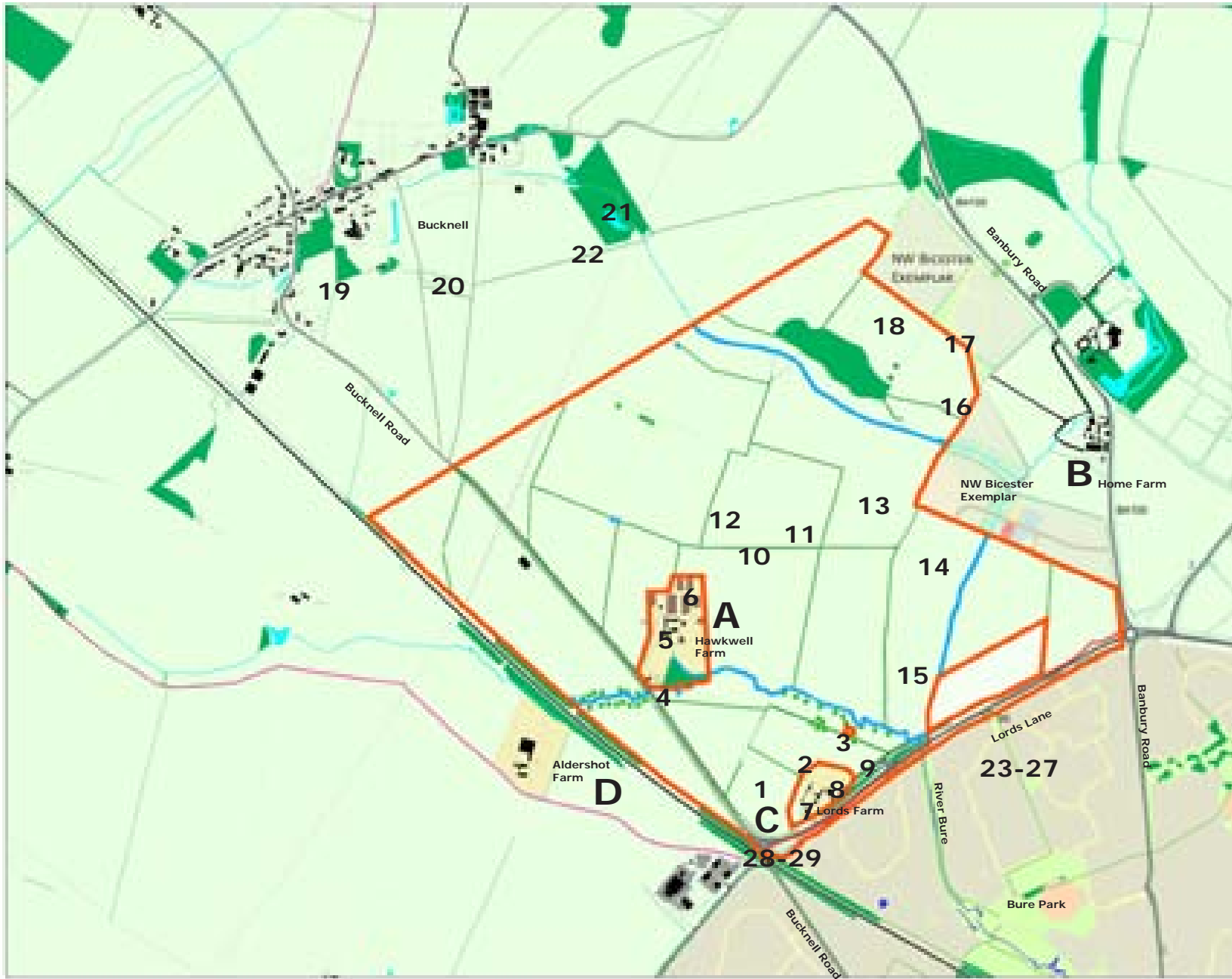
Hawkwell Farm



Lords Farm



Lords Farm fields and hedges



### Key

- Existing Uses**
- Farmland
  - Woodland
  - Field boundaries
  - Housing (inc. roads and residential play space and private gardens + allows for some green infrastructure)
  - Primary Schools
  - Site boundary
  - Young woodland plantation
  - Scattered Trees
  - Scattered Scrub
  - Existing farmyard and farm buildings
- Existing Connectivity**
- Main roads
  - Secondary roads
  - Foot & cycle path
  - Bridle path
- Existing Infrastructure**
- Water Courses
  - Electric Cables

**NO.S 1-29  
REFER TO PHOTOS**

**APPLICATION 1 NORTH OF LORDS LANE - EXISTING SURROUNDING USES**  
BIMPG 102C NW BICESTER APPLICATION - SUPPORTING PLAN

Rev C - 25/07/14

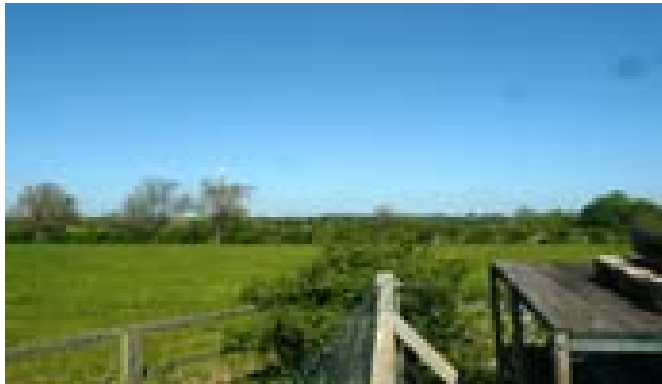


## Lords Farm fields and hedges

1



2



3



## Hawkwell Farm

4



5



6



## Lords Farm

7



8



9





**Hawkwell Farm Fields and Hedges**

**Stream Corridor**

**Home Farm Fields and hedges**

**10**



**13**



**16**



**11**



**14**



**17**



**12**



**15**

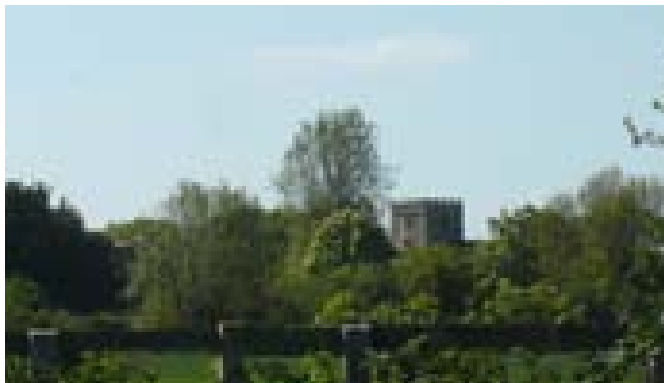


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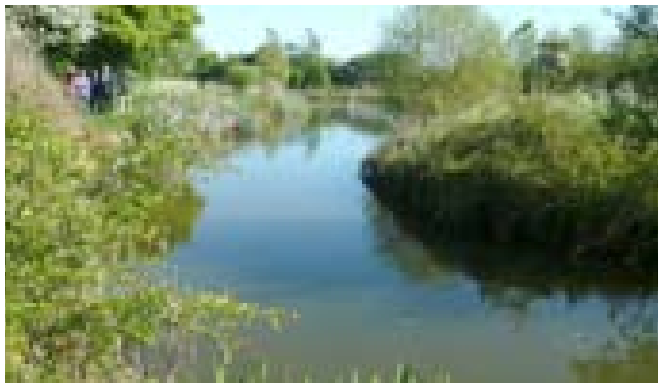


## Fields and Hedgerows Adjacent Bucknell

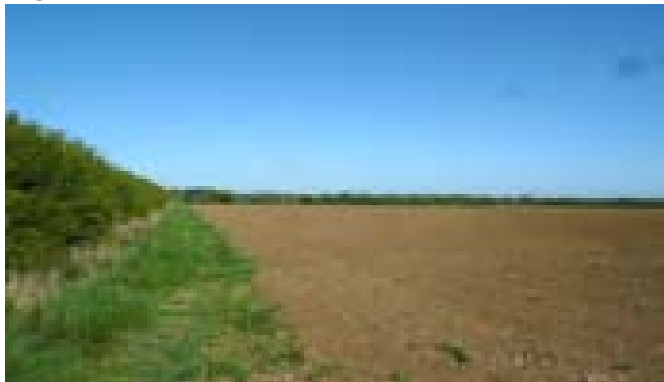
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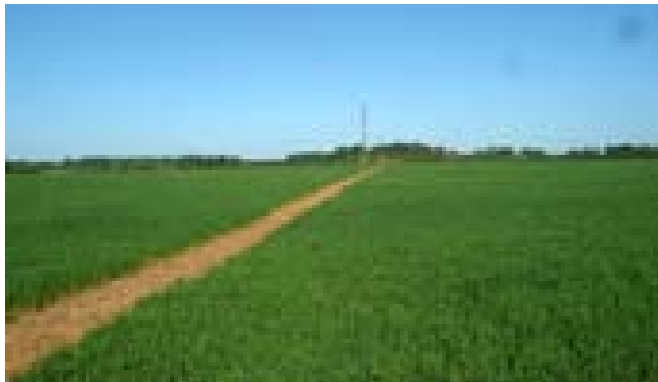
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22



## Lords Lane

23



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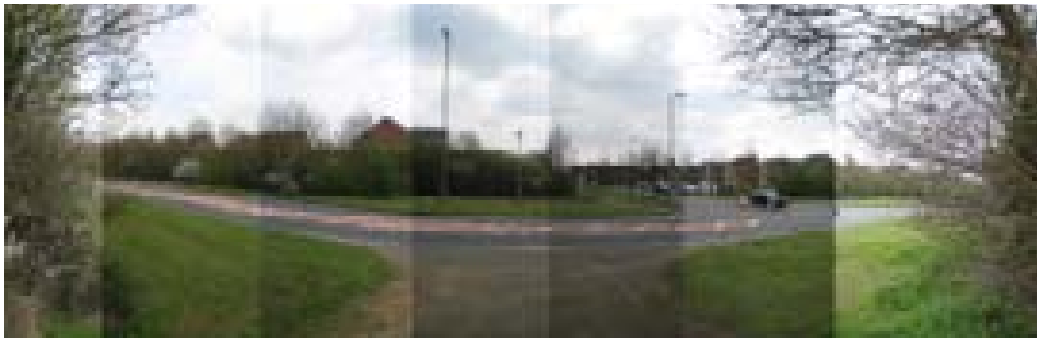
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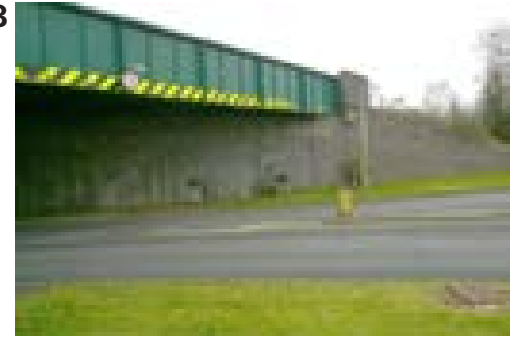


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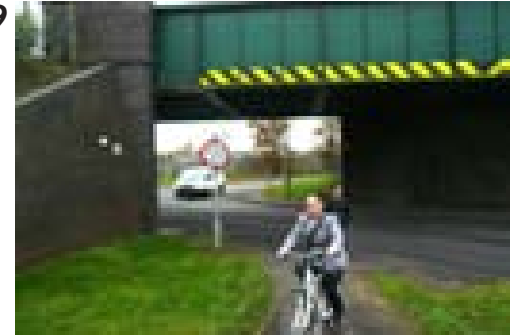


## Railway Bridge

28



29



### 3.1.2 Existing Habitat

#### **Water Courses**

The streams and tributaries which subdivide the site provide a unique topography and create distinctive character areas across the site. The application site is subdivided by streams into 4 distinct parts- the largest area is of a regular shape, reflected by the existing field boundaries.

This portion makes up approximately half of the application area, whilst the remaining three areas on the periphery are wedge shapes confined by the existing routes of Banbury Road, Lords Lane and the existing railway line.

In the earliest strip field pattern of farming the streams were generally used to access the fields. The streams provide important, rich habitats and are the location of most of the larger groupings of trees which add to the character of the site. The streams and associated habitat are a significant and defining feature of the site; providing an opportunity to build upon and enhance character in the application layouts.

#### **Hedgerows**

There are approximately 11km of existing hedgerows enclosing farm land in field sizes from approximately 3 to 10 hectares.

The ecology and habitat survey has established that whilst there is a range of hedgerow quality from species rich; supporting five or more woody species, to species poor, the hedgerows are the most significant contributor to the biodiversity of the application site.

Many of the hedgerows are associated with dry ditches that were shaded by the hedgerow

shrubs. The hedgerow ground floras are species-poor with few if any hedgerow species.

Several of the hedgerows support mature and semi-mature trees with

Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Horse-chestnut and willow the most commonly recorded species. Many hedgerows have been replanted with a diverse mix of native shrub species

The hedgerows provide habitat links across the application site.

#### **Woodlands**

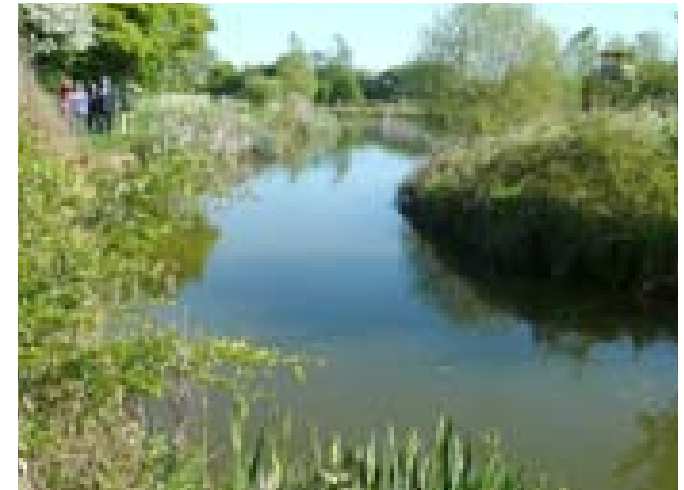
There are 2 areas of existing species rich woodland in the application site. In the north there is an area of 2 hectares adjacent to the stream and a disused quarry. In the centre of the site there is a strong belt of trees along the stream and a 0.5 hectare area of woodland close to Hawkwell Farm and Bucknell Road, but this is not included in the application site.

Both woodlands are large groupings of trees adjacent to the streams combining with additional smaller groups of trees along their length. Because the streams were part of the historic routes to the strip fields, these woods will both reflect the original settlement pattern and are established corridors of biodiversity.

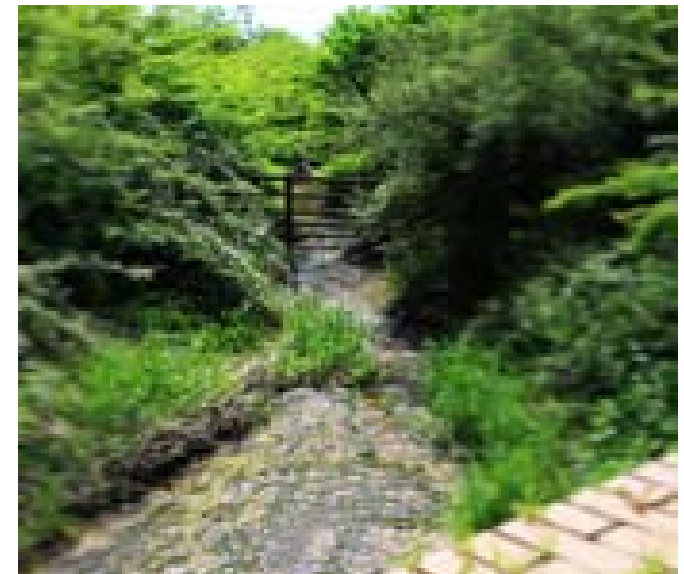
Adjacent to the application site there are also areas of existing associated woodlands.

- Woodland to the north adjacent to Bucknell
- Woodlands surrounding Caversfield House to the north east

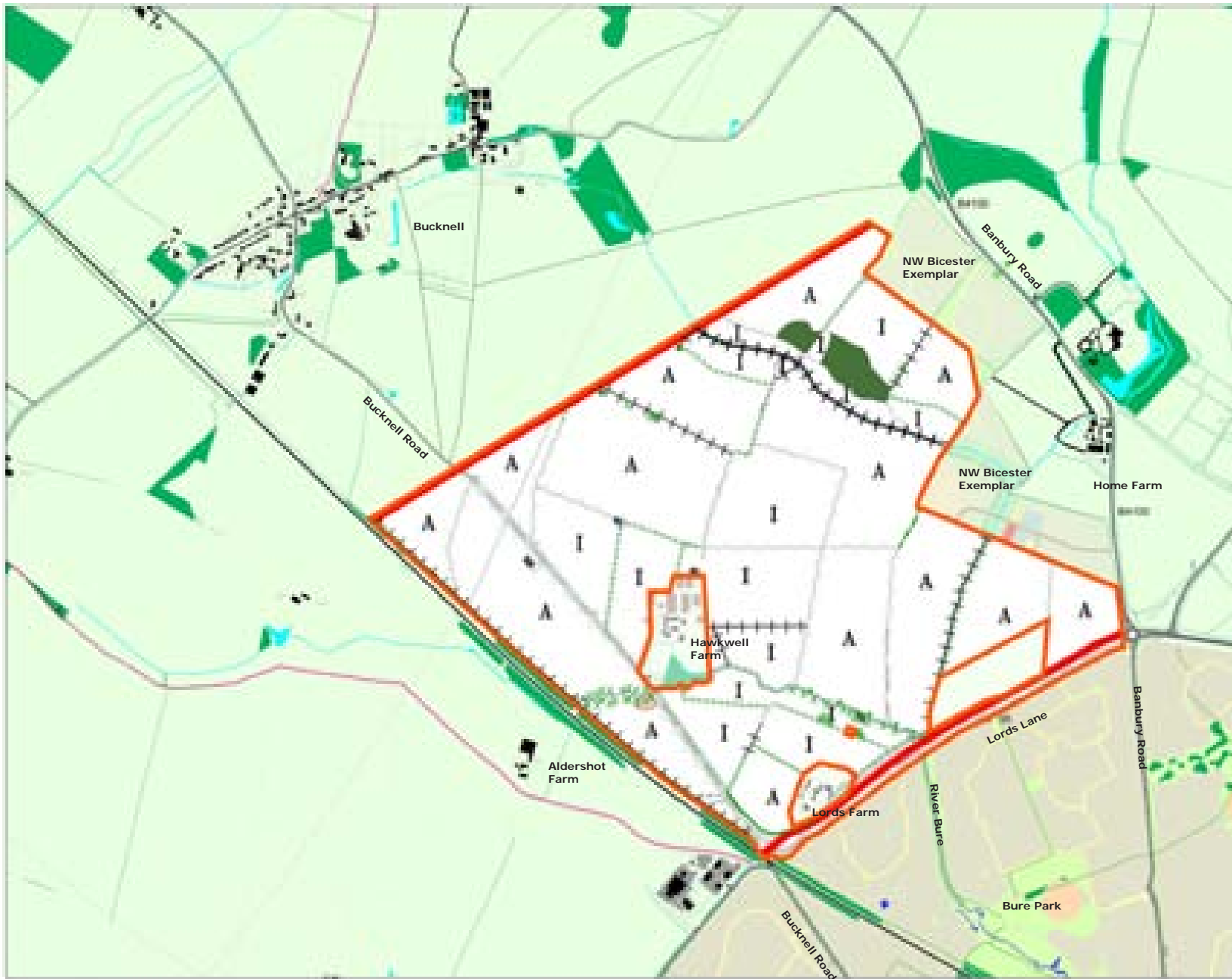
There are opportunities to create habitat and visual linkages between areas of woodland through landscape corridors in the masterplan.



Pond near Bucknell



The Bure under Lords Lane and into Bure Park



- Key**
- MASTERPLAN SITE BOUNDARY
  - BROAD-LEAVED SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND
  - BROAD-LEAVED PLANTATION WOODLAND
  - DENSE/CONTINUOUS SCRUB
  - SCATTERED SCRUB
  - BROAD-LEAVED - SCATTERED TREES
  - IMPROVED GRASSLAND
  - SPECIES-POOR SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND
  - TALL RURAL HERB
  - NATIVE SPECIES-RICH INTACT HEDGE
  - NATIVE SPECIES-POOR INTACT HEDGE
  - NATIVE SPECIES-RICH HEDGE & TREES
  - NATIVE SPECIES-POOR HEDGE & TREES
  - DEFUNCT NATIVE SPECIES-RICH HEDGE & TREES
  - DEFUNCT NATIVE SPECIES-POOR HEDGE & TREES
  - DEFUNCT HEDGE SPECIES-POOR
  - FENCE
  - SWAMP
  - OPEN STANDING WATER
  - SPENTY GRASSLAND
  - BRICK
  - RUNNING WATER
  - BUILDING

**APPLICATION 1 NORTH OF LORDS LANE - HABITAT CONSTRAINTS**  
 BIMPG 1038 NW BICESTER APPLICATION - SUPPORTING PLAN

### 3.1.3 Landscape & Character

#### Place Making and Character Areas

It is important that NW Bicester feels like a place, with a set of coherent identities and characters.

The existing site and its rural and urban context is made up from a number of landscape character areas comprising of rural and arable farmland, existing housing estates, Caversfield, Bucknell, Home Farm, Bure Park, the existing historic town centre, the railway, river and nearby M40 corridors.

Each of these character areas have many differing identities that make them unique, amongst them; species of trees, ratios of green to urban space, vernacular architecture and use of local materials, habitats and ecologies, micro climates, existing populations and so on.

The application site was surveyed in 2010 to assess the existing landscape character within the local context. The characterisation can be broken down into the following 3 categories;

**A - Caversfield Valleys and Ridges** - land to the east of the Bure stream and west of Caversfield. This character area encompasses Home Farm and the rolling landscape and valley sloping down to the Bure stream.

- Distinctive valley and ridge landform.
- Valleys defined by tree lined watercourses, woodland blocks and relatively steep fields predominantly laid to pasture.
- Mixed farmland on ridges, with fields bounded by established hedgerows and woodland blocks.

- Settlement comprising the historic, stone built village of Caversfield, including Home Farm and the Anglo-Saxon St Laurence's Church (Listed Buildings), with the church tower forming a visible element in the local landscape.
- Generally strong sense of enclosure due to characteristic landform, vegetation and settlement edges.

**B - Bucknell Ridge** - high land contained on all sides by Bucknell village, Bucknell Road and the Bure stream.

- Ridgeline defined by subtly raised landform, with land falling away to local watercourses and Bicester urban edge.
- Large, rectilinear fields, predominantly in arable use.
- Established hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Settlement limited to scattered farmsteads of clustered farm buildings.
- Open, expansive views framed by established hedgerow vegetation.

**C - Bucknell Valley Corridor** - corridor between the existing bridle way (outside of the application site) and Bucknell Road, this includes the existing railway line.

- Shallow valley depression, falling between local ridgelines.
- Landscape pattern heavily influenced by linear communications and drainage features, with generally narrow, elongated fields separated by communications and drainage corridors.

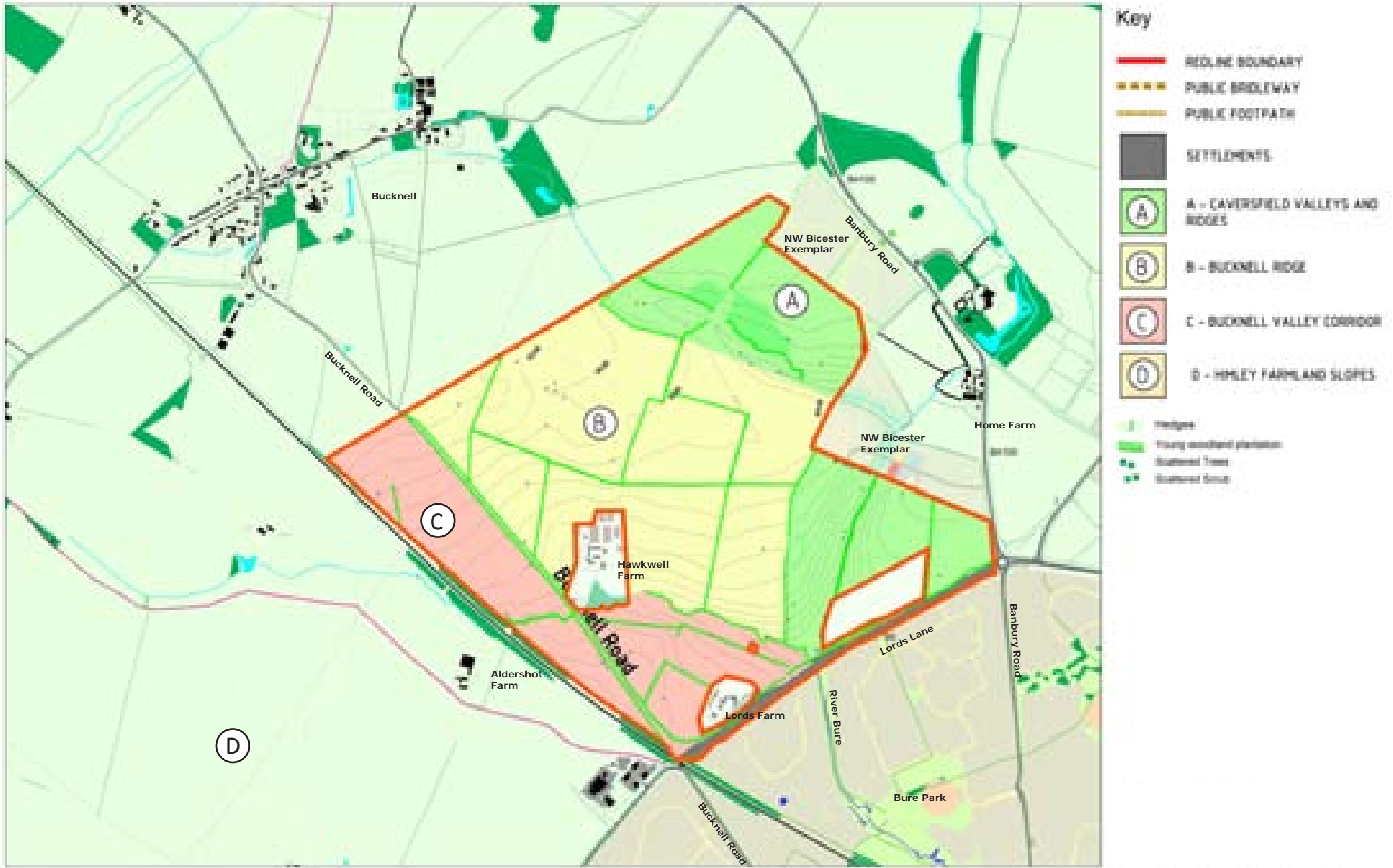
- Farmland comprising mixture of fields in arable and pastoral use, bounded by established hedgerows and copses.
- Settlement defined by a mixture of scattered farmsteads and, nearer the urban edge, modern offices /depots.
- Strong sense of enclosure due to vegetation cover, railway embankment and settlement edges.



Bucknell Ridge - Bucknell Road looking north



Bucknell Valley Corridor - toward the railway



**APPLICATION 1 NORTH OF LORDS LANE - LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**  
 BIMPG 1048 NW BICESTER APPLICATION - SUPPORTING PLAN

Rev B - 25/07/14



### 3.1.4 Levels & Topography

The site is broadly described as having a rolling landform, with underlying limestone geology, characterised by a distinctive pattern of woodlands and mixed farmland - much of which is associated with 18<sup>th</sup> Century parkland. Most recently, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004), places the site within 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Character Type, with the following key characteristics (Ref 1-4):

- *'Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.'*
- *Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.*
- *Large parklands and mansion houses.*
- *A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.*
- *Small villages with strong vernacular character.'*

**Geology, landform and drainage:** The geology in the area around Bicester and further south is dominated by Oxford Clay. Landform is gently rolling, with the streams of local springs flowing through small valleys.

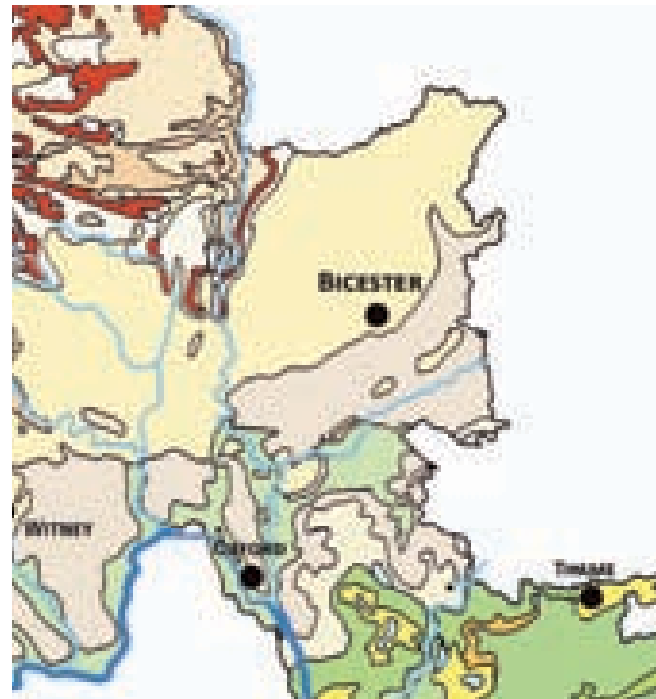
#### **Contours and Gradients**

The site is sloping generally from north west to south east with a height above ordnance datum at the highest from approximately 95m AOD to the lowest at 79m AOD. The general slope of approximately 16m in 2km across the application site creates an average gradient of 1 in 125.

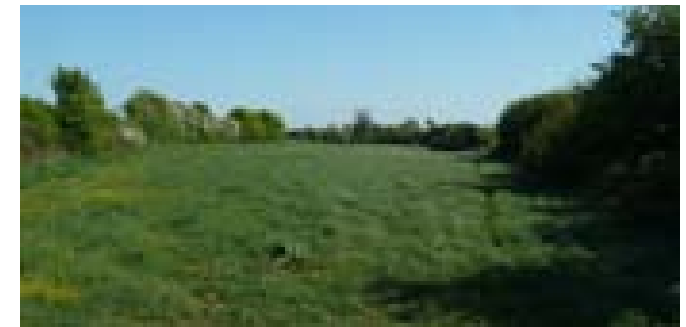
The streams which cross the site flowing from west to east join the River Bure which crosses the eastern part of the site flowing south towards Bicester town centre. The increased

slopes adjacent to the streams create local gradients of up to 1 in 15.

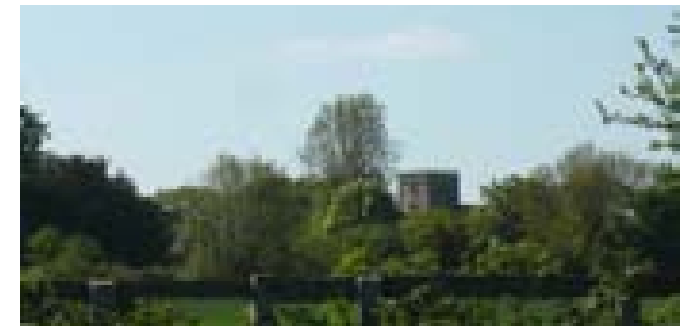
The proposed ground levels would generally follow the existing topography, but may in instances be leveled where localised depressions or rises would be filled or cut accordingly. This may be necessary to regularise the ground levels and assist drainage. Other localized minor earthworks that could be undertaken, include the creation of water features or ponds, and mounding as part of the landscaping scheme and bridge crossing abutments, this is all subject to detailed design works.



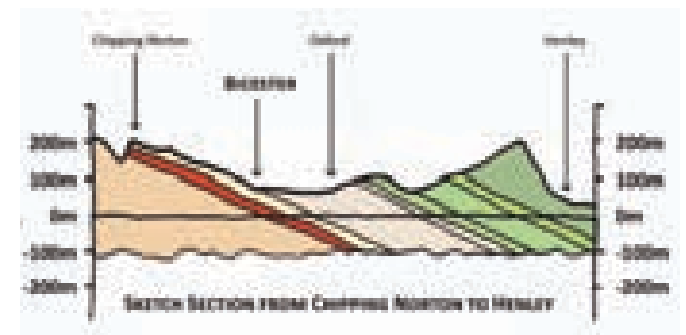
Lords Farm



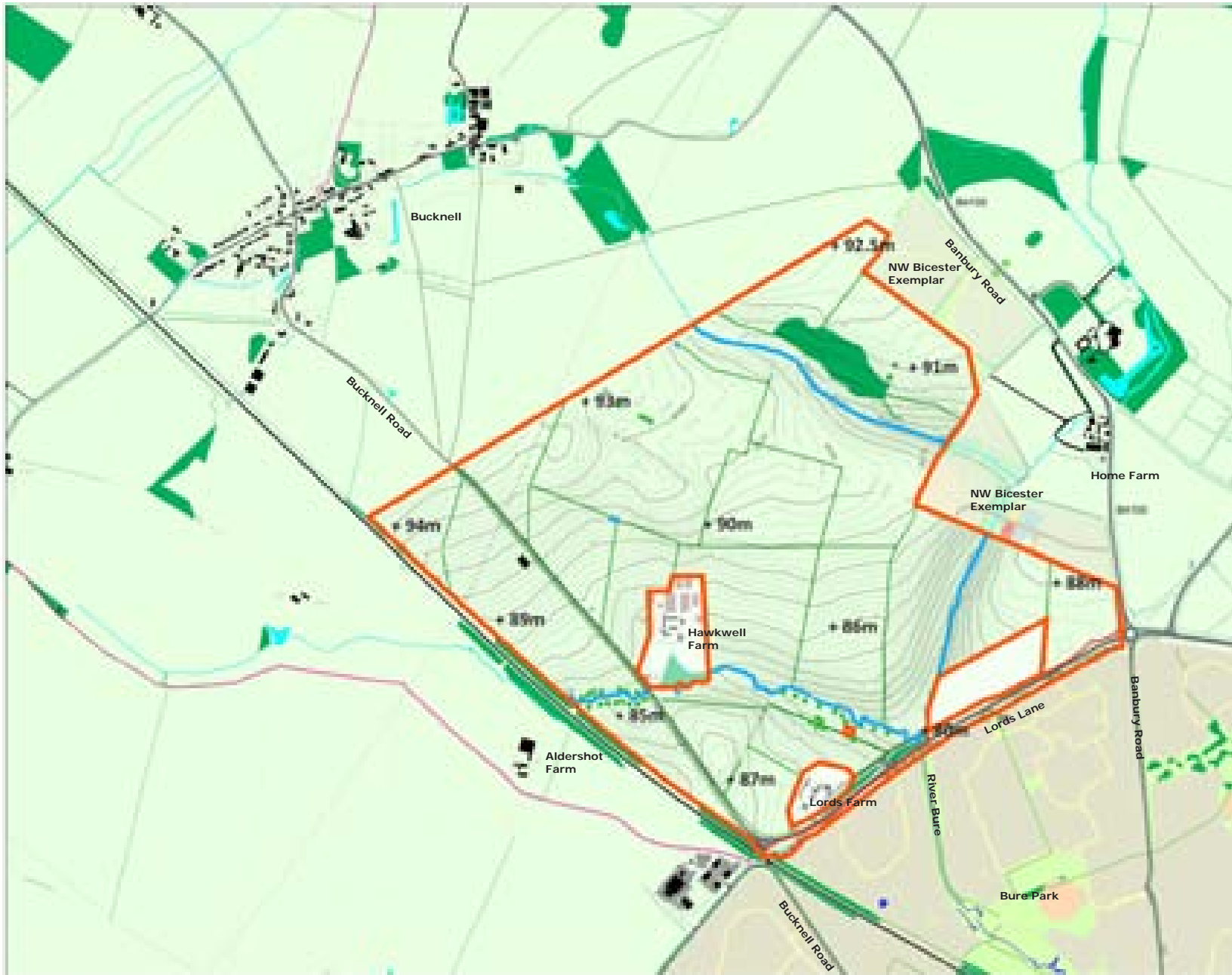
North fields



Towards Caversfield, St Lawrence's Church







## Key

### Existing Uses

- Farmland
- Woodland
- Field boundaries
- Housing (inc. roads and residential play space and private gardens + allows for some green infrastructure)
- Primary Schools
- Site boundary
- Young woodland plantation
- Existing contours
- + 93m Existing spot levels above AOD

### Existing Connectivity

- Main roads
- Secondary roads
- Foot & cycle path
- Bridle path

### Existing Infrastructure

- Water Courses
- Electric Cables
- Scattered Trees
- Scattered Scrub

## APPLICATION 1 NORTH OF LORDS LANE - EXISTING LEVELS AND TOPOGRAPHY

BIMPG 1058 NW BICESTER APPLICATION - SUPPORTING PLAN

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## 3.2 Layout

### 3.2.1 Proposed Levels & Topography

#### Topographical influence

The application proposal takes into account the sloping contours of the site and the associated drainage requirements for this type of development. Where possible the levels of the existing site will not largely change, to maintain the character of the existing landscape. There will of course be localised changes in levels for the provision of new infrastructure and housing, but this will be mitigated as far as possible.