



# BICESTER GATEWAY BICESTER, OXFORDSHIRE

Outline Planning Application  
Design and Access Statement  
December 2016

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# 01 | Introduction



# 01 | Introduction

## 1.1 Statement Overview

This document has been prepared as part of the supporting documentation for an outline planning application which is to be submitted to Cherwell District Council for the development of vacant land east of A41 / Oxford Road and west of Wenderbury Road, Bicester.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by UMC Architects on behalf of Bloombridge LLP, in support of the submission for:

**Proposed new build business and technology park (Bicester Gateway, Phase 1 - as referred to subsequently within this document) on 9.39 acres/3.794 hectares comprising approximately 24,800 m<sup>2</sup> of employment:**

- **B1 (B1a Offices and B1b Research & Development): Approx. Total – 14,972 m<sup>2</sup>/161,166 ft<sup>2</sup>**
- **Hotel with up to 149 bedrooms.**

**With associated infrastructure, car parking and marketing boards.**

This document highlights the evolution of the physical design and identifies potential design responses in respect of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

The overall objective is to deliver the first phase of a new, high quality business park for Bicester, using Bloombridge's experience in this sector to attract B1 knowledge economy jobs to the town.

## 1.2 Report Content & Structure

The statement contains a summary of the site context, analysis of the surrounding areas and an explanation of the design framework, which will form the basis for future reserved matters applications. The statement explores how the physical characteristics of the scheme have been informed by the design process and explains the steps taken in the process, culminating in the design parameters. This is in accordance with the requirements of the planning application processes, which were introduced by the Government in May 2006. These are set out in the circular "Guidance on changes to the development control system", effective from 10th August 2006, and are explained further in the publication "Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them" (CABE 2006).

The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 1.0 is an introduction.
- Section 2.0 outlines some of the main national and local policy documents which have been considered as part of this application.
- Section 3.0 is a site appraisal, containing a description of the existing site, usage, building heights, landscaping, sun path analysis, vehicular and pedestrian routes and views & skylines.
- Section 4.0 is a site evaluation & scheme development, including design brief, site constraints and opportunities, design principles and a description of the scheme evolution.
- Section 5.0 discusses the design and access aspects of the proposed design, covering proposed: usage, amount, layout, scale & massing, appearance, vehicular & pedestrian movements, landscaping & fencing and a design summary.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and application form for the proposed scheme.





# 02 | Planning Policy Context

## 2.1 National Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was published on 27 March 2012, coming into immediate effect and replacing all previous Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

The Framework (para.14) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan making and decision taking.

In this context, the Framework (para.7) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental which should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core planning principles should underpin decision making, including:

- Promoting sustainable transport
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- Requiring good design
- Promoting healthy communities
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Framework (para.56) states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should positively contribute to making places better for people. The Framework encourages applicants to work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Such development proposals will be looked on favourably (para.66).

## 2.2 Local Plan

Planning applications within Cherwell District Council are determined having regard for the Cherwell Local Plan, which guides the future planning decisions in the district. The Cherwell Local Plan broadly sets out the long term strategic “spatial vision” of how the district will evolve until 2031. The plan was adopted in July 2015 and therefore carries significant weight in the decision making process. The proposals for Bicester Gateway (an allocated employment site) accord with the local plan and are unarguably sustainable development.

The following policies are key to evaluating the proposal against the most relevant aspects of the local plan:

- **Policy PSD1**
- **Policy SLE1**
- **Policy SLE2**
- **Policy SLE3**
- **Policy SLE4**
- **Policy Bicester 10**



Site Location. Wide Context Plan



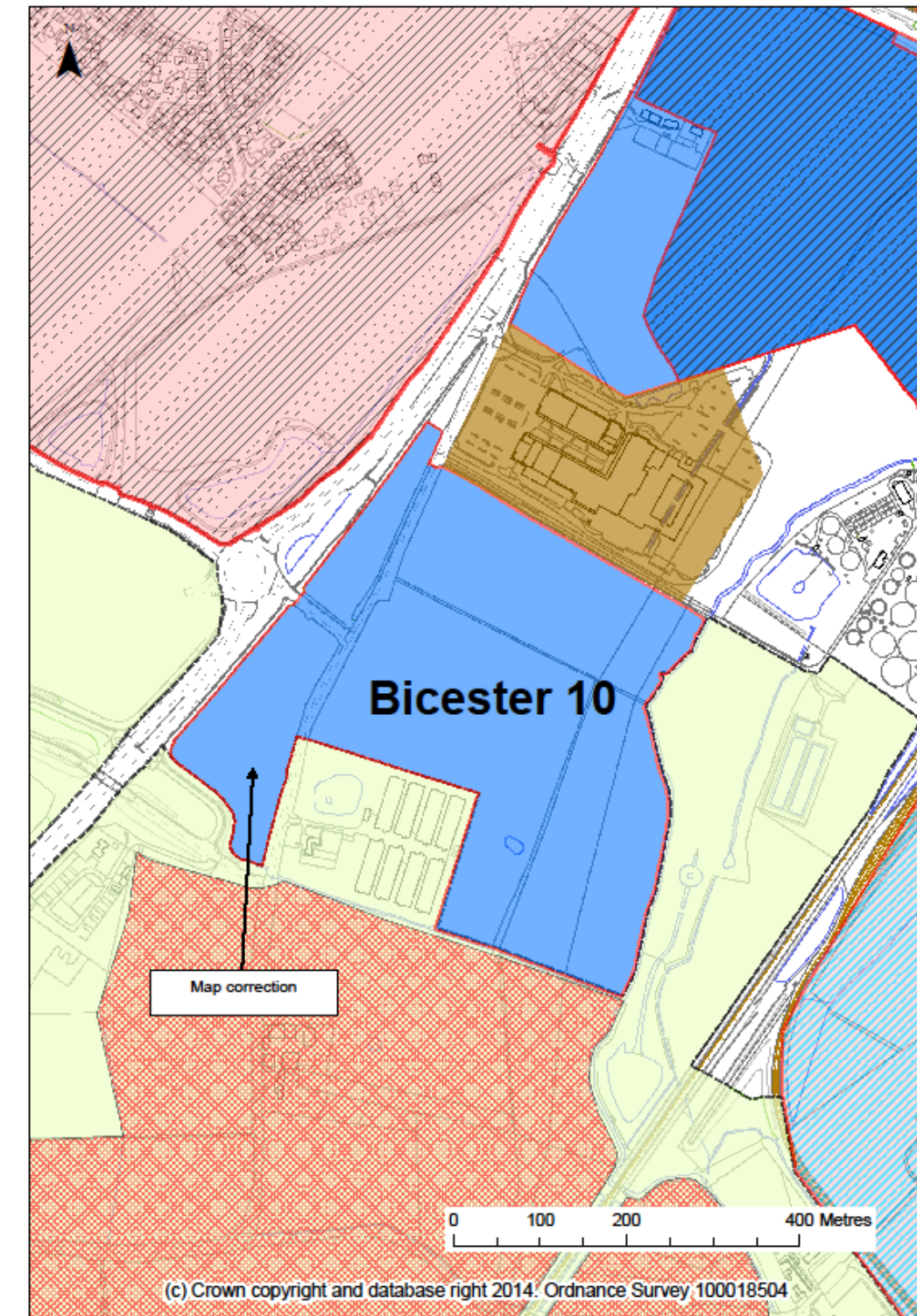
Site Location. Immediate Context Plan



## 02 | Planning Policy Context

Key site specific design and place shaping principles shaping principles from Policy Bicester 10 are set out below, not all of which are relevant to Phase 1:

- Proposals should comply with Policy ESD15 [ie on design quality, culture and heritage].
- A well designed modern area with the provision of high quality property to attract and retain 'best in class' technology companies.
- A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, materials and colourings and careful consideration given to building heights to reduce overall visual impact.
- Conservation and enhancement of the setting of Alchester Roman Town Scheduled Ancient Monument and the setting out of opportunities to better reveal its significance.
- Layout that enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing development particularly the mixed use urban extension at South West Bicester to the west, the garden centre to the north, and, further to the north, Bicester Village retail outlet and Bicester town centre.
- Provision of opportunities for Green Infrastructure links beyond the development site to the wider town and countryside.
- Provision and encouragement for sustainable travel options as the preferred modes of transport rather than the private car, and provision of a Travel Plan. Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for.
- The provision of a detailed transport assessment tailored to assess in detail the impact of the proposed use class and floorspace on the strategic road network.
- Provision for safe pedestrian and cyclist access from the A41 including facilitating the provision and upgrading of footpaths and cycleways that link with existing networks to improve connectivity generally, to maximise walking and cycling links between this site and nearby development sites and the town centre.
- Accommodation of bus stops to link the development to the wider town.
- Maximisation of walking and cycling links to the adjoining mixed use development at South West Bicester as well as the garden centre to the north.
- Contribution to the creation of a footpath network around Bicester.
- Development should not encroach within 8m of the watercourse banks.
- Adequate investigation of, protection of and management of priority and protected habitats and species on site given the ecological value of the site, with biodiversity preserved and enhanced.



Bicester 10 Plan; Cherwell District Council (Extracted from SOCG, December 2014)

## 02 | Planning Policy Context

- The provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity.
- Structural planting and landscape proposals within the site to include retention of existing trees and hedgerows, the enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors, and to limit visual impact of new buildings and car parking on the existing character of the site and its surroundings.
- Adoption of a surface water management framework to reduce surface water run off to greenfield rates.
- Full mitigation of flood risk in compliance with Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management including the use of SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)) specifically infiltration SuDS techniques in the far south western corner of the site, combined infiltration and attenuation techniques in the north western and south eastern areas, and attenuation techniques in the central and north eastern area of the site, taking account of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. A Flood Risk Assessment should investigate opening the culverted watercourse that crosses through the east of the site to reduce flood risk and improve its ecological value.
- An assessment of whether the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land, including a detailed survey where necessary.
- A soil management plan may be required to be submitted with planning applications.
- Take account of the Council's SFRA for the site.
- No built development will be located in Flood Zone 3b and the principle set out in Policy ESD 6 will be followed.
- Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments.
- A layout that maximises the potential for walkable neighbourhoods and enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing communities.
- Planting of vegetation along strategic route ways to screen the noise.

We are entirely comfortable that we have addressed the above criteria through our design endeavours.  
The whole Project Team are firmly focussed on delivering a high quality business park, starting on site in 2017.





# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.1 Site Location & Description

The site is to the south of Bicester Town, and approximately thirteen miles to the north of Oxford city centre. It benefits from established highways infrastructure most notably A41/ Oxford Road which provides easy access via the A34 to Oxford and to Junction 9 of the M40, just two kilometres away, putting central London to the east and Birmingham to the west both accessible in under an hour’s drive.

The Bicester Gateway development site is roughly triangular approximately 500m x 150m with a total area of 3.794 hectares. There are a few mature trees and hedgerows along the boundaries whilst the middle is largely open and unmarked.

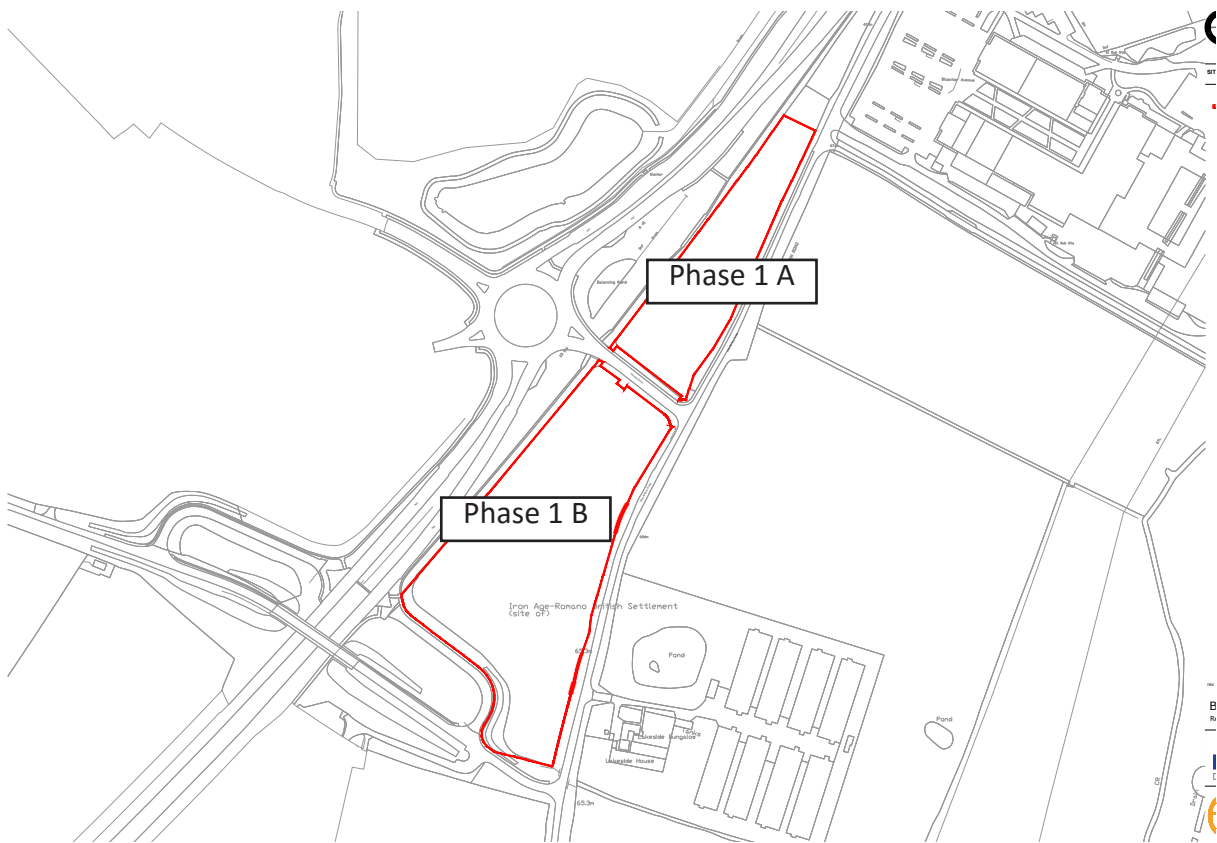
The site is surrounded by A41 to the west, former slip road to the south and Wendlebury Road to the east.



Site Location - Wider Context



Site Location - Local Context



Red Line Application Boundary