



PLANNING STATEMENT

BICESTER OFFICE PARK

December 2017

DP9 Ltd

100 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5NQ

Tel: 020 7004 1700
Fax: 020 7004 1790

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	2
2.0	THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	4
3.0	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	7
4.0	PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT	10
5.0	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared by DP9 Ltd on behalf of Scenic Land Developments Ltd (“the Applicant”) in support of an outline planning application for the proposed development of Bicester Office Park on Land to the South and East of the A41 and Oxford Road, Bicester (“the Site”).

1.2 This Planning Statement has been completed in order to explain the nature of the proposed development and assess the high level and strategic principles against relevant planning policy and demonstrate its acceptability.

The Planning Application

1.3 The planning application has been submitted in outline to Cherwell District Council (“Cherwell DC”), with all matters reserved except for access, seeking outline planning permission for the following development:

“the construction of a business park of up to 60,000 sq.m (GEA) of flexible Class B1(a) office / B1(b) research & development floorspace; parking for up to 2,000 cars; and associated infrastructure and earthworks”

1.4 The Planning Application comprises of the following:

- Completed Application Forms and Ownership Certificates;
- Site Location Plan (1105_P_004 Rev A) prepared by Bennetts Associates;
- Parameter Plan (1105_P_005 Rev E) prepared by Bennetts Associates;
- Design & Access Statement (December 2017) prepared by Bennetts Associates;
- Planning Statement (December 2017) prepared by DP9;
- Environmental Statement (comprising Vol.1 Environmental Statement; Vol.2 Technical Appendices; and Non-Technical Summary) (December 2017) prepared by Trium;
- Transport Assessment (including Highways Access Plan at Appendix D) (December 2017) prepared by Motion; and

- Framework Workplace Travel Plan (December 2017) prepared by Motion.

1.5 Against this background, this Statement provides an overview of the relevant aspects of the proposed development and, alongside the aforementioned supporting technical documents, an assessment of its appropriateness against the Development Plan and other material considerations. The scope of this Statement is as follows:

- Section 2 describes the Site, the main features of the surrounding area and the Site's planning history.
- Section 3 describes the main components and features of the proposed development.
- Section 4 outlines the relevant planning policy context of the Site and the proposed development and sets out a planning assessment of the proposed development against policy requirements.
- Section 5 provides a summary and our conclusions on the proposed development.

2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The Site extends to 13.1 ha and comprises a parcel of land to the south and east of the A41 and Oxford Road, Bicester. The Site is primarily agricultural land, accommodating a mix of arable crops, farmed under rotation. The Applicant's ownership extends beyond the application Site and further details of the Site boundary (red line) and ownership boundary (blue line) are shown in detail in the supporting plans and documents submitted as part of this application.
- 2.2 The Site is to the south of Bicester in an area characterised by a mix of established and emerging developments comprising a range of commercial and residential uses.
- 2.3 The Site sits adjacent to the new Tesco superstore on Lakeview Drive (which is to the north), beyond which is Bicester Village designer outlet shopping park. The Site is located approximately 1 km to the south of Bicester Town Centre. To the west of the Site, beyond the A41, is the Kingsmere urban extension (circa 2,000 new homes) and the proposed Bicester Gateway Retail Park site (which is currently the subject of a live planning application and awaiting determination). To the south of the Site is Bicester Avenue Home and Garden Centre, and beyond this the site of the recently approved Bicester Gateway Business Park. To the east of the Site are sewage treatment works and beyond this the railway line running south from Oxford to London Marylebone, via Bicester Village station (less than 1.5km from the Site). Further detail of the Site and the surrounding area is provided in the accompanying Design & Access Statement.
- 2.4 The Site is not in a Conservation Area and does not contain nor does it sit adjacent to any Heritage Assets. In addition to a number of listed properties located within Bicester Town Centre, the closest Heritage Assets to the Site include the Grade II Listed Langford Park Farmhouse (0.46 km to the east) and the Alchester Roman site Scheduled Ancient Monument (c.1km to the south).

Site Planning History

- 2.5 Planning Permission was granted in October 2010 for a 60,000 sq.m GEA business park incorporating offices (Class B1) and hotel (Class C1), parking for up to 1,837 cars, associated highway, infrastructure and earthworks (reference: 07/01106/OUT). This scheme related to a different site (to that which this application relates), hereafter referred to as 'the original site'. This permission establishes the principle of office development in this location of a scale commensurate to that now being proposed.
- 2.6 As a result of a subsequent Planning Permission for the Lakeview Drive Tesco superstore (reference: 12/01193/F), now built out and operational, the full quantum of permitted office floorspace to be delivered on the remainder of the original site was reduced to 45,000 sq.m (referring to section 3.1.2 of the 12 November 2013 deed of variation to the original section 106 agreement dated 26 October 2010).
- 2.7 The Applicant has subsequently acquired a parcel of adjacent land of circa 3.8 ha, fronting onto Oxford Road, and this forms a natural extension and addition to the remainder of the original site and, when combined, now allows the delivery of the full quantum of office floor space and the fulfilment of the policy allocation for employment floorspace across the combined site, as part of this outline planning application. The additional parcel of land now incorporated into the Site was previously always envisaged to become part of the Office Park development, accessible off the now constructed Lakeview Drive (reflected in the requirements secured by Condition 7 of planning permission ref: 07/01106/OUT).
- 2.8 A plan showing the relationship between the application Site (edged red) and the original site (edged blue) and the position of the now built Tesco store (edged green) is provided overleaf in Figure 2.1.

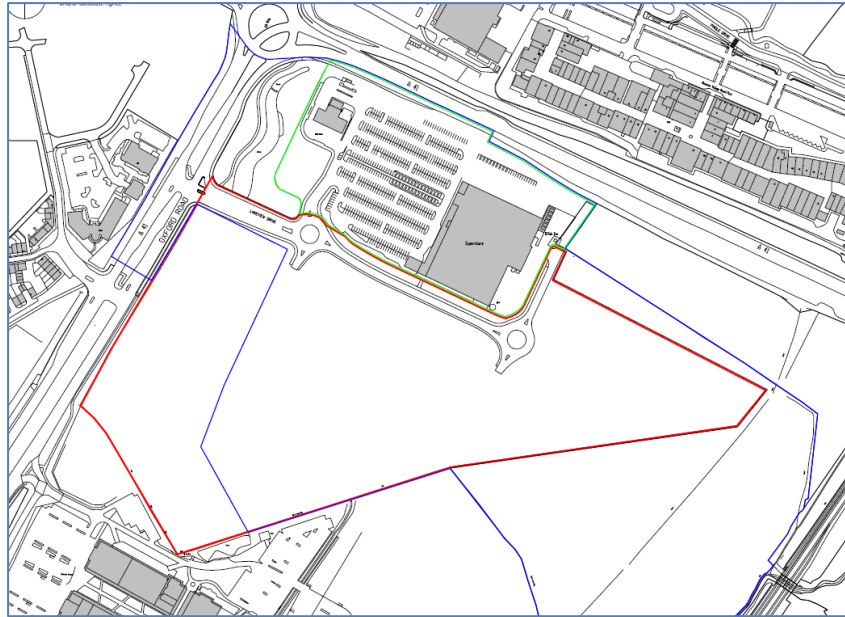


Figure 2.1 – Plan showing relationship of sites.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposed development, as set out in Section 1 of this Planning Statement, comprises the construction of a business park of up to 60,000 sq.m (GEA) of Class B1(a) office / B1(b) research & development floorspace; parking for up to 2,000 cars; and associated infrastructure and earthworks.
- 3.2 The application is seeking outline planning permission for the proposed development, with all matters reserved except for access. A Parameter Plan is submitted seeking approval for a maximum quantum of Class B1(a/b) floorspace; across six distinct development zones (A-F); within defined developable areas; and for buildings up to defined maximum heights (storeys and mAOD). A Highways Access Plan, contained within the Transport Assessment at Appendix D, is also submitted for approval, this showing existing and proposed access into the site for vehicle and pedestrians.
- 3.3 The principles of this outline application are all considered to be established by virtue of the consented 2010 scheme in terms of land use; the broad quantum of development; and indicative layout and design options (to be secured through subsequent reserved matters submissions). This has been further strengthened through Policy Bicester 4 (Bicester Business Park) in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (July 2015), which supports a high-quality office scheme on the site. Further detail of this policy allocation is provided in Section 4 of this Planning Statement.
- 3.4 As established through the 2010 Office Park scheme, the development will provide a new, attractive, high quality and sustainable business / office ‘quarter’ for Bicester, with its own distinctive character and identity, based on a detailed assessment of the site and the surrounding area. As identified previously, Bicester Office Park will be well integrated with the existing settlement pattern of Bicester. Whilst the surrounding area continued to evolve since 2010, development supports and complements the concept of Bicester Office Park and vice versa. Furthermore, the substantial residential development that has and is

now coming forward places greater emphasis on the need to deliver increased employment space and provide more job opportunities.

Delivery

- 3.5 The Applicant wishes to proceed with the development as soon as possible, with reserved matters submissions to follow upon the grant of outline planning permission. It is intended, at this stage, that the Site will be developed on a phased basis as demand for the space dictates. These phases will be broadly consistent with the development zones established in this application (and shown on the parameter plans) although a phasing plan is intended to be approved as part of a later submission(s), suggested to be secured by planning condition.
- 3.6 We propose to make the reserved matters applications for layout and landscaping on a development zone-by-zone basis, in accordance with the parameter plan submitted with this application, unless this is superseded by a phasing plan establishing a different approach to the delivery of the scheme across these zones. We propose to make the reserved matters applications for scale and appearance on a building-by-building basis, within each development zone. There may be opportunities where such submissions can be grouped and this will be explored at the appropriate time. We wish to retain the ability to deal with reserved matters submissions on a more individual zone / building basis to ensure flexibility in delivery of Bicester Office Park.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 3.7 The proposed development, as was previously the case with the 2010 scheme, has been subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted in support of the application. The ES, prepared by Trium, has been the subject of a request for a scoping opinion with Cherwell DC, with a response being received on 2 August 2017. The ES should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the other documents submitted in support of this planning application.

- 3.8 The ES identifies the mitigation measures proposed that ensure that the proposed development will not have any significant adverse effects on the environment.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.9 Prior to the submission of this application, pre-application discussions have been held with Cherwell DC planning officers in early 2017 to introduce the proposed scheme and to establish the 'extant' principles secured through the 2010 scheme and the more recent 'Bicester 4' policy allocation. Pre-application discussions also allowed us to scope the requirements for this application (including as part of the formal ES Scoping Opinion process).

4.0 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Site comprises the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 ('CLP1') (2015) and the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan (1996).
- 4.2 CLP1 is currently undergoing a partial review process (in relation to housing around Oxford) and the scope of this review and it being at an early stage mean that it is not relevant to this application. A Local Plan Part 2 is scheduled to be prepared in the near future, although this will still be at a very early draft stage. This application is not affected by this either therefore.
- 4.3 We are not aware of any Neighbourhood Plan intentions for this area, either at this moment in time or in the foreseeable future.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's objectives for achieving sustainable development. The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 confirms there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. This includes "*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*" (paragraph 7) and "*making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages*" (paragraph 9).
- 4.5 When making planning decisions, paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that planning permission should be granted where development proposals accord with the development plan. This approach is applied in the assessment of the proposed

development. The proposed development should be defined as sustainable development for the following reasons:

- *Economic Role:* the proposed development will contribute to the building of a strong, responsive and competitive economy through the delivery of a substantial quantum of high quality office accommodation. This represents suitable employment space in this place and this time, to support growth and innovation. It is consistent with the NPPF and strategic and allocation-specific parts of the Development Plan.
- *Social Role:* the nature of the proposed development means that there are limited opportunities to support local community's needs in terms of health, social and cultural well-being. The proposals do not cause any harm in this regard however. As part of the detail reserved matters submissions to follow this application, the Office Park scheme will create a high quality built environment.
- *Environmental Role:* the proposed development will contribute towards the protection of the natural, built and historic environment through the well-considered use of this allocated site in an accessible and sustainable location. The scheme is underpinned by and guided by a detailed Environment Statement which sets out the credentials of the proposal in this regard and outlines the mitigation measures to be included.

4.6 The NPPF then outlines a series of considerations against which development should be assessed. In terms of the proposed development the following parts of the NPPF are considered and referred to within the technical material submitted with this application.

- Chapter 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy;
- Chapter 4 – Promoting sustainable transport;
- Chapter 7 – Requiring good design;
- Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy communities;
- Chapter 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding;

- Chapter 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and
- Chapter 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

4.7 The NPPF encourages Local Planning Authorities to determine applications positively to foster the delivery of sustainable development (Paragraph 186). LPAs are advised to look for solutions rather than problems and decision-takers are asked to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (Paragraph 187).

The Development Plan: *Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 (July 2015)*

4.8 Cherwell DC's vision, as set out in the CLP1, is to develop a sustainable economy that is vibrant and diverse with good transport links and sound infrastructure. Cherwell DC anticipates that the economy will grow to provide more diverse employment for the increasing population and reduce the need for residents to travel outside of the District for work.

4.9 Paragraph A.14 of the CLP1 states that the key challenges towards achieving a sustainable local economy include the need to make more efficient use of existing employment uses by prioritising the use of existing sites; improving existing employment areas to retain and attract business; and improve the diversity in the local economy.

4.10 To achieve this strategic aim, Cherwell DC will work with private sector partners to *"take advantage of the locational advantages the District enjoys, the high economic activity level, the skills available and the clusters of specialist activity ... [and] ... support jobs-led economic growth"* (paragraph B.5).

4.11 CLP1 Policy SLE1 states that, *"employment development on new sites allocated in this Plan will be the type of employment development specified within each site policy"*. The Site is located within the Bicester 4 policy area. This relates to 29.5 ha of land to the south east of Bicester (including the entirety of the application Site) and allocates it for, *"employment generating development in the form of a high quality B1 office scheme"*. This reflects the consented 2010

Office Park scheme to which this current application applies. The policy establishes key site specific design and place shaping principles, which as expected are consistent with the principles of developed proposed as part of this application. The requirements in terms of surface water management, transport assessment, flood risk and archaeology are all addressed through this application, principally as part of the ES. The proposed development is fully compliant and consistent with the principles of Policy Bicester 4.

Policy Conclusions

- 4.12 The Site is within an existing, recent policy allocation which lends support to “*employment generating development in the form of a high quality B1 office scheme*”. The proposed outline scheme is commensurate with this allocation – in terms of the land use proposed and the quantum of development – and consistent with the 2010 consented scheme which establishes the principle of development here.
- 4.13 The proposed development facilitates the delivery of strategic targets set out in the CLP1 in terms of the retention of jobs and economic activity within the District, specifically within Bicester as a key growth town.
- 4.14 The Site is well positioned to benefit from a range of modes of public transport, including by bus and train. This therefore represents sustainable development through the ability to offer prospective office park tenants and visitors the ability to travel easily to and from the site with unparalleled high levels of connectivity to larger ‘business hubs’, namely Oxford and London.
- 4.15 The proposed development is considered to be consistent with the NPPF, and the Development Plan, in terms of the principle of development, both strategically and site-specifically, and also in terms of other technical matters, covered in the supporting material submitted.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The proposed development, through the delivery of a high-quality Office Park scheme, represents a clear opportunity to deliver sustainable development in line with the NPPF. Furthermore, the proposals are in accordance with strategic aspirations and site-specific and technical policies at a national and local level, including the key Bicester 4 allocation.

5.2 As set out in this Statement, the proposed development is consistent with the principles established as part of the 2010 Office Park consent, with the scheme being of a high architectural quality, respecting the site's context and responding to the wider setting in this part of Bicester.

5.3 The proposed development makes use of an additional parcel of land adjacent to the A41 and facilitates the delivery of the full quantum of office / research & development floor space and the fulfilment of the policy allocation for employment floorspace for the combined site .

5.4 The detailed proposals, to follow through subsequent reserved matters submissions (or through planning conditions / obligations), will be designed to make use of sustainable, energy efficient building techniques and renewable energy technically and maximise the opportunities available to people to travel by a variety of means of transport other than by private car.

5.5 The proposals will provide a wide range of benefits which can be summarised as follows

- Maximising the potential of this prominent gateway site to the south of Bicester;
- Strengthening the quality and quantity of office / research & development floorspace in this key location, established as an area where such uses are appropriate and explicitly supported;
- Developing a high-quality design, using sustainable and energy efficient building techniques and technologies;

- Maximising the opportunities available to people to travel by a means of transport other than by car, including making use of the Site's inherent high level of accessibility; and
- Respecting and where possible enhancing the natural and historic environment.

5.6 On the basis that the supporting documents, including this Planning Statement, submitted as part of the planning application have demonstrated compliance with the requirements of the NPPF and the adopted Development Plan and in the absence of overriding harm, it is therefore entirely appropriate to grant Planning Permission for the proposed development.