



Elmsbrook Local Centre

North West Bicester Eco Town

ADP Oxford / June 2019

Design & Access Statement





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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

“Creating a vibrant community is at the heart of all our plans, because NW Bicester’s most valuable resource will be its people”

(Below) Proposed site plan

NW Bicester Masterplan,
Vision and Objectives,
[planning app 10/01780/HYBRID]

Background

This Design and Access Statement is in support of the planning application for the Elmsbrook Local Centre, which forms part of the Exemplar phase of the North West Bicester Eco Town [LPA reference 10/01780/HYBRID]. This document sets out the vision for the new local centre, together with the design intent and sustainable design approach. We will show how the site and buildings have been designed to be accessible for all users and we aim to provide any further supporting information that the Local Planning Authority or the public may wish to know.

This application develops the previous Local Centre development proposals [LPA reference 15/00760/F]. The development was submitted for planning in April 2015, and was granted planning permission in July 2016.

Located within the Local Centre, but outside the scope of this project is an Eco-Business Centre. Since 2016, the design for the Eco-Business Centre has developed, impacting the overall site strategy and thus instigating a reassessment of this scheme [LPA reference 17/00573/CDC].

The Section 106 agreement that is attached to the Exemplar planning permission (10/01780/HYBRID) requires the provision of the retail store and community hall by the 250th occupation. To date, A2D have completed 171 homes with a further 222 under construction. Given that Applications 1 and 2 (LPA refs 14/01384/OUT and 14/01641/OUT) at NW Bicester, and the Exemplar phase are not viable (as demonstrated by A2D and their advisers Turner Morum’s Viability Report), A2D has two options:

- » Halt development now and in advance of the 250th occupation;

- » Accept the scheme continues to be unviable and explore whether the revised local centre ‘offer’ can be delivered that meets the aims of the policy.

A2D’s preference is to secure permission for a revised scheme and to secure the occupation thereof now, so that the needs of residents can be met and the Exemplar phase can be completed.

As such, the Local Centre scheme has been reviewed accordingly.

Proposed

The scheme proposes the development of a new Local Centre comprising Retail, Commercial and Community floorspace (flexible use Class A1/A2/A3/B1/D1), with a total GEA of 1,476 sqm, and 38 residential units (Use Class C3) with associated access, servicing, landscaping and parking.

Planning Applications

Relevant to the Local Centre are a number of planning applications, forming parts of the overall masterplan, which include:

- » Elmsbrook Exemplar development [Ref. 10/01780/HYBRID]
- » Land North of Lords Lane [Ref: 14/01384/OUT] *(resolution only) (Application 1)*
- » Land North of Howes Lane [Ref: 14/01641/OUT] *(resolution to grant only) (Application 2)*
- » Eco-business Centre [Ref. 17/00573/CDC]
- » Previous Local Centre planning application [Ref. 15/00760/F]



ASPIRATIONS



SENSITIVITY TO CONTEXT:

- » Reflecting the form and massing of the surrounding context (Eco Business Centre and adjacent housing)
- » Maximising interaction, through views and external space, with the River Corridor
- » Creating an active street frontage, drawing people to and through the Local Centre



INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE:

- » Maximising interaction with the River Corridor via views, balconies and landscape design
- » Using integrated landscape and streetscape features to introduce planting and trees into the Local Centre - reflecting the ethos of Elmsbrook
- » Planting species which are appropriate for the local context and environment
- » Using landscape design as a tool to enhance existing context and promote well-being



ORIENTATION:

- » Integrated solar shading to prevent over-heating and provide external space
- » Building orientated to improve connections with the landscape
- » Roof form reflects existing massing whilst maximising area from renewable technologies



PLACEMAKING:

- » Provision of a range of commercial, retail and social uses
- » Creating socialable places to meet and gather at the heart of the community
- » Encouraging an active Local Centre day and evening
- » Facilitating interaction with the Eco Business Centre



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT:

- » Connecting up to existing dedicated cycle routes and pedestrian paths
- » Provision of cycle stands for residents and visitors
- » Encouraging permeability with the River Corridor
- » Creating a point of activity on the main bus route



NORTH WEST BICESTER MASTERPLAN

Planning Context and History

Image: Site Plan from
Elmsbrook Marketing_
www.fabrica.co.uk

1.1 Overview

The development of an Eco Town at North West Bicester was included in the Adopted Cherwell Plan 2011 - 2031, the inclusion outlined a zero-carbon development which included 6000 new homes and supporting community facilities.

The masterplan includes:

- » Up to 6,000 new build zero-carbon homes
- » 40% public and private green space throughout
- » Achieving a zero carbon standard
- » Primary schools located within 800m of all homes
- » Creating jobs with a sustainable travel distance

The North West Bicester Masterplan aims to create a place which is driven by community and sustainability. The masterplan uses infrastructure and landscape to promote a sense of community identity and sustainable living.

Environmental performance will be achieved throughout and will be further enhanced through the provision new homes and employment facilities ensuring a sustainable future.

The North West Bicester Eco Town will be built as a series of phases of which Elmsbrook is the exemplar first phase [LPA reference 10/01780/HYBRID]. The Local Centre sits at the centre of the exemplar phase and will provide key facilities for Elmsbrook, reinforcing a sense of place and strengthening community identity.

1.2 Masterplan Design Strategy

The Local Centre is located along the principal east-west route into the development, with the watercourse forming a notable west boundary and green buffer to the development.

The North and South blocks affront the main road, with car parking removed to the rear, freeing up the street for the public realm.

The design team have taken the overriding principles of the masterplan to develop the local centre design presented within this statement.



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Advice and Assessments

Throughout the design development process, various parties were consulted in order to help inform the design and ensure the needs of the community are met within the Local Centre.

1.3 Pre-Application Advice

Two pre-application meetings were undertaken with Cherwell District Council to discuss the proposals for the Local Centre, held on the following dates:

- » 06.09.2018
- » 09.01.2019

The first discussion focused on the site layout and strategy, looking at the opportunities to connect to the River Corridor and establish an active street frontage, drawing on the ideas set-out within the NW Bicester Eco Town application (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID). Feedback reflected the need to establish a clear landscape strategy as well as understand how the proposals respond to the eco town standards. The scheme, at this stage, was well received:

“The scheme has evolved taking into account the interaction between the various uses nearby including the eco business centre, energy centre and the river corridor and play space as well as considering the interaction between the various uses themselves. This is generally positive in my view.”

The second meeting centered discussions around the overall massing and form, concentrating on the material strategy and landscape design. Positive comments were also received on the layout of the community centre from the council team, as well as

provision of external area for community use, which was seen as beneficial. Suggestions were made to reconsider the assignment of the proposed materials on the elevations, which have been tested and implemented for the planning application.

1.4 Public Consultation

Alongside regular design updates to the local residents groups, a public consultation took place on 21.01.2019.

The site strategy, concept and proposed design of the Local Centre were informally presented to allow discussion and feedback to be received on the night. Throughout the consultation process comments were recorded and, where possible, implemented into the design such as, increasing the number of parking spaces and providing public space. Refer to Statement of Community Involvement for more information.

1.5 Reference Scheme

The design for the Local Centre has been developed in conjunction with a 'Reference Scheme', which illustrates a potential layout for the proposed flexible uses within the Local Centre.

The 'Reference Scheme' will be used to support the technical documents and assessments, and refers to such functions as a nursery, community centre, retail and offices.

Refer to *Section 3.5* for more information.

1.5 Supporting Drawings and Documents

The following documents will be submitted to support and illustrate the proposed Elmsbrook Local Centre and should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement:

ADP - Architect

ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-0800 (Location Plan)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-0910 (Site Plan Proposed)

ELC2-ADP-00-GF-DR-A-1000 (Ground Floor Plan)
ELC2-ADP-00-01-DR-A-1001 (First Floor Plan)
ELC2-ADP-00-02-DR-A-1002 (Second Floor Plan)
ELC2-ADP-00-R1-DR-A-1003 (Roof Plan)
ELC2-ADP-00-GF-DR-A-1011 (Reference Scheme)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1050 (1B2P – Typical GA)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1051 (2B4P – Typical GA)

ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1200 (Elevations 1 of 3)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1201 (Elevations 2 of 3)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1202 (Elevations 3 of 3)

ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1300 (Site Sections 1 of 2)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1301 (Site Sections 2 of 2)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1310 (Elevation Study)
ELC2-ADP-00-XX-DR-A-1311 (Elevation Study)

LELC2-ADP-00-GF-DR-A-L1000 (Landscape GA)

ADP - BREEAM Consultant

BREEAM Pre-assessment

Infrastructs - Civil Engineers

BICE-ICS-01-XX-DR-C-002 (Existing and Proposed Levels)
BICE-ICS-01-XX-DR-C-003 (Drainage Strategy Plan)
BICE-ICS-01-XX-DR-C-005 (Vehicle Manoeuvre Plan)

1.6 Technical Assessments

The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the following reports and assessments:

Mode -

Transport Statement and Travel Plan

The Travel Statement has been prepared with reference to the Travel Assessment produced for the NW Bicester Eco Town application (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID).

Aspect Ecology -

Ecology Statement

Hoare Lea -

Energy Strategy and Sustainability Statement
Daylight Assessment
Overheating Analysis - Residential

Infrastructs -

Flood Risk Assessment

Bidwells -

Economic Strategy
Marketing Report
Business Case

Barton Willmore -

Statement of Community Involvement
Affordable Housing Statement



Local Centre site looking across the river corridor.

THE SITE

Overview

Location Plan - Elmsbrook
Local Centre

2.1 Location

The site is located on either side of Charlotte Avenue, as outlined within the North West Bicester Eco Town application (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID). The site sits adjacent to the recently completed Eco Business Centre (LPA ref 17/00573/CDC), and overlooks the River Corridor to the west with residential properties to the north and future potential residential development to the south of the site.

Located 200m north of the site is Home Farm, which contains a Grade II listed building, whilst the entire Elmsbrook exemplar site, including residential development, is bounded by existing hedgerows and trees.

2.2 Site Area

0.6715 hectares / 6715m²

2.3 Flood Risk and Ecology

The site is not located within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zone 2 or Flood Risk Zone 3. For more information please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment Report.

The scheme has been designed to minimise the impact on the local natural environment and, whenever possible, enhance the ecology of the site through strategic planning and landscape design. The statement should be read in conjunction with the Ecology Statement.



THE SITE

Overview

Example Local Centre from NW Bicester application (LPA ref: 10/01780/HYBRID)

2.4 Local Centre Planning Background - design context

The development of the Local Centre is referenced within the NW Bicester Eco Town application (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID), describing the development as follows:

“organised along the principal route but embraces the north/south watercourse as a major green feature, like a green or village pond may occur in a historic settlement. The High Street captures this landscape feature by extending beyond it, by means of a linear bridge, before finishing with a landscaped space defined by a pair of buildings on the far bank and a termination of the vista with the school beyond. The parade [is] [...] given cohesion by protruding corner blocks that help to define the space. The parade buildings sit back from the pavement edge to create generous footpaths that will allow for people to stop and meet and others to pass and continue with their daily business.”

Furthermore, an application for a previous version of the *Local Centre* was submitted in April 2015 with permission granted in July 2016 (LPA ref 15/00760/F).

The application expanded on the design principals set out above, developing the design to improve the mix of uses, deemed suitable at the time of submission, and excluded the Eco Business Centre site as part of the development which was developed as a separate entity.

The following break-down of uses were proposed as part of the previous application (15/00760/F):

Community Hall (D1)	523m ²
Nursery (D1)	869m ²
Retail (A1/A3/A5)	444m ²
Convenience Store (A1)	503m ²
Commercial Units (A2/B1/D1)	614m ²
Pub / Pub Restaurant (A4)	664m ²

The application for the **Eco Business Centre** (LPA ref 17/00573/CDC) was submitted in March 2017 with permission granted in June 2017.

The Eco Business Centre is located to the north west of the site and comprises a three storey block with associated landscaping and car parking. The form and mass of the centre has been developed in response to the local context and sustainable aspirations. The approach is a departure from the strategy set-out within the Exemplar planning permission (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID), requiring a review of the overall strategy of the Local Centre in order to respond to the needs of the community and context, whilst drawing on the aspirations developed within the previous Local Centre applications (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID and LPA ref 15/00760/F).



UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

Key Analysis

2.5 Site Observations

The initial aspirations of the NW Bicester application for the Local Centre (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID pg 45-46) set out its desire to create an active high street, which extends towards the primary school from the Eco Business Centre, whilst also embracing and interacting with the River Corridor as a key landscape and community feature. The application also discussed the massing opportunity to create a feature of the corners to define the Local Centre as a distinct development within the exemplar phase of NW Bicester.

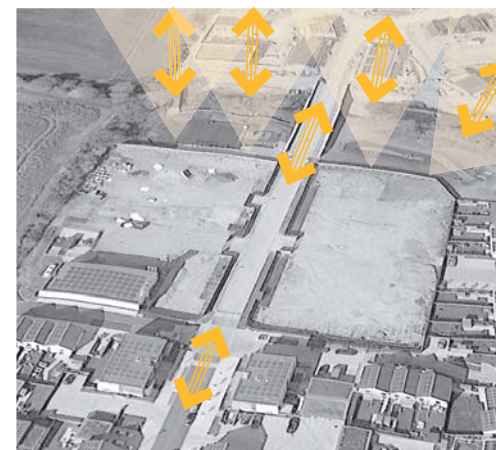
The site was analysed to understand the key characteristics and opportunities presented and how these features may help to inform the strategy for the Local Centre. It was identified that the Local Centre site holds a commanding position, acting as a transition point between Phase 1 and 2 of Elmsbrook as well overlooking an established play area and green corridor.

The site acts as a 'gateway', a key arrival and meeting point for Elmsbrook. The Local Centre should respond to the massing and form established by the existing Eco Business Centre whilst also integrating the Energy Centre into the overall strategy for the site.

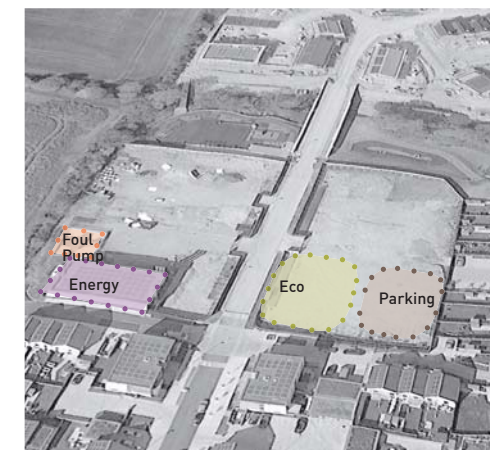
It was also identified that the way people move in, and around, the Local Centre is vital in creating an active and vibrant development. Key edges, such as the River Corridor and Charlotte Avenue, were established and would inform the overall site strategy.



Green Space and River Corridor



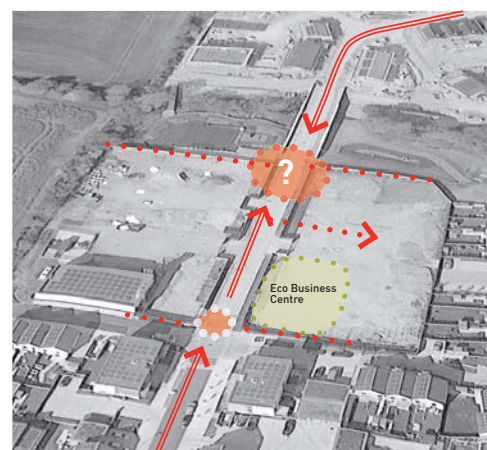
Key Views



Current Functions



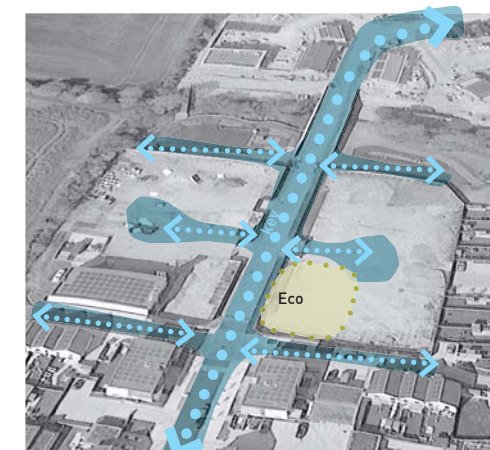
Street Edge Interaction



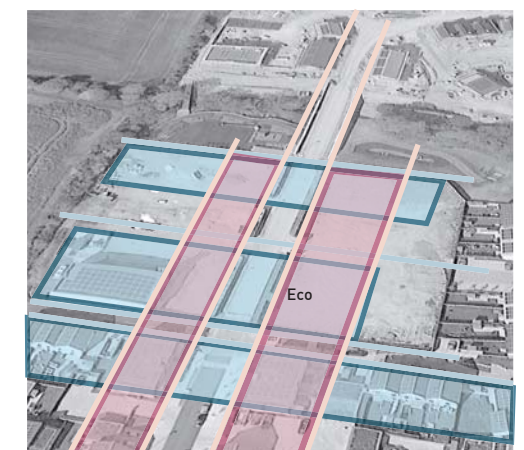
Arrival and Identity



Building Heights



Movement



Geometry and Edges

SITE CONCEPT

Community and Site

2.6 Establishing Place

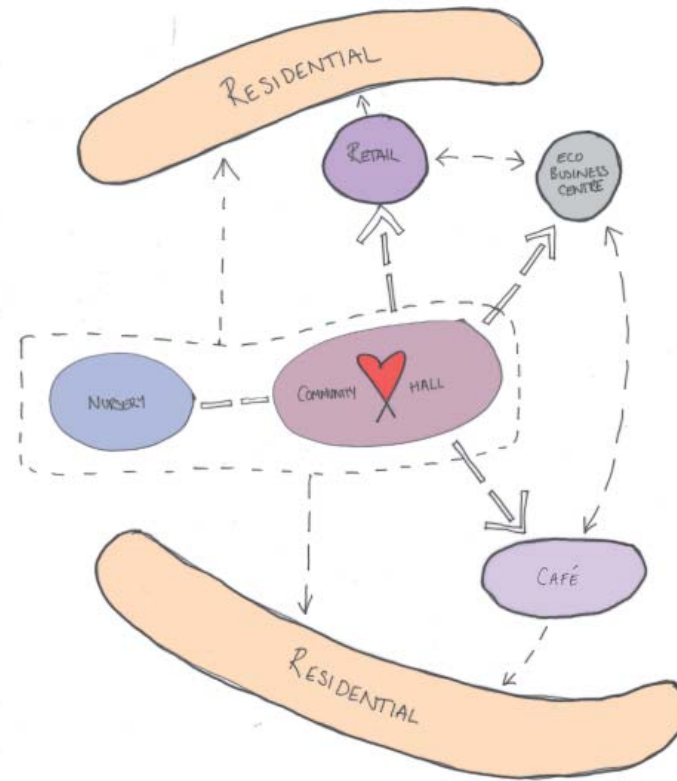
Key to the concept for the Local Centre is the desire to create a place which sits at the heart of the community - serving the needs, present and future, of the residents of Elmsbrook and beyond.

The local centre should create a place that encourages people to meet, interact and facilitate activity.

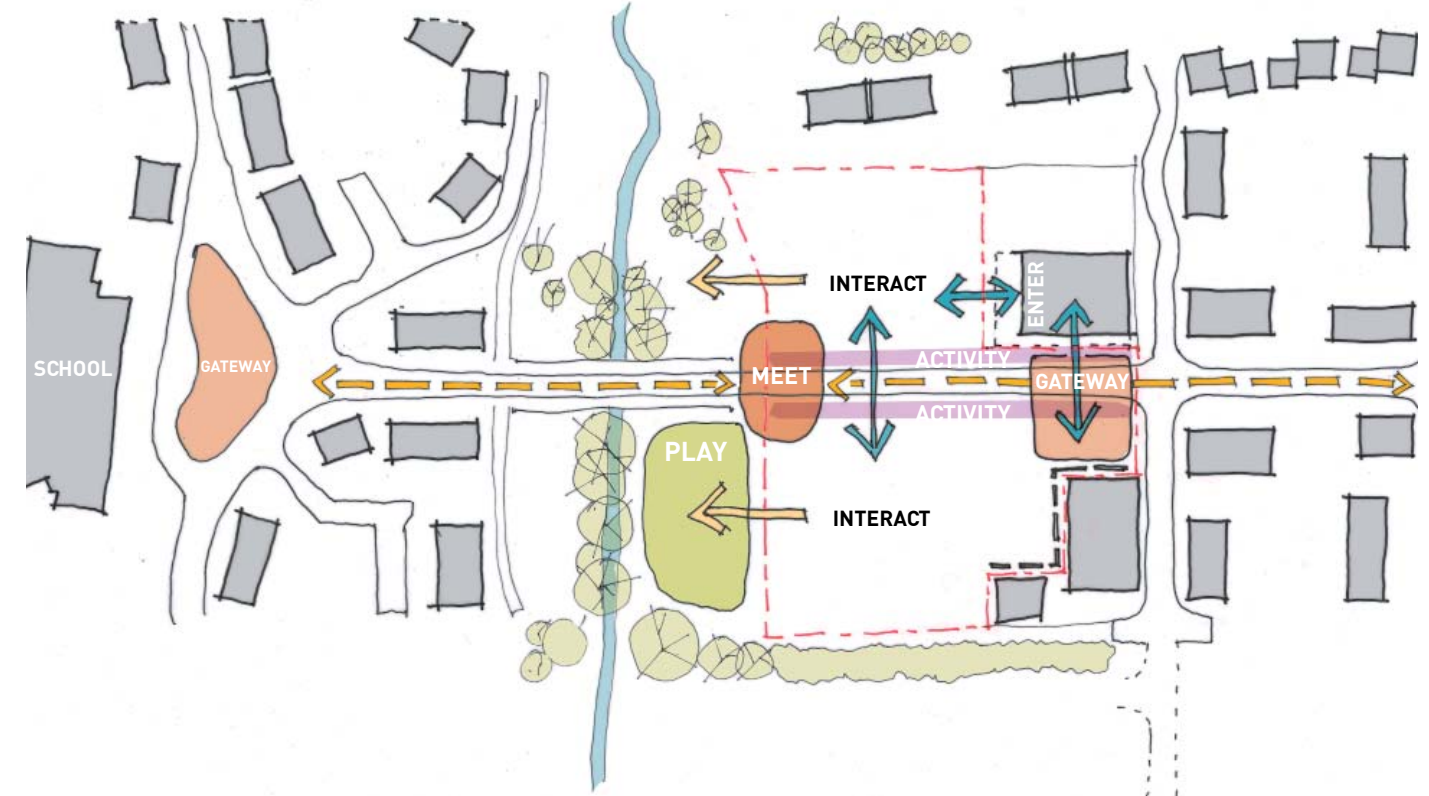
Figure (1) explores the relationship of community and function, establishing the desire for social functions to act as a key link between all uses on the site and placing it within the 'heart' of the community. The Eco Business Centre is included within the strategy in order to ensure a holistic approach is adopted across the site and the function, form and architecture of the Local Centre complements the existing context.

The Local Centre should be designed for the people and collective community of Elmsbrook. The idea of 'placemaking' firmly advocates understanding the needs and desires of community, focusing on creating places which encourage **interaction, activity, connectivity** and **healthy environments**. Figure (2) explores the potential for the site to create a place which reacts with the immediate and wider context whilst forming opportunities to establish points of meeting, interaction and activity within the center of the community.

The concept of establishing the local centre as a place within the heart of the community informs the development of the site strategy and layout.



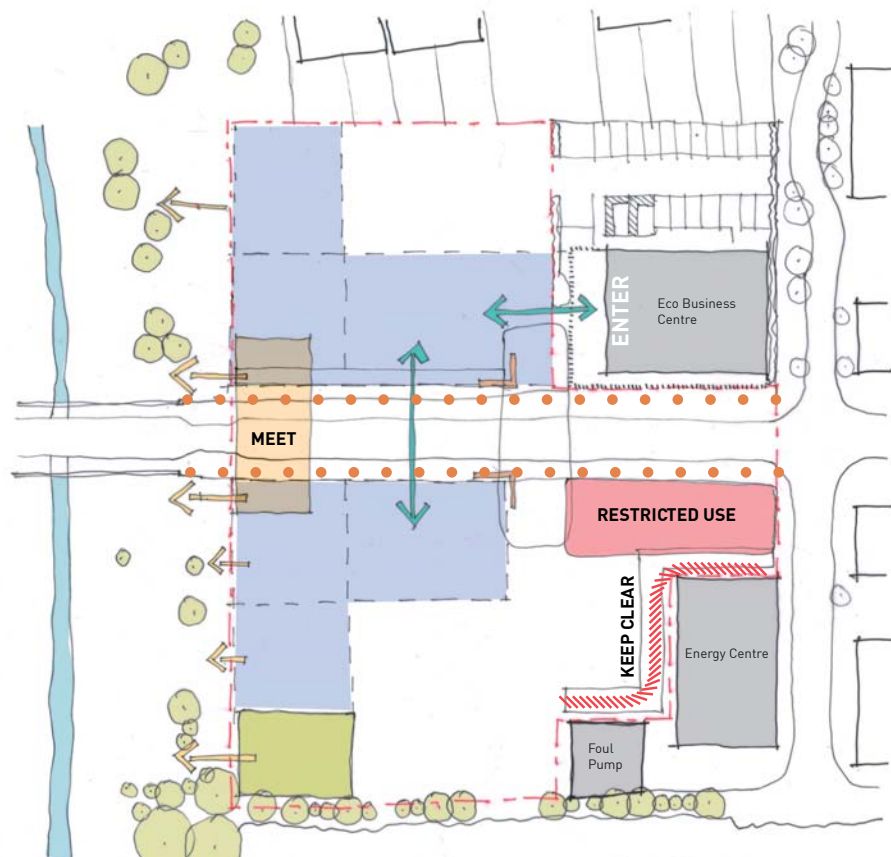
(Fig 1) Key Use Relationships



(Fig 2) Encouraging Connectivity and Activity

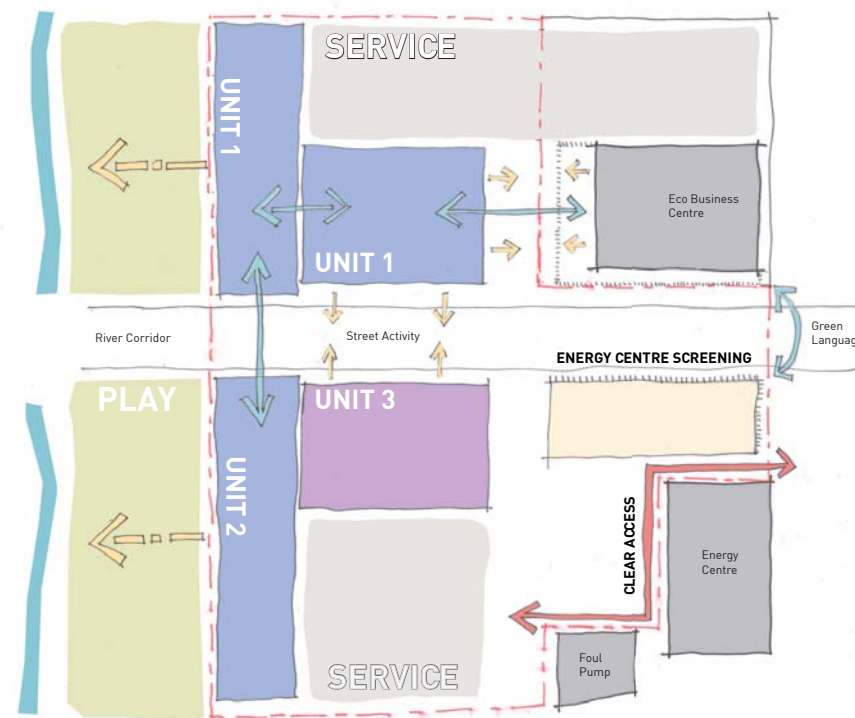
SITE CONCEPT

Strategy Development



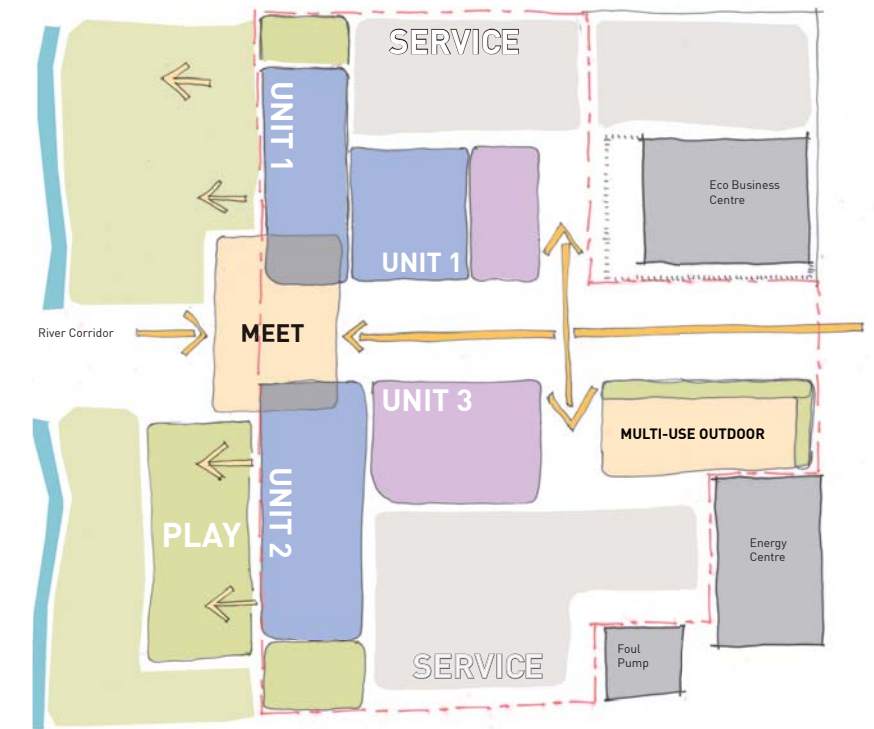
2.7 Constraints and Opportunities

- » Create interaction with entrance of Eco Business Centre
- » Encourage activity along the street edge (Charlotte Avenue)
- » Maximise views over across the River Corridor
- » Form a 'gateway' to the Local Centre
- » Consider how the Energy Centre interacts with the street edge
- » Establish interaction between the North and South blocks



2.8 Site Relationships

- » Service access to the rear of the blocks to keep street edge clear
- » Community facilities maximising benefits of play area and River Corridor
- » Using landscaping to establish connections with Eco Business Centre and Energy Centre
- » Replicating massing and site strategy of Eco Business Centre to create a suitable and holistic approach to site



2.9 Space Relationships

- » Creating a place to meet and gather as a gateway to the Local Centre and community
- » Forming a variety of external spaces to interact with different uses
- » Utilising commercial and social uses to activate street edges
- » Encourage activity along all elevations of the blocks - street, rear and River Corridor through spatial planning
- » Avoid 'back of house' under-utilised space



USE AND AMOUNT

An Overview

3.1 The Proposal

The proposal has been based on an assessment undertaken to determine the needs of the community and viability of the Local Centre, taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic context. The use of the Local Centre has been developed to create a vibrant, active and accessible proposal. The following variety of uses is proposed:

Use	Class	Area (GIA)
Unit 1	D1 and/or A3	552m ²
Unit 2	A1/A2/B1 and/or D1	487m ²
Unit 3	A1/B1 and/or D1	268m ²
Residential*	C3	3465m ²

*The above GIA includes all apartments and communal circulation areas. GIAs for each apartment can be found below:

Type	Amount	Area (GIA)
2 Bed 4 Person (70m ²)	22no.	1540m ²
2 Bed 4 Person (73m ²)	4no.	288m ²
Total (2B4P)	26no.	1828m²
1 Bed 2 Person (50m ²)	2no.	100m ²
1 Bed 2 Person (54m ²)	8no.	432m ²
1 Bed 2 Person (55m ²)	2no.	110m ²
Total (1B2P)	12no.	642m²
Residential Total	38no.	2570m²

3.2 The Development of Uses

As outlined within the *Business Case*, prepared by Bidwells, the mix of commercial units has developed from the previously approved applications (LPA ref 10/01780/HYBRID and LPA ref LPA ref 17/00760/F).

The mix and amount has been developed with respect to market factors such as, proximity to existing commercial centres and rate of residential development at NW Bicester.

The development also proposes the provision of residential units, ensuring the local centre remains a continual vibrant and viable centre. Refer to the *Planning Statement* for more information.

3.3 Employment

The *Economic Strategy*, prepared by Bidwells, outlines the number of jobs the proposed Local Centre will generate as part of the construction, maintenance and operation of the development.

In total 361 new jobs will be created as part of the proposals. Please refer to the *Economic Strategy* for more information.

3.4 Amount

The proposed site area for the Local Centre is 6540m² and contains a mix of accommodation spread between two blocks on either side Charlotte Avenue. The North Block creates a total GIA of 1875m² and the South Block creates a total GIA of 2750m², overall totalling 4625m².

At ground floor the proposed Local Centre will provide a variety of uses to meet the current and future needs of the community, these include a commercial, retail and social offering; a total of 38no residential apartments have also been proposed on an affordable basis, comprising as follows:

1 Bed 2 Person (50 - 54m²) - 12no.
2 Bed 4 Person (70 - 72m²) - 26no.

3.5 Reference Scheme

In order to test and develop the proposed scheme, a Reference Scheme was developed. The Reference Scheme applied the following uses to the proposed units:

- » **Unit 1** - Community Hall and Retail (A3/D1)
- » **Unit 2** - Nursery (A1/A2/B1/D1)
- » **Unit 3** - 2no Retail Units and Offices (A1/B1/D1)

The Reference Scheme was utilised to support the technical assessments, in order to ensure the scheme could meet the needs of the community whilst achieving Zero Carbon standards and BREEAM Very Good.

The table below compares the previously approved application and Reference Scheme.

Use	Class	Previous Application (GEA) (15/00760/F)	Reference Scheme (GEA)
Retail (Unit 3)	A1/A3/A5	444m ²	210m ²
Community Hall (Unit 1)	D1	523m ²	483m ²
Community Retail (Unit 1)	A3	n/a	141m ²
Nursery (Unit 2)	D1	869m ²	487m ²
Commercial (Unit 3)	A2/B1/D1	614m ²	82m ²
Pub / Pub Restaurant	A4/A3	664m ²	n/a
Convenience Store	A1	503m ²	n/a
Residential	C3	n/a	3465m ²

For a detailed proposed Schedule of Accommodation refer to Section 3.1