

Site ref	Settlement		Gross site area (ha)		
BI031	Bicester		24.8		
Site address		Current/previous landuse		Type of site	
Land north of Gavray Drive		County Wildlife Site		Greenfield	
Planning status	Employment site in the 2011 Non-Statutory Local Plan. Subsequently granted permission on appeal for residential development. Renewal permission quashed by the High Court.				
Description of site					
The site is a county wildlife site therefore it is greenfield. The site is situated to the east of Bicester town centre. It is bounded by railway lines to the north and west. Residential lies to the south of the site and the A4421 road to the east. Beyond the road and rail infrastructure bounding the site, there is the Bicester Distribution Park to the north and the town centre is located to the west. The site comprises individual trees, tree and hedgerow groups, and scrubland/vegetation. Two public rights of way cross the site, linking Langford Village with Launton and Bicester Distribution Park. The Langford Brook water course flows through the middle of the site.					
Planning history					
The site has a complicated planning history since 2004 when a planning application for a residential development of 500 homes (04/02797/OUT) was refused by the Council before receiving approval at appeal in July 2006. Since the appeal decision there was an application (10/01667/OUT) for renewal which was approved in February 2012 however this was subsequently quashed by the High Court. This follows a judicial review in January 2013 based upon technical breach of the EIA regulations.					
Policy context					
A greenfield site outside the built-up limits of Bicester but within the perimeter road and contained by development to the north and south. The site is also located close to Bicester town centre to the west. Bicester is one of the two most sustainable settlements in the district.					
Physical constraints					
The central part of the site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The majority of the site is part of the River Ray Conservation Target Area. The western part of the site may include improved grassland (a BAP priority habitat). There is an additional BAP priority habitat which is a lowland meadow in the centre of the site. Approximately a quarter of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 therefore any development would need to be developed outside of this area. There are a number of protected species located towards the eastern part of the site. There are Public Rights of Way situated to the west and south of the site. The agricultural land is Grade 4 (poor quality) under the Agricultural Land Classification. There are several ponds and a small stream, known as the Langford Brook, which runs from north to south through the middle of the site. A range of wildlife is present on the site, including butterflies, great crested newts and other amphibians, reptiles, bats and birds.					
Potential impacts					
There are risks of flooding on some parts of the site therefore mitigation measures must be considered. There is also a risk of harming the large number of recorded protected species towards the eastern part of the site. Impacts need to be minimised by any proposal. This reduces the potential developable area of the site.					
Suitability summary					
This is a greenfield site located outside of the built-up area of Bicester. Although there are a number of known constraints such as Flood Zone 3, River Ray Conservation Target Area and protected species, some areas of land could be removed from the developable area and appropriate mitigation made. The site is well located in relation to the town centre, and extends from central Bicester out towards the perimeter roads. Despite the ecological constraints of the site, there is sufficient land available to accommodate some development while protecting and enhancing environmental assets.					
Market appraisal					
Since the SHLAA was completed for Cherwell in 2013, the housing market update provides evidence of strengthening conditions. Local market evidence underlines this view, together with favourable macroeconomic indicators, and increased housebuilder activity. While of course the housing market will be almost undoubtedly be subject to future cyclical fluctuations, at the very least, the short to medium term prospects are good.					
In the 2013 SHLAA a series of nominal sites were tested for their indicative viability. The updated housing market evidence suggests that the positive viability demonstrated for these sites at this time is still present – and indeed scheme viability is likely to have improved. The positive attributes Cherwell possesses in terms of its location and existing and planned infrastructure further serve to make the District an attractive housing area.					
Availability summary					
The site is being promoted through the 2014 Call for Sites for residential development of 350 dwellings (16 dph).					
Achievability summary					
Delivery projections provided by the agents in June 2014 anticipate construction potentially commencing late 2016-17 and a build out at 50 units per year.					
Yield by year:					
2014 - 2019	2019 - 2024	2024 - 2029	2029 - 2031	Final density	Final suggested yield
300	0	0	0	12	300
Yield summary					
The theoretical density multiplier for an urban extension in this location is 20 dph which would result in a yield of 496 dwellings. However when considering the constraints on the site the yield should be reduced to approximately 300 dwellings focused mainly at the western end of the site outside of the Local Wildlife Site and as far as possible outside Conservation Target Area but also potentially some development along the southern boundary of the site.					
Conclusion					
This site is considered potentially suitable for residential development, should additional greenfield land be required, with a capacity of approximately 300 dwellings. Active promoter interest suggests that the site could be delivered within the first five year period.					

