

LAND TO THE SOUTH WEST OF BUCKINGHAM**TECHNICAL NOTE TO SUPPORT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ALLOCATION**NOVEMBER 2024

Introduction

The Site is some 32.4ha in size and occupies a position to the south side of the A421, to the south west of Buckingham. It is currently an undeveloped site and comprises of arable land. To the east planning permission has been granted for residential development of up to 420 dwellings (including affordable housing), and associated infrastructure including provision of open space (including formal playspace). To the west planning permission has granted for the new town cemetery and allotments.

The site could accommodate up to 800 new homes of a wide range of housing types, sizes and tenures, a site for new primary school and local centre with employment space creating (with existing committed developments, a new neighbourhood for Buckingham.

The Technical Note has been updated in the light of representations made on the Plan at Regulation 14 stage.

Landscape

The site and the local landscape are not covered by any landscape quality designation at either a national or local level.

In the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2008) the site is located within the Gawcott Ridge Landscape Character Area, with its landscape condition being defined as "weak", and landscape sensitivity judged as "moderate".

There are no significant or distinctive landscape features or elements within the site. The site comprises four open arable fields that are defined with hedgerows and some mature trees. None of the site is publicly accessible at present.

The site lies alongside the main transport route of the A421, which has an urbanising influence on this landscape. Commercial buildings, and a solar farm lies to the south, whilst the built edge of Buckingham lies to the east on Gawcott Road and to the north off Tingewick Road.

The site very gently falls northwards towards Buckingham, and together with the landscape fabric of established trees and hedges, views of the site are broadly restricted to highway users as they pass by on the local roads (A421, Gawcott Road) and for users of a short Public Footpath near the site's southern boundary.

Landscape and design strategies can be developed to create a green infrastructure framework (i.e. retained hedges and trees, new perimeter planting and green space) to appropriately and sensitively integrate built development into the landscape and Buckingham's green infrastructure network.

Biodiversity

The site is not covered by any ecological designations.

Aside from the site's hedgerows and trees, the site is considered to have limited ecological value as it comprises arable land.

Design strategies can be developed to maximise ecological and biodiversity benefits across the site, and this includes linking in with existing wildlife corridors and creating a variety of new landscape habitats (e.g. wildflower grassland native hedgerows, woodland planting).

Protected species surveys would be undertaken to understand the ecological value of the site and any necessary mitigation measures that might be needed, and provided as part of the wider proposals to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain, the proposals will need to deliver 10% BNG (as measured by the most up to date metric) in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Act 2021. Proposals to

deliver 10% BNG will be complementary to the Buckingham Green Ring. The proposals will be worked up in detail through application proposals and will have regard to the mitigation hierarchy set out in national policy and in Policy ENV2 – specifically on site in the first instance or sequentially off site locations or where necessary or appropriate through off site contributions to support the Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

Drainage

The entirety of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and is considered to be at low risk of fluvial flooding.

The vast majority of the site is shown to be at very low risk of flooding from surface water, a localised area of potential flooding abuts the A421 immediately to the east of the existing A421 roundabout, however, this can be mitigated with a positive surface water drainage system serving the proposed development.

An appropriate foul sewerage outfall location has been established, utilising a pumped solution.

Options have been identified to ensure an effective surface water drainage strategy for the site, one option being to include infiltration basins(s) in the northern part of the site adjacent to the A421.

Further assessment of site conditions and the drainage strategy is to be undertaken and will include infiltration testing, liaison with the LLFA and Anglian Water, and review of levels and surface water drainage options, conceptually, in the light of levels on the site and to embrace any mitigation, including through design of any localised flood risks.

A detailed drainage strategy will be prepared for the site once topographical surveys have been completed and the design of the layout has evolved.

Agricultural Land

The entirety of the site comprises land identified as Agricultural Land Classification 3 as set out by Natural England data set "Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC (England))".

No part of the site is identified as Grade 2 land.

Transport

Technical studies completed to date confirm that vehicular access can be achieved via the A421 / Tingewick Road roundabout to the north and Gawcott Road to the east, each incorporating active travel infrastructure to connect with the existing network, with provision of new off-site crossing facilities to support onward journeys to key destinations in the wider town.

The site can be served by buses through the efficient diversion of existing high-frequency services through the site or through provision of new bus stop infrastructure on the A421 along the site frontage.

A review of the site's transport sustainability credentials confirms that a range of existing off-site facilities and services are within walking distance. Opportunities to connect through and around the site into the existing footpath and bridleway network and potential improvements to routes to off-site facilities and services will be subject to further review and discussion with the Local Highway Authority.

The potential impacts of proposals on the operation of the highway network will be subject to further technical studies at a more detailed stage of the planning process. This will include assessment of junctions on the A421 corridor and those within the town centre network and the need for any mitigation [*"In terms of mitigation, it is understood that the approach taken by the Local Highway Authority in responding to recent neighbouring planning applications has been to seek contributions towards measures identified in the Buckingham Transport Strategy"*].

The Transport strategy will be mindful of wider proposals in relation to transport infrastructure at Buckingham and will seek to encourage a connected movement network within the site, and to encourage connections to the boundary of the site to complement as appropriate proposals for strategic access around the south of the town.

Deliverability

Hallam Land, the forward land and planning division of the Henry Boot Group, has an extensive track record of delivering successful and sustainable new development. Hallam has been at the forefront of the promotion of potential development land for over 30 years, promoting and delivering primarily high quality and sustainable residential and mixed use development around England and Scotland. Notable schemes include Cranbrook New Community (East Devon District); New Lubbesthorpe (Blaby District); Eastern Green (Coventry City).

Hallam Land also has an extensive track record of delivering successful and sustainable new development in Buckingham. HLM are keen to work with the Town Council, Local Authority, other stakeholders and local communities to deliver this new development in South West Buckingham.

Conceptual proposals for the site to reflect sustainable principles for the development of the site, responses from consultation to date (including the Developers Roadshow held in January 2024) and the outcomes of the technical work, and further technical work, referred to in this note as well as the Draft Neighbourhood Plan policies. Issues to address in more detail will be the location of the site for the primary school and other uses within the site and the final capacity of the site.

A conceptual masterplan is intended to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It is anticipated that proposals for the development of the site will be progressed in a timely manner and, potentially, in parallel with the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan process. On this basis there is the potential to secure a start on site and a meaningful number of completions on site within a 0-5 year horizon. Once housebuilding is commenced the first year of completions is likely to be some 20-30 dwellings rising to potentially 100 completions per annum with the involvement of multiple outlets on site.