



SITE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Bloxham Grove Academy

FS0730

LC0122

Prepared by: Jacqueline Nixon, Gareth Whitmarsh & James Strang

8 March 2019

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 LocatED was commissioned in April 2017 by the Department for Education (DfE) to find and acquire a 2 to 3 acre site for a 100 pupil Special Educational Need (SEN) school, enabling the delivery of a 29,063 sq ft (2,700 sq m) educational facility. The search area comprised North Oxfordshire, therein establishing a suitable location that reduced the need for students to travel long distances from across North Oxfordshire to the only existing school in Central Oxford and home again each day. There is currently no provision in North Oxfordshire for students between 7-18 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) and associated Cognition and Learning Needs (C&L). The following statement has been provided by Oxfordshire County Council, which supports the new provision: it has *“identified a specific need for a free school with the key features of The Iffley Academy in the Bicester / Banbury area. This is because of a number of factors, including the population growth, the shortage of places in existing special schools: the lack of appropriate provision and to offer parents choice of placements”*. The search area was therefore outlined as the northern half of the county.
- 1.2 A suitable option for this school comprises a site within a quiet, natural, rural or semi-rural setting, whilst also benefitting from good transport links. Due to the complex SEN condition of pupils, very few are expected to be able to undertake independent travel to the school. All pupils at the proposed school will qualify for organised transport by taxi or minibus, so very few parents are expected to transport pupils themselves. Staff however might benefit from good public transport links. The team aimed to find the most sustainable location it could whilst meeting this criteria. This automatically directed focus to the outskirts and surrounding areas of towns and villages. The search started by looking at the edge of the largest settlements (Banbury and Bicester). The initial search identified that many of these sites are ‘optioned’ for future development and are therefore unavailable. Not only were such landowners not in a position to dispose of their land, if they were, the cost of acquiring such land at alternative use values would inevitably exceed government thresholds. The search continued, by next considering larger villages.

- 1.3 LocatED were also instructed to identify a site that would enable the delivery of the school by 2020, due to the increasing demand for this type of education as a result of forecast local population growth. As a result of the relatively tight acquisition timescale, LocatED primarily concentrated on properties which were on the market and site introductions from local agents.
- 1.4 The Trust also wished to identify sites that had the opportunity of readily accessing an operational farm for educational and experience purposes. The school aims to provide a curriculum which includes land management and farm studies as well as animal care. Notwithstanding this desire, care would need to be taken to find the right type of farm, taking into account factors such as safeguarding and costs. LocatED considered the acquisition of several farms which were on the market, however it became apparent early on that this would be a costly and potentially unrealistic option. Planning permission would be required for change of use for all or part of a farm unit. There were no farms of suitable size nor landowners willing to dispose of part of their holdings at the time of the search.

2. THE SITE SEARCH

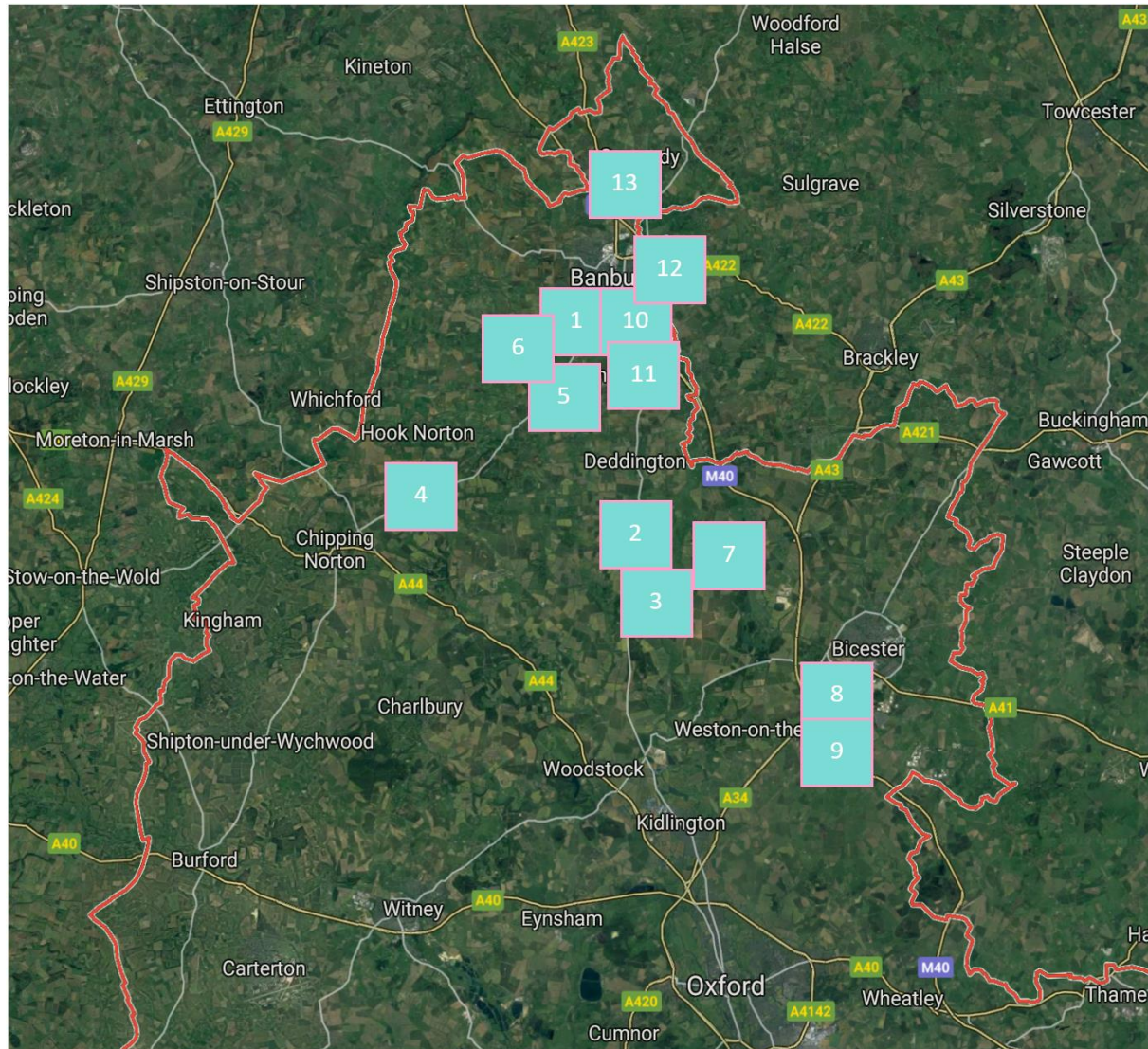
- 2.1 LocatED commenced an initial site search from April 2017 until October 2017. The search involved the use of LocatED's marketing methods including advertisement, internal databases, online platforms (Rightmove, CoStar, Land Insight, etc), contact with local and national agents, landowners and public sector contacts as appropriate. Although a preferred site was found in late 2017 through this process, we continued to track and monitor the market through the use of online sources, agents and our internal database to ensure that no other viable options were missed, beyond October 2017 until the present day.
- 2.2 Having undertaken an initial search, over time, thirteen potentially suitable sites were identified for further consideration. The sites can be identified within the wider search area on the site search map below. Furthermore, a summary assessment can be seen on the site assessment list below. The list of sites was examined using various tools but primarily, a comparative site options appraisal. The longlist was subject to scoring against the following criteria:
- Suitability
 - Availability
 - Achievability
- 2.3 Scoring for suitability took into account size, shape, sustainable settlement location, access to the transportation network, public transport provision and environmental and planning policy constraints (i.e. whether/how the site is affected by matters such as flood zones, AONB, conservation areas, listed buildings etc). The availability criterion considered whether the landowner was agreeable to sell. The achievability criterion took into account both suitability and availability plus any delivery issues which might indicate a school could not be provided on time. The sites could then be scored for each criteria (up to 10 marks for each) and a total score could be calculated to identify the top rated sites. Following this, the sites are also rated by a 'RAG' overall scoring system (out of 30 points) for ease of reference. A red score is the lowest and indicates when less

than 10 points have been secured. Amber means that the site secured between 11 and 20 points. Green equates to a score of 21 to 30. The site score and ranking matrix is set out below.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The site assessment process established the most suitable, available and deliverable option that best met the school requirement, early on in the search. The option was presented to LocatED's Investment Committee, the DfE and the School Trust which all agreed with LocatED's recommendation that the Warriner School land was the most achievable option. The site search was later revisited, to check whether any other alternative sites had come to the fore since the original activity. This confirmed that the Warriner school site is still considered to be the most suitable.

SITE SEARCH MAP



No.	Site
1	The Warriner School Farm, Grove Road, Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4LJ
2	Warren Farm, Middle Aston, Bicester, OX25 5QF
3	Oxford Road, Middle Aston, OX25 5PZ
4	Wynmere Farm, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5TD
5	Land lying to the south west of Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4RA
6	Banbury Road, Bloxham, OX15 4SE
7	Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, OX25 5HD
8	Land west of Oxford Road, Bicester, OX26 1BT
9	Land adjacent to Oxford Road, Bicester OX26 2NY
10	Banbury School, Ruskin Road, Banbury, OX16 9HY
11	Gardner Way, Adderbury, Banbury, OX17 3FW
12	Land to the rear of Samuelson House, Tramway Road, Banbury, OX16 5AU
13	Crockwell Farm, Great Bourton, Banbury, OX17 1QT

SCORING MATRIX

Rank	Site	Score	Site No.
1	The Warriner School Farm, Grove Road, Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4LJ	29	1
2	Land lying to the south west of Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4RA	18	5
3	Banbury School, Ruskin Road, Banbury, OX16 9HY	13	10
4	Crockwell Farm, Great Bourton, Banbury, OX17 1QT	11	13
5	Wynmere Farm, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5TD	9	4
6	Banbury Road, Bloxham, OX15 4SE	9	6
7	Land to the rear of Samuelson House, Tramway Road, Banbury, OX16 5AU	8	12
8	Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, OX25 5HD	5	7
9	Land west of Oxford Road, Bicester, OX26 1BT	5	8
10	Land adjacent to Oxford Road, Bicester OX26 2NY	4	9
11	Gardner Way, Adderbury, Banbury, OX17 3FW	3	11
12	Oxford Road, Middle Aston, OX25 5PZ	3	3
13	Warren Farm, Middle Aston, Bicester, OX25 5QF	2	2

2

Warren Farm, Middle Aston, Bicester, OX25 5QF



227
acre /
560 ha
farm

Private
landowner

Rural location south of
Banbury and north east of
Bicester in small village

Whole farm freehold
available, owner unwilling to
fragment.

The location is near the
A4260.

Buses run through Steeple
Aston to the south, between
Banbury and Oxford from
stops c 1.5km distance from
site.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

As a farm this is quiet and rural in
nature and large enough. A parcel
/buildings would need to be identified
within this large working farm.

Although accessible from an A road,
the site is however is remote (c 10km to
centre of Bicester) with very poor public
transport links and therefore not in a
very sustainable location.

Availability

Owner is not willing to sell just part of
the site without the rest of the estate,
thus site is too large.

Achievability

Not achievable. Unwilling seller.
Change of use of part or whole of site
would be required. Remote location
may be difficult to justify without
significant transportation data to
suggest this is preferable to sites
located near to settlements.

3

0

0

3

3

Oxford Road, Middle Aston, OX25 5PZ.

7.6 ha
19
acresPrivate
landowner
(part of
Warren farm)Set of former farm buildings
now in commercial use with
undulating pasture land
surrounding them.Freehold interest of whole
farm for sale.Rural location south of
Banbury and north east of
Bicester

Close to the A4620.

Buses run through Steeple
Aston to the south between
Banbury and Oxford from
stops c 1.5km distance

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

See site 2 above.

Quiet and rural location and site large
enough although only part would be
required. A parcel would need to be
identified within this asset.Although accessible, the site is very
remote (c 10km to centre of Bicester)
and not in a sustainable location.**Availability**Owner is not willing to sell just part of
the site without the rest of the land, thus
site is too large.**Achievability**Not achievable unless acquire whole.
Unwilling seller.Change of use of part or whole of site
would be required. Buildings could be
used under permitted development
rights, but permission would be
required for alterations and extensions
as well as use of the land. Securing
prior approval (highways) could also be
an issue.Remote location may be difficult to
justify without significant transportation
data to suggest this is preferable to
sites located near to settlements.

3

0

0

3

4

Wynmere Farm, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5TD



3.84 ha/
9.49 acres

Private landowner

The site consists of a 4-bedroom farm house and a range of farm buildings and paddocks amounting to almost 10-acres.

Residential and agricultural land.

Freehold.

The site is situated within an AONB.

12km south of Banbury and 18km west of Bicester, access from Banbury Road (A361).

Positioned on a bus route but a distance away from bus stop. Route includes Banbury and Chipping Norton. Very infrequent service.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

Larger site than required. Would need to check if can be readily subdivided.

Remote, rural location situated within an AONB. Access arrangements are poor as is public transport. Not a sustainable location.

Availability

Alternative use value (residential) would exceed thresholds.

Achievability

Not easily achievable. Access is poor and location unsuitable. Cost of acquisition likely to be prohibitive and exceed threshold.

The existing buildings on the site would not be suitable for the proposed school, would need considerable modification and as result there are likely planning and cost issues making redevelopment challenging.

4

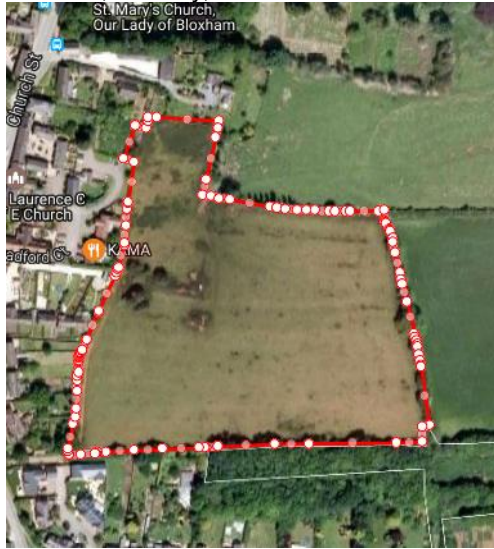
9

3

2

5

Land lying to the south west of Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4RA



3.1 ha/
7.90
acres

Residential
developer.

Located on eastern side of Bloxham

Residential developers own land on the western boundary of Bloxham.

A planning application for 37 homes was withdrawn. A revised application for 24 dwellings (15/01528/F) was also withdrawn (2016). Considered overdevelopment in terms of scale in relation to village category.

Rural area. Adjacent conservation area.

Potential access from Collins Drive

Bus service runs between Chipping Norton and Banbury c hourly on the Banbury Road.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

Suitable size and parcel.

Bloxham is the third largest settlement in Cherwell district after Banbury and Bicester and is well placed to provide a location to serve both towns and the north of Oxfordshire.

Potential point of access from Collins Drive, not explored.

Sustainable location on edge of larger settlement.

Availability

Potentially available. Residential land value likely to be sought by landowner.

Achievability

Achievable, although potentially an expensive option.

Access arrangements are currently unclear.

7

18

5

6

6

Banbury Road, Bloxham, OX15 4SE

1.3 ha/
3.4acPrivate
ownerNorthern end of Bloxham
opposite the Warriner School.

This site consists of agricultural land used as a stables; an open field with small farm buildings.

Access likely to be achievable from Ellis Lane

Bus service runs between Chipping Norton and Banbury c hourly on the Banbury Road.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

Sustainable location on edge of larger settlement. Bloxham is the third largest settlement in Cherwell district after Banbury and Bicester and is well placed to provide a location to serve both towns and the north of Oxfordshire.

Rural location but with access to road network.

Site adjacent to the Warriner School, offering potential access to school farm.

Availability

Owner unwilling to dispose. Likely to be expensive/residential value if owner was willing.

Achievability

Not achievable as it is not available to acquire.

9

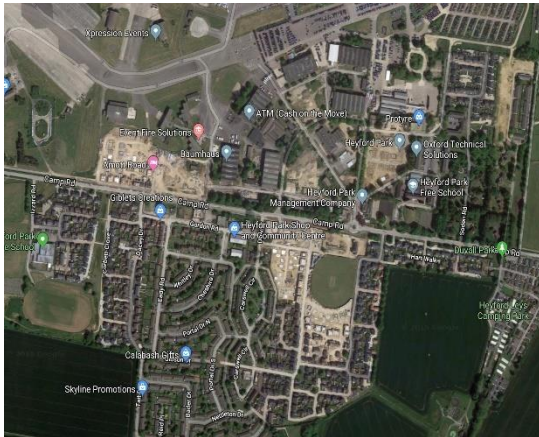
0

0

9

7

Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, OX25 5HD



N/A

Dorchester Group.

Part of the Heyford Park strategic development.

Cherwell Local Plan allocated land for 1,600 additional homes and 1,500 additional jobs, including a school.

The settlement has bus routes to Oxford and Bicester currently as well as a train station with routes to Oxford and Banbury.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

Location here would be sustainable as in a new settlement. However once constructed the site would not be rural in character and does not have access to a farm. Construction site is not a conducive environment for an SEN school due to noise pollution and disturbance.

Strategic site already includes sites for education to meet its own demands. SEN provision may compliment the existing proposed schools, however a site is not included in the masterplan.

Availability

Owner unwilling to dispose. Expensive if must pay residential value.

Achievability

Not achievable as not available.

LPA unlikely to support loss of residential or employment land for specific D1 within master-planned area.

5

0

0

5

8

Land west of Oxford Road, Bicester, OX26 1BT

325.26
acresCountryside
Properties
(Bicester) LtdStrategic housing site
(Kingsmere) south- west of
Bicester.1,585 dwellings and
community facilities, including
two new schools and a
community hospitalAccessible site, close to bus
routes.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

SuitabilityNot rural/part of strategic expansion of
town.Would need to acquire a parcel of land
within the wider development. Use of
land not already identified for D1 school
would have an impact on the
masterplan, plus provision of open
space and housing land supply
requirements.**Availability**

Seller unwilling to lose residential plots.

Purchase of a residential parcel would
be costly.**Achievability**Not easily achievable. Risk that LPA
will not support the proposals unless
this is the only suitable location further
to a site search.

5

0

0

5

9

Land adjacent to Oxford Road, Bicester OX26 2NY



3.6ha/
9.12
acres

Scenic Land
Development
s Ltd

Site on south side of Bicester within area identified for employment and retail uses.

Allocated for employment use. Planning permission has been granted (01/16) for the erection of a 150 bed hotel and B1 use.

Adequate accessibility, close to the A41.

The site is close to a park and ride bus facility serving Oxford and Bicester.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

Suitability

Not a rural location.

Site on edge of larger settlement. Sustainable location. As a strategic employment site, on a busy road, this is not suitable as it is not quiet nor rural in character.

Would not require the full site.

Availability

Not available. Vendor wants to deliver planning permission for B1 uses.

Achievability

Not achievable as not available. Also a risk that LPA will not support loss of employment land.

2

0

0

2

11

Gardner Way, Adderbury, Banbury, OX17 3FW

1.5
acresAdderbury
Retirement
Living
S.A.R.LRear of Gracewell care home.
Located on A4260.Planning permission exists to
further expand the existing
facility,Access to A4620 Banbury
RoadThe village is on a bus route
to Banbury with an hourly
timetable.

Flood Zone 1 – low risk

SuitabilitySuitable location on main road to serve
wider search area. Semi-rural setting.
Adderbury is one of the larger villages
in north Oxfordshire.

Too small.

Transportation advice would be
required on suitability of the existing
access to serve a D1 site as well as a
care home.**Availability**Planning permission for expansion of
C2 care home exists, thus the site is not
currently available.**Achievability**

Not achievable.

A reasonably sustainable location.

Discounted due to site size

1

2

1

4

12

Land to the rear of Samuelson House, Tramway Road, Banbury, OX16 5AU



0.8ha/
2.0
acres

Inchmere
Design Ltd

Comprises several industrial units.

Allocated within a redevelopment area of mixed-use (housing and employment) for approximately 700 new homes.

Bounded by two watercourses running to the north and south of the site.

The site is close to the rail and bus stations.

Flood Zone 1/2/3 – parts of the site are designated within flood zones 1, 2 & 3.

Suitability

Not a suitable location. The site does not meet the size requirement. Not rural or quiet.

Access to the site is restricted and may require improvement if redevelopment is proposed.

Further investigations will have to be undertaken to understand risk of flooding

Good links to transport. Sustainable location.

Availability

The site is marketed with vacant possession on completion.

Achievability


Not easily achievable.

1

5

2

8

					<p>LPA unlikely to support loss of residential/employment land unless no suitable alternatives exist.</p> <p>Redevelopment would incur demolition and possibly remediation costs.</p> <p>Highways and access may pose a challenge as well as flood risk although the site is well located for public transport.</p>		
13	<p>Crockwell Farm, Great Bourton, Banbury, OX17 1QT</p> 	18.73 ha / 46.28 acres	<p>Unknown</p> <p>Marketing agents – Brown & Co</p>	<p>The property is situated north of Banbury in the rural area, close to the village of Great Bourton</p> <p>Outline planning permission exists for the conversion and redevelopment of the existing barns into three dwellings.</p> <p>Access from Manor Road would be challenging as existing is narrow and rural in character.</p> <p>The village is on a bus route, however timetables are not available on line.</p> <p>Flood Zone 1 – low risk</p>	<p>Suitability</p> <p>This site is quiet and rural in nature, of suitable size and shape. A school would not require the full site; a suitable parcel would need to be identified.</p> <p>The village is one of the smaller settlements in north Oxfordshire. As located north of Banbury, it is in a less sustainable position than other identified sites.</p> <p>Access arrangements are poor and difficult to upgrade.</p> <p>Availability</p> <p>The site is on the market with vacant possession upon completion. Willing seller.</p> <p>Achievability</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7</p> <p>1</p>	11

					<p>Not achievable. Not a sustainable location. Access to the site would be difficult.</p> <p>Loss of residential units might not be supported by the LPA.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--



LocatED
6th Floor, Roxburghe House
273-287 Regent Street
London W1B 2HA

www.LocatED.co.uk

© Crown copyright 2016