MIDDLETON
CHENEY
Please Drive Slowly
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INTRODUCTION
1.1 OVERVIEW

This Vision Framework has been prepared to accompany representations to the emerging South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2A). It presents Catesby Estates vision for new residential development on land to the east of Waters Lane, Middleton Cheney.

Catesby Estates specialise in the delivery of land through the planning system. As promoters of the land to the east of the Waters Lane, Catesby has the expertise and experience to deliver high quality residential development within the plan period, helping to meet South Northamptonshire’s housing needs.
Middleton Cheney has a rich architecture and range of local facilities and services. Good transport links make it an ideal location for sustainable development.
1.2 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

Section 2.0 - Site and Local Context
Describes the site’s location and surrounding context.

Section 3.0 – Planning Context
Provides an overview of the emerging Local Plan and the need for future development.

Section 4.0 – Site Appraisal
Examines the site’s context, including how its constraints shape any potential development proposal.

Section 5.0 – Development Principles
Sets out the masterplan concept for the site.

Section 6.0 – Conclusions
Summarises the case for the allocation of the site.
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SITE AND LOCAL CONTEXT
2.1 THE SITE

Middleton Cheney is situated approximately 3 miles east of Banbury and 6 miles north west of Brackley.

Located on the eastern edge of Middleton Cheney, the site comprises of an agricultural field divided by an established tree and hedgerow.

The site is bound by Waters Lane (to the west) and properties fronting Thenford Road (to the south east). A recent housing development by David Wilson Homes is situated immediately to the west of the site on the opposite side of Waters Lane. Agricultural land borders the site to the north and east.

Middleton Cheney contains key local facilities including a primary school, secondary school, convenience stores, doctors surgery, village hall and sports field.

A frequent bus service connects the village with Banbury 4.5 miles to the west.

The good range of local facilities and public transport connections make Middleton Cheney a sustainable location for future development.

The boundary of the site is shown edged in red on the Site Location Plan on the following page. The total site area extends to 2.90 hectares (7.16 acres).
Viewpoint 1: View towards the eastern boundary from the west

Viewpoint 2: View towards the eastern boundary from site entrance

Viewpoint 3: View towards the south east (Thenford Road property)

Viewpoint 4: View south towards properties off Waters Lane

Viewpoint 5: View towards the north west from the south east

Viewpoint 6: View north towards the central field boundary
Historically two settlements, Lower and Upper Middleton Cheney, it wasn’t until the twentieth century that development amalgamated to form the present day Middleton Cheney.

The oldest properties in the village are situated along Main Road and High Street. They are typically wide-fronted houses with strong build lines and ridgelines parallel to the road alignment.

The High Street forms part of a Conservation Area (situated approximately 0.8km west of the site). The fourteenth century All Saints Parish Church dominates views along the street and all period properties front onto the pavement in a linear form.

The older buildings vary in size, height and architectural style, however building materials remain consistent. Most dwellings have been built using coursed or rubbled ironstone (often the locally sourced Horton Stone). Some original thatched roofs remain in the village, however the majority have been replaced with slate or tiles.
Higher density post-war development is found to the south and north east of the village. Detached and semi-detached homes are situated on cul-de-sacs off main distributor roads such as Chacombe Road, Horton Road/Washle Drive and Bull Baulk. Architectural features and materials are less in keeping with the historic village character and are of a more standardised style typically found in 1960’s housing developments.

Twenty-first century development exists at Rochester Drive, Thenford Road and most recently ‘Middleton Leys’, situated off Waters Lane (opposite the site’s western boundary). In keeping with the character of the village, most properties are clad in coursed stone with occasional brick properties to break up the street scene and add variety. Dwellings are located close to the road, framing the street and providing a sense of place and surveillance.

In summary, the majority of housing within the settlement is established in character, with a rich variety of architectural styles and facing materials present.

Design elements contributing to the local vernacular include: continual block structure to smaller houses; larger houses set back from the street laid out with front gardens; generous pitches to roofs; broken and varying eaves lines and simple but legible architectural detailing.
2.3 LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Facilities Plan above shows the location of facilities and services in relation to the site. The majority are located around the High Street within 800m of the site - equivalent to a 10 minute walk or 5 minute cycle.

Local educational facilities include Middleton Cheney Primary Academy (1km away from site) and Chenderit School (1.15km from site). The nearest doctors surgeries and dental clinics are situated in Banbury.
2.4 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

The Facilities Plan shows pedestrian and bus links from the site to the surrounding village and beyond. Waters Lane runs in a northerly direction along the western boundary of the site. The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit which increases to the national speed limit at the edge of the village and eventually connects up to the B4525 (Banbury Lane).

The nearest footpath is opposite the site (next to Waters Lane) and runs in an east-west direction towards the High Street. Overall, a comprehensive network of footpaths link the village with the surrounding countryside.

The Facilities Plan shows local bus routes. The nearest bus stops are located on Main Road, approximately 140m from the sites southern boundary. The stops are served by the 500 bus which operates every 30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays and hourly on Sundays, between Brackley and Banbury. The 132 bus operates a less frequent service, running twice every Saturday between Buckingham and Banbury.

Banbury Station is easily accessible by bus. Chiltern Railways operate three trains per hour to London Marylebone and two per hour to Birmingham Moor Street or Snow Hill. Cross Country also operate a service which travels north to Manchester or Newcastle via Birmingham New Street, and south towards Southampton or Bournemouth via Reading.
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PLANNING CONTEXT
3.1 LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

ADOPTED AND EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

The adopted Development Plan includes saved policies from the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) and West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) Local Plan (Part 1) (2014).

The WNJCS does not include any site specific proposals for residential development in the rural areas. WNJCS Policy R1 ‘Spatial Strategy for the Rural Areas’ establishes that for the period 2011-2029 there is an identified need for 2,360 dwellings in the rural areas. The Council has already met this requirement through completions or sites with planning permission. The Council acknowledges that the 2,360 requirement is not a maximum and that in accordance with the NPPF, in some villages there is likely to be some need for additional market and affordable housing in the future to meet identified local needs. It has also been acknowledged that this development may not all be able to be accommodated within the defined confines of a village.

The Council is preparing a Part 2 Local Plan in conformity with the WNJCS to provide more detailed planning policies and site allocations. On adoption the Plan will replace the remaining saved policies in the 1997 South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

The Preferred Options draft of the Part 2 Local Plan approved for public consultation in July 2017 proposes a criteria based policy for new residential development on suitable sites adjacent to the village confines.

In the draft Part 2 Local Plan Middleton Cheney is defined as a Primary Service Village (Tier 2 Settlement) described as follows:

“To maintain and enhance their role as large villages which provide employment, retail, and key services and facilities for the local area, the Primary Service villages will be a focus for accommodating an appropriate level of growth. These are the most sustainable villages within South Northamptonshire District. These have the ability to support sustainable patterns of living in the District because of the current levels of facilities, services and opportunities that are available. There is scope for limited development within or adjoining the village confines of these settlements where this is limited to meet any identified local needs or accommodation to meet individual or communal specialist needs including Starter or self build homes or where there are opportunities for the redevelopment of brownfield sites which will result in a positive environmental improvement”.

The overall WNJCS housing requirement is based on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) dated 2010 which is now seven years old. The SHMA, together with other evidence will be reviewed as part of the commitment to review the Core Strategy for adoption no later than 2020. South Northamptonshire Council is committed to this review following the submission of the Local Plan Part 2 in late 2018.

EMERGING MIDDLETON CHENEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Middleton Cheney was designated a Neighbourhood Plan Area in October 2012. Work on preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan commenced in January 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan will not be progressed until the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan is further advanced.

“Development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay – a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision.”

(The Framework, Ministerial foreword)
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SITE APPRAISAL
4.1 SITE OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the site’s characteristics and all environmental and technical matters. It confirms there are no significant physical, environmental and technical constraints to developing the site for residential use.

The plan at the end of this section shows the site’s physical, technical and environmental constraints and opportunities.

View from the west of site towards the north east
4.2 LANDSCAPE

The site lies within the ‘Middleton Cheney and Woodford Halse’ Character Area forming part the ‘Undulating Hills and Valleys’ Character Type identified in the Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment.

The landscape character strategy states that new development should be controlled to conserve and enhance the balance of the rural elements that contribute to the intrinsic character of the agricultural landscape. Wherever possible, the distinctive and strong hedgerow network should remain intact, particularly where historic field patterns are evident, and conserved and managed to encourage species diversity and enhanced wildlife habitats.

The strategy states there may be opportunities for limited development in association with the rural villages. Where such development is considered, reference should be made to the locality for the effect on the landscape resource and wider setting, together with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout and arrangement of features in the landscape.

There are a limited number of local views towards the site from close range. Views from the wider site context, for example from Waters Lane or to the north of the site are possible during winter leaf conditions but are very minor and glimpsed and/or gained in the context of existing settlement and other urban infrastructure.

Views from the Conservation Areas in Middleton Cheney are restricted by the density of built form within the village and no key views have been identified by the Conservation Area Appraisals.

In summary it is considered that development within the site would relate to the existing built form of Middleton Cheney, be visually well contained and would not result in an unacceptable adverse effects to the landscape character or visual amenity of the site and its surrounds.

4.3 ARBORICULTURE

The perimeters of the site are characterised by dense hedgerow and occasional trees. The quality and health of the trees on site will be determined through further detailed investigation.

A small section of hedgerow and potentially some trees along the western boundary may need to be removed to facilitate the proposed site access. Replacement planting will be provided to mitigate any loss.
4.4 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.4.1 HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

The site is currently accessed from Waters Lane via a filed gate at the junction with the recently constructed housing to the west.
Two options for providing vehicular access to the site from Waters Lane have been considered. These proposals, if carried out with appropriate surfacing materials, will provide a high quality environment where vehicle speeds are kept to a minimum to promote a safe pedestrian priority environment.

Option 1 – Roundel

- Raised table at the junction of Centenary Road / Waters Lane forming part of an existing simple priority junction with 2m ramps up to table level.
- Raised table at the junction of Slade Leas / Waters Lane incorporating elements of mini-roundabout design taken from DRMB TD 54/07.
- Addition of a new 5.5m wide access to proposed development to the East with 2 x footways either side of the access linking Centenary Road and Waters Lane.
- Herringbone blocks used for the tables with a contrasting material / colour for the inner ‘dome’ and further contrasting material set at a 2m offset at the roundabout to encourage low vehicle speeds.

Option 2 – Staggered Junction

- Raised table at the junction of Centenary Road / Waters Lane forming part of an existing simple priority junction with 2m ramps up to table level.
- Raised table at the junction of Slade Leas / Waters Lane and Proposed Access / Waters Lane creating a raised staggered junction. The proposed access taking the form of a 5.5m wide access to proposed development to the East with 2 x footways either side of the access linking Centenary Road and Waters Lane.
- Raised tables will reduce speeds along Watery Lane and the omission of give way markings at the proposed access and Slade Leas will encourage motorists to slow down.

Pedestrian access to the site will be provided by a new footway on the eastern side of Waters Lane. This footway will run along the frontage of the site, and extend into the site at the vehicular access point. A second pedestrian access will be provided from the northern parcel of the site onto Waters Lane to link up with the existing public right of way to the west. This will provide a shortened walking distance to the local facilities within the village.

Parking will be provided in accordance with the Northamptonshire Parking Standards document (2016).

Further surveys, assessments, and consultation with the local highway authority will be undertaken to ensure that any impact from the development on the local highway network is sufficiently mitigated.
4.4.2 GROUND CONDITIONS

The site does not have any significant geotechnical constraints in relation to strata or contamination given its greenfield nature.

The BGS Mapping data identifies the bedrock geology as Whitby Mudstone Formation with Marlstone Rock to the west side of the site along Waters Lane.

Historically the site has been in agricultural use and as such the risk of significant contamination being present is considered low. Notwithstanding this prior to development a ground investigation will be completed.

4.4.3 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

The whole of the site falls within Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Seas), Flood Zone 1 ‘low probability’.

Surface water is likely to outfall via an existing surface water sewer running west to east across the centre of the site (subject to its capacity) or by gravity to the eastern boundary. As a worst case, an allowance should be made for balancing of surface water to a greenfield run off rate with a 40% allowance for climate change.

On site storage will be provided within attenuation basins, which will ensure surface water treatment is provided. A surface water management strategy would manage surface water runoff sustainably, with key features potentially providing areas of ecological and amenity value.

4.4.4 UTILITIES

Mains gas, water, electricity and BT will all need to be installed to serve the site.

Confirmation will be sought from each network operator to determine whether reinforcement to existing infrastructure will be required to serve the development proposals.

4.4.5 NOISE AND VIBRATION

A baseline noise level survey and an assessment of the site to examine the extent of the current noise environment and determine the suitability of the site for residential development, will be carried out based on the guidance contained within British Standard (BS) 8233:2014 “Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings”.

The results of the assessment will include any requirements for mitigation measures to ensure that internal and external noise levels are within guideline values.

4.5 ECOLOGY

Habitats of elevated value within site, including hedgerows and semi-mature / mature trees will be retained.

Overall, the site is considered to provide only minor opportunities for protected species. In any event, it is anticipated that any species will be safeguarded and enhanced under a sensitively designed masterplan.

Significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement exist following the removal of land from agricultural use. In addition, the creation and reinforcement of green infrastructure, such as hedgerows and mature trees, will give rise to significant potential gains.

4.6 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The adjacent plan shows the site’s physical, technical and environmental constraints, along with all opportunities for development (explained in more detail in the following section).
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DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
5.1 OPPORTUNITIES

The key opportunities for new development include:

- the potential to create a high-quality sustainable residential development with a strong emphasis on good design and “place-making”
- the potential to integrate the development proposals within the existing village fabric
- the potential to provide new homes with a mix of typology, scale, mass and size, contributing towards an interesting street scene avoiding repetition, echoing the character and identity of the local area while meeting the needs of local people
- opportunity to provide much needed affordable housing
- opportunities to create appropriate and accessible public open space and green networks through the site
- opportunity to provide strong links to the local pedestrian, cycle and highway infrastructure network within the surrounding village context
- providing attenuation features on the site to control the discharge of surface water run-off from the development offering betterment to the surrounding area.

5.2 PROPOSAL

The proposal (shown on the following page) is an illustrative representation considering the key features and associated constraints, while suitably accommodating the key opportunities previously identified.

The proposal illustrates residential development with a capacity of up to 50 houses.

The configuration of housing blocks can be planned to reflect the local setting, so the development integrates seamlessly into the site and the village.

- The indicative proposals for the site are underpinned by key design principles:
  - an achievable, well-structured housing layout which uses the site’s natural features with key character areas throughout, creating a positive ‘sense of place’;
  - a pedestrian movement route is proposed around the development perimeters, increasing permeability and choice of route within the development;
  - tree and hedgerow retention will be maximised wherever possible and enhanced through new planting. The planned development facade will address all green infrastructure, ensuring that all retained trees and hedgerows positively contribute to the scheme design, provide positive features in that they are functional and form ‘social’ spaces, while helping to integrate the development within the surrounding context;
  - a new boundary planted in an east-west direction to form a continuation of the strong linear boundary to the north west;
  - publicly accessible open space will help the health and welfare needs of future occupants of the development. A large proportion of the development will be public and semi-natural open space, which is predominantly located to the northern and eastern edges of the site;
  - an easy-to-read hierarchy of primary and secondary movement corridors are proposed to maximise connectivity and aid permeability. Streets will be faced by development resulting in a visually strong street scene;
  - the provision of a sustainable drainage system will ensure that the impact of development upon the local surface water drainage network can provide a betterment to existing greenfield run-off rates.
5.3 DESIGN STRATEGY

When considering the design context for any development, it is important to draw inspiration from the character of the local area to ensure the development integrates well into its surroundings.

Our study of Middleton Cheney concluded that it has a rich and varied character, which helps to create a comprehensive pattern book to work with when selecting the right block structure, scale and architectural styles for a design strategy.

New development on the site should have smaller houses (1, 2 and 3 bedroom) ranging to medium or medium-large houses (4 and 5 bedroom). Such a mix of property sizes will ensure that the land is used efficiently.

Development should be up to two-and-a-half storey, with generously pitched roofs and gables.

Block structure should vary to help people navigate the site and create streets and spaces with character.

At the core of the site, block structure could be more continual with building facades close to the street. At the site’s fringes, block structure can be less continual and more relaxed with blocks in varied configurations, set at differing angles to avoid uniformity along the street.

This relaxed configuration can help to soften the transition between the newly built-form and retained open space to the eastern edge of the site. Landscape will be prioritised over structure, with the existing green infrastructure and other green enhancement able to contain development.

Variation in the massing of detached blocks set back from the green edge at various depths will ensure that the development edge avoids repetition and allows the landscape to organically contain development.

Development should address both key spaces and open green spaces to help give the right level of natural surveillance and spaces that are functional, safe and social.

Concerning the style of architecture, development should include aspects of the following:

- Yellow coursed stone to reflect the local character of the area with occasional facing brick or rendered walls (either smooth or medium texture finish) finished in traditional organic colours such as ivory, cream and white to add variety;
- Roofs shall be mostly gabled with some occasional hips to add variety;
- Feature gables occasionally clad with treated timber waney edge boards;
- Grey plain tiles (sand faced/smooth) to roof coverings in the majority with occasional natural slates;
- Chimneys will feature regularly atop the ridge line, and to larger dwellings, along the gable end;
- Mainly, verges shall be clipped with cut masonry. Bargeboards occasionally feature to gables;
- White painted joinery, windows and door frames;
- Head and sill detailing will be simplistic. Timber lintels will be detailed to heads. To rendered plots, heads will be finished with over-sized bell-cast stop beads. Occasional brick detailed heads and stone dressings to sills will feature;
- Front entrance door styles, simply vertically boarded with/without small glazed lights.
- Front gardens enclosed where possible eg: stone walling to contain development at the green edge, railings at the site core.
- Where front gardens cannot be enclosed, allow for a generous scheme of landscaping.
- Private drives will directly abut the landscape ie: associated green infrastructure and open space. Field boundaries will be enhanced with new tree and hedgerow planting where gaps or thinning is present. This will help to alleviate any potential appearance of the development edge at ground level.
- Hard surfacing and edgings to streets and driveways to encourage a ‘shared surface’ arrangement (so the design promotes low speeds, so pedestrians and cyclists feel safe).

Fundamentally, “good design” should be the backbone of the proposed development which will create a strong “sense of place”, one where people will want to live.
CONCLUSION
6.0 CONCLUSION

The land to the east of Waters Lane, Middleton Cheney has been robustly assessed in terms of its planning, environmental and physical context. It has been shown that the site is suitable to accommodate future housing development to meet identified needs.

The analysis of the site and the illustrative proposal presented within this document demonstrates how a well-designed, high-quality development of up to 50 homes can be achieved to respond to the context of the site.

The site is readily available, deliverable and suitable for development. It would make a sustainable and appropriate opportunity for new housing to assist in meeting the council’s needs.