

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Bertie Place Recreation Ground
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPS3
Site size (ha)	0.67

Site location



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A) Site overview

- The site is currently a public recreation ground.
- The site is currently allocated for housing, and there is a live application for 31 homes (ref: 23/00988/FUL). Unlikely other uses would be proposed or would align with strategy.

Site photos



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B) Open space, nature and flood risk

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Description of current context

- A number of established trees onsite, particularly around perimeter. The trees are significant and are important to public amenity in the area and will provide valuable ecosystem services. Existing trees may influence developable area of site and its capacity.
- The recreation ground contains regularly managed grassland, likely of limited diversity, though the tree lines bordering the site may be of greater value. However, there is potential for protected species i.e. slow worms, to be found on site.
- The recreation ground is likely to exceed the minimum score required by the proposed UGF policy, and it is expected that this is maintained or improved with any future development on the site.
- There are no specific ecological designations on site, however it may lie within the catchment area of the Iffley Meadows SSSI (600m away). The SSSI is sensitive to changes in the flows and quality of water in the two arms of the River Thames due to being in its floodplain. As such it can be impacted by contamination through surface water runoffs.
- Site is partially in Flood Zone 3b. There is a small area of surface water flood risk towards western boundary on site.
- Based on current and historic uses, land contamination risks on this site are low.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Slow worms are a protected species, although their habitats are not. If found they can be relocated to alternative sites. Slow worm sites should not be isolated from other potential wildlife corridors so, if they are able to be retained on site, a buffer should be retained along the river and railway corridors.
- Mitigations would be required to minimise the amount of surface water runoff to reduce the impact of surface water flooding to development onsite and further harms to the Iffley Meadows SSSI.
- There is a moderate level of natural surface cover on the site, and in its current state it is at a level that will meet the policy requirement for the type of proposed development. Options to ensure that the UGF scores meet the policy requirement post development can include retaining the mature trees along the perimeter as far as possible, and integrating highly

(UGF) rated natural features into development schemes, including features that may support onsite biodiversity as stated above.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

- Site contains no known archaeological sites or has limited/uncertain archaeological potential
- Site is also outside conservation areas and view cones. No heritage assets on site or within its immediate setting.
- The context is primarily residential with a suburban character. There are areas of woodland and mature, well-established trees on the perimeter of the site and the surrounding area. Adjacent to the site are a nature park and a caravan site.
- Site contains a playground and a MUGA, with no other development on site which makes it effectively a greenfield site. The playground and MUGA will likely take up most if not all of the developable area of the site.
- The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with a low density, low height suburban character. Most of the buildings are two storey, semidetached dwellings with the occasional short terrace. The site bordered by rear the gardens of residential dwellings, an area of woodland, a caravan site and a disused retail unit.
- The north and east of the site are bordered almost continuously by the back gardens of dwellings along Wytham Street and Abingdon Road, which limits the permeability of site. At present site has a single point of vehicular entry/exit via Bertie Place, and there is a cycle path that connects Wytham Street to Bertie Place.

Analysis and urban design implications

- No significant implications of development for historic environment expected on this site.
- The recreation ground and MUGA will need to be 're-provided' ideally on site, so this can be incorporated into the open space requirement for the site – which is expected due to the number of units expected to be proposed.
- Open space/public realm landscaping can also incorporate SUDS as part of mitigations against surface water flood risk.
- There is an opportunity for an increased level of density from surroundings to be delivered on the developable area of this site, subject to constraints arising from areas of flood risk and the need to avoid overly dominating the surrounding residential development that is in close proximity. Increased density can be achieved by thoughtful consideration of layout and block typologies e.g. terraces as opposed to semidetached dwellings, rather than height due to amenity concerns of neighbouring dwellings (overlooking, overshadowing) and respecting character of surrounding context.
- To further protect the amenity of adjoining neighbours, setbacks from the boundaries and suitable massing may be required at the north and eastern boundaries.
- Linkages between the site and adjoining natural features should be explored i.e. mature trees along site perimeter, watercourses, woodland beyond Whytham Street. This can be achieved by a site layout and block arrangements. The linkages can be direct physical connections or strong visual relationships.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

- Road access will be from Bertie Place, although only potential for one route in, one route out, so site will be a cul-de-sac (for vehicles) There is pedestrian access through to the Abingdon Road and Wytham Street.
- Good pedestrian and cycling connections using National Cycle Route 5 which cuts through the site and will need to continue through the site, even if its exact location is altered.

- Access/egress from the site and immediate surroundings lies within Flood Zone 2. Part of Abingdon Road which lies near the site is in Flood Zone 3b.
- There are good public transport links with bus stops nearby on Abingdon Road served by high frequency bus routes to the city centre and towards Abingdon. Redbridge P&R is also nearby.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Access/egress from the site is over land in moderate flood risk, further investigation and mitigation is likely to be required.
- Existing pedestrian and cycle routes go through the site and layout of development should ensure continued permeability through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelers.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

- Re-provision of MUGA and playground will be required and may be incorporated into the open space provision that will most likely be required for the site given the scale of the landowner's aspirations. Existing natural features on site should be retained as far as possible.
- There are no existing uses in the vicinity that would impact the amenity of future occupiers of development on the site. The site is backed onto by the rear gardens of residential dwellings on two boundaries – the amenity of those occupiers will need to be taken into account in future proposals, especially as it relates to overlooking or overshadowing.

F) Landowner aspirations

- Landowner aspirations for the site are for housing. The site is a current allocation in Local Plan 2036 and is under consideration for allocation in the emerging 2042 plan. There is a live planning application for 31 homes with 're-provided' MUGA and play area on the site.

G) Any extra work needed to inform allocation? (won't apply to all sites)

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- SFRA Level 2 assessment
- Site specific ecological/biodiversity assessment

H) Key considerations informing the minimum number of homes for the allocation policy

Minimum capacity for the site has been calculated with the following assumptions:

- Density based on typical suburban typology – 60 dph
- Developable area excluding Flood Zone 3 coverage and potential buffer to wildlife corridors/habitats