



**Land West of Bloxham  
Road, Banbury**

**Landscape and Visual  
Appraisal**

Prepared by:  
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Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:  
**Barwood Development  
Securities Ltd**

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## Executive Summary

- S1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Barwood Development Securities Ltd, to inform planning proposals for the development of up to 60 new homes at Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury. EDP is an independent environmental consultancy and Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute, specialising in the assessment of developments at all scales across the UK.
- S2 This report summarises the findings of a comprehensive landscape data trawl and field appraisal undertaken by EDP's landscape team. The proposed development and mitigation are described, and an assessment has been undertaken of the likely landscape and visual effects having regard to the above, in line with a robust methodology which aligns with the principles embedded within the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition*.
- S3 The geographical extent of change affecting the host Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Type would be extremely small, being limited to the site itself and its immediate surroundings to the west and south. The proposed development addresses the 'Landscape Strategy' within the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) by enhancing components of the landscape character through meadow grassland, hedgerow enhancement and tree planting.
- S4 There would be elevated effects on the character of the site itself as a result of the proposals (which is an unavoidable consequence of wholesale land use change), but the proposals offer an opportunity to enhance the existing site fabric in some areas and introduce new habitats to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity on-site. In particular, the proposal responds to the need to integrate the proposed built form with the landscape and the existing residential development.
- S5 The assessment of visual amenity finds that the site is visually contained within circa 0.5-1km of the site, with the greatest level of anticipated change likely for PRoW users, residential receptors and road users to the south and east. To the north, the existing settlement screens views of the proposals, and the generally flat landscape between the site and Wykham Lane means views are foreshortened, with existing vegetation having a notable effect on screening views. There may be some distant filtered views from further south as the ground rises, but these would see the proposals in the context of a wide panorama and would not materially impact the views (given the existing context) and would be very few and far between.
- S6 Residents of Crouch Farm, Crouch Cottages and the newly constructed properties that abut the site boundary to the north have variable views into the site and would, consequentially, experience some moderate effects. This is not a reflection on the quality of the proposals, which have been designed to mitigate change through boundary planting and the provision of sufficient offsets.
- S7 The assessment demonstrates the extent to which sensitive layout and strategic planting proposed in the masterplan would mitigate views, retain and reinforce the characteristic

landscape fabric and pattern of the site, and assimilate the proposed development into the settlement edge.

- S8 Accordingly, this LVA concludes that the site has the capacity for the development as proposed on the masterplan, and that there is no 'in principle' or policy, landscape or visual reason why the site should not be developed as proposed.

## **Section 1**

### **Introduction, Purpose and Methodology**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Barwood Development Securities Ltd ('the applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of proposals to develop residential development at Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury ('the site'). The site falls within Cherwell District Council Local Planning Authority (LPA) area, extends to circa 2.8 hectares (ha), and is briefly described in **Section 2** of this LVA.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Cardiff. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website ([www.edp-uk.co.uk](http://www.edp-uk.co.uk)). EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute<sup>(1)</sup> specialising in the assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape.
- 1.3 This LVA is part of a suite of documents accompanying an Outline Planning Application for the proposed development summarised in **Section 6** of this LVA. The proposal is for an Outline Planning Application for the development of up to 65 dwellings, including open space provision, parking, landscaping, drainage and associated works, with all matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) except for access. The proposals are illustrated on the Illustrative Masterplan at **Appendix EDP 1**.

#### **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 1.4 The site lies directly to the south and west of Barwood Strategic Land's consented residential development (Planning Ref: 14/01188/OUT) for up to 350 dwellings and is currently under construction; herein referred to as 'Phase 2' development.

#### **PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS LVA**

- 1.5 The purpose of this LVA is to identify the baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics that might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. It then provides an appraisal of landscape and visual effects predicted to arise from development on the site, with reference to the baseline analysis.
- 1.6 In undertaking the assessment described in this LVA, EDP has:
- Undertaken a thorough data trawl of relevant designations and background documents, described in **Section 3**;

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<sup>1</sup> LI Practice Number 1010

- Assessed the existing (baseline) condition and character of the site and its setting, described in **Section 4**;
- Assessed the existing visual (baseline) context, especially any key views to and from the site (**Section 5**). The establishment of baseline landscape and visual conditions, when evaluated against the proposed development, allow the identification and evaluation of landscape effects later in the LVA at **Section 7**;
- Described the landscape aspects of the proposed development that may influence any landscape or visual effects (**Section 6**);
- In **Section 7**, assessed the landscape and visual effects in accordance with the approach described below;
- Reached overall conclusions in **Section 8**; and
- Provided an analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme, which is determined by combining the magnitude of the predicted change with the assessed sensitivity of the identified receptors. The nature of any predicted effects is also identified (i.e., positive/negative, permanent/reversible).

## **METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE ASSESSMENT**

- 1.7 The proposed development assessed by this LVA is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This LVA has, therefore, been undertaken in accordance with the principles embodied in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition* (LI/IEMA, 2013) (GLVIA3) and other best practice guidance, insofar as it is relevant to non-EIA schemes.
- 1.8 **Familiarisation:** EDP’s study has included reviews of aerial photographs, web searches, LPA publications and landscape character assessments. EDP has also obtained, where possible, information about relevant landscape and other designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), conservation areas and gardens and parks listed on Historic England’s ‘Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England’ (RPG).
- 1.9 **Field Assessment:** EDP has undertaken a comprehensive field assessment of local site circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the site and its surroundings, using photography from a number of representative viewpoints. The field assessment was undertaken by a suitably qualified landscape architect in fine weather, in April 2021. Whilst being early spring, this did predominately provide ‘winter’ conditions whereby leaf cover was absent; the field assessment enabled an appraisal to be made of the potential worst-case impacts, and it is those which are reported in this LVA.
- 1.10 **Acknowledgement of any Shortcomings:** The field assessment was undertaken in early spring, with the leaf cover largely absent. Therefore, the assessment has been undertaken based upon a ‘worst case’ scenario, informed by professional judgement.

- 1.11 **Design Inputs:** EDP's field assessment has informed a process whereby the development proposals have been refined to avoid, minimise or compensate for landscape effects. Such measures are summarised in **Section 6** and form an important part of the LVA process, by enabling key constraints and opportunities to be incorporated into the design of the proposals.
- 1.12 **Assessment Methodology:** Predicted effects on the landscape resource arising from the proposed development (as detailed in **Section 7** of this LVA) have been determined in accordance with the principles embedded within published best practice guidance, insofar as the assessment adopts the following well-established, structured approach:
- Likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity are dealt with separately;
  - The assessment of likely effects is reached using a structured methodology for defining sensitivity, magnitude and significance which is contained as **Appendix EDP 2**. This framework is combined with professional judgement. Professional judgement is an important part of the assessment process; it is neither 'pro' nor 'anti' development but acknowledges that development may result in beneficial change as well as landscape harm;
  - As advised in GLVIA3, the appraisal takes into account the effects of any proposed mitigation; and
  - Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. Fifteen years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the shorter-term effects (which may often be rather 'raw' before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long time period.

## **STUDY AREA**

- 1.13 To establish the baseline and potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:
- First, a broad 'study area' was adopted, the extent of which is illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**. Based mainly on desk-based study, this broad study area allowed the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined, based on the extent of views to/from the site, extent of landscape effects and the site's environmental planning context; and
  - Second, following initial analysis and subsequent fieldwork, the broad study area was refined down to the land that is most likely to experience landscape effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 2km from the site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**.



## Section 2 The Site

- 2.1 **Plan EDP 1** illustrates the location of the site's boundaries and the study area for the LVA. The site's character and local context is illustrated on the aerial photograph contained as **Plan EDP 2**.
- 2.2 A site-specific assessment of the landscape circumstances of the local context has been undertaken by appropriately experienced Chartered Landscape Architects. This study has included a review of aerial photography, mapping and field assessments to enable EDP to prepare a description of the local landscape character, from which the following key points can be drawn. The Photoviewpoints provided should also be referenced as they illustrate the character of the site and surrounding area.
- 2.3 The site comprises a single grazed pasture field, which is bounded by hedgerows, trees and woodland. It is located between Bloxham Road (to the east), Barwood's Phase 1 consented and partially constructed residential development (to the north), the existing settlement of Banbury (further north) and agricultural farmland to the south.



**Image EDP 2.1:** View from within the site's interior looking south.

- 2.4 The site's local context is largely dominated by the adjacent consented and partially constructed residential development (Phase 2) which encompasses a large area of land to the north with associated public open space (POS) to the east (refer to **Plan EDP 2** and **Image EDP 2.2** and **2.3**). To the south, lie adjacent open agricultural fields. The landscape is generally open and exposed, but with some mature boundary vegetation.



**Image EDP 2.2:** Phase 2 area of public open space (POS) adjacent to the site to the east.



**Image EDP 2.3:** View of the adjacent residential development (Phase 1) under construction.

## Section 3 Findings of EDP Data Trawl

- 3.1 The findings of EDP's data trawl of relevant environmental and planning designations are illustrated on **Plan EDP 3** and summarised in this section.

### **BACKGROUND PUBLISHED EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS**

- 3.2 The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate, later in this report:

- *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021);*
- Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (adopted July 2015);
- Cherwell Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (July 2018);
- Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (October 2017);
- Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (Sept 2013);
- National Character Area Profile 95: Northamptonshire Uplands (Natural England, 2013);
- The Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study (OWLS) (2004);
- Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment (November 1995).

### **FINDINGS OF EDP DATA TRAWL**

- 3.3 EDP has conducted a review of relevant planning policy and landscape designations to identify what 'value' the local authority places on the landscape and what value it has in planning terms. This review focuses on local plan policy, since such policy is: (a) more specific to the site; and (b) reflects the advice of regional and national advice regarding landscape issues.

### **Landscape-related Designations and Other Considerations**

- 3.4 Landscape-related designations and policy considerations within 2km of the site are shown on **Plan EDP 3**. In summary:
- National landscape designations: The site does not lie within a nationally designated landscape;
  - Local landscape designations: The site is not located within a locally designated landscape; and

- Other landscape-related designations: The site does not lie within any other designated area, such as Green Belt, a green wedge or other policy area.

### **Heritage Matters**

- 3.5 Heritage assets can influence the visual character of the landscape and enrich its historic value. This LVA addresses heritage assets only insofar as they are components of the wider contemporary landscape – not in terms of their significance and value as heritage assets, which is a matter addressed by the separate Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (edp7153\_r005).
- 3.6 Within the near study area, the following heritage assets are the principal components of the contemporary landscape relevant to this LVA (i.e. those within circa 2km):
- There are no listed buildings on the site. The closest listed building in the surrounding landscape is Crouch Farm, lying immediately north-west of the site. Crouch Farm is occupied as a residential property and its visual amenity is considered in **Section 5**.
  - No part of the site lies within, or close to, a designated Conservation Area (CA). The closest CA is Bodicote, 1.9km to the south-east. During EDP's field appraisal it was found that there is no intervisibility with the CA and the application site and it will not be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal.
  - No part of the site lies within, or close to, a park or garden listed on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens (RPG) of Historic Interest. The closest RPG is Broughton Castle, a Grade II listed mansion and gardens, located 1.7km to the south-west of the site.

### **Arboricultural Matters**

- 3.7 A separate Arboricultural Impact Assessment (edp7153\_r006) considers the arboricultural assets on the site and within the study area. The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVA:
- The closest TPO (01/1954) is a woodland belt of trees to the east of the site, parallel with Bloxham Road and adjacent to No 2 Crouch Cottage; and
  - There is no Ancient Woodland within or surrounding the site.

### **Public Access and Rights of Way**

- 3.8 As detailed briefly in **Section 2**, a review of the definitive map reveals the following notable public rights of way (PRoW) within the study area:
- 3.9 Public footpath Ref. 120/28/10 lies approximately 190m to the west of the site, connecting Banbury to Wykham Lane. Extending from this are footpaths Ref. 120/29/10 and Ref. 145/4/10 which connect to Wykham Lane. To the north of footpath Ref. 120/28/10, the route continues on footpath Ref. 120/27/10 with other short routes leading to Crouch Hill. Approximately 160m to the east of the site, public footpath Ref. 120/49/10 provides a route from Bloxham Road to Wykham Lane.

3.10 **Plan EDP 2** illustrates these and other PROWs in close proximity to the site. A restricted byway Ref.120/34/10 lies approximately 275m north of the site, separated by the Barwood Phase 1 development. It also forms part of national cycle route '5' and Banbury Circular Walk.

### **National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance**

3.11 At the heart of the NPPF, (updated July 2021) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For landscape, this means recognising the intrinsic beauty of the countryside (paragraph 174 (b)) and balancing any 'harm' to the landscape resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects. This balancing exercise is to be undertaken by the decision maker (in this case the LPA) and falls outside the remit of this report. The benefits of the scheme are to be weighed against the effects on the landscape character and visual amenity as set out in this report, and as detailed in the Planning Statement accompanying this application. The policy framework is supported by the *National Planning Policy Guidance* where relevant.

3.12 Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include the NPPF (the Framework).

### **Adopted Local Plan (Published)**

3.13 The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1 (adopted July 2015) includes overarching general development policies, to which the development proposals will be tested. There are no policies that are specifically related to the site; however, the following overarching policies are of relevance in landscape and visual terms:

- Policy ESD 13: 'Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement' which, with particular reference to urban fringe locations, notes that *"Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided."*;
- Policy ESD 15: 'The Character of the Built and Historic Environment' states that *"New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential"*. Further, the policy text continues to provide a number of more detailed considerations, including that new development should *"Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features..."*; and
- Policy ESD 17: 'Green Infrastructure' which requires the maintenance and enhancement of the district's green infrastructure network, noting that *"Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond"*.

### **Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies**

- 3.14 The Local Plan Proposals Map shows no specific policies applying to the site.
- 3.15 The following saved policies to be retained under the new 2011-2031 Local Plan are considered relevant in the context of this assessment:
- Saved policy C7 'Landscape conservation', requires development to take into account the surrounding topography and landscape character so as not to detract from important views; and
  - Saved Policy C28 'Layout, design and external appearance of new development', which relates to the design of development (including siting, layout, size, scale, architectural style, building materials, means of enclosure and landscaping), and which should be sympathetic to the character of its landscape context.

## Section 4

### Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Landscape Character

- 4.1 This section provides an assessment of the ‘baseline’ (existing) conditions in respect of the character of the site and its landscape context. It summarises any relevant published landscape assessments that contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context. Such assessments provide a helpful understanding of the landscape context, but rarely deliver sufficiently site-specific or up-to-date information to draw robust conclusions about the significance of any change proposed by the development. Accordingly, EDP has undertaken its own assessment of the site itself, which is included in this section.

#### **NATIONAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

- 4.2 At the national level, the character of England has been described and classified in the National Character Area (NCA) profiles published by Natural England<sup>2</sup>. The site and its surroundings fall within NCA 95 ‘Northamptonshire Uplands’, which extends from Banbury to the south-west, to the outskirts of Northampton and Rugby to the east and north respectively.
- 4.3 For the scale of the development proposed on the site, it is considered that the description of landscape character undertaken at the sub-regional level is more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline. As such, of much greater use are the more localised assessments described in the following paragraphs.

#### **LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS (RELEVANT EXTRACTS PROVIDED IN APPENDIX EDP 3)**

##### **County Landscape Character**

##### ***Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004)***

- 4.4 The Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study (OWLS), published in 2004, examines the relationship between landscape character and biodiversity across the county. The study defines twenty-four landscape types (LTs) which are made up of landscape description units defined on the basis of similar patterns of geology, topography, land use and settlements.
- 4.5 The site lies within the ‘Upstanding Village Farmlands’ landscape type, which covers much of the upland areas to the south of Banbury and is not unique to the site. Again, the key characteristics are quite generally defined as:
- *“A steep-sided, undulating landform;*

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>



- *A well-defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows; and*
- *A strong settlement pattern of compact nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in [the] wider countryside.”*

4.6 The undulating nature of landform can be appreciated in **Plan EDP 2**, which illustrates contours of the local landscape in which the site lies. It can be seen from this plan that the site occupies a broadly flat plateau which extends across Banbury, as well as the surrounding context. It is not part of the steep-sided, undulating landform described above. The most notable change in topography is represented by Crouch Hill, which overlooks Banbury as well as much of the landscape in the vicinity. However, the change in topography does not noticeably encroach on the application site.

4.7 The site occupies a single, rectangular field, which shares the same geometric pattern although the majority of surrounding fields are medium-sized. The ‘Cultural Pattern’ section describes a landscape in which hedgerows give structure, but the lack of woodland and tree cover results in an open landscape. This is partially true of the site but also of the wider agricultural landscape. It describes hedgerow trees as being generally sparse and associated with grassland. Much of the landscape is in active agricultural management and therefore feature a variety of transient crops on seasonal rotation. Native hedgerow species include hawthorn, elm and elder and hedgerow trees are typically oak and ash, which is consistent with those found on the site boundaries and in the wider landscape.

4.8 This section goes on to state that trees are concentrated along linear features such as paths, bridleways and parish boundaries. These linear features are already well defined within the urbanised areas of Banbury, such as north of Longelandes Way, west of Valley Road and south of Hightown Leyes, all of which create a distinctive urban landscape.

4.9 The ‘Forces for Change’ section describes the following:

- *“The hedgerow network is generally intact and in good condition, even in places dominated by intensive arable farming. However, around Bodicote the hedgerow pattern is weaker, with roadside hedges tending to be overgrown and internal field hedges generally low and gappy; and*
- *There is some residential development within the main settlements that is out of character, particularly in the larger settlements to the south of Banbury. There are also some industrial estates, but they are generally well screened by landscape planting”.*

4.10 A key recommendation for this LCA, and for consideration as part of future development proposals, is to *“Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages.”* The Landscape Strategy guidelines, in summary and where of relevance to the site's location and context, identify the need to:

*“Landscape Strategy:*

- *Strengthen and enhance the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.*
- *Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type, particularly along roadsides.*
- *Conserve the surviving areas of permanent and ridge and furrow pasture on the steeper slopes and hillsides.*
- *Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials, characteristically the ironstones and slate tiles of the Northamptonshire Uplands, and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.*
- *Enhance tree cover through small-scale woodland planting next to streamlines and on steeper hillsides, so that it does not block off views of the landscape, keeping the feeling of openness.”*

#### **Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment (November 1995)**

4.11 At a local level the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment, prepared in 1995, is now somewhat outdated, however identifies eight broadly defined Landscape Character Areas (LCA) and seven more detailed landscape types. The site lies within the 'Ironstone Hills and Valleys', which is described as one of the larger District LCAs with features that include a *“complex topography”* formed by the underlying geology.

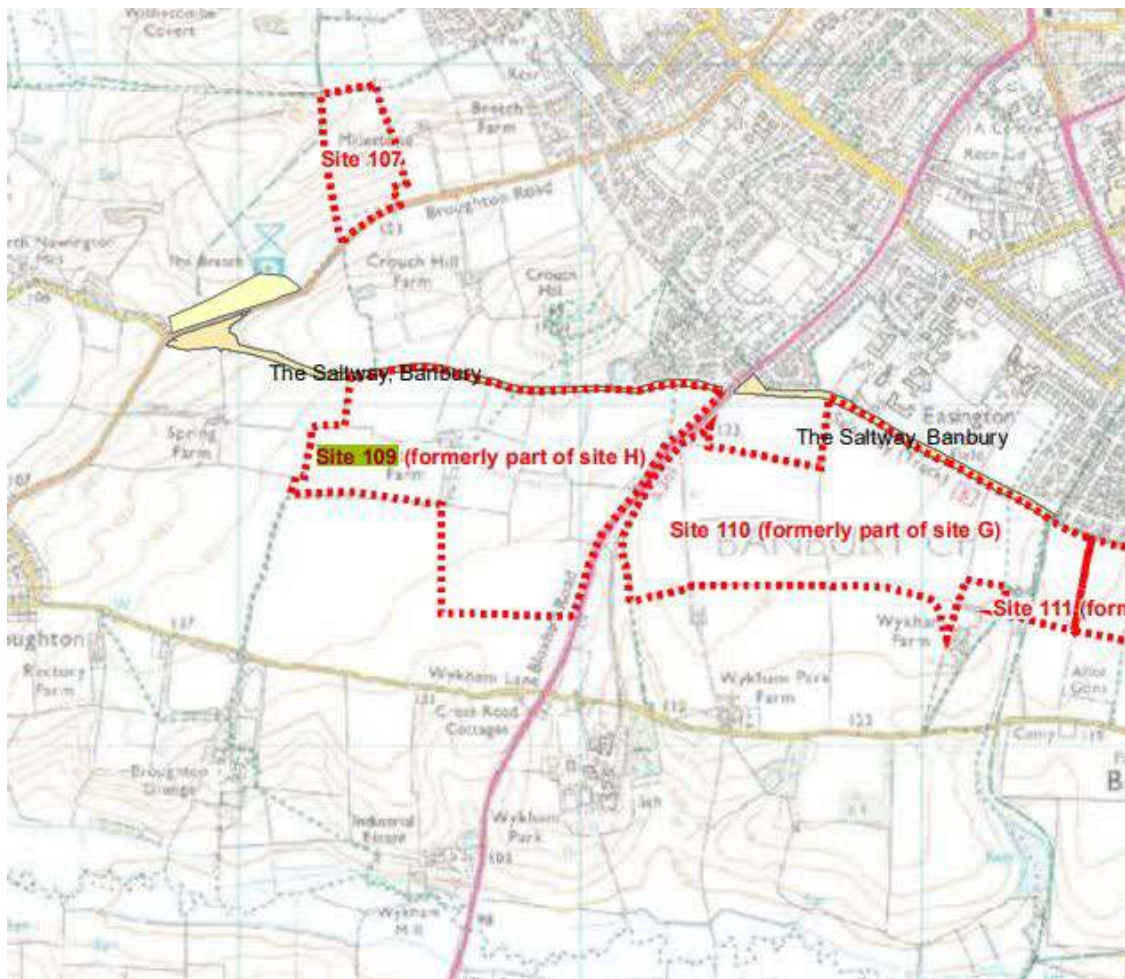
4.12 **Plan EDP 2** demonstrates that the complex topography only becomes more distinctive some distance to the south and west of the site, where the land dips down sharply into localised valleys. The site itself occupies a broadly flat plateau which it shares with the existing urbanised area of Banbury to the north. Wykham Lane extends along the edge of the plateau to form a more permanent landscape feature, which can be used to distinguish between the broad plateau to the north and the more complex landscape to the south.

4.13 This District LCA goes on to identify agricultural practices as contributing factors to the openness of this character area, describing *how “much of the higher land and gentler slopes now have a fairly open arable landscape”*. The agricultural landscape to the south of the site, in particular, does appear more open where fields are larger. However, the existence of residential development and trimmed and substantial hedgerows, limits this openness.

- 4.14 There is a section in the 'Ironstone Hills and Valleys' Landscape Character Area describing 'Special Features'. There are none listed that are particularly representative of the site. There is, for example, no reference to Crouch Hill or Salt Way.
- 4.15 This District LCA also provides guidelines for these landscape areas and types. The site lies within a 'restoration' area. Guidelines which form part of this, and the other published character assessments, will be revisited in **Section 7** as part of the assessment of the effects of the proposal on the fabric and character of the landscape.
- 4.16 For the purposes of this assessment, the proposals are assessed against the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' landscape type as identified in the more recent OWLS.

#### **Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (Sept 2013)**

- 4.17 White Young Green (WYG) was commissioned to carry out further Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (LSCA) work in September 2013 to supplement and build upon the Cherwell District Council Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, prepared in September 2010 by Halcrow Group Limited. The purpose of this report was to provide an update to the existing LSCA using verified baseline desk-based information, and support the Cherwell Local Plan.
- 4.18 In the 2013 LSCA, the site was located within 'Site H' which covered 103 hectares of land between the A361 in the south and Broughton Road to the north of the area. An addendum of this assessment was undertaken in August 2014, with a new site being identified: 'Site 109' (formerly part of Site H).



**Image EDP 4.1:** Extract of the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Addendum 'Site 109' (formerly part of site H).

- 4.19 In terms of landscape sensitivity, this assessment notes that *“Although the landscape is of small to medium scale field pattern within the north of the area, this changes to a large field pattern in the south of the area.”* It goes on to note that *“The site has few landscape features of importance within it apart from Salt Way passing on the north boundary of the site in an east west direction and the ridge and furrow which is visibly notable around Crouch Farm.”* Overall, Site 109 is concluded to have a combined medium landscape sensitivity.
- 4.20 In terms of visual sensitivity, the area is only generally viewed by those using the public footpath in the local area and by longer distance viewers across the Sor Brook Valley. The site has a medium visual sensitivity to the local visual receptors and a medium sensitivity to mitigation, thus a combined visual sensitivity of medium. The assessment identifies the potential for mitigation within the site through the *“re-establishment of hedgerows within the south of the area”* to assist in visual screening from the south and west. *“Mitigation would not alter the overall character but strengthen the character that is present within the smaller fields in the north of the area.”*

- 4.21 Based upon the methodology used for the assessment, the overall landscape capacity for residential development is medium to low. This assessment has not taken into account the residential development Land West of Bloxham Road to the north of the site, which has changed the nature of intervisibility with the site across the surrounding local context. Future management and maintenance recommendations for Site 109 *“should ensure safeguarding of the landscape context of Salt Way as a historic route. If development occurs, consideration should be given to the implementation of structure planting to the south of the development to mitigate views across Sor Brook valley.”*

### **EDP SITE ASSESSMENT**

- 4.22 While the above published assessments provide a helpful contextual appreciation of the wider landscape, as set out below, EDP considers that the published descriptions of the local landscape character do not convey the detailed character of the site and its immediate environs, in the same way as a more detailed study can. This requires an appropriately detailed assessment of the site itself and its immediate surroundings. EDP has undertaken such an assessment, and the results are described below and should be read in conjunction with **Plan EDP 2** and **3**.
- 4.23 A site visit was undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect in April 2021, in clear weather conditions. This field visit was complemented by a review of aerial photography, mapping and field assessments from publicly accessible locations (e.g., from local roads and PRow).
- 4.24 Recognising that 'landscape' is a multi-dimensional concept embracing 'what we see', its time-depth and physical attributes, this LVA reviews and assesses change to landscape character in terms of the physical landscape, the site's visual and sensory character, landscape fabric and habitats, historic landscape character and cultural connections.
- **Physical Landscape:** From **Plans EDP 2** and **3**, the site's physical relationships with its surroundings are illustrated. The site is positioned on the edge of the urban area of Banbury, which is the largest settlement in the area. The existing settlement immediately to the north and east of the site comprises the newly constructed residential development 'Land West of Bloxham Road'. Beyond this, to the north are a mix of primarily mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, two-storey red brick properties located in close proximity to Salt Way or overlooking Bloxham Road. Further residential development lies immediately to the east, beyond Bloxham Road. To the south of the site lies a large agricultural field which adjoins Wykham Lane. Further south lie open agricultural fields, either side of the Sor Brook;
  - **Surrounding Topography:** The site lies at approximately 135-140m Above Ordnance Datum (aOD), which is approximately 'at grade' with the settlement edge of Banbury. All the fields within this area are flat or (locally) very gently undulating where they occupy the broad plateau. However, over 1km to the south of the site, the land falls away sharply to 90-100m aOD where it forms part of the Sor Brook valley;
  - **Visual and Sensory Character:** The site is unremarkable in the wider context and contains little in the way of sensitive visual and sensory features, although being an

open parcel of land on the edge of the settlement, surrounded by vegetation, it does exhibit some value in this respect. It is agricultural grazing land which does not form a notable setting or fringe to the urban form of Banbury, although those approaching from the east and west along PRoW 120/28/10 and 120/49/10 would appreciate the site as they approach the town;

- **Landscape Fabric and Habitats:** Groundcover on the site is mainly grazing land with occasional mature features on the vegetated boundaries. The ecology appraisal confirms that the site is of local ecological value, with the main features of interest/quality being the hedgerow boundaries and trees;
- **Cultural Connections:** There are no defined cultural associations between the site and the local context. The site has historically been managed for agriculture but is not unique in that regard;
- **Landscape Quality:** The site comprises grazed farmland with generally good quality field boundary hedgerows and numerous hedgerow trees of varied quality. The landscape is considered to be of good quality, although is somewhat influenced by the adjacent settlement areas; and
- **Recreation Value/Access:** There are no PRoW running through the site. There is a good network of PRoW to the west and east, which link to new routes running through the residential development to the north.

## **INTERIM CONCLUSIONS: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

### **Overall Sensitivity of the Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Type**

- 4.25 The landscape within which the site is situated is generally representative of the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' LT. There are no landscape designations covering the site or within the study area. The above appraisal of value, using Landscape Institute guidance, defines the value of the site in the local context of medium.
- 4.26 The susceptibility of the landscape resource is defined as the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects), to accommodate new development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Given the small scale of the site in comparison to the overall LT and the focus of key characteristic features to field boundary fabric, it is felt that the LT has capacity to accommodate change within the site without extensive detrimental impact upon the LT as a whole, resulting in a medium susceptibility and therefore and overall **medium** sensitivity.

### **Overall Sensitivity of the Site Character**

- 4.27 The main character and valuable fabric of the site is to be found along the vegetated boundaries, which include an area of woodland and limited number of tree groups and hedgerows. From a sensory perspective, the site is consistent with its near, and more distant, context, being relatively unremarkable within the wider landscape and experiencing a strong edge of settlement character along its northern edge. It does not form a prominent,

or important, part of the appreciation of the wider landscape, and is perceived as open grazing land in close proximity to existing residential properties in the context of Banbury.

- 4.28 All of the existing field boundary hedgerows would be retained as part of the proposed development (except a small loss on the northern boundary to allow for the access) and have the potential for improved management and enhancement. There is also scope for new hedgerow and tree planting within the development, in line with the published Landscape Strategy recommendations for the LT.
- 4.29 The site is used for pasture grazing and found to be of limited biodiversity value. Indeed, the proposed development offers the potential to increase the biodiversity value of the site, as set out in the Ecological Appraisal (edp7153\_r003). There are no obvious cultural associations with the site specifically.
- 4.30 On this basis, the overall sensitivity of the landscape character of the site and its environs is judged to be **low/medium** in accordance with EDP's methodology contained at **Appendix EDP 2**.

#### **INTERIM SUMMARY**

- 4.31 The landscape character receptors to be assessed within this LVA are summarised below for convenience.

**Table EDP 4.1:** Summary of Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

<b>Receptor</b>	<b>Overall Sensitivity</b>
The Site	Low/medium
The Site Context	Low/medium
Upstanding Village Farmlands	Medium

## Section 5

### Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Visual Amenity

#### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 Visual amenity (as opposed to ‘visual character’ described in the previous section) is not about the visual appearance of the site, but has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the proposed development.
- 5.2 This section describes the existing views; changes to views wrought by the proposed development are analysed in **Section 7**. An analysis of existing views and the ‘receptors’ likely to experience visual change is conducted in three steps, described in turn below.

#### STEP ONE: DEFINING ZONES OF THEORETICAL AND PRIMARY VISIBILITY

- 5.3 The starting point for an assessment of visual amenity is a computer-generated ‘zone of theoretical visibility’ (ZTV). The ZTV is derived using digital landform height data only and therefore it does not account for the screening effects of intervening buildings, structures or vegetation, but it does give a prediction of the areas that, theoretically, may be able to experience visual change; it thus provides the basis for more detailed field assessment.
- 5.4 The ZTV is then refined by walking and driving local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive at a more accurate, ‘field-tested’ zone of primary visibility (ZPV). The ZPV is where views of the proposed development would normally be close-ranging and open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle. In this instance, the field assessment was undertaken by an experienced landscape architect in April 2021 in fine weather, and therefore confidently predicts the extent of worst-case views of the proposed development.
- 5.5 Beyond the ZPV lies a zone of visibility that is less open, being either partly screened or filtered. Views from within this zone would include the proposal – it may not be immediately noticeable, but once recognised would be a perceptible addition to the view.
- 5.6 **Plan EDP 5** illustrates the findings of the visual appraisal from which it can be seen that the ZPV extends as follows:
- To the north the ZPV extends only as far as the neighbouring, and partially completed, residential development which is adjacent to the site’s north and western boundaries. Noting that the land to the west of the site forms part of the consented development’s open space and therefore does not comprise built form, but a large attenuation basin. This development all but restricts views south from other receptors, but change would be likely from the housing development and the open spaces;



- To the west, there would be available views from the nearby public footpaths Ref. 120/28/10, 120/29/10 and 145/4/10 to the west. Views beyond this would diminish towards the B4035;
- To the east there would be available views from Bloxham Road, with views further east largely restricted by the combination of the topography and intervening vegetation. Some glimpsed views might be available from the public footpath 120/49/10 in close vicinity; and
- To the south, the agricultural landscape continues unbroken for c.2km towards Bloxham. Within this immediate area views are foreshortened by the flat topography and intervening vegetation. Even at a distance of c.2.5km to the south of the site, from PRoW 136/6/20 on Hobb Hill, intervisibility is likely to be extremely limited.

5.7 Note: ZTV is **NOT** illustrated.

## **STEP TWO: DEFINING RECEPTOR GROUPS**

5.8 Within the ZPV and wider area, the people ('receptors') likely to experience visual change can be considered as falling into a number of discernible groups; these are reviewed below.

### **Rights of Way Users**

5.9 While there are a number of PRoW within the broad study area, only a limited number of locations on these routes allow for clear views towards the site, as indicated by the ZPV on **Plan EDP 4**. Generally, users of PRoW are considered of high sensitivity unless they are within areas particularly desensitised by urban form (such as within settlements) or conversely, within a landscape designation such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These routes are reviewed below.

- PRoW Ref. 120/28/10, 120/29/10 and 145/4/10 are connected routes which lie to the west of the site. **Photoviewpoint EDP 4** demonstrates that from PRoW 120/28/10, outside of the site to the west, there are no penetrating views into the interior of the site due to the maturity and width of the intervening tree belt. With the exception of the access track to Crouch Farm creating a narrow, slot view into part of the site, the tree belt and hedgerow form part of an effective screen and vegetated buffer to much of the north-west boundary of the site;
- Views from PRoW 145/4/10 are represented by **Photoviewpoint EDP 1**. At a distance of c.850m, the effectiveness of screening created by field boundary hedgerow is demonstrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 1**. Glimpsed, filtered views are possible of the Barwood Phase 1 development. Crouch Hill is distinctive as the backdrop to Crouch Farm, but the interior of the site itself is curtailed by trees and hedgerows;
- **Photoviewpoints EDP 2** and **EDP 3** taken from PRoW 120/29/10 and 120/28/10 respectively, portray similar characteristics of flat open agricultural fields contained by mature tree and hedgerow vegetation;

- To the north of the site, 120/27/10 and 120/108/40 lead to the top of Crouch Hill. Views are represented by **Photoviewpoint EDP 7**;
- PRoW Ref. 120/49/10 lies to the east of the site; beyond Bloxham Road, several PRoW generally follow a north-south direction. Along these routes, the combination of intervening field boundary vegetation and a gentle curvature of the local topography, results in there being no intervisibility with the site; and
- From the locally promoted Salt Way, PRoW 120/34/10 (merging into 120/35/10), which forms part of the Banbury circular route, and also part of the National Cycle Route 5 (NCR 5), the experience of the view is principally along the route of the track itself, as seen in **Photoviewpoint EDP 6**. There is a narrow breach in the hedgerow for footpath access (PRoW 120/28/10). However, the extent of mature vegetation alongside the route is effective in heavily filtering views both north and south. With reference to the methodology, the overall sensitivity of receptors using this locally promoted route is very high.

### **Road Users**

#### ***Bloxham Road (A361)***

- 5.10 Bloxham Road connects Banbury to Bloxham on a north-south axis. **Photoviewpoints EDP 8** and **EDP 9** are representative of the views from Bloxham Road towards the site. The site forms part of the approach into Banbury, where signs, entrance features, street lighting and a slow-down in traffic indicate to the receptor that the settlement is imminent. Owing to this being a main road, the overall sensitivity of receptors travelling along this route is low.

#### ***Wykham Lane***

- 5.11 Wykham Lane extends on an axis east-west, approximately 1km to the south of the site. Where there is potential for views, the actual intervisibility is curtailed by intervening hedgerows adjacent to this road. For a short duration of this route, where there is no hedgerow and only a timber post and beam fence, receptors passing in vehicles would experience more open views towards the site. The overall sensitivity of receptors travelling along this route is medium.

### **Residential Dwellings/Groups**

- 5.12 This LVA focuses predominantly on views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential properties, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application. However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change, so are reviewed briefly below:
- Barwood's Phase 2 development is adjacent to the site's northern boundary, separated by a block of broadleaved woodland. The proposed vehicular access would result in the loss of some trees to facilitate access into the site. Views from the new residential dwellings are likely to be largely filtered by the intervening woodland, although some

glimpsed views of the upper levels of built form might be possible from dwellings to the north-east. For the majority of dwellings, views of the proposals would be screened by intervening built form;

- Crouch Farm is located approximately 220m to the north-west of the site. As demonstrated by **Photoviewpoint EDP 4**, intervening vegetation along the northern and western field boundaries limits the extent to which views penetrate into the interior of the site, although some glimpsed views of the upper levels are possible; and
- Crouch Cottages are located at the access off Bloxham Road to Crouch Farm. These properties are orientated north-west to south-east and therefore are orientated away from the site to the west. Intervening vegetation, again, heavily filters westerly views from these properties.

### STEP THREE: DEFINING REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

5.13 Within the ZPV, there are clearly many individual points at which views towards the site are gained. EDP has selected a number of viewpoints that are considered representative of the nature of the views from each of the receptor groups. The selection of the representative viewpoints is based on the principle that the assessment needs to test the 'worst case' scenario, and in selecting these viewpoints, EDP has sought to include:

- A range of viewpoints from all points of the compass, north, south, east and west;
- A range of viewpoints, from distances at close quarters at the site boundary and up to distant viewpoints at 1km and more from the site; and
- Viewpoints from all the above receptor groups.

5.14 The representation of views is supported by **11 Photoviewpoints (PVPs)**. Their locations are illustrated on **Plan EDP 4**. Photographs from the selected viewpoints are contained in **Appendix EDP 4**. The purpose of these viewpoints is to aid assessment of a visual receptor(s). These viewpoints are not assessed separately.

**Table EDP 5.1:** Summary of Representative Viewpoints

<b>PVP No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Grid Reference</b>	<b>Distance and Direction of View (m)</b>	<b>Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor</b>
1	View from public footpath Ref. 145/4/10 looking north-east towards the site	443004, 238280	865m 45°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.
2	View from public footpath Ref. 120/29/10 looking east towards the site	443139, 238720	655m 90°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.
3	View from public footpath Ref. 120/28/10 looking east towards the site	443555, 238697	240m 90°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.

<b>PVP No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Grid Reference</b>	<b>Distance and Direction of View (m)</b>	<b>Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor</b>
4	View from public footpath Ref. 120/28/10 looking east towards the site	443632, 238782	755m 100°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.
5	View from public footpath Ref. 120/28/10 looking south-east towards the site	443769, 238979	200m 170°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.
6	View from the 'Salt Way'/restricted byway Ref. 120/35/10 looking south towards the site	443824, 239047	280m 170°	PRoW Users on promoted route. Very high sensitivity.
7	View from public footpath Ref. 120/108/40 at Crouch Hill looking south towards the site	443983, 239190	330m 180°	PRoW Users. High sensitivity.
8	View from Bloxham Road looking west towards the site	444046, 238591	85m 300°	Main road receptors. Low sensitivity.
9	View from Bloxham Road looking west towards the site	443983, 238400	210m 330°	Main road receptors. Low sensitivity.
10	View from Wykham Lane looking north towards the site	443777, 238157	440m 10°	Rural road receptors. Medium sensitivity.
11	View from Wykham Lane looking north towards the site	443302, 238209	625m 40°	Rural road receptors. Medium sensitivity.

## **Section 6**

### **The Proposed Development and Mitigation**

- 6.1 Having defined the baseline conditions in the previous two sections, this section reviews the proposed development and, in the next section, undertakes an assessment of the likely effects in landscape terms.

#### **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.2 An Illustrative Masterplan of the proposed development is included in **Appendix EDP 1**, while the Landscape Strategy is included at **Plan EDP 6**. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) supporting this application provides full details of the development proposals. This assessment is based on the contents of the DAS and Illustrative Masterplan, along with the mitigation shown on the Landscape Strategy.
- 6.3 The proposed development is for an Outline Planning Application for the development of up to 65 dwellings, including open space provision, parking, landscaping, drainage and associated works, with all matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) except for access.

#### **OVERALL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

- 6.4 The findings of EDP's early and ongoing field appraisals have been fed into the evolving proposals, in order to ensure that the masterplan is 'landscape led'. Accordingly, the proposal incorporates designed and embedded mitigation, as illustrated within the landscape sections of the DAS and Landscape Strategy provided at **Plan EDP 6**:
- The scheme aims to maintain the character of a strong treed edge encompassing the southern extent of Banbury and when approaching from the south, through strengthening the boundary vegetation. The proposals include planting new native trees, hedgerows, shrubs and meadow grassland, reflecting species present within the local vicinity. Proposed planting would integrate and soften views of the proposed built form and, through the use of appropriate species and quantities, address the site's relationship to the wider setting;
  - A network of public open green space is proposed around the whole perimeter of the development to provide recreational and biodiversity benefits for new and nearby residents, as well as contributing to the connectivity of the local green infrastructure network. The proposals retain and enhance existing vegetation with new planting;
  - Additional POS features have been incorporated within the site, comprising a seasonally wet attenuation basin, a local area of play and a recreational foot/cycle path. These features are surrounded by new planting to provide a variety of recreational experiences and habitat spaces throughout the development;

- The focus of residential built form within a single field parcel ensures that minimal loss of boundary vegetation would occur, with only a small section of woodland to the northern boundary required for removal in order to facilitate access into the site. This loss of woodland would be aptly compensated for across the development, through the addition of new tree and hedgerow planting and reinforcement of other boundary vegetation around the site's extents; and
- The overall landscape planting proposals would greatly increase the biodiversity across the site (as demonstrated by the 10% net gain), including within the areas of the site that contribute to the sustainable drainage strategy where new wet habitats would be created, forming both wildlife and amenity interest.

## Section 7 Assessment of Effects

### INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 In this section, the predicted effects on landscape character and visual amenity are assessed. The assessment uses the thresholds for magnitude, sensitivity and significance defined at **Appendix EDP 2** as a guide, but moderated where appropriate with professional judgement. Professional judgement is an important part of the assessment process; it is neither 'pro' nor 'anti' development but acknowledges that development may result in beneficial change as well as landscape harm. The assessment also takes account of the likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation.
- 7.2 Predicted effects on receptors are assessed at the construction stage and upon the first year following completion (Year 1), these effects tending to be the 'worst case'. Also provided is an assessment of effects at Year 15, once mitigation has had time to mature and the proposals are settled in their context. Year 15 (and beyond) is the timeframe over which the proposed development should be judged for its acceptability, with landscape change properly measured over this longer-term horizon.

### CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

- 7.3 Within the site, construction activity would inevitably result in a very high magnitude of change on the existing nature of the agricultural field, as a discrete geographical unit of the wider landscape. The existing field boundary vegetation would be retained, with the exception of those sections removed to accommodate the proposed new vehicular access point. A significantly adverse effect on the 'Perceptual and Sensory' dimension is not surprising during the temporary construction phase. Overall, the proposed development construction activity would result in a very high magnitude of change within the site, giving rise to a major/moderate temporary adverse effect within the site, albeit seen with some association to existing dwellings to the north of the site within Banbury.
- 7.4 In terms of the wider context, construction activity within the site would benefit from visual screening afforded by trees and hedgerows that immediately bound the site. There would be localised excavation of land, ground remodelling and the storage of topsoil, and slight alteration to local features of the site. Additionally, movement and machinery associated with the site operations would introduce additional localised activity. Recommendations for protection of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837, would ensure that the rooting areas of trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.
- 7.5 In the wider context, higher-level construction activities may be visible. Together, these operations would lead to an incremental increase in effects on the local landscape as construction draws to completion. Geographically, these changes would generally be experienced at the site level and its immediate context only, although longer filtered views from within some areas of the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' LT may be possible during winter months. During construction, the proposed development would not directly affect the

wider landscape context, as the physical effects of construction (i.e. changes to fabric and character) would be contained within the site. In the wider context, there would be a medium short-term magnitude of change to the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' LT, giving rise to a moderate/minor adverse and temporary level of effect

### **PREDICTED EFFECTS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT (YEAR 1 AND COMPLETION)**

- 7.6 Following construction/establishment of the Landscape Strategy (whichever is sooner), the predicted effects take into account suitable and appropriate management of existing and proposed landscape features, undertaken in accordance with a landscape management plan or similar.
- 7.7 The changes predicted to occur on the dimensions that contribute to the character of the site are described below and evaluated overall:
- **The Physical Landscape:** The primary changes to the topography of the site would be in relation to the provision of sustainable drainage (SuDS) features in the south-east corner of the site, and excavations for residential development and associated infrastructure. The proposals include properties up to a maximum of 2-storeys across the site; and
  - **Landscape Fabric and Habitats:** Changes to the fabric of the site would be limited to the removal of an area of agricultural grazing land of limited quality and the removal of a short section of woodland to facilitate the vehicular access. The loss of trees has been mitigated through the proposed Landscape Strategy, with new tree planting throughout the site, on the site boundaries and particularly including the enhancement of the southern boundary.
- 7.8 The activities involved in the change of use of the site, from agricultural land to a residential development, would result in a very large change to its visual and perceptual character. Following completion, the site would have undergone a wholesale change in use. As would be expected for any such development on a greenfield site, albeit one with some existing detractors (in the form of the adjacent settlement), this would result in a fundamental change to the visual and perceptual aspects of the site's character.
- 7.9 These effects would be tempered, to some degree, by the fact that the site sits adjacent to newly constructed residential development (Barwood Phase 2), and the landscape-led approach which would ensure the retention, enhancement, and long-term management of existing characteristic landscape elements. The provision of new features which respect the aspirations of the LT; particularly the retention of existing trees, where possible, and site boundary vegetation, and the provision of green buffers along the boundaries help limit effects.
- 7.10 In addition, the layout of the development (as illustrated on the Illustrative Masterplan at **Appendix EDP 1**) reflects the pattern of development set by the recent Barwood development to the north of the site, and represents, as a result, a logical extension in this part of the settlement's hinterland.



- 7.11 The proposed scheme includes the retention, enhancement, and ongoing management of existing boundary landscape features alongside establishment of new hedgerows, hedgerow trees and meadow grassland. Ongoing sympathetic management would lead to a gradual, positive characteristic alteration to the landscape features as the planting matures, with this (importantly) including the retained mature woodland to the north of the site, between the two site parcels.
- 7.12 The sensitivity of the site and its immediate environs is considered to be medium. Impacts would be of medium scale, restricted to within the site (though also visible within the immediate environs of the site), long-term and permanent. The magnitude of change on the site is therefore assessed as high, resulting in a **moderate** adverse effect at Year 1, and at Year 15.

### **PREDICTED EFFECTS ON THE UPSTANDING VILLAGE FARMLANDS LT**

- 7.13 The area immediately surrounding the site would be subject to the greatest change to the defined LT and this is predicted to diminish due to distance and intervening landform and features. Effects on the immediate surroundings and the wider area are described below. The overall sensitivity of the LT examined in the baseline was judged to be medium.

#### **The Site's Immediate Surroundings**

- 7.14 The area immediately surrounding the site would be subject to the greatest indirect change to the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' LT. The area affected would be focused on the landscape immediately to the west and south (due to the existing settlement context to the north and east). It would further diminish due to distance and intervening landform and features. The assessments below therefore represent the worst-case effects (i.e., those at close range).
- 7.15 The magnitude of change on the immediate environs to the site (within circa 200-300m) would be high during construction and at Year 1, reducing to low by Year 15 once the proposed boundary planting has developed, and the development has become integrated. With a medium sensitivity, the effect would be **moderate** adverse during construction and at Year 1, reducing to **moderate/minor** adverse by Year 15.

#### **The Wider Area**

- 7.16 As a result of the mitigation measures and Landscape Strategy described above, the proposals would result in a limited effect on the characteristic physical fabric of the site itself - changes would be limited to the loss of a parcel of agricultural grazing land, and the proposals, in landscape terms, would be perceived as an extension to the existing settlement from most vantage points. There would be no physical effect of the proposed development beyond the site boundary.
- 7.17 The layout of the proposed development has taken into account the patterns of existing vegetation, including field boundary vegetation surrounding the site, and also the pattern of development to the north. Critically, this includes the mature and contemporary settlement edge immediately adjacent to the north and east. In so doing, this has ensured that the

scheme can be implemented without notable harm to the underlying, and overarching, character, the topography or setting to the local landscape, notwithstanding the elevated changes that would be observed locally.

- 7.18 The mitigation measures that are integral to the proposed scheme, are intended to conserve character where it exists, and to restore or enhance landscape features where they have deteriorated, in line with the published OWLS. This includes the boundary hedgerows with hedgerow trees and ensuring that the proposals are well integrated spatially.
- 7.19 In addition, the site represents only a very limited proportion of the host LT, and for these reasons it is concluded that there would be a very limited change to the landscape character of the overall LT arising from the construction and operation of the proposals.
- 7.20 The sensitivity of the host LT is considered to be medium. The magnitude of change to the LT in these areas is considered to be low, reducing to very low over time. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, long-term effect which is considered to be **minor** adverse for the LT as a whole, reducing to **minor/negligible** over time as the proposed planting develops and matures, and the development becomes a well-designed part of the wider landscape and townscape.

#### **PREDICTED EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY**

- 7.21 The baseline visual amenity of the application site is described in **Section 5** of this report. As a consequence of intervening vegetation and built form, in combination with the plateau topography, it was found that only limited intervisibility between the site and publicly accessible areas (visual receptors) was available. Representative views are contained within **Appendix EDP 4 (Photoviewpoints EDP 1 to EDP 11)**. These views do not represent the only areas from which there would be an effect, rather they provide a representative assessment that is used as a benchmark to understand the wider potential effects.
- 7.22 All effects are adverse, unless otherwise stated, with construction effects being short term and reversible, Year 1 effects being medium to long-term and permanent, and Year 15 effects being long term and permanent.

#### **Rights of Way Users**

- 7.23 The following PRoW are identified within the baseline stage as being likely to experience an effect as a result of the proposals.
- 7.24 For PRoW routes 120/28/10, 120/29/10 and 145/4/10 that are to the west of the site, there would inevitably be a higher degree of change as the baseline changes from agricultural to urban use. However, these routes provide onward, immediate connections to Banbury and/or to Bloxham Road, with the results being that receptors would be familiar with urban context. In the longer term, the finished scheme would become more muted in appearance and softened by the maturing landscape planting.
- 7.25 During construction and at Year 1 the development would be glimpsed and filtered by existing boundary vegetation. The magnitude of change would be medium and the effect moderate adverse. At Year 15 the boundary vegetation, and the further mitigation planting

would have matured, reducing the extent of change to low, leading to a **moderate/minor** adverse effect.

- 7.26 In views from the elevated routes encircling Crouch Hill, illustrated by **Photoviewpoint EDP 7**, the proposed development is entirely screened by intervening vegetation, largely owing to the woodland adjacent to the site's northern boundary. During construction, effects are predicted to be minor. At Year 1 and Year 15, the proposed development would be screened by intervening vegetation. The magnitude of change would be very low, leading to a minor adverse effect on PRoW receptors.
- 7.27 Elsewhere, the combination of relatively flat topography on the plateau to the south of the site, combined with intervening vegetation, would ensure visual effects with the other identified PRoW are very limited.

### **Road Users**

#### ***Bloxham Road***

- 7.28 The only major road in the study area is the A361 Bloxham Road, where there are filtered views to the west of the site from certain open parts of the route. Receptors using this road exhibit a low sensitivity.
- 7.29 Along this part of Bloxham Road, receptors would be slowing down to enter the settlement, where views westwards would be already defined by new built form. The change would be most apparent as road users travel north and where breaks in roadside vegetation occur.
- 7.30 Over a short length of the overall route, the magnitude of change at the construction stage is considered to be medium, leading to a minor adverse effect. Good construction practices and mitigation would help reduce impacts but owing to proximity, the change would be recognisable. At Year 1 the development would be glimpsed beyond roadside and boundary vegetation. The magnitude of change would remain medium and the effect minor adverse. At Year 15, the proposed southern boundary planting, and the further mitigation would have matured, reducing the extent of change to low, leading to a **minor/negligible** adverse effect.

#### ***Wykham Lane***

- 7.31 This route is located sufficiently distant from the scheme to ensure that it retains its local character as a minor road. Instances of roadside vegetation and intervening field boundaries, alongside localised changes in topography, combine to limit the extent to which views are influenced by the proposed development, as shown on **Photoviewpoint EDP 10** and **11**. The proposed development would be well contained by surrounding trees during construction and this is anticipated to mature further to soften those limited portions of the scheme which may be perceptible. Receptors using this road are considered to be of medium sensitivity.
- 7.32 There may be very occasional glimpsed views through roadside vegetation towards the proposed development, but these would be oblique to the direction of travel and not widely available. At the construction stage the change would likely be the greatest, and result in a

low magnitude of change and a **minor** adverse effect. This would reduce to very low at Year 1 and Year 15, and result in a **minor/negligible** adverse effect.

### **Residential Dwellings/Groups**

7.33 This LVA focuses predominantly on views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential properties, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application.

7.34 However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change, so are assessed below.

- The dwellings bordering the northern site boundary, within Phase 1 have a variety of different boundary treatments and varying intervening vegetation between the dwelling and the site. Given these are newly constructed dwellings within the context of 'new development', the extent of change at the construction stage and Year 1 is likely to be medium, leading to **moderate** adverse effects. As noted above, this is likely to be the worst case, with the majority of effects much lower than this, particularly once proposed planting has matured;
- Crouch Farm - the site's existing western and northern boundary planting and the large gates to the farm obscure it from view for the majority of the site. There are, however, glimpsed views of the upper floors along the western and northern boundaries and into the centre of the site. The change at construction and Year 1 would be medium, forming a new and recognisable element within the view and with the settlement extending much closer to the receptor. This would lead to potential **moderate** adverse effects. At Year 15 the vegetation proposed within the POS boundaries (particularly in the north-west corner) would be more mature, in-filling the gap in trees and adding to the visual screening afforded by the existing boundary vegetation. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, leading to **moderate/minor** adverse effects.
- Crouch Cottages are located at the access off Bloxham Road to Crouch Farm. Despite the close proximity to the site the dwellings are orientated away from the site, with an area of intervening POS associated with the Phase 2 separating the site from rear gardens. The susceptibility of these dwellings is reduced by the Phase 2 development currently under construction, with associated construction impacts. During construction and at Year 1 the magnitude of change would be medium, leading to moderate adverse effects, with this reducing to low and therefore **moderate/minor** adverse effects at Year 15, once planting has matured.

## Section 8 Summary and Conclusion

- 8.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) is an independent environmental consultancy and Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute, specialising in the assessment of developments at all scales across the UK.
- 8.2 This report has summarised the findings of a comprehensive landscape data trawl and field appraisal undertaken by EDP's landscape team (**Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5**). In **Section 6**, the proposed development is described along with any proposed mitigation. **Section 7** undertakes an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects, having regard to the above and based on a combination of the thresholds set out in **Appendix EDP 2** coupled with professional judgement.
- 8.3 In terms of landscape, the character of the site would alter through the introduction of the proposed residential development and associated infrastructure. The development, and therefore the effects upon landscape character, would be permanent and long term but would only result in the permanent loss of a single pasture field, and a section of woodland to facilitate the site access.
- 8.4 New areas of public open space are proposed, with this including a circular walk around the site (with visual and biodiversity interest added by the SuDS features) and play provision. This multifunctional green space would be a positive resource for new residents, linking into the wider open space provision within the neighbouring Barwood development.
- 8.5 It is considered that the site forms a relatively 'normal' part of the 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' LT, being closely associated as it is with the existing settlement edge to the north and east. The proposals commit to providing enhancement in line with the Landscape Strategy set out in the OWLS; although there would be localised harm, the more effective transition between the settlement and surrounding rural landscape means that on balance, the landscape-scale impacts are considered to be acceptable.
- 8.6 Notable effects on landscape character would be limited to the site and its immediate environs during the construction phase and at Year 1. By Year 15, the growth and development of the existing and proposed planting would reduce landscape character effects within the environs of the site.
- 8.7 The visual effects of the proposal would be localised and limited to a small number of PROW which run close to the site, and residential properties which lie in close proximity to its boundaries. Views of the site are generally filtered and not especially extensive from public or private locations. The flat topography to the immediate south has the effect of foreshortening views and making vertical features more effective at screening/filtering the proposals than would otherwise be the case, whilst the new housing to the north screens many views from this direction. There is sufficient layering of vegetation within the surrounding landscape to ensure the extensiveness of visual change would be restricted to a limited number of local receptors, even where the topography undulates further to the south.

8.8 Notable effects on visual amenity would be limited to:

- A very limited number of residential receptors (Crouch Farm) and adjacent to the northern and eastern site boundaries that are anticipated to experience moderate effects. The comprehensive Landscape Strategy does, however, target potential visual impacts experienced from these properties and the assessment demonstrates that this can reduce the predicted visual effects; and
- PRoW 120/28/10, 120/29/10 and 145/4/10, which generally run in close proximity to the site to the west.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

8.9 The assessment demonstrates the extent to which sensitive layout and strategic planting proposed in the masterplan would mitigate views, retain and reinforce the characteristic landscape fabric and pattern of the site, and assimilate the proposed development into the settlement edge and rural landscape of the site context. In addition, this LVA shows how the proposed development would make a positive contribution to visual, recreational and wildlife amenity.

8.10 Accordingly, this LVA concludes that the site has the capacity for the development as proposed on the masterplan, and that there is no 'in principle' policy, landscape or visual reason why the site should not be developed as proposed.

## **Appendix EDP 1 Illustrative Masterplan**

## KEY

-  Proposed Site Boundary (total area 3.46ha)
-  Proposed Trees





## Appendix EDP 2

### Methodology: Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in the Appraisal/Assessment

- A2.1 Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views, as a result of changes to the perception of the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.
- A2.2 A number of factors influence professional judgement when assessing the degree to which a particular landscape or visual receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development. Sensitivity is made up of judgements about the ‘value’ attached to the receptor, which is determined at baseline stage, and the ‘susceptibility’ of the receptor, which is determined at the assessment stage when the nature of the proposals, and therefore the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to change, is better understood.
- A2.3 Susceptibility indicates “*the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences*”(3). Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor.
- A2.4 **Table EDP A2.1** provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a landscape receptor is judged within this assessment, and considers both value and susceptibility independently.

**Table EDP A2.1:** Defining the Sensitivity of the Landscape Baseline.

<b>EDP Assessment Terminology and Definitions</b>	
<b>Landscape Baseline – Overall Sensitivity</b>	
Very High	<p><b>Value:</b> Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.</p> <p><b>Susceptibility:</b> Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition*. Page 158.

<b>EDP Assessment Terminology and Definitions</b>	
High	<b>Value:</b> Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.
	<b>Susceptibility:</b> Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	<b>Value:</b> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.
	<b>Susceptibility:</b> Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	<b>Value:</b> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.
	<b>Susceptibility:</b> Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	<b>Value:</b> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.
	<b>Susceptibility:</b> Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

A2.5 For visual receptors, judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked considerations. For example, the most valued views are those which people go and visit because of the available view – and it is at those viewpoints that their expectations will be highest and thus most susceptible to change.

A2.6 **Table EDP A2.2** provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a visual receptor is judged within this assessment, and considers both value and susceptibility together.

**Table EDP A2.2:** Defining the Sensitivity of the Visual Baseline.

<b>Visual Baseline – Overall Sensitivity</b>	
<b>Very High</b>	<b>Value/Susceptibility:</b> View is designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
	<b>Examples:</b> May include views from residential properties; National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; open Access Land.

<b>Visual Baseline – Overall Sensitivity</b>	
<b>High</b>	<b>Value/Susceptibility:</b> View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
	<b>Examples:</b> May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.
<b>Medium</b>	<b>Value/Susceptibility:</b> View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
	<b>Examples:</b> May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
<b>Low</b>	<b>Value/Susceptibility:</b> View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
	<b>Examples:</b> May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work but visual surroundings have limited relevance.
<b>Very Low</b>	<b>Value/Susceptibility:</b> View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.
	<b>Examples:</b> May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.

## MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

A2.7 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of Change;
- Geographical Extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/Proportion.

A2.8 **Table EDP A2.3** provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

**Table EDP A2.3:** Geographical Extent Criteria.

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<b>Visual Receptor Criteria</b>
Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas.	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies.	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site.	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the development site itself).	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level.	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

A2.9 The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out in **Table EDP A2.4**.

**Table EDP A2.4:** Factors Influencing Judgements on Magnitude of Change.

Duration	Reversibility
Long Term (20+ years)	Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension, hydrocarbons.
Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)	Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units.
Medium term (5 to 10 years)	Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings.
Short term (1 to 5 years)	Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development.
Temporary (less than 12 months)	Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

**Table EDP A2.5:** Defining the Magnitude of Change to the Landscape and Visual Baseline.

Magnitude of Change	
(Considers Scale of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)	
<b>Very High</b>	<b>Landscape:</b> Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or fails to integrate with the baseline.
	<b>Visual:</b> Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.
<b>High</b>	<b>Landscape:</b> Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements.
	<b>Visual:</b> Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.

<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	
<b>Medium</b>	<b>Landscape:</b> Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.
	<b>Visual:</b> The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
<b>Low</b>	<b>Landscape:</b> Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape receptors/- characteristics; additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape.
	<b>Visual:</b> Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
<b>Very Low</b>	<b>Landscape:</b> Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
	Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.
<b>Imperceptible</b>	<i>In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.</i>

## PREDICTED EFFECTS

A2.10 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table EDP A2.6**.

**Table EDP A2.6:** Determining the Predicted Levels of Effects to the Landscape and Visual Baseline.

<b>Overall Sensitivity</b>	<b>Overall Magnitude of Change</b>				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
<b>Very High</b>	Substantial	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor
<b>High</b>	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor
<b>Medium</b>	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible
<b>Low</b>	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible
<b>Very Low</b>	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/- None

**Table EDP A2.7:** Definition of Effects

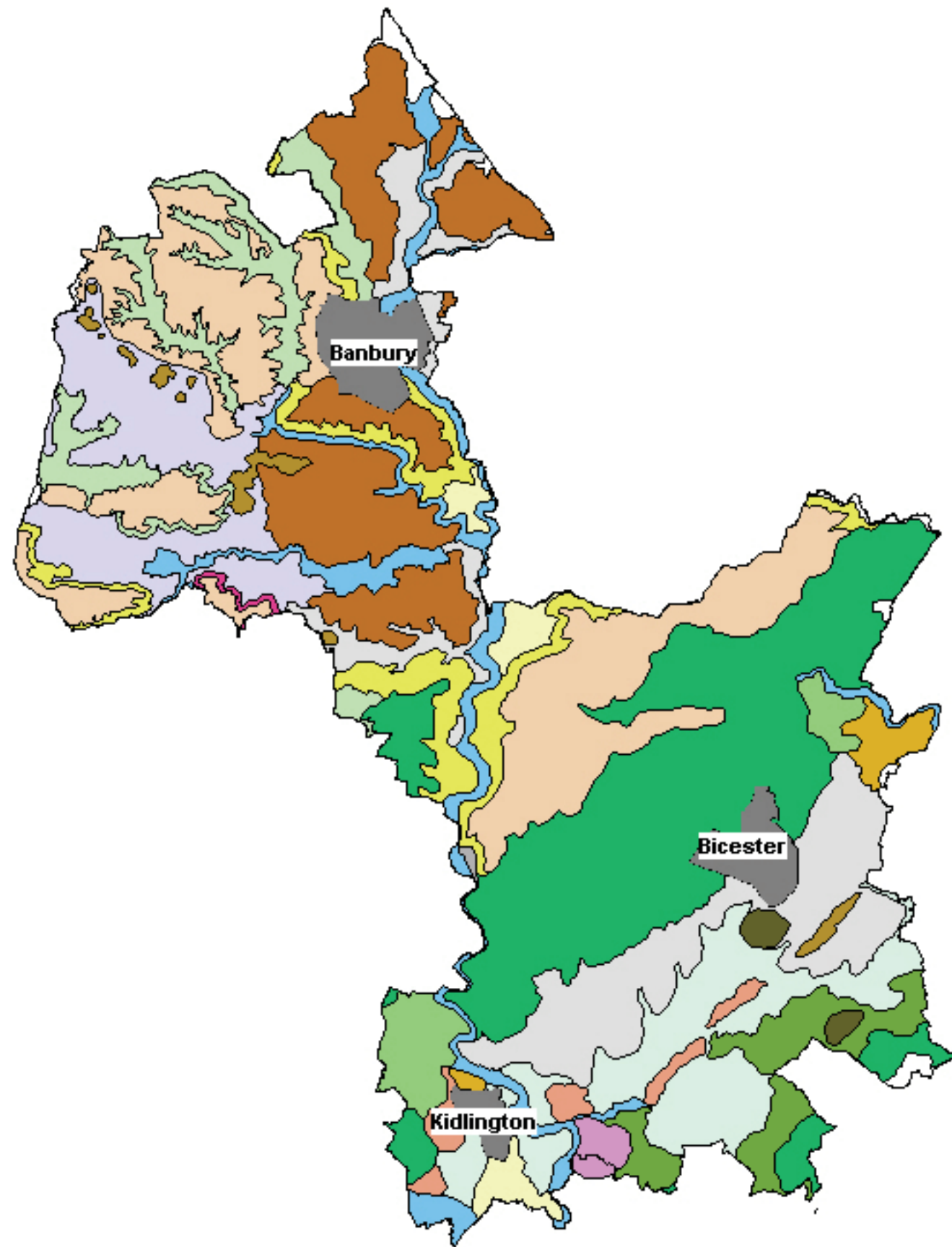
<b>Definition of Effects</b>	
<b>Substantial</b>	Effects that are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
<b>Major or Major/Moderate</b>	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to much ( <i>Major effect</i> ) or some ( <i>Moderate/Major effect</i> ) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
<b>Moderate</b>	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to a few of the key characteristics of the baseline landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
<b>Minor or Minor/Negligible</b>	Effects that result in slight alterations to some ( <i>Minor effect</i> ) or a few ( <i>Minor/Negligible</i> ) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
<b>Negligible or Negligible/None</b>	Effects that result in barely perceptible alterations to a few ( <i>Negligible effect</i> ) or some ( <i>Negligible/None effect</i> ) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
<b>None</b>	No detectable alteration to the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.

- A2.11 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large-scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, unless otherwise stated, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies.
- A2.12 Visual effects are more subjective as peoples' perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst case scenario. Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies.
- A2.13 The timescale of each effect is also important and effects are generally assessed at time stamps in the whole development life cycle: temporary (at a mid-point in construction), short-term (completion at year 1), medium-term (typically 15 years), medium- to long-term (15+ years). In some cases, the operational phase of a scheme could be considered 'temporary'.

## **Appendix EDP 3**

### **Local Landscape Character Assessment**

# Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study – Landscape Types



## Cherwell Landscape Types

- Alluvial Lowlands
- Clay Vale
- Estate Farmlands
- Farmland Hills
- Farmland Plateau
- Farmland Slopes and Valley Sides
- Lowland Village Farmlands
- Pasture Hills
- River Meadowlands
- Rolling Clayland
- Rolling Farmland
- Rolling Village Pastures
- Upstanding Village Farmlands
- Vale Farmland
- Wooded Estatelands
- Wooded Estate Slopes and Valley Sides
- Wooded Farmland
- Wooded Hills
- Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes



## Landscape Types:

### Upstanding Village Farmlands



#### 16. UPSTANDING VILLAGE FARMLANDS

##### Regional Character Areas

Northamptonshire Uplands.

##### Location

This landscape type covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and south of Banbury, around Claydon and Kidlington, Great Bourton, Bloxham and Deddington.

##### Overview

A hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from the local ironstone.

##### Key Characteristics

- A steep-sided, undulating landform.
- A well-defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows
- A strong settlement pattern of compact, nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in wider countryside.

##### Geology and landform

The Middle Lias series, a mix of clays and sands, largely dominates this area. The beds are overlaid in places by the Marlstone Rock bed, an iron-bearing limestone that gives rise to the higher hills. To the south of Banbury, only parts of the ironstone are overlaid by the clays and thin limestones of the Upper Lias, as these have been eroded away over much of north Oxfordshire. The rolling landform is apparent throughout the

landscape type, and rises to a height of 160m around Mollington. Around Deddington and Bourton, the landform is shaped into prominent ridges and small gullies drained by ditches and streams.

### **Land use and vegetation**

The land uses are mixed. Arable cropping dominates the areas around Deddington, Hempton, Bodicote and Claydon, whereas grassland, interspersed in places with small patches of scrub and secondary woodland, is largely associated with the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture is a characteristic feature of this grassland. These fields are sometimes used for pony grazing. A number of wide, species-rich road verges are located in the more elevated northern part of the landscape type.

There is very little woodland and it is largely confined to small plantations on the steeper grounds and in the parkland at Williamsote. Patches of scrub are found growing in the steeper gullies.

### **Cultural pattern**

There is a prominent pattern of geometrically-shaped fields enclosed by moderately tall hedges. The hedges give structure to the landscape and are dominated by hawthorn, elm and elder. Fields are moderately-sized, except for the larger arable fields around Bodicote. Hedgerow trees, of oak and ash, are generally sparse but become denser where they are associated with grassland. Most of the remaining trees are concentrated along roadsides, footpaths, bridleways and parish boundaries. The elevated nature of the landform, combined with lack of woodland and tree cover, results in a rather open landscape.

The pattern of well-defined nucleated villages is very characteristic. They are often situated on rising ground and slopes, linked by straight roads. This nucleated settlement pattern is in contrast to the few dispersed farmsteads in the wider countryside. The vernacular character is strong in most of the settlements, but is particularly prominent in the smaller villages to the north of Banbury including Bourton and Mollington. The larger settlements, such as Deddington, Bloxham and Adderbury also retain a core of buildings with a strong vernacular character. The distinctive ironstone used as building material gives rise to characteristic warm orange-brown buildings with stone or slate roof tiles.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

### **Overview**

This landscape type supports a range of locally important habitats, including deciduous woodland and plantations, as well as priority habitats such as acid and marshy grassland.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Predominantly low-medium to medium bioscores.
- Priority habitats such as acid and marshy grassland.

### **General Description**

This landscape type is located on the steep, undulating hills to the west of Banbury. Overall, it supports a range of locally important habitats including some deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. There is only a limited range of other important and priority habitats such as ancient semi-natural woodland, species-rich hedgerows, parkland and acid and marshy grassland. These habitats are generally very small and isolated within the landscape type.

## LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS

### A. Mollington (NU/28 and NU/35)

#### Landscape Character

The area has medium-sized fields and a mixed farming pattern, with the larger fields associated with arable farming and the smaller grass fields largely restricted to the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture can be seen in places. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of hawthorn and elm hedges with some ash and field maple. The hedgerow network is generally in good condition with dense, well-maintained hedges, although some internal field hedges tend to be low and gappy. Throughout this area there are thinly scattered, mature trees of oak and ash and a few small mixed plantations around Mollington.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscores/biobands: 32/LM; 54/LM

Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. There are some species-rich ponds.

### B. Wardington (NU/32)

#### Landscape Character

The area has small, regularly-shaped fields with both arable cropping and semi-improved grassland. The grassland tends to be restricted to the steeper slopes. Some ridge and furrow pasture can also be found. Fields are enclosed by hedges dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn, elm and field maple. There are sparsely scattered hedgerow trees of ash and oak, and a small deciduous plantation close to Williamscoot. The hedgerow network is declining and hedges are often low, gappy and, in some places, removed altogether and replaced by fences.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 100/MH

There are a number of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There is also parkland, with its associated mature trees, surviving acid grassland and heath along the embankments of a disused railway, and some marshy grassland along the Cherwell Valley.

### C. Bodicote (NU/16)

#### Landscape Character

The area is characterised by large-sized fields dominated by arable farming, with some smaller grass fields used for pony grazing. They are enclosed by low hawthorn hedges which are generally in good condition. Hedges bordering roadsides and old lanes are taller, well-maintained and more species-rich. There are a few young ash, field maple and oak trees in the hedges, and some small tree clumps close to farms.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 48/LM

Locally important habitats include plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There are also species-rich hedges bordering some roads and green lanes.

## **D. Bloxham (NU/9)**

### **Landscape Character**

The area is characterised by regularly-shaped, small-sized grass fields and larger arable fields. Ridge and furrow pasture is common. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of intact hawthorn and elm hedges which, in places, are overgrown and gappy. Mature ash, oak and sycamore trees are scattered throughout the area. They are denser where there is more grassland, along roadsides, country lanes and the disused railway line.

### **Biodiversity**

Bioscore/bioband: 48/LM

This area has a number of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There is also some parkland with its associated mature trees.

## **E. Deddington (NU/6)**

### **Landscape Character**

The area is dominated by large, geometrically-shaped arable fields. There is some semi-improved grassland, interspersed with scrub, on the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture is also evident. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of low, intact hawthorn hedges. They are generally taller and thicker where they enclose grassland. Mature ash and oak trees are scattered throughout, and they are denser to the east of Deddington and along bridleways and old lanes. There are some minor watercourses along the valley bottoms.

### **Biodiversity**

Bioscore/bioband: 36/LM

Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees.

## **FORCES FOR CHANGE**

- The hedgerow network is generally intact and in good condition, even in places dominated by intensive arable farming. However, around Bodicote the hedgerow pattern is weaker, with roadside hedges tending to be overgrown and internal field hedges generally low and gappy.
- There is some residential development within the main settlements that is out of character, particularly in the larger settlements to the south of Banbury. There are also some industrial estates, but they are generally well screened by landscape planting.
- Other land uses, such as the disused airfield and wireless station near Barford, can be visually intrusive.

### **Landscape strategy**

**Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages.**

### **Guidelines**

- Strengthen and enhance the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.

- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type, particularly along roadsides.
- Conserve the surviving areas of permanent and ridge and furrow pasture on the steeper slopes and hillsides.
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials, characteristically the ironstones and slate tiles of the Northamptonshire Uplands, and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.
- Enhance tree cover through small-scale woodland planting next to streamlines and on steeper hillsides, so that it does not block off views of the landscape, keeping the feeling of openness.

### **Biodiversity Strategy**

**Ensure that all surviving priority habitats are safeguarded, in favourable condition and management, and enhanced to satisfy the actions and targets identified within the relevant habitat and species action plans. Safeguard, maintain and enhance all locally important habitats in a way that is appropriate to the landscape character of the area.**

### **Guidelines**

- There are very few priority habitats within this landscape and they tend to be small and isolated. It is important that they are safeguarded and in favourable condition and management through agreement with the landowner. Opportunities for expanding these habitats within the landscape type are very limited.
- Species-rich hedgerows are distributed throughout different parts of the landscape type, particularly bordering roadsides and green lanes. Priority should be given to safeguarding and maintaining this resource, particularly in those local character areas where they remain a significant feature.
- Opportunities for the establishment of other locally important habitats, such as semi-improved grassland and small deciduous woodlands, should be promoted in order to strengthen wildlife corridors and enhance the local landscape character.

### **Key Recommendations**

- **Safeguard and enhance the landscape character of the hedgerow network.**
- **Ensure that the few surviving priority habitats are in favourable condition and management.**

**Appendix EDP 4**  
**Representative Photoviewpoints**  
**(edp7153\_d017a 19 December 2022 GYo/VPo)**



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



the environmental  
dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427  
www.edp-uk.co.uk  
info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: **443004, 238280**  
Date and Time: **20/04/2021 @ 11:27**  
Projection: **Planar**  
Visualisation Type: **1**

Horizontal Field of View: **39.6°**  
Height of Camera: **1.6m**  
Make, Model, Sensor: **Canon 5D MK2, FFS**  
Enlargement Factor: **100% @ A3**

Direction of View: **45°**  
Distance: **865m**  
aOD: **133m**  
Focal Length: **50mm**

date **19 DECEMBER 2022**  
drawing number **edp7153\_d017a**  
drawn by **GYo**  
checked **VPo**  
QA **RBa**

client **Barwood Development Securities Ltd**  
project title **Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury**  
drawing title **Photoviewpoint EDP 1**



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



the environmental  
dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427  
www.edp-uk.co.uk  
info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: 443139, 238720  
Date and Time: 20/04/2021 @ 11:37  
Projection: Planar  
Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°  
Height of Camera: 1.6m  
Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 5D MK2, FFS  
Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

Direction of View: 90°  
Distance: 655m  
aOD: 135m  
Focal Length: 50mm

date: 19 DECEMBER 2022  
drawing number: edp7153\_d017a  
drawn by: GYo  
checked: VPo  
QA: RBa

client: Barwood Development Securities Ltd  
project title: Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury  
drawing title: Photoviewpoint EDP 2





To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



the environmental  
dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427  
www.edp-uk.co.uk  
info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: **443555, 238697**  
Date and Time: **20/04/2021 @ 11:39**  
Projection: **Planar**  
Visualisation Type: **1**

Horizontal Field of View: **39.6°**  
Height of Camera: **1.6m**  
Make, Model, Sensor: **Canon 5D MK2, FFS**  
Enlargement Factor: **100% @ A3**

Direction of View: **90°**  
Distance: **240m**  
aOD: **136m**  
Focal Length: **50mm**

date **19 DECEMBER 2022**  
drawing number **edp7153\_d017a**  
drawn by **GYo**  
checked **VPo**  
QA **RBa**

client **Barwood Development Securities Ltd**  
project title **Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury**  
drawing title **Photoviewpoint EDP 3**



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



the environmental  
dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427  
www.edp-uk.co.uk  
info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: 443824, 239047  
Date and Time: 20/04/2021 @ 11:46  
Projection: Planar  
Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°  
Height of Camera: 1.6m  
Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 5D MK2, FFS  
Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

Direction of View: 170°  
Distance: 280m  
aOD: 139m  
Focal Length: 50mm

date 19 DECEMBER 2022  
drawing number edp7153\_d017a  
drawn by GYo  
checked VPo  
QA RBa

client Barwood Development Securities Ltd  
project title Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury  
drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 6

Photoviewpoint EDP 7: View from public footpath Ref. 120/108/40 at Crouch Hill looking south towards the site



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



the environmental  
dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427  
www.edp-uk.co.uk  
info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: **443983, 239190**  
Date and Time: **20/04/2021 @ 11:49**  
Projection: **Planar**  
Visualisation Type: **1**

Horizontal Field of View: **39.6°**  
Height of Camera: **1.6m**  
Make, Model, Sensor: **Canon 5D MK2, FFS**  
Enlargement Factor: **100% @ A3**

Direction of View: **180°**  
Distance: **330m**  
aOD: **149m**  
Focal Length: **50mm**

date **19 DECEMBER 2022**  
drawing number **edp7153\_d017a**  
drawn by **GYo**  
checked **VPo**  
QA **RBa**

client **Barwood Development Securities Ltd**  
project title **Land West of Bloxham Road, Banbury**  
drawing title **Photoviewpoint EDP 7**

Photoviewpoint EDP 8: View from Bloxham Road looking west towards the site



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

Photoviewpoint EDP 9: View from Bloxham Road looking west towards the site



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length