

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT,
LAND WEST OF WHITE POST ROAD, BANBURY

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Gladman Developments to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposed residential development to land west of White Post Road, Banbury.
- 1.2. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, and local policy and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 1.3. Banbury is a historic market town located on the River Cherwell in Oxfordshire and lies 34km north north west of Oxford and 43km south of Coventry.
- 1.4. In relation to transport infrastructure, Oxford Road A4260 runs north-south some 250m east of the application site with the M40 lying further east at 1.75km. Further beyond this the mainline railway corridor lies 2.5 km east.
- 1.5. The application site occupies the land between Banbury's southern settlement fringe and the western realms of the village of Bodicote.
- 1.6. The site is bounded by White Post Road directly in the east, the main route to Bodicote from Banbury, and Wykham Lane in the south, a rural lane which heads westwards to Broughton.
- 1.7. The historic route of Salt Way (also a restricted byway) bounds the site directly north, beyond which lies Banbury's urban fringe with the residential properties of Sycamore Drive.
- 1.8. To the west the application site abuts further agricultural land which extends towards the Wykham Park some 2km west where Bloxham Road A361 heads north east to Banbury.

- 1.9. The application site itself comprises three parcels of land, a large rectangular arable field to the west, a medium sized rectangular arable field located centrally and an irregular shaped small tract of land to the eastern most interface with White Post Road. The land cover in this tract of land is pasture with scattered parkland trees. Its irregular shaped northern perimeter is defined by the boundary with two large detached properties, one being Salt Way Day Nursery the other being a private residence.
- 1.10. Immediately south of the application site eastern land parcel lies a large recreational ground with Bodicote Village Hall occupying its south eastern corner.
- 1.11. Immediately south of the application site central land parcel is Banbury Cricket ground whose access is off White Post Road via a curvilinear driveway lined with avenues of purple leafed specimen trees, this driveway being within the application site.
- 1.12. Wykham Lane bounds the cricket ground to the south with residential properties aligning its northern carriageway segregating the lane from the recreational and cricket grounds.
- 1.13. The largest westernmost farm field of the site has a rectangular plot of allotment gardens to the south western corner with informal access off Wykham Lane. It should be noted that the application site does not include this plot of allotments.
- 1.14. Salt Way is significant as a wildlife corridor and as a recreational amenity being part of the Sustrans network as well as a restricted byway.
- 1.15. There is currently no public access into the application site, apart from a public footpath which runs through the middle of the westernmost field.

- 1.16. The application site falls within the planning jurisdiction of Cherwell District Council and is allocated within the emerging Local Plan as a site for future residential development.
- 1.17. Landscape character assessments of relevance to the application site are the National Character Area 95: 'Northamptonshire Uplands' and the county level OWLS landscape character area 'Upstanding Village Farmlands', and at the district level 'Ironstone Hills and Valleys'.
- 1.18. There are no statutory designations which affect the application site.
- 1.19. The proposal is for a residential development of up to 280 dwellings. This will include the provision of public open space and green infrastructure as well as a wide variety of housing:
 - High quality homes of varying sizes, types and tenures.
 - Affordable housing provision for local people. It is anticipated that a provision of 30% of these dwellings will be affordable (84 units)
 - Comprehensive Green infrastructure and Public Open Space.
- 1.20. Primary vehicular access will be from White Post Road using a new junction located further north from the cricket club access. The main spine road will incorporate a broad carriageway and a landscaped verge with footways and a cycleway.
- 1.21. Key green infrastructure proposals which form important mitigation measures are summarised as follows:
 - The retention and reinforcement of existing landscape features, such as boundary hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees in order to promote local distinctiveness of the site in addition to enhancing visual amelioration and screening.

- A development set back to respect Salt Way including a landscape structural buffer to enhance its setting.
 - The incorporation of new structural landscape buffers along the site's southern boundary to provide a robust development edge.
 - The provision of a green infrastructure incorporating public open space a new cricket pitch, recreational green space, comprehensive street and garden tree planting and amenity landscaped areas.
 - Provision of a green corridor accommodating an improved user experience and amenity for the retained public footpath which traverses the application site.
- 1.22. The application site is visually contained due to prevailing topography, intervening built form and established vegetative structures around its site boundaries and within its immediate setting. These substantially limit the visibility of the site to views from the immediate locality, these views being from adjacent public rights of ways and public highways.
- 1.23. With regard to views from a wider landscape context intervening built form, prevailing topography and offsite vegetation ensure that there is a natural visual envelope enjoyed by the site that mostly conceals it from all directions but from the south and also localised high ground in the west, the impact being partial views predominantly of the roofscape.
- 1.24. Furthermore, views of the new development will be seen within the overall context of the existing residential settlement of Banbury and as such the new built form will not be perceived as being out of place.
- 1.25. Green infrastructure is proposed along the southern and western perimeters to provide a robust development edge with the rural interface as well as providing visual amelioration from surrounding public rights of way and views from the south.

- 1.26. The built form of the development proposals will not co-exist within the same visual envelope as the Bodicote Conservation Area.
- 1.27. There are views out of the site to the south, where long distance views are afforded of the south valley slopes of the Sor Brook valley. In addition the localised high ground of Crouch Hill is a culturally significant natural landmark to the west.
- 1.28. Overall it is considered that the development will generally have a significance of effect ranging from moderate to moderate / minor upon the visual environment and that effects will be mostly limited to the immediate setting of the site.
- 1.29. The site is simple and open in character comprising of a flat expanse of arable farmland subdivided by field hedgerows with little hedgerow trees to provide vertical features.
- 1.30. The character of the site is heavily influenced by the close proximity of existing urban influences, namely the residential properties along the southern urban fringe of Banbury. Urban influences are also prevalent emanating from the settlement of Bodicote to the east and south eastern site boundaries.
- 1.31. The presence of these existing urban edges is a significant influence upon the character of the site and its context, resulting in an urban fringe sub-character area, which relates more readily to the existing built up area of Banbury.
- 1.32. Although there is a good degree of woodland cover along the urban fringes relating to garden and street trees, and some hedgerow trees to the south, the site itself is of simple character and low in diversity and can be considered to be an unremarkable urban edge landscape.
- 1.33. There are also a number of peri-urban influences which pervade across the site, these predominantly being the cricket ground with its dominant pavilion structure along with ancillary features such as the out building, high practice nets and the formal tree lined car park and driveway. In

addition the recreational ground to the east and the presence of the allotment gardens in the south west also detract from the rural character.

- 1.34. The sense of tranquillity is also disturbed by the busy roads of White Post Road and Wykham Lane.
- 1.35. Whilst the application site would appear on first sight to be a rural setting for south Banbury, the urban fringe is a significant feature, characterising the site and its immediate setting.
- 1.36. Overall the landscape sensitivity of the site is considered to be medium – low. This is reinforced by Cherwell District Council's landscape assessment and landscape capacity study, which identify that the site has the capacity to accommodate change as a result of residential development. As a result the site forms part of an allocation to the south of Banbury for future residential development in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.37. With regard to the effect of the proposals on the landscape character, it is considered that the development of the site in this location would not cause undue detrimental effects to the localised or wider character reviewed in the baseline assessment. It is considered the significance of effect upon landscape character to be moderate / minor.
- 1.38. The green infrastructure elements within the southern realms of the development, incorporating the recreational and public open spaces, will form a new settlement edge to south Banbury, thereby creating a sensitive and diffused interface along the urban rural transition.
- 1.39. The scheme proposes an undeveloped zone within its southern section to reduce the visual impact of development in long distance views from the south.
- 1.40. The scheme proposes another undeveloped zone within its eastern realms in order to prevent potential coalescence between Banbury and Bodicote and to promote the distinctiveness of the latter.

- 1.41. The application site is located outside of the adopted settlement boundary set out in the saved policy in the local plan 1996. However, it should be noted that the Emerging Local Plan identifies the application site as part of the Banbury 17 Allocation Site.
- 1.42. It is noted that Cherwell District Council has approved a development for 350 dwellings outside the settlement boundary and within the setting of the historic Salt Way, this development being Land South of Salt Way and West of Bloxham Road.
- 1.43. This landscape and visual assessment considers that the application site represents an appropriate and logical addition to the urban settlement that will not compromise the integrity of the surrounding open countryside nor the heritage assets of either Banbury or Bodicote.
- 1.44. The proposals have incorporated a landscape led approach, with careful consideration given to the location of the proposed open space areas, the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation and new structure planting within the site. These features ensure that the proposals can be accommodated within this setting without detriment to the quality and character of the receiving environment.
- 1.45. Overall this site specific assessment is broadly in agreement with the Landscape Capacity Study and considers the application site to have a medium-high capacity for change of the type proposed.
- 1.46. It is considered that the application site and receiving environment have the capacity to accommodate the proposals. The proposals will not result in significant harm to the landscape character or visual environment and, as such, it is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated in this location, is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective, and therefore meets the landscape requirements of both national and local planning policy.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Gladman Developments to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposed residential development to land west of White Post Road, Banbury.
- 2.2. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 2.3. The assessment of effects has been derived from guidance provided within GLVIA3 (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 Edition) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in April 2013. The methodology is contained within Appendix 1 of this document.
- 2.4. This assessment should be read alongside the other supporting material which accompanies this application.

3. LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

- 3.1. The NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Governments planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 3.2. The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF, including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas.
- 3.3. Paragraph 14 describes the key theme throughout the Framework is that of 'Achieving Sustainable Development' and confirms that the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" should be seen as a *"golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking."*

"For decision - taking this means:

(i) "Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and

(ii) Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

- 3.4. In respect of the latter, footnote 9 within the Framework identifies the types of areas where development should be restricted and lists sites protected by the Birds and Habitats Directive and/or designated as SSSI's: land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park: designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.
- 3.5. Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out at Paragraph 17, of which the following are relevant to landscape and visual matters, stating that planning should:
- *"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
 - *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
 - *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;*
 - *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production);*
 - *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations; and*
 - *actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable."*

- 3.6. The NPPF then identifies thirteen aspects which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Application Site and proposed development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, inter alia:

"..Establish a strong sense of place,

- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings

- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

- 3.7. Paragraph 61 states that:

"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

- 3.8. Section 11: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment notes in paragraph 109 that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by inter alia *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils"*.

- 3.9. Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

- 3.10. Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, local planning authorities should:

"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."

- 3.11. Paragraph 125 states that:

"By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014)

- 3.12. Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Landscape, paragraph 1. PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place, as a means to informing, planning and managing change. PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.
- 3.13. Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure, paragraph 15. PPG supports positive planning for networks of multifunctional green space, both urban and rural, which deliver a range of benefits for local communities and makes reference to Natural England guidance on Green Infrastructure.
- 3.14. Under the heading of Light Pollution, paragraph 1, PPG refers to the risk of artificial lighting undermining enjoyment of the countryside or the night sky and, in paragraph 2, considers potential effects on protected areas of dark skies or intrinsically dark landscapes. PPG then provides guidance for mitigation-by-design of artificial lighting, including location, timing and extent of lighting.

Local Planning Policy

Emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

- 3.15. The emerging Cherwell Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for formal examination on

January 2014. In June 2014 the Inspector suspended the examination to allow the Council to undertake main modifications in relation to meeting its objectively assessed housing needs over the plan period. The Council has since undertaken modifications along with further public consultation and re-submitted these to the Inspector in October 2014. The Inspector's Report on Examination of the modified submission has been published and council officers are considering the report. It is intended that it will be presented to Members at meeting of the Council on 20 July 2015 with a recommendation for adoption.

- 3.16. Relevant policies include the following;

Policy ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

- 3.17. This policy seeks to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations. Proposed development should not give rise to undue visual intrusion, it should be consistent with local character and should not harm the setting of local settlements.

Policy ESD15: Green Boundaries and Growth

- 3.18. Development proposals should incorporate appropriate green infrastructure. Green buffers identified within the draft local plan are intended to define the limits of built development between settlements, including Banbury and Bodicote. The application site would lie within the proposed modified green buffer.

Policy ESD16: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

- 3.19. All new development is required to be of a high design standard and respect the areas built, natural and cultural context.

Policy ESD18: Green Infrastructure

- 3.20. The policy seeks to ensure the existing green infrastructure network forms an integral part of new development.

Emerging Site Allocation Policy - Modified Submission of Cherwell District
Council Local Plan Part 1

- 3.21. In October 2014 as part of the re-submission of the modified Local Plan to the Secretary of State, the following site allocation policy was included;
- Banbury 17 Land South of Salt Way
- 3.22. The development proposals of the application site falls within the eastern section of the new proposed Strategic Housing Allocation of Banbury 17, which comprises a broad tract of agricultural green field land extending across the southern settlement edge of Banbury.
- 3.23. The undeveloped southern section of the application site is shown on the emerging modified policy map as Outdoor Sports Provision.
- 3.24. The undeveloped eastern section of the application site is shown on the emerging modified policy map as New Green Space and Parks.

4. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Site & Surrounding Context

- 4.1. Banbury is a historic market town located on the River Cherwell in Oxfordshire and lies 34km north north west of Oxford and 43km south of Coventry. With a population of approximately 46,850 it is a major centre within the district with a significant commercial and retail economy.
- 4.2. Whilst the main local planning authority is Cherwell District Council, the application site lies within Bodicote Civil Parish.
- 4.3. In relation to transport infrastructure, Oxford Road A4260 runs north-south some 250m east of the application site with the M40 lying further east at 1.75km. Further beyond this the mainline railway corridor lies 2.5 km east.
- 4.4. The application site occupies the land between Banbury's southern settlement fringe and the western realms of the village of Bodicote and is allocated within the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.5. The site is bounded by White Post Road directly in the east, the main route to Bodicote from Banbury, and Wykham Lane in the south, a rural lane which heads westwards to Broughton.
- 4.6. The historic route of Salt Way (also a restricted byway) bounds the site directly north, beyond which lies Banbury's urban fringe with the residential properties of Sycamore Drive.
- 4.7. To the west the application site abuts further agricultural land, which also forms part of the wider development allocation, Banbury 17, and which extends towards the Wykham Park some 2km west where Bloxham Road A361 heads north east to Banbury.
- 4.8. The application site falls within the eastern section of the new proposed Strategic Housing Allocation of Banbury 17. The land directly adjacent

to the west also falls within Banbury 17 and is subject to a separate planning application 14/01932/OUT submitted by another party.

- 4.9. The application site itself comprises three parcels of land, a large rectangular arable field to the west, a medium sized rectangular arable field located centrally and an irregular shaped small tract of land to the eastern most interface with White Post Road. The land cover in this tract of land is pasture with scattered parkland trees. Its irregular shaped northern perimeter is defined by the boundary with two large detached properties, one being Salt Way Day Nursery the other being a private residence. Access to these properties is off Salt Way. A distinctive feature of the application site is the mature tree canopies which abound within and on the boundaries of these properties.
- 4.10. A well established hedgerow forms the eastern boundary with White Post Road, a busy main road which boasts mature street trees on the eastern side of the carriageway along with extensive areas of green open space. A primary school and local council offices occupy the land further south before the main settlement of Bodicote commences.
- 4.11. Immediately south of the application site eastern land parcel lies a large recreational ground with Bodicote Village Hall occupying its south eastern corner.
- 4.12. Immediately south of the application site central land parcel is Banbury Cricket ground whose access is off White Post Road via a curvilinear driveway lined with avenues of purple leafed specimen trees. The cricket club driveway traverses through and within the application site's eastern land parcel before dog-legging into the cricket ground's curtilage where an extensive car park facility is again framed with specimen trees. A prominent two storey pavilion stands sentinel to the north of the cricket pitch oval, with nets and an ancillary outbuilding also visually prominent. The dominant pavilion structure is ameliorated by mature hedgerow trees which frame the building within the north west and northern corner boundaries.

- 4.13. Wykham Lane bounds the cricket ground to the south with residential properties aligning its northern carriageway segregating the lane from the recreational and cricket grounds.
- 4.14. Beyond and west of these properties Wykham Lane is a quintessential narrow winding country lane with a billowing meadow verge and well established high hedgerows which are fairly consistent in their continuity.
- 4.15. The largest westernmost farm field of the site has a rectangular plot of allotment gardens to the south western corner with informal access off Wykham Lane. It should be noted that the application site does not include this plot of allotments.
- 4.16. The application site's land parcels are sub-divided by field hedgerows which are trimmed yet gappy in places and are mostly devoid of hedgerow trees.
- 4.17. To the west of the application site's western land parcel lie more long rectangular arable fields and field hedgerows.
- 4.18. Salt Way adjacent to the north of the application site is strongly defined by a well established hedgerow with intermittent mature hedgerow trees. Salt Way is significant as a wildlife corridor and as a recreational amenity being part of the Sustrans network as well as a restricted byway.
- 4.19. There is currently no public access into the application site, apart from a public footpath which runs through the middle of the westernmost field from Wykham Lane connecting through to the restricted byway of Salt Way to the north of the site, and then linking through to the residential neighbourhood of Beaconsfield Road beyond.
- 4.20. The application site has low voltage transmission lines traversing north-south but these are not perceived as overly intrusive within the landscape.

Topography

- 4.21. The southern settlement fringe of Banbury sits on a plateau with the ridgeline running along the approximate same line as Sycamore Drive. The application site occupies the land just south of this ridgeline on a gently south facing slope and can be considered to be relatively flat, with little localised undulations.
- 4.22. The application site is approximately 125mAOD in the north west corner and falls with few dips and folds at a relatively constant grade to 115mAOD in the south east corner.
- 4.23. Beyond Wykham Lane the terrain starts to fall away sharply down to the Sor Brook river valley and then rises up again on the southern valley side over towards Bloxham forming higher ground at Broughton in the south west and Hobb Hill & Fern Hill near Bloxham in the south.
- 4.24. The distinctive localised hillock of Crouch Hill is evident in the west which is a culturally significant natural landmark of Banbury.
- 4.25. Long distance views over to the south reveal the rolling high terrain of the Cotswolds with its limestone escarpment whilst over to the south east beyond Bodicote lies the eastern valley sides of the Cherwell river basin with the Northamptonshire Uplands beyond.

Designations

- 4.26. There are no statutory designations which affect the site itself.

National Designations

- 4.27. Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located 10km to the west and south of the application site.

Heritage Assets

- 4.28. A detailed heritage assessment has been undertaken as part of the planning application, however, as an overview, Bodicote Conservation Area is located 150m to the south east of the application site. Its most western realms, where the historic core of the village extends southwards in a linear settlement pattern, is contained by layers of existing vegetative structures and not within the visual envelope of the site.
- 4.29. Banbury Conservation Area lies some 950m directly north of the application site and is contained visually by built form.
- 4.30. Bloxham Conservation Area is located 2.5km to the south west of the application site and is contained by existing vegetative structures and prevailing topography.
- 4.31. There are no listed buildings within the site.
- 4.32. The nearest listed buildings are the Lodge to Bodicote House Grade II located 115m south south east with Bodicote House Grade II also some 200m south east of the application site. To the south Yew Tree Cottage Grade II lies 190m located along Wykham Lane.
- 4.33. Further south there are a number of cottages, town houses and farmhouses all mostly Grade II scattered along the historic linear core of Bodicote village.
- 4.34. There are a number of Registered Parks and Gardens within the wider setting of the application site, which include:
- Broughton Castle Grade II located 3.4km directly west
 - Wroxton Abbey Grade II located 3.6km north west
 - Aynho Park Grade II located 8.2km south east
- 4.35. There are a number of scheduled monuments within the wider setting of the application site, including;

- Broughton Castle fortified house & moat
- Castle Bank Enclosure located 5.4km north west
- Earthworks NE of Tadmarton village located 5.6km west
- Dovecote south of Milcombe Hall Farm located 5.4km south west
- WWI national filling factory located 2.6km north east
- Tooley's boatyard located 2.4km north within the centre of Banbury

4.36. There is no intervisibility between these heritage assets and the application site due to intervening existing vegetative structures, built form and prevailing topography.

Public Rights of Way

4.37. FP 137/13/10 traverses through the middle of the site north-south.

4.38. The following public footpaths are in close proximity:

- Restricted Byway RBW 120/43/10 & 20 runs adjacent along the northern site boundary, otherwise known as Salt Way.
- BW 137/11/10 traverses north to south some 135m to the west of the site.
- FP 120/47/10, FP 137/16/10 & FP 120/46/10 are located further west traversing north to south.

4.39. Salt Way runs along the southern settlement boundary of Banbury and adjacent the northern site boundary. In addition to a restricted byway it forms part of Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 5 and is also part of the long distance route of the Banbury fringe walk.

National Landscape Character

Countryside Agency - Countrywide Landscape Character Assessment

4.40. A landscape assessment of the local area has been carried out which seeks to identify broadly homogenous zones that can be categorised in terms of quality and character. This is necessary in order to assess the potential impact that change will have on a particular landscape. The Countryside Agency produced a countrywide landscape character assessment resulting in the published Character Map of England. The map includes large tracts of countryside which have similar characteristics in terms of landform, geology, land use and other landscape elements.

4.41. Within the Countryside Agency Character Map of England document, the application site lies within the NCA 95: Northamptonshire Uplands character area. The key characteristics of this area are identified as:

- *“Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.*
- *Rivers rise and flow outwards in all directions, including the rivers Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise, and the area forms the main watershed of Middle England.*
- *Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.*
- *Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.*
- *Typical ‘planned countryside’ with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak...*
- *Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands, some ancient and often on*

hill tops, with mires, areas of lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland in the river valleys...

- *Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements. Several large historic...and small country estates, with extensive parkland containing a great many mature, veteran and ancient trees.*
- *Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.*
- *A dense network of narrow lanes with wide grassy verges, often following ridges, crossed by many strategic road and rail corridors..."*

4.42. It should be noted that NCA 107: Cotswolds is located 1km south of the application site, commencing at the southern banks of the Sor Brook.

4.43. Key Characteristics of NCA 107: Cotswolds

- *"Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combes, and outliers...the scarp and dip slope of the landscape...has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.*
- *Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the south- east, dissected by river valleys.*
- *Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.*

- *Drystone walls define the pattern of fields of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.*
- *...The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.*
- *Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned..."*

4.44. The landscape character of the application site is sufficiently detached from the Cotswold NCA and relates well to the Northamptonshire Uplands.

The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

4.45. At a more local level, Oxfordshire County Council have produced The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) which takes into account the Character Map of England but looks at the character at a more detailed level. The OWLS assessment identifies that the site is located within Landscape Type 8: Upstanding Village Farmlands.

4.46. The Upstanding Village Farmlands is described as a hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from the local ironstone.

4.47. Key characteristics are stated as;

- *"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".*

- 4.48. 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.
- 4.49. 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.
- 4.50. Within the OWLS assessment, under Cultural Pattern, the assessment notes that 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.
- 4.51. 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.

- 4.52. The landscape type is described in greater detail under smaller landscape description units. The application site lies within Local Character Area C: Bodicote (NU/16). The assessment identifies that this 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.*
- 4.53. *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.”*
- 4.54. The OWL’s assessment outlines the various pressures being exerted upon the landscape:
- *“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”.*
- 4.55. The OWL’s assessment also sets out guidelines for the preservation and enhancement of the landscape under Landscape Strategy and states that: *“Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages”.*

Cherwell District Council Landscape Character Assessment 1995

- 4.56. The district council commissioned Cobham Resource Consultants to prepare a landscape assessment for the Cherwell District as a basis for a consistent, coordinated approach to planning policy, development control and landscape management and conservation.
- 4.57. The application site lies within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area. The following extract describes its key characteristics;

“The main distinguishing features are its extremely complex topography and the style of vernacular buildings which is unique to the Banbury region. The unspoilt ironstone villages and tranquil countryside are remote and isolated, particularly towards the west of the character area.

The geology of this area is faulted and fairly complex, which gives rise to a correspondingly complicated topography.

Since the area is faulted and uplifted, and also cut through by numerous small streams, the landscape is divided into very steeply sided, convoluted valleys with narrow valley bottoms and rolling, rounded hill lines. Underlying geology has given rise to iron rich clay soils of a characteristic red colour, much of which is classed as Grade 2 agricultural land.

Rolling hills with rich soils are considerable agricultural assets and much of this area is in arable cultivation, the main crops being winter cereals with potatoes and sugar beet. In some areas, medium and large arable fields are still surrounded by hedges and the boundaries marked by hedgerow trees.

However, the area is riddled with steep sided valleys and narrow valley floors with a pattern of smaller fields and mixed farming, predominantly permanent pasture. Many hedgerows are unmanaged and growing out, and road verges sometimes include narrow stands of trees, which gives a well-treed impression, although the area lacks larger woodlands.

Streams in valley bottoms are locally marked with old willows with some pollarding, and with wet pasture.

- 4.58. The landscape character areas are further sub-divided into landscape types, the application site falls within Landscape Type R4b – Small-scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern, described as;

“Wherever the landform levels out slightly, the small fields can be ploughed and crops of winter cereals grown. The resulting landscape is an intricate blend of mixed farming, with small variations in scale and local land use being closely related to topography, a tight knit small scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern.

Lanes and minor roads run straight along ridges wherever possible, dipping sharply down the valley sides to connect with villages. Hedgerows are mostly dense, well grown barriers, although where arable farming prevails they are closely trimmed. The practice of hedge laying is still continued locally as a means of maintaining a stockproof boundary. Many of the hedges contain mature hedgerow trees, the dominant species being oak and ash, with beech on the limestone outcrops....”

- 4.59. The application site lies within an area classified as a ‘Conservation Landscape’. This category applies where ‘the landscape character and sense of place is particularly strong or where individual features are particularly notable for their landscape, ecological and/or cultural value. Examples include the intricate, hedged and wooded rural landscapes...’

- 4.60. *“Most forms of development are likely to be highly damaging to these sensitive landscapes. However, this does not necessarily mean that they could or should be fossilized. All of these landscapes require management to conserve their declining features, to reduce intrusive influences and to maintain and enhance long-term landscape and ecological value.”*

- 4.61. Relevant recommended guidelines include:

- *“Conservation and good management of hedgerows. Removal of hedges should be strongly resisted...”*
- *Continued renewal of hedgerow trees should be encouraged to prevent the decline of the hedgerow tree network...*
- *Development should only be permitted if it is sensitively sited and the scale, size, materials and character of the scheme are designed to blend in to the area...”*

Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment 2010

- 4.62. Cherwell District Council commissioned Halcrow Group Ltd to undertake a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment in order to inform its Local Development Framework and identify strategic areas within the district’s two main centres of Banbury and Bicester which are able to accommodate development.
- 4.63. The application site falls within the broader strategic area referenced as Site G within the Capacity Study. It is worth noting that the application site only forms the eastern most section of the study area, however the study encompasses the tract of land extending from White Post Road in the east to Bloxham Road in the west, and bounded by Salt Way in the north and Wykham Lane to the south.
- 4.64. The following are relevant extracts from the study;

“The landscape sensitivity of the site mostly varies from low to moderate, with the higher value in areas around Wykham Farm where woodland belts, pasture and smaller fields come together...”

“The visual sensitivity is judged to be moderate. Housing estates on the edge of Banbury and Bodicote overlook the site and are themselves visible in long views from the south... A large number of people use the Salt Way which is a Sustrans route and long distance footpath, and there is a visual sensitivity in relation to this.”

- 4.65. *“The overall sensitivity to development is therefore moderate and high around Wykham Park, Wykham Farm and the edge of Bodicote.”*
- 4.66. With regard to cultural heritage value *“Wykham Farmhouse, Wykham Park and the Bodicote Conservation Area are of moderate value, with the remaining non-designated monuments within the site and in the wider study area of low value.*
- ...The site is ordinary in terms of its scenic value and has a greater degree of tranquillity than sites closer to the motorway, although it is broken by traffic running on Wykham Lane. The value is judged to be low apart from the setting of the farms and the recreational areas associated with paths and sportsfields which are high.”*
- 4.67. With regard to the capacity to accept development the assessment notes that: *“Site G is judged to have a moderate capacity to accept residential development but only on the parts of the site which are of low value and landscape sensitivity. Other areas have a low capacity. The site has a high capacity to accept playing fields on the flatter areas and a high capacity to accept informal recreation and woodland in small blocks.”*
- 4.68. In terms of mitigation the study notes that *“Screen planting would be effective, could protect views from the south and from Bodicote and could fit into the landscape. The Salt Way and other footpaths should be retained as substantial green corridors, and the setting of listed buildings should be protected. A local horizon west of Bodicote forms the setting of the old core of the village and development should not extend east of this line.”*
- 4.69. The study notes that, in relation to Green Infrastructure, *“The Salt Way is an important movement corridor for wildlife and people and should link to the Sor Brook valley by way of a green space around Wykham Farm and the footpaths.”*

Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Addendum 2014

4.70. White Young Green undertook a more in depth analysis of the strategic sites previously studied in the Cherwell District Assessment. In August 2014 they published an addendum which studied a smaller strategic area which previously formed part of Site G, this area now being referenced as Site 111. The application site falls within the northern half of Site111.

4.71. The following are relevant extracts from the study. In relation to landscape sensitivity, the addendum states that:

- *“The sensitivity of natural factors is Medium to Low.*
- *The sensitivity of cultural factors is Medium.*
- *The aesthetic value of the area is medium.*
- *The overall landscape quality and condition is Medium to Low.”*

4.72. The combined Landscape Sensitivity is identified as Medium.

4.73. In terms of visual sensitivity, the addendum notes that:

- *“The general visibility of the area is Low.*
- *The visual sensitivity of the site to the surrounding visual receptors is Medium.*
- *There is a Medium sensitivity to mitigation e.g. screening at site boundaries.”*

4.74. The combined Visual Sensitivity is identified as being Medium to Low.

4.75. With regard to landscape character sensitivity, the assessment notes that:

“The Landscape Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium sensitivity and the Visual Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium to Low sensitivity. This results in a Medium to Low Landscape Character Sensitivity for Site 111.”

4.76. In terms of landscape value, the addendum concludes that:

- *“There are no landscape or ecological designations within the area. The value of designations is Medium to Low.*
- *The scenic value and tranquillity of the site is considered to be Medium value.*
- *The site is not accessible for public use however a public footpath does pass through the area and Salt Way passes along the north site boundary, which is a locally important feature. The area is important in preventing coalescence of Banbury and Bodicote and therefore plays an important function in visual terms. The perceived value is Medium.”*

4.77. The value of Site 111 is considered to be Medium.

4.78. In terms of landscape capacity, the addendum concludes that:

“In general, the potential Landscape Capacity of Site 111 is Medium to High.”

4.79. The addendum goes on to assess the capacity for residential development, stating that:

“Visually the area is relatively well contained and therefore able to accommodate development from a visual point of view, however, the land provides an important buffer between Banbury and Bodicote. The area could accommodate development as long as the site is designed carefully in the eastern section to ensure a feeling of visual and physical separation is maintained.”

- 4.80. The capacity for residential development is concluded as being Medium to High.
- 4.81. The addendum then set out future management and maintenance objectives, stating that:

“Future management of the area should ensure the safeguarding of the landscape context of Salt Way as a historic route. If development occurs consideration should be given to structure planting to the south of the development to restrict long distance views from the south and also to maintain the separation of Banbury and Bodicote.”

Cherwell District Council SHLAA 2014 Update

- 4.82. The SHLAA is part of the evidence base to be used to inform the preparation of the Council’s Local Plan and will help the Council to identify specific sites that may be suitable for allocation for housing development.
- 4.83. The application site has been reviewed under this assessment for suitability as a strategic site allocation, under reference BA362. It should be noted that the site area of BA362 incorporates the section land currently used as allotment gardens, whereas the application site does not include this plot.
- 4.84. Regarding Site BA362, the SHLAA concludes that:

“With a reduction of the gross site area to reflect a smaller developable area and the incorporation of formal and informal open space in the southern and eastern parts of the site, this is considered to be an appropriate site for residential development.”

5. THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1. The outline proposals have been developed by the design team consultants to ensure a high quality and sustainable development which respects, maintains and enhances both the existing urban fabric, the local community and the adjoining wider landscape. The scheme seeks to be visually attractive, respecting the context, form and type of existing built form and building styles evident within the local area. Details of the proposals are included within the Design & Access Statement that accompanies the application.
- 5.2. The outline proposals are illustrated on Aspect Drawing 5713/ASP03 – Development Framework Plan.
- 5.3. The proposal is for a residential development of 280 dwellings. This will include the provision of public open space and green infrastructure as well as a wide variety of housing:
- High quality homes of varying sizes, types and tenures.
 - Affordable housing provision for local people. It is anticipated that a provision of 30% of these dwellings will be affordable (84 units)
 - Comprehensive Green infrastructure and Public Open Space.
- 5.4. Primary vehicular access will be from White Post Road as illustrated on Plan ASP03. The main spine road will incorporate a broad carriageway and a landscaped verge with footways and a cycleway.
- 5.5. The primary access road will run westwards through the development forming a main residential street feeding a number of minor access roads serving quieter residential closes and cul de sacs. There will be a medium density development of dwellings made up of a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings and terraced/ mews style properties and associated parking.

- 5.6. A consolidated footpath network will feed a comprehensive green infrastructure connecting a series of major public open spaces. The scheme will also provide accessible children's play facilities with good neighbourhood stewardship amenity.

Design Principals

- 5.7. A design process has been undertaken to ensure a carefully considered and sensitive development approach is achieved, refer to the Design & Access Statement for further detail. From the outset the proposals have sought to respond to and where possible enhance the existing features which characterise the site and its immediate setting with reference to relevant design guidance both national and local. As such a sensitively designed and located development will be in keeping with the existing character of the landscape setting.

- 5.8. A number of design principles have influenced the development proposals for the site which include:

- The retention and enhancement of the existing vegetation structure associated with the site boundaries. This will include reinforcing the site boundaries along the southern and western perimeters with the planting of additional hedgerow trees to provide key visual screening and amelioration from the south.
- The protection and enhancement of the existing vegetation structure associated with Salt Way including the gapping up of fragmented sections and planting of new hedgerow trees.
- The existing field hedgerows internal to the site will also be retained and substantially reinforced with the gapping up of fragmented or lost sections.
- A new structural landscape buffer will define the southern section of the development providing a framework for the public open space and helping to reinforce site boundaries to promote

a robust development edge thereby creating a new urban fringe with the surrounding landscape.

- A generous development set back will be provided to the northern site boundary in order to respect the historic setting of Salt Way. A new structural landscape buffer will be incorporated within this set back to promote a robust development edge and enhance a sense of enclosure and its rural character, in addition to promoting the wildlife value of the corridor.
- The proposals seek to achieve a high quality, sustainable development which reflects the scale, layout and pattern of the adjacent urban fabric and which is appropriate to its setting.
- The scheme aims to be visually attractive, respecting the context, form and type of existing built form and building styles evident within the locality. The layout will ensure that the development has a sense of identity and is legible.
- The development proposals will reference the varying architectural styles and materials that characterise the local area, ensuring that the proposals respect and enhance the local character of the nearby Bodicote Conservation Area.
- The provision of a substantial area of undeveloped space within the southern section of the scheme will reduce the visual impact in long distance views from the south. This zone will comprise green infrastructure in the form of a cricket pitch oval relating to the adjacent land use and an informal neighbourhood park area providing a community focus for the surrounding new residential properties. The parkland setting will promote a village green style character with wide open amenity green space punctuated by groups of specimen parkland trees, along with a children's play area. To the south of this parkland area there will be a naturalistically designed attenuation basin framed by woodland blocks.

- An extensive area of undeveloped space within the eastern section of the scheme will help prevent coalescence of the two urban centres and promote the distinctiveness of the Bodicote village. This zone will comprise green infrastructure in the form of a more formal parkland setting incorporating a recreational ground character thereby relating to the adjacent land use. A youth games court will be provided adjacent the existing recreational ground and a small parking facility will promote the green space as a community amenity.
- The parkland setting will also provide a gateway element to development with wide open amenity green space punctuated by groups of specimen parkland trees, along with a children's play area. The existing access driveway to Banbury Cricket Club will be re-provided along the new development spine road, the old route being made good and integrated within the park. The existing avenue of specimen trees that line the driveway will be retained providing a sense of formality for the new park character.
- Another key consideration to be addressed by the development proposals is the role of sustainable urban drainage system (SUD's) not just for drainage engineering but also for the sense of place and visual amenity that this brings to the site's green infrastructure. The attenuation pond will be appropriately sited in the low lying south eastern corner of the site within an area allocated for informal public open space.
- The attenuation pond will be integrated sensitively within the receiving landform and will be accompanied by appropriate structural planting in order to encourage wildlife. The basin will be naturalistically designed and framed by woodland blocks. Flows on site will be limited using SuDS. Including a swale between the developable area and the area allocated for the cricket pitch. Full details of the Flood Risk Assessment and recommendations are included within the standalone documentation prepared by GRM Development Solutions which accompanies the application.

- The provision of ecologically valuable corridors to existing vegetation structures through creation of species rich margins and woodland edges will be a key GI component of the development proposals. This is particularly significant in the role of the retained field hedgerows and footpath corridors.
- Street tree planting within the residential areas and larger parkland tree planting within areas of proposed open space will break up the appearance of urban development and increase the level of tree cover generally within the site.
- Planting of small trees to garden plots (where feasible and at appropriate distances from built form) to assist in providing a consistent tree canopy coverage across the site to instil a rural edge character and provide visual mitigation.

5.9. In terms of pedestrian links, the development proposals will incorporate a strong network of pedestrian and cycle links which will be vital for the successful sustainability of the community. These links should seek to form direct and legible access to:

- Adjacent existing residential / neighbourhood areas.
- Public transport facilities.
- Local key community service facilities.
- Local schools.
- Important open spaces and recreational areas.
- Surrounding wider countryside such as linking into the existing PROW network including Salt Way.

5.10. The public right of way traversing the site will be retained as part of a green corridor, passing through a number of green open spaces of varying scale including areas with recreational and children's play facilities. Where feasible opportunities should be taken within the design layout to preserve glimpsed, channelled or wider views out of the site from key points along the public footpath, the main views being south towards the Sor Brook Valley and the distant rolling countryside of the Cotswolds.

- 5.11. The treatment along the retained public footpath corridor will be of particular importance to ensure the rural character and visual amenity of the path will not be adversely affected by the development, which will see back garden boundaries flanking on both sides of the track. In addition to affording views out wherever feasible, it is recommended through agreement that the footpath's amenity be refurbished with an appropriate surfacing if required and be accompanied by appropriate high quality landscaping—for example residential boundaries could comprise formal or informal native hedgelines, a generous verge of wild flower meadow accompanied by an avenue of small fruit trees (using local varieties) as a reference to the rural and cultural heritage. The section of footpath passing through the green open space will be lined by an avenue of specimen trees which will spatially demarcate the cricket pitch from the neighbourhood park setting.
- 5.12. New footpaths will also sensitively connect onto Salt Way, with due respect to the historic setting of the route, and link into the adjacent existing neighbourhood communities of Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road.

Green Infrastructure

- 5.13. Key green infrastructure proposals which form important mitigation measures are summarised as follows:
- The retention and reinforcement of existing landscape features, such as boundary hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees in order to promote local distinctiveness of the site in addition to enhancing visual amelioration and screening.
 - A development set back to respect Salt Way including a landscape structural buffer to enhance its setting.
 - The incorporation of new structural landscape buffers along the site's southern boundary to provide a robust development edge.

- The provision of a green infrastructure incorporating public open space, recreational green space, comprehensive street and garden tree planting and amenity landscaped areas.
- Provision of a green corridor accommodating an improved user experience and amenity for the retained public footpath which traverses the application site.

Summary

- 5.14. Overall a sensitive and considered design approach will allow the development to sit comfortably within its setting without detriment to the localised landscape character, visual environment or the amenity of the neighbouring properties and the wider landscape setting.

6. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS - VIEWS

- 6.1. The effect of the proposals upon the receiving visual environment has been assessed and a number of photographs have been taken from key viewpoints from publicly accessible areas to illustrate the site and its setting. The selection of viewpoints was informed through the preparation of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Assessment, which is based solely on bare earth topographic data, and does not take account of intervening built form and vegetation. The selection of views was then reviewed against OS data and Aerial Imagery to identify likely visual constraints and these were then verified on site in order to refine the selection of views and to define the Zone of Visual Influence. The key viewpoint photographs are intended to form representative views from publicly accessible viewpoints, and while not exhaustive are considered to provide an accurate overview of the site and its setting.
- 6.2. The visual analysis and viewpoint locations are included within Appendix 2. A summary is included in Table 1 after paragraph 6.136.

Viewpoint 1

- 6.3. Viewpoint 1 is a short distance view taken from the public highway White Post Road looking west directly at the application site. The view illustrates the degree of enclosure afforded to the application site by the well established boundary hedgerow and large mature field trees within the site. The scene shows the approximate location of the main proposed vehicular gateway into the development.
- 6.4. The principle receptors are identified as road users and pedestrians along the carriageway pavements. In addition the viewpoint can be regarded as a representative view from the adjacent primary school, however views available from ground floor classroom windows will be substantially contained by intervening vegetative boundary structures, and users will have inward focus on educational activities. As such the combined sensitivity of the visual receptors is considered to be medium.

- 6.5. The development proposals in terms of built form will not be apparent when viewed from this location.
- 6.6. The immediate view will be of the new road junction into the development which will also serve as dual access to the cricket ground, the existing cricket ground driveway being removed with the hedgerow gapped up. The new access point will be located further north away from the primary school gate and will enjoy a wide carriageway with a landscaped verge, footways and cycleway. The well defined hedgerow will be retained as the boundary feature along White Post Road.
- 6.7. The scheme will accommodate a generous development set back with the land immediately adjacent White Post Road being retained as important green open space and will enjoy a parkland setting with groups of specimen tree planting through which the new access road will wind its way westwards. A youth games court and children's play area will also be provided along with a small car parking facility to promote the greenspace as a local community amenity. A new footpath will also be created from White Post Road linking the development's network of green open spaces with both new and existing neighbourhoods.
- 6.8. Green infrastructure proposals will include specimen tree planting within this parkland area. These measures, in addition to the eastern boundary hedgerow and the existing mature tree cover (predominantly associated with the boundary of two large residential properties adjacent Salt Way) will provide an effective visual containment of the new built form within the field to the west.
- 6.9. After leaf fall during the winter months it is anticipated that there will be some degree of visual transparency of the development but that these will be partial and glimpsed views only.
- 6.10. It is considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude, acting upon a low sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate/ minor.

Viewpoint 2

- 6.11. Viewpoint 2 is a short distance view looking north west along White Post Road taken at the junction access to the Bodicote House Council Offices, and a representative viewpoint from the Grade II Bodicote Lodge House. The view illustrates the substantial level of mature tree cover enjoyed by the eastern section of the application site. The foreground scene is dominated by the busy White Post Road, with its visually intrusive clutter of sign posts and lamp posts, and the generous vergeside pavements. The recreational ground is evident to the left middle whilst the application site can be seen bounded by hedgerows along its southern and eastern boundaries. The existing junction access to Banbury Cricket Ground can be discerned by a gap in the hedgerow boundary and rows of purple leafed specimen trees aligning its carriageway. Beyond there is an extensive backdrop of large mature trees associated predominantly with Salt Way and the boundaries of two large properties, Salt Way Day Nursery and a private residence.
- 6.12. The principle receptors are identified as:
- road users concerned with the road corridor.
 - pedestrians substantially concerned with journeying from A to B not necessarily for the enjoyment of the landscape.
 - Residential receptors relating to the Grade II Bodicote Lodge House.
- 6.13. The combined sensitivity of these visual receptors is considered to be high.
- 6.14. The development proposals in terms of built form will not be apparent when viewed from this location.
- 6.15. As with viewpoint 1, the immediate view will be of the reconfiguration of hedgerow and junction access points, with the stopping up of the existing cricket ground driveway and the provision of the new development gateway giving dual access further north along White Post

Road. Again, the well defined hedgerow will be retained and made good as the eastern site boundary feature along this main road.

- 6.16. Beyond this boundary hedgerow the green open space framed by impressive mature tree cover will be retained in this eastern section of the application site, with additional specimen tree planting enhancing the parkland setting. These measures will provide an effective visual screen to the development located within the next field to the west.
- 6.17. After leaf fall during the winter months it is anticipated that there will be some degree of visual transparency of new built form but that these will be partial and glimpsed views only.
- 6.18. It is considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate.

Viewpoint 3

- 6.19. Viewpoint 3 is a short distance view looking south at the application site from Salt Way, a restricted byway 120/43/20 which traverses along the northern site boundary and adjacent the southern settlement fringe of Banbury. Salt Way also forms part of the National Cycle Network Route NCN 5.
- 6.20. The view is afforded from a gap in the fragmented hedgerow along Salt Way and illustrates the relatively flat topography and openness of the application site with long distance views available to the south east and beyond the Sor Brook valley across to the rolling higher ground of woodland and pasture. The foreground is dominated by arable farmland on a gently south facing slope with regular subdivision by hedgerows. A low voltage overhead power line traverses the site in unison with a field hedgerow leading the eye to the two storey cricket pavilion of Banbury Cricket Ground which forms a distinctive feature in the middle distance framed by a consistent cover of mature hedgerow trees.

- 6.21. In the distance the southern perimeter can be seen as a boundary hedgerow defining the course of Wykham Lane with the number of outbuildings relating to the allotment gardens sitting adjacent. A linear tract of woodland planting provides the backdrop to the west in the vicinity of Wykham Farm Cottage running adjacent bridleway BW137/11/20. The hinterland extending to the south of the site is perceived as a well wooded landscape albeit predominantly comprising regular shaped arable farm fields bounded by a network of hedgerow and hedgerow trees.
- 6.22. The principle receptors are identified as users of the restricted byway and residential receptors relating to the properties along Sycamore Drive. As such the combined sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be high.
- 6.23. Due to the gap within the mature hedgerow along Salt Way, the development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.
- 6.24. The immediate foreground view will comprise the north eastern realms of the development, this being full views of predominantly rear elevations of new built form relating to one of the quieter residential drives emanating from the primary access road spine. These dwellings will be a mix of styles and types, the density of which will allow glimpsed views further into the site providing a depth of view which will, when combined with the site's green infrastructure elements, help soften the development.
- 6.25. Due to their proximity these new dwelling units will form the skyline from this viewpoint and will truncate the long distance views.
- 6.26. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and

breaking up the dominance of the roofscape thus helping to integrate the dwellings into the receiving environment.

- 6.27. Mitigation proposals will include the reinforcement and gapping up of the fragmented hedgerow along the northern site boundary with Salt Way, which in time will provide visual amelioration to this section of the development. Additionally there will be a development set back to accommodate a structural landscape buffer along the northern site boundary providing visual screening and a robust development edge to both the restricted byway of Salt Way and the existing residential estate of Sycamore Drive. It may be a consideration here to adopt a 'plant ahead' strategy with respect to the structural planting in order that a reasonable degree of establishment is already in place by the time the construction phase commences.
- 6.28. During winter months after leaf fall it is likely that some filtered and glimpsed views of the development may be afforded through the mitigation planting but its density should be adequate to maintain a reasonable degree of amelioration.
- 6.29. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium to low magnitude in year 1 falling to low magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/ moderate to moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 4

- 6.30. Viewpoint 4 is a short distance view looking back south eastwards at the application site further along Salt Way restricted byway 120/43/10.
- 6.31. The view illustrates the flat and open terrain of the application site segregated by field hedgerow enclosures and the degree of visual containment afforded to the site's eastern interface with White Post Road. Dominant in the left field of vision is the restricted byway Salt Way as it traverses eastwards towards Bodicote along with its

established hedgerow and vergeside meadow evident to both sides of the track with the occasional hedgerow tree. In the middle ground can be seen the application site, arable farmland subdivided into small scale regular plots by hedgerow field boundaries. Overhead transmission lines traverse the site and the Banbury Cricket Club pavilion is just evident to the far right field of vision. The background is dominated by an extensive cover of mature trees associated with the boundary of private residential properties and White Post Road, this substantial vegetative structure all but concealing a partial filtered view of built form associated with the Bodicote settlement.

- 6.32. The principle receptors are identified as users of the restricted byway and residential receptors relating to the properties along Sycamore Drive. As such the combined sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be high.
- 6.33. The development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.
- 6.34. The immediate foreground view will comprise of the Salt Way and hedgerow boundary being retained and enhanced. To the right a development set back will accommodate a landscape buffer and then rear garden plots to new development properties. These properties will be juxtaposed around one of the cul de sac residential drives within the northern realms of the development, and it is anticipated that there will be full and oblique views of rear elevations with some gable ends also in view. These dwellings will be a mix of styles and types, the density of which will allow glimpsed views further into the site providing a depth of view which will, when combined with the site's green infrastructure elements, help soften the development.
- 6.35. Due to their proximity these new dwelling units will predominantly form the skyline from this viewpoint, the roofscape merging into the backdrop of mature tree cover to the east of White Post Road.

- 6.36. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and breaking up the dominance of the roofscape thus helping to integrate the new dwellings into the receiving environment.
- 6.37. Mitigation proposals will include the reinforcement and gapping up of the fragmented hedgerow along the northern site boundary with Salt Way. Additionally there will be a development set back to accommodate a structural landscape buffer along the northern site boundary providing visual screening and a robust development edge to both the restricted byway of Salt Way and the existing residential estate of Sycamore Drive.
- 6.38. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium to low magnitude in year 1 falling to low magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/moderate to moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 5

- 6.39. Viewpoint 5 is a short distance view from public footpath FP 137/13/10 taken from within the application site looking eastwards across the farmland.
- 6.40. The view again illustrates the flat openness of the farmland and the extent of mature woodland cover which forms a buffer between the southern urban fringe of Banbury and the village of Bodicote. The arable land cover is defined by a network of hedgerow field boundaries providing an ordered enclosure to the agrarian landscape and archetypical of the prevailing local landscape character. A glimpsed view of the residential built form associated with Sycamore Drive is evident within tree cover to the far left field of vision, in front of which Salt Way traverses eastwards defined by the hedgerow boundary. The

byway passes behind a distinctive copse of mature trees in the middle ground, these trees being associated with the boundary of two detached properties, one of which is just evident between the foliage. The mature tree cover extends across the background scene following the line of White Post Road towards Bodicote. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be a high sensitivity receptor.

- 6.41. The development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.
- 6.42. The immediate view will comprise the central section of the development and in particular of the main tree lined primary access road along with landscaped verge, footpaths and cycleway. Located along this broad tree lined avenue will be new dwellings and generous front garden plots along with associated garage and driveways. It is anticipated that there will be full and oblique views of their front elevations with gable ends also in view. A cross road junction will also be evident in the middle distance detailed to provide a pedestrian dominant environment, and affording access to quieter residential closes and cul de sacs both north and south of the spine road.
- 6.43. Due to their proximity new built form will predominantly form the skyline from this viewpoint, although longer distance views of the development roofscape will potentially be softened in places by the mature tree canopies in the east. Indeed, dwellings will be a mix of styles and types, the density of which will allow glimpsed views further into the site providing a depth of view which will, when combined with the site's green infrastructure elements, help soften the development.
- 6.44. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and breaking up the dominance of the roofscape.

- 6.45. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium magnitude acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/ moderate. While the assessment methodology would denote that this would give rise to a significant effect, when applying professional judgement and considering the heightened degree of integration which will be afforded by the establishment of the proposed landscape treatment, it is considered the effect of the proposals will be reduced to moderate at year 10.

Viewpoint 6

- 6.46. Viewpoint 6 is a short distance view from public footpath FP 137/13/10 taken from within the farmland looking directly north across the application site.
- 6.47. The view illustrates the northern site boundary with the hedgerowed Salt Way traversing east to west in front of the built form associated with the southern urban fringe of Banbury. The openness of the application site with its flat but gently south facing slope dominates the foreground with extensive arable land cover. The skyline is dominated by the residential properties of Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road interspersed by mature tree canopies, with a low voltage overhead transmission line also traversing the scene. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be a high sensitivity receptor.
- 6.48. The development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.
- 6.49. The immediate view will comprise of the public footpath being retained and enhanced with a green corridor.

- 6.50. Located on both sides of the public footpath will be rear garden plots and their boundaries relating to new dwellings located along the secondary roads forming the quieter residential closes. It is anticipated that there will be oblique views of their rear elevations with gable ends also in view with their roofscape subtly rising with the site's topography. In the mid distance there will be full and partial views of the rear elevations relating to dwellings located along the main primary spine road.
- 6.51. The footpath corridor will enjoy a high quality landscape setting to reflect the rural character, the path being flanked on both sides by consistent and sensitive rear garden boundary treatments. A vertical emphasis will be provided by garden trees to help soften the residential elevations and associated roofscape as the dwellings rise sensitively with the topography of the site.
- 6.52. Due to their proximity new built form will form the skyline from this viewpoint especially those commanding the high ground of the site. The different styles, juxtaposition and density of dwellings will allow glimpsed views further into the site providing a depth of view which will, when combined with the site's green infrastructure elements, help soften the development.
- 6.53. Uninterrupted and channelled views northwards through the site will be retained by the public footpath corridor which affords a view of the mature tree cover within the Sycamore Drive estate.
- 6.54. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and breaking up the dominance of the roofscape thus helping to integrate the new dwellings into the receiving environment.
- 6.55. The presence of built form within the scene will not constitute an unexpected feature given the visibility of the existing urban character of Banbury's southern settlement edge.

- 6.56. Mitigation proposals will include a structural landscape buffer along the northern site boundary. The full establishment of this structural landscape will in the future provide some relief to the roofscape of the development on the higher northern section of the site. This ameliorating effect can be encouraged by a 'plant ahead strategy' if feasible.
- 6.57. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium to low magnitude in year 1 falling to low magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/ moderate to moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 7

- 6.58. Viewpoint 7 is a short distance view from public footpath FP 137/13/10 taken in the vicinity of Wykham Lane looking north eastwards across the application site.
- 6.59. The view illustrates the southern urban fringe of Banbury abutting a gently sloping open expanse of arable land associated with the application site. The skyline is a balance of mature tree canopies interspersed with existing residential properties relating to Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road. Salt Way defined by its established hedgerow delineates the southern urban fringe of Banbury. To the middle left field of vision allotment gardens are in evidence whilst to the far left the two storey pavilion and associated outbuilding relating to Banbury Cricket Club sits within a framework of mature hedgerow trees, from whence a field hedgerow traverses the site northwards providing enclosure. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be a high sensitivity receptor.
- 6.60. The development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which

exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.

- 6.61. The immediate view will comprise the southern section of the development, namely an undeveloped zone set aside as a neighbourhood park. An expanse of green open space defined by groups of specimen parkland trees will occupy the centre foreground. Groups of trees will also frame a naturalistically designed attenuation basin located to the right field of vision with woodland block planting buffering the eastern boundary with Banbury Cricket Club pavilion. An avenue of specimen trees line the retained public footpath intersecting the site leading north where a children's play area will be evident in the middle distance. To the far left field of vision beyond the allotment gardens, naturalistic tree groupings and woodland block planting will provide a framework for a new proposed cricket pitch oval.
- 6.62. Built form of the new development will be evident in the far middle distance beyond the green open space and specimen parkland trees. There will be both full and partial views of predominantly rear elevations of new dwellings along with their rear garden plots and boundaries.
- 6.63. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and breaking up the dominance of the roofscape thus helping to integrate the new dwellings into the receiving environment.
- 6.64. From this viewpoint the development will appear as a foreshortened band of built form which will mostly replace the existing scene of residential dwellings along Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road. The development's roofscape will vie for the skyline competing with the mature urban tree backdrop located within the existing residential estate.
- 6.65. Mitigation proposals will include a structural landscape buffer along the northern site boundary. The establishment of this structural landscape

will in time ensure that the skyline on the higher ground will be predominated by woodland cover giving relief to the roofscape scene.

- 6.66. The presence of built form within the scene will not constitute an unexpected feature given the presence of the existing urban character of Banbury's southern settlement edge.
- 6.67. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium to low magnitude in year 1 falling to low magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/moderate to moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 8

- 6.68. Viewpoint 8 is a mid distance view looking north westwards from the vicinity of the residential property no. 17 Wykham Lane.
- 6.69. The view illustrates the undulating nature of the prevailing terrain with Wykham Lane traversing westwards over a localized ridge along with its well established hedgerow, hedgerow trees and vergeside meadow. The red brick cottage of no.17 dominates the scene with its trimmed ornamental garden hedge and shrub layer evident to the foreground. Mature trees beyond the garden plot define the peripheral vegetation of the Banbury Cricket Ground.
- 6.70. The principle receptors are identified as road users concerned with the road corridor and residential receptors relating to Wykham Lane, particularly nos.17 and 16. The combined sensitivity of these visual receptors is considered to be high.
- 6.71. The development proposals will not be apparent when viewed from the Wykham Lane itself, views being truncated by intervening vegetative structures and built form.

- 6.72. In consideration of the views available from the residential property, the immediate view will be of the boundary hedgerow on their western property boundary. Beyond this hedgerow the development's green infrastructure proposals will occupy the land adjacent, these being a structural planting buffer and an attenuation basin and further afield a neighbourhood parkland setting. It is likely new built form pertaining to the northern development section will be partially contained by intervening topography and existing vegetative structures and fully contained once mitigation planting has established.
- 6.73. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low/ negligible magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate to moderate/ minor in year 1 levelling off at moderate/minor once mitigation proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 9

- 6.74. Viewpoint 9 is a mid distance view taken from adjacent farmland along bridleway 137/11/20 in the general vicinity of Wykham Farm looking west towards the application site.
- 6.75. The view illustrates the extent of visual containment afforded by the prevailing topography with localised dips and ridgelines abounding. Pastoral farmland occupies the foreground rising up to a hedgerow stockproofed by timber agricultural post and rail fenceline. Seen in the middle ground and beyond this field boundary is further agricultural land under cultivation, the distinctive red coloured ironstone clay soil much in evidence. The application site occupies the next field beyond.
- 6.76. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath and the residential receptors of the nearby farm properties such as Wykham Farm Cottage, and as such they are considered to be high sensitivity receptors.

- 6.77. It is likely that a small section of roofscape relating to the development's higher northern section will be visible protruding above the intervening existing vegetative structure.
- 6.78. As such it is considered that the magnitude of change will be low after completion constituting a significance of effect of moderate. This is not considered significant.

Viewpoint 10

- 6.79. Viewpoint 10 is a mid distance view taken from 300m away along public footpath 137/16/10 in the vicinity of Wykham Farm looking directly east towards the application site. The view can also be regarded as a representative viewpoint from George's Barn and Wykham Farmhouse listed Grade II.
- 6.80. The view illustrates the relatively flat and open expanse of arable farmland laced with a regularity of field hedgerows. The application site is visible as the most distant farm field in the sequence to the left middle ground and enjoys a well wooded backdrop within which it is possible to discern the existing built form of Banbury's southern urban fringe. To the opposite end of the site and occupying the centre middle ground is the distinctive two storey pavilion of Banbury Cricket Club flanked by mature hedgerow trees. Its cricket pitch lies further to the right behind which a well wooded backdrop defines the tracking of White Post Road which heads south revealing the built form of Bodicote village nestling within its vegetation, the skyline defined by this impressive tree cover. An existing contemporary structure relating to a local rural business is evident to the far left field of vision.
- 6.81. In terms of the effect of the proposals when viewed within the context of viewpoint 10, the principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath and the residential receptors of the nearby farm properties, and as such they are considered to be high sensitivity receptors.
- 6.82. The development proposals will be clearly apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a noticeable degree of change to that which

exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.

- 6.83. The scheme's green infrastructure proposals will occupy the land to the right of Banbury Cricket Club pavilion, notably a parkland setting of open space and cricket pitch, framed by specimen tree groupings and structural woodland planting to the site perimeter. These measures will screen the Banbury Club pavilion structure within the scene.
- 6.84. The main development proposals will be in evidence to the left of the cricket pavilion and will take the form of a foreshortened band of built form of mixed dwelling types and juxtaposition, predominantly rear elevations with some gable ends in view. These will extend from the vicinity of the pavilion across the farmland scene to the far left field of vision, the scale taking a similar form to the pavilion two storey building. The well wooded backdrop will therefore be predominantly retained as the skyline.
- 6.85. A small degree of amelioration to the building elevations will also be afforded by the presence of the existing fragmented hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the site's western perimeter.
- 6.86. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme in the form of both street and garden tree planting. These measures will in time soften the impact of the development, visually ameliorating the built form elevations and breaking up the dominance of the roofscape thus helping to integrate the new dwellings into the receiving well-wooded environment.
- 6.87. Mitigation proposals will include structural landscape buffer planting along the west and southern site perimeters which in time will serve to provide further screening of the new dwellings.
- 6.88. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of medium/low magnitude in year 1 falling to low magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be major/ moderate to moderate in year 1 levelling off at

moderate once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 11

- 6.89. Viewpoint 11 is a mid distance view taken from further along Wykham Lane in the vicinity of the allotment gardens looking north east towards the application site. The view takes advantage of an access point within the rural lane which is ordinarily well enclosed by a well established hedgerow. The foreground shows an area of informal parking adjacent to a number of glass houses, outbuildings and fencelines associated with the allotment gardens. The application site is just discernible by a glimpsed view beyond the allotments as a patch of farmland rising along a south facing slope. The localised ridgeline beyond is occupied by Banbury's southern settlement edge with residential properties framed by a backdrop of mature urban woodland cover which also forms the skyline.
- 6.90. The principle receptors are identified as road users, but also users tending to their allotments, whose focus will be primarily inward on their gardening activities. As such the combined sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be medium.
- 6.91. The development proposals will be apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a degree of change to that which exists at present. It is considered however, that this change can be accommodated.
- 6.92. The immediate change within the view will encompass the northern section of the development comprising new dwellings on the site's higher ground.
- 6.93. Whilst new tree planting will provide a degree of visual amelioration, there is likely to be both full and partial views of predominantly rear elevations of new dwellings and their roofscape.
- 6.94. From this viewpoint these new dwellings will appear to be foreshortened and will mostly replace the existing scene of residential dwellings along

Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road. Being located closer to the viewer the development will however appear slightly more apparent than the existing residential edge, its roofscape breaking the skyline but seen within the context of a well wooded backdrop of urban trees.

- 6.95. Mitigation proposals will include a structural landscape buffer along southern site boundary whose establishment will in time ensure that the new built form will be screened from the allotment gardens.
- 6.96. The presence of the new built form within the scene will not constitute an unexpected feature given the presence of the existing urban character of Banbury's southern settlement edge.
- 6.97. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a low sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate/minor in year 1 levelling off at minor once mitigation and green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 12

- 6.98. Viewpoint 12 is a mid distance view from the Bankside road, which skirts round the south eastern periphery of Banbury, looking south west towards the application site. The image has been taken from the bridge flyover across the A4260 Oxford Road. The foreground right shows the flyover slip road framed by mature tree canopies. To the middle ground an extensive tract of green space lies adjacent Oxford Road which serves as an important buffer separating Banbury from Bodicote settlement, whose residential edge is just discernible through the mature tree cover beyond the greenspace.
- 6.99. The development proposals will not be apparent when viewed from this location, being contained in full by intervening existing vegetative structures and built form.
- 6.100. As such there is no significance of effect to report from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 13

- 6.101. Viewpoint 13 is a mid distance view taken 700m away along Wykham Lane looking east towards the application site. The view has been taken from a farm gateway opening along a country lane which enjoys a well developed hedgerow structure, evident in the foreground right. The scene shows a gently sloping arable landscape in cultivation bounded with field hedgerow enclosure. The skyline is defined by a ridgeline occupied by mature hedgerow trees and a woodland copse framing the listed Grade II farmstead of Wykham Farm.
- 6.102. The application site lies beyond intervening topography and a layering of existing vegetative structures and is therefore not visible. As such there is no significance of effect to report from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 14

- 6.103. Viewpoint 14 is a long distance view taken 1.4km away from along from along public footpath 120/49/10 looking east towards the application site. The scene is representative from the A361 Bloxham Road and Wykham Park Lodge.
- 6.104. The view illustrates the degree of containment afforded by the undulating and rolling pastoral landscape of Banbury's hinterland. An arable crop field dominates the scene with hedgerow tree cover just discernible over the ridgeline.
- 6.105. Views of the application site are fully contained by the intervening topography. As such there is no significance of effect to report from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 15

- 6.106. Viewpoint 15 is a long distance view taken from 1.7km away along public footpath 120/108/40, from local high ground of Crouch Hill at 160mAOD, looking south east towards the application site.

- 6.107. From the local natural landmark feature of Crouch Hill, panoramic uninterrupted long distance views are available across the district. The view illustrates a well-wooded landscape comprising a mix of urban tree cover, rural lane hedgerow trees and sporadic woodland copses with patches of arable farmland interwoven with regular hedgerows enclosures. A built up enclave of Banbury's urban fringe nestles within a strong framework of woodland cover at the base of the hillock, notably the residential properties pertaining to Waller Drive estate.
- 6.108. Set within a more distant layering of woodland cover to the right field of vision is a thin assemblage of built form relating to the village of Bodicote, with the distinctive Banbury Cricket Club pavilion just discernible. To the left of this lies the application site predominantly screened by existing vegetative structures. Beyond in the very far distance can be seen the rolling high ground of the Northamptonshire Uplands, a pastoral and woodland mosaic representing the eastern slopes of the Cherwell Valley. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be of high sensitivity receptor.
- 6.109. The development proposals will be scarcely apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a minimal degree of change to that which exists at present.
- 6.110. The proposals will only be just discernible as a very thin slither of roofscape sandwiched within a block of woodland mass, which will be further integrated in time by the scheme's green infrastructure tree planting proposals.
- 6.111. The roofscape will form a very small element within a wider panoramic scene and furthermore will not constitute an unexpected feature given the presence of other existing urban fringes within the scene.
- 6.112. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered

to be moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate/minor once green infrastructure proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 16

- 6.113. Viewpoint 16 is a long distance view taken 2.3km away from Bloxham Grove Road looking north east towards the application site. The scene is also a representative viewpoint from the northern realms of Bloxham and in particular the Warriner School.
- 6.114. The hedgerow lined rural lane of Bloxham Grove Road occupies the central field of vision with longer distance glimpsed views available through gaps in the fragmentary hedgerow structure. Arable land can be seen in the middle ground with field hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees providing an impression of a well wooded scene through which the Old Barn is just discernible. Further afield in the background can be seen a ridgeline associated with the northern side of the Sor Brook valley, along which woodland cover predominates and frames a small section of built form relating to Banbury's southern settlement fringe.
- 6.115. The principle receptors are identified as road users, but also users of the school complex whose focus will be inward and on educational activities. As such the combined sensitivity of the visual receptors is considered to be medium.
- 6.116. The development will be only just discernible as a thin band of foreshortened built form which will in effect replace the existing scene of Banbury's southern residential edge.
- 6.117. The built form will form a very small element within a wider scene and will be merged into the surrounding landscape assisted by the framework of woodland cover.
- 6.118. Additionally views of the development will not constitute an unexpected feature given the existing presence of the urban fringe of Banbury within the scene.

6.119. Mitigation proposals will also include structural buffer planting to reinforce the western and southern site boundaries which in time will serve to provide further screening of the development.

6.120. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a medium sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate/minor in year 1 levelling off at minor once mitigation planting proposals have matured.

Viewpoint 17

6.121. Viewpoint 17 is a long distance view taken 1.3km away from the intersection of public footpath 136/2/40 and bridleway 136/15/10 within the vicinity of Bloxham Grove Road looking north towards the application site at a datum of 116mAOD.

6.122. The view illustrates the archetypical rolling landform of the Ironstone Hills and Valleys local character area. The scene is of a farm track and public right of way cutting its way through arable crops and veering down the sloped valley side of the Sor Brook. Hedgerow tree canopies can be seen from the lower river basin whilst the farmland rises up on the opposite valley side. In the distance the terrain flattens out to a plateau where hedgerowed farmland is foreshortened. The ridgeline is commanded by a well wooded backdrop within which can be seen the built up southern urban fringe of Banbury to the centre of vision. The distinctive pavilion of Banbury Cricket Club acts as a marker for the application site which lies just to the left as a thin slither of farmland. Wykham Farmhouse Grade II is evident within the far left field of vision whilst glimpses of properties relating to the Bodicote settlement is visible through the tree cover to the far right. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be of high sensitivity receptor.

6.123. The development will be apparent as a thin slither of built form which will in effect replace the presence of Banbury's southern residential edge within the existing scene.

- 6.124. Green infrastructure proposals will include a substantial level of tree cover throughout the scheme. These measures will help integrate the new dwellings into the well-wooded receiving environment, softening the impact of the roofscape. Furthermore, the mature tree backdrop will retain the skyline.
- 6.125. Mitigation proposals will also include structural buffer planting to reinforce the western and southern site boundaries which in time will serve to provide further screening of the development.
- 6.126. Additionally views of the development will not constitute an unexpected feature given the presence of the existing residential edge and will be perceived as being part of the existing urban fringe of Banbury.
- 6.127. On the whole the new development with its comprehensive green infrastructure proposals will constitute a new settlement edge to south Banbury, one which is more integrated within the surrounding environment than the present situation.
- 6.128. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate/minor once mitigation planting proposals have matured. Furthermore, the significance of effect is considered to be beneficial.

Viewpoint 18

- 6.129. Viewpoint 18 is a long distance view taken from 3.3km away along public footpath 136/6/20, from the local high ground of Hobb Hill at 165mAOD, looking north east towards the application site. It can also be considered as a representative viewpoint from the nearby property of Woollen Hale.
- 6.130. The view once again illustrates the rolling landform of the Ironstone Hills and Valleys with its dips and folds stretching a tapestry of farmland, field

hedgerows and woodland copses across its expansive terrain. Uninterrupted panoramic views across the district are afforded from this localised high ground where pasture land cover is prevalent.

- 6.131. The scene is similar to that of viewpoint 17, with the land falling away towards the Sor Brook river valley before arable farmland rises gently on the opposite slope with the southern urban edge of Banbury occupying the plateau, merged into the landscape tapestry by a strong band of woodland cover adorning the ridgeline. The application site is largely screened by an extensive section of woodland plantation within Wykham Park, located just east of Tudor Hall School. Once again the cricket pavilion is just discernible as a marker point. Further to the right field of vision is Bodicote village which extends southwards across the ridgeline. Again in the far distance is the rolling high terrain of Northamptonshire Uplands on the eastern slopes of the Cherwell Valley. The principle receptors are identified as users of the public footpath, and as such are considered to be of high sensitivity receptor.
- 6.132. The development will be only just discernible as a thin slither of foreshortened built form which will in effect replace the existing scene of Banbury's southern residential edge within the panorama. The development proposals will be scarcely apparent when viewed from this location, resulting in a minimal change to that which exists at present.
- 6.133. The built form will form a very small element within a wider scene and will be merged into the surrounding landscape assisted by the framework of woodland cover.
- 6.134. Additionally views of the development will not constitute an unexpected feature given the presence of the existing residential edge within the scene, and will be perceived as the being part of the urban fringe of Banbury.
- 6.135. Mitigation proposals will also include structural buffer planting to reinforce the western and southern site boundaries which in time will further serve to provide further screening of the development.

6.136. It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a change of low magnitude in year 1 falling to negligible magnitude in year 10, acting upon a high sensitivity receptor. The significance of effect is considered to be moderate in year 1 levelling off at moderate/minor once mitigation planting proposals have matured.

Table 6: Summary of visual effects					
Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Nature of Effect	Magnitude of Change	Significance (Year 1)	Significance (Year 10)
<i>Viewpoint 1</i> – from White Post Road looking west	Medium	Direct Neutral	Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
<i>Viewpoint 2</i> –from Bodicote Lodge House looking north west	High	Direct Neutral	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
<i>Viewpoint 3</i> –from restricted byway 120/43/20 Salt Way looking south west	High	Direct, adverse	Medium-Low	Major/ Moderate to Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 4</i> – from restricted byway 120/43/10 Salt Way looking south east	High	Direct, adverse	Medium-Low	Major/Moderate to Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 5</i> – from PROW 137/13/10 looking east	High	Direct, adverse	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 6</i> – from PROW 137/13/10 looking north	High	Direct, adverse	Medium-Low	Major/ Moderate to Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 7</i> - from PROW 137/13/10 looking north	High	Direct, adverse	Medium-Low	Major/ Moderate to Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 8</i> - from Wykham Lane looking north west	High	Direct, adverse	Low-Negligible	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor	Moderate/ Minor
<i>Viewpoint 9</i> - from bridleway 137/11/20 looking east	High	Direct adverse	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
<i>Viewpoint 10</i> - from PROW 137/16/10 looking east	High	Direct, adverse	Medium-Low	Major/ Moderate to Moderate	Moderate
<i>Viewpoint 11</i> - from Wykham Lane looking north east	Medium	Direct, adverse	Low	Moderate/Minor	Minor
<i>Viewpoint 12</i> - from Bankside flyover looking south west	Medium	N / A	None	None	None
<i>Viewpoint 13</i> - from Wykham Lane looking east	Medium	N / A	None	None	None
<i>Viewpoint 14</i> - from PROW 120/49/10 looking east	High	N / A	None	None	None
<i>Viewpoint 15</i> - from PROW 120/108/40 Crouch Hill looking south east at 160mAOD	High	Direct adverse	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
<i>Viewpoint 16</i> - from Bloxham Grove Road looking north east	Medium	Direct Neutral	Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
<i>Viewpoint 17</i> - from intersection PROW 136/2/40 & bridleway 136/15/10 looking north	High	Direct Neutral	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
<i>Viewpoint 18</i> - from PROW 136/6/20 Hobb Hill looking north east at 165mAOD.	High	Direct adverse	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor

Summary of Visual Effects

- 6.137. The visual assessment has identified the following conclusions:
- 6.138. The application site is visually contained due to prevailing topography, intervening built form and established vegetative structures around its site boundaries and within its immediate setting. These substantially limit the visibility of the site to views from the immediate locality, these views being from adjacent public rights of ways and public highways.
- 6.139. With regard to views from a wider landscape context intervening built form, prevailing topography and offsite vegetation ensure that there is a natural visual envelope enjoyed by the site that mostly conceals it from all directions but from the south and also localised high ground in the west, the impact being partial views predominantly of the roofscape.
- 6.140. Furthermore, views of the new development will be seen within the overall context of the existing residential settlement of Banbury and as such the new built form will not be perceived as being out of place.
- 6.141. The retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerows and treescape to the site's boundaries will maintain the character of the site setting, and ensure that the degree of separation and containment currently afforded to the site is maintained and enhanced where necessary.
- 6.142. Green infrastructure is proposed along the southern and western perimeters to provide a robust development edge with the rural interface as well as providing visual amelioration from surrounding public rights of way and views from the south.
- 6.143. The built form of the development proposals will not co-exist within the same visual envelope as any of the listed heritage assets in the Bodicote Conservation Area.
- 6.144. The built form of the development proposals will be visible from the undesignated local heritage asset of Salt Way as glimpsed full short

range views from gaps within the hedgerow enclosure, these being afforded before the establishment of mitigation measures.

- 6.145. Key views out of the site are to the south where long distance views are afforded of the south valley slopes of the Sor Brook valley and far distant views of the rolling high ground of the Cotswolds. In addition the localised high ground of Crouch Hill is a culturally significant natural landmark to the west. Where feasible, it is recommended that channelled, glimpsed or indeed wider views towards these scenic elements should be incorporated within the scheme.
- 6.146. In regard to long distance views out to the south afforded from gaps within the Salt Way hedgerow enclosure, it is recommended that the design of the development layout should, if feasible, attempt to preserve key views over to the south from various points along the route. Opportunities to achieve this will prevail at openings where footpaths from the south connect into Salt Way.
- 6.147. Overall it is considered that the development will generally have a significance of effect ranging from major/moderate to moderate upon the visual environment at year 1, predominantly affecting the localised visual environment. However and as demonstrated within this assessment it is considered that the proposed mitigation measures, will over time, mature and established to ensure that the proposals can be integrated into this setting ensuring that the proposals can be accommodated without resulting in a long term significant adverse effect at year 10.

7. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 7.1. Whilst the National Character Assessment and the District Landscape Character Assessment are useful in providing an overview of the landscape character of the wider setting of the application site, and while Aspect broadly agrees with this assessment, it is considered that they represent a broad-brush assessment which does not necessarily reflect the intricacies of the landscape character of the assessment site and its immediate setting.
- 7.2. As such Aspect has undertaken a more localised landscape character assessment of the application site and the surrounding landscape.
- 7.3. The site is simple and open in character comprising of a flat expanse of arable farmland subdivided by field hedgerows with little hedgerow trees to provide vertical features. The route of Salt Way provides a defined hedgerowed boundary to the north albeit fragmentary in some places. More established vegetative structures are prevalent along the site boundaries particularly to the south in the vicinity of the cricket pavilion and to the east where mature trees provide boundary cover for the Salt Way Day Nursery and a large detached private residence.
- 7.4. It is considered that there are a number of factors that both influence and affect the character and sensitivity of the site and its setting to a change of the type proposed. Firstly, the character of the site is heavily influenced by the close proximity of existing urban influences, namely the residential properties along the southern urban fringe of Banbury. Urban influences are also prevalent emanating from the settlement of Bodicote to the east and south eastern site boundaries.
- 7.5. The presence of these existing urban edges detracts from the tranquillity and character of the site, promoting an urban fringe sub-character area, which relates more readily to the existing built up area of Banbury.
- 7.6. Although there is a good degree of woodland cover along the urban fringes relating to garden and street trees, and some hedgerow trees to

the south, the site itself is of simple character and low in diversity and can be considered to be an unremarkable urban edge landscape.

- 7.7. There are also a number of peri-urban influences which pervade across the site, these predominantly being the cricket ground with its dominant pavilion structure along with ancillary features such as the out building, high practice nets and the formal tree lined car park and driveway. In addition the recreational ground to the east and the presence of the allotment gardens in the south west also detract from the rural character.
- 7.8. Tranquillity is greatest towards the central western realms of the application site. White Post Road is a busy through route from Banbury to Bodicote which also serves a primary school and large council offices.
- 7.9. Whilst the application site would appear on first sight to be a rural setting for south Banbury, the urban fringe sub-character has a tendency to prevail.
- 7.10. Overall the landscape sensitivity of the site is considered to be medium-low.
- 7.11. With regard to the effect of the proposals on the landscape character, it is considered that the development of the site in this location would not cause undue detrimental effects to the localised or wider character reviewed in the baseline assessment. It is considered the significance of effect upon landscape character to be moderate / minor.
- 7.12. The green infrastructure elements within the southern realms of the development, incorporating the recreational and public open spaces, will form a new settlement edge to south Banbury, thereby creating a sensitive and diffused interface along the urban rural transition.
- 7.13. The scheme seeks to consolidate on the existing public footpath network and indeed it is considered the user experience along the retained right of way running through the middle of the development

proposals will be enriched with a responsive environment comprising a green corridor which also passes through the southern green open space, the latter forming a neighbourhood park for the local community and also a cricket pitch. The quintessential English countryside scene of a cricket ground inherently imbues a rural character, one which relates well with the adjacent land use.

- 7.14. The proposed cricket pitch and neighbourhood park forms a strong green infrastructure within the undeveloped zone of the southern section of the application site. This undeveloped zone reduces the visual impact of the scheme in long distance views from the south. Otherwise built form would be seen extending down the whole of the south facing sloping site, in addition to the existing urban edge. Since built form is proposed to only the higher ground on the site on the same plateau as the existing residential properties, the resulting impact sees the new dwellings effectively replacing the existing residential built up edge within the scene.
- 7.15. In addition, the scheme proposes an undeveloped zone to the eastern realms of the application site. Here green open space will take the form of a more formal parkland setting incorporating a recreational character to relate well with the adjoining recreational ground. This green infrastructure is vital to protect against coalescence and will combine with the extensive green open space prevailing across the carriageway of White Post Road to help protect the distinctiveness and sense of identity of Bodicote village.
- 7.16. In consideration of the historic route Salt Way, whilst historic research is required to qualify any potential formal designation as a heritage asset, it is nevertheless acknowledged that the route is perceived as being a culturally significant non-designated local heritage feature. The value of Salt Way with respect to a wildlife corridor and a recreational amenity for walking, riding and cycling is also significant.
- 7.17. As such it is important that the scheme not only seeks to protect these values but also to enhance and indeed celebrate them.

- 7.18. The setting of the Salt Way within the stretch along the northern perimeter of the application site is somewhat weak in character, being too open and one dimensional. On its northern flank lies the residential properties of Sycamore Drive and Beaconsfield Road, with their rear garden boundaries of predominantly trimmed garden hedges.
- 7.19. On its south flank there is open flat agricultural farmland with little intrinsic interest. The value here is in the sum of the whole, the tapestry of landscape components that make up the rural setting extending across to the visible horizon in the south. Its boundary to the south is a gappy and fragmented hedgerow devoid of hedgerow trees.
- 7.20. Thus the character of Salt Way along this stretch is underwhelming. Its main character as portrayed in other sections of Salt Way lies in the sense of place it evokes through the channelled enclosure created by its mature hedgerow trees forming a mini cathedral-like archway. From this sense of enclosure comes the element of surprise and wonder from discovering glimpsed views out of the enclosed archway, and the experiential journey and progression through varying spatial scales and qualities.
- 7.21. Unfortunately this character is absent along the application site's northern boundary, but an enhancement strategy is proposed to engender a richer character.
- 7.22. This strategy includes the gapping up of fragmented sections and planting of new hedgerow trees to create varying spatial rhythms. In addition a development set back will respect its setting. Due to the paucity of hedgerow trees to provide verticality there is scope to propose a structural landscape buffer within this set back zone. This will create a sense of enclosure at least to one side of the route providing variety to the sequential experience. At various key points along this buffer planting there will be glimpsed views out across to the Cotswold Hills in the south- these vistas will work in conjunction with the design of the development layout where potential views through the scheme will be coordinated if feasible. Creating glimpsed vistas through both the landscape buffer enclosure and channelling them through the

development by good design will thereby enable Salt Way to connect through to its wider setting.

- 7.23. These measures will also enhance the value of the Salt Way route as an ecological corridor. In addition increasing the connectivity with other footpaths linking into adjacent neighbourhoods will enhance accessibility and thereby improve the route's recreational amenity too.
- 7.24. Within the Emerging Local Plan (subject to modifications) the application site falls within the eastern section of the new proposed Strategic Housing Allocation of Banbury 17, which comprises a broad tract of agricultural green field land extending across the southern settlement edge of Banbury. The undeveloped southern section of the application site is shown on the emerging modified policy map as Outdoor Sports Provision. The undeveloped eastern section of the application site is shown on the emerging modified policy map as New Green Space and Parks.
- 7.25. With current demographic trends and the market demand for housing within the district, particularly affordable dwellings, coupled with the town's desirability as a commuter town and its position as major centre within the district economically, it is difficult to reconcile the aspiration of the town as a successful, vibrant and growing community when fundamentally there is a tension between demand and supply.
- 7.26. In regard to this, it is noted that Cherwell District Council has recently approved a development for 350 dwellings outside the settlement boundary and within the setting of the historic Salt Way, this development being Land South of Salt Way and West of Bloxham Road.
- 7.27. This landscape and visual assessment considers that the application site represents an appropriate and logical addition to the urban settlement that will not compromise the integrity of the surrounding open countryside nor the heritage assets of either Banbury or Bodicote.
- 7.28. The siting, scale, height, appearance and layout of the proposed dwellings will reflect the existing built context of the existing local

character. Built form and the pattern of the existing settlement is a component within the immediate landscape character and as such it is considered that the localised character has the capacity to integrate the proposals.

- 7.29. In summary the proposals have sought to promote a sensitive and considered development approach, maintaining a level and layout of development which both respects and enhances the setting of the receiving environment and the localised context.
- 7.30. The proposals have incorporated a landscape led approach, with careful consideration given to the location of the proposed open space areas, the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation and new structure planting within the site. These features ensure that the proposals can be accommodated within this setting without detriment to the quality and character of the receiving environment.
- 7.31. Overall this site specific assessment is broadly in agreement with the Landscape Capacity Study and considers the application site to have a medium-high capacity for change of the type proposed.
- 7.32. In terms of the long term effects of the proposals upon the receiving landscape character, with regard to the national and regional character areas, it is considered that the maturing of the proposed planting and establishment of the proposed green infrastructure, associated with the proposals, will reduce the perceived presence of the proposals. It is considered that the enhancement of the green edge to the site and the urban – rural transition will ensure that the proposals can be integrated in this location without long term harm. The proposed development will be perceived in the wider context of the southern expansion of Banbury and incorporates appropriate measures to ensure that an appropriate and defensible edge to the urban area is achieved. It is therefore considered that the residual effect of the proposals upon these wider landscape character areas will be minor to negligible.
- 7.33. With regard to the immediate landscape context of the site, the maturing of the comprehensive landscape scheme will reinforce the integration of

the proposed built form, softening the built elevations and enhancing the adjoining streetscenes and pedestrian routes. The proposed open space and recreation facilities will also have established to become key focal points within the community. The Cherwell landscape capacity assessment and SHLAA both identify that this site has the capacity to accommodate residential development. This is reinforced through the sites allocation within the emerging Local Plan. It is considered that the maturing of the proposed landscape treatment and wider Green Infrastructure will ensure that the proposals can be integrated without significant harm to the setting of Banbury or its landscape context. The proposals represent a high quality extension to the urban area that will form a robust and defensible edge to the settlement without compromising the key characteristics of the receiving landscape. The significance of the residual effect is therefore considered to be minor to negligible neutral.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. The proposed development seeks to promote a sensitive and considered development, which relates to the existing urban fringe and character of Banbury. Consideration has been given to the scale and layout of the proposals, to the proposed landscape structure, and provision of open space seeking to promote a strong green infrastructure. Development proposals seek to retain and enhance the site's key existing green infrastructure assets in order to promote the site's character and distinctiveness. This considered development layout ensures that the proposals can be integrated into the site and its immediate setting within the vicinity of Bodicote village.

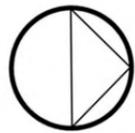
- 8.2. It is considered that the application site and receiving environment have the capacity to accommodate the proposals. The proposals will not result in significant harm to the landscape character or visual environment and, as such, it is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated in this location, is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective, and therefore meets the landscape requirements of both national and local planning policy.

ASPECT PLANS

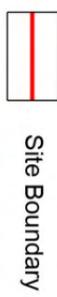
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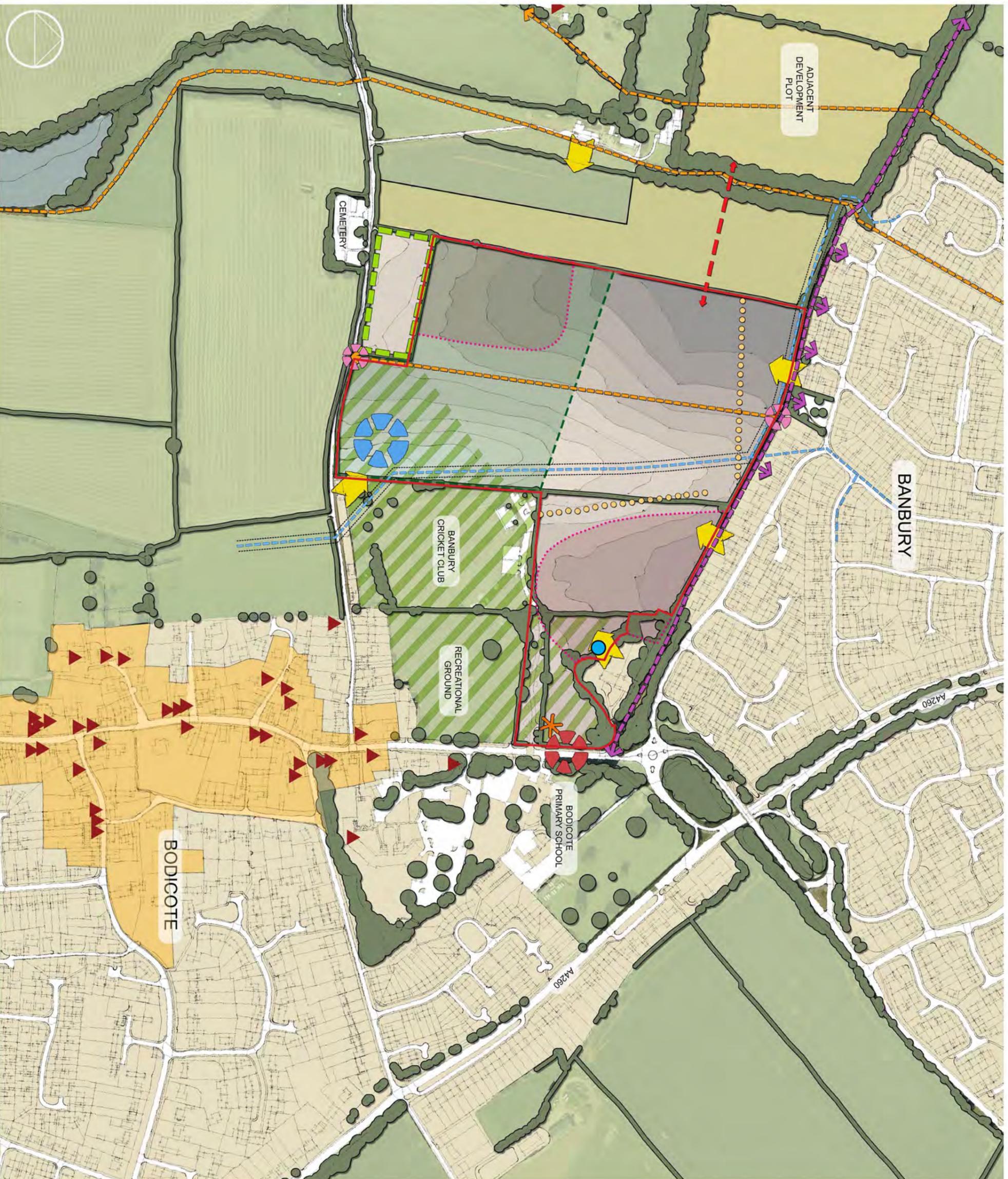
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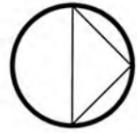
Site Boundary

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				
TITLE Land West of White Post Road, Banbury Site & Setting				
CLIENT Gladman Developments Ltd				
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN		
Not to Scale	JUL 2015	SLB		
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION			
5713/ASP1				

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- KEY:**
- Application Boundary - 17.53Ha
 - Existing Public Right of Way - Saltway
 - Existing Public Footpaths
 - Existing Trees and Hedgerows
 - Existing Drainage - Surface Water
 - Existing Overhead Electricity Cables
 - Contours
 - Existing Alignment
 - Existing Septic Tank
 - Indicative Location of Badger Setts
 - Potential for New Car Park
 - Consider Views from Adjacent/Nearby Housing
 - Low Point of Site - Potential Suds Area
 - Potential Primary Access
 - Retained Pedestrian Access
 - Prevent Coalescence of Banbury and Bodicote - Retain a Green Buffer between Settlements
 - Archaeological Sensitive Areas
 - Potential Bus Link to Adjacent Development
 - Designated Outdoor Sports Provision Allocation
 - Listed Buildings
 - Bodicote Conservation Area

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

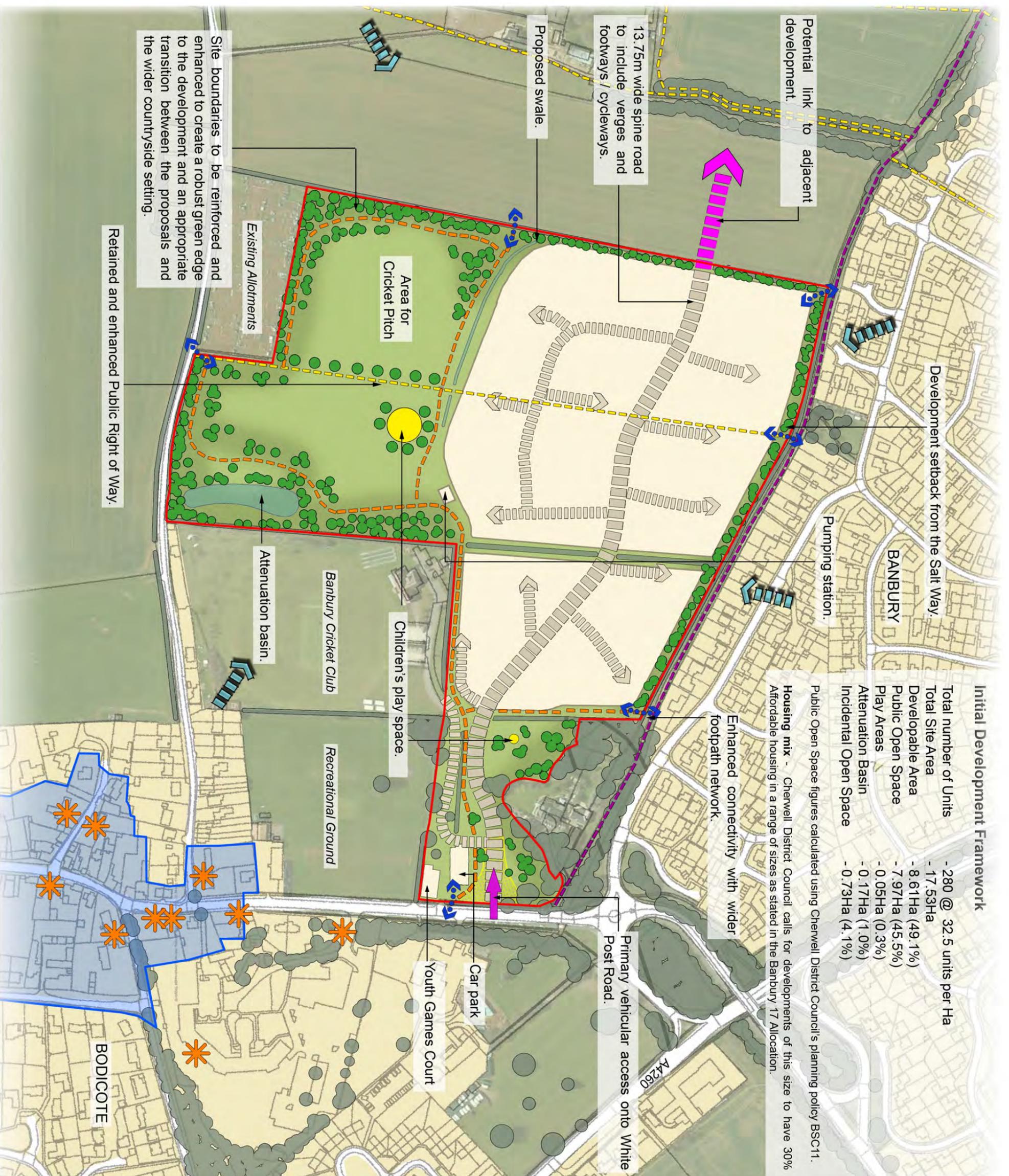
TITLE
 Land off White Post Road, Banbury
 Constraints & Opportunities Plan

CLIENT
 Gladman Developments Ltd

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
Not to Scale	JUN 2015	RF	RF

DRAWING NUMBER
 5713 / ASP002

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Initial Development Framework

Total number of Units	- 280 @ 32.5 units per Ha
Total Site Area	- 17.53Ha
Developable Area	- 8.61Ha (49.1%)
Public Open Space	- 7.97Ha (45.5%)
Play Areas	- 0.05Ha (0.3%)
Attenuation Basin	- 0.17Ha (1.0%)
Incidental Open Space	- 0.73Ha (4.1%)

Public Open Space figures calculated using Cherwell District Council's planning policy BSC11.

Housing mix - Cherwell District Council calls for developments of this size to have 30% Affordable housing in a range of sizes as stated in the Banbury 17 Allocation.

Site boundaries to be reinforced and enhanced to create a robust green edge to the development and an appropriate transition between the proposals and the wider countryside setting.

Retained and enhanced Public Right of Way.

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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Existing Vegetation to be Retained
- Proposed Indicative Vegetation Structures
- Developable Area
- Public Open Space
- Proposed Road Corridor (13.75m wide)
- Proposed Secondary Road Corridor
- Existing Access to Banbury Cricket Club
- Potential Site Access
- Existing Public Right of Way
- The Salt Way Public Right of Way
- Proposed Footway / Cycleway
- Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Access Points to be Enhanced
- Key Views
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Potential Link to Adjacent Development
- Safe guarded land providing flexibility to allow for the larger part of the allocation

REVISIONS

E	07.07.15	Updated to client comments	SLB	RF
D	30.06.15	Amended attenuation areas	SLB	RF
C	08.06.15	Updated to client comments	RF	RF
B	03.09.15	Updated to client comments	RF	RF
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
White Post Road, Banbury
Development Framework Plan

CLIENT
Gladman Developments

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
not to scale	MAY 2015	SLB	RF
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION		
5713 / ASP03	F		

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APPENDIX 1

ASPECT LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT METHODOLOGY

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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 1.1. The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment have jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013) that gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This methodology takes on board the above guidance.
- 1.2. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and how the development will affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.
- 1.3. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. This process will identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

1. Baseline study

Landscape

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.
- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value and susceptibility of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

Visual

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate, and establish

the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals.

2. Project description

The baseline study highlights clear opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The aspects of the scheme at each phase that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity will need identifying. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design as a response to the local landscape and visual environment.

3. Description of Effects

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.

This will identify whether the effects are:

Adverse or Beneficial - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view.

Direct or Indirect – A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.

Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 10, following completion of the development.

Reversible or Irreversible – can the resulting effect of a development be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.

4. Significance of Effects (EIA only)

A final judgment on whether the effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Regulations. The summary should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative/ adverse effects. Mitigation measures need to be identified that may reduce the final judgement on the significance of any residual negative effects in the long term.

Assessing effects

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.4. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society. The following table explains each threshold and the factors that make up the degree of sensitivity.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Landscape resource where there is a high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, relatively intact and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be of National or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, AONB's, Conservation Areas etc.
Medium	Landscape resource where there is a medium susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of medium value, good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. Typical examples may be designated for their value at District level.

Low	Landscape resource where there is a low susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of low value, and contain evidence of previous landscape change.
Negligible	Landscape resource where there is little or no susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes are likely to be degraded, of weak landscape structure, intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.5. The sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change, and is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Each receptor should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Viewers on public rights of way whose prime focus is on the landscape around and are often very aware of its value. Occupiers of residential properties with primary views affected by the development. Examples include viewers within National landscape designations, users of National Trails, Long Distance Routes or Sustrans cycle routes, or within the setting of a listed building.
Medium	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape, occupiers of residential properties with oblique views affected by the development, and users of rural lanes and roads. Examples include viewers within moderate quality landscapes, local recreation grounds, and outdoor pursuits.
Low	Viewers engaged in outdoor sport or recreation whose prime focus is on their activity, or those passing through the area on main transport routes whose attention is focused away from an appreciation of the landscape.
Negligible	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and not susceptible to changes in the surrounding landscape.

Effect Magnitude

- 1.6. The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as high, medium, low, or negligible.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Effect Definition
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape or view.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view.
No Change	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change due to being totally compatible with the local character or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

Significance Threshold

- 1.7. The magnitude of change is then considered against the sensitivity of the landscape resource as a receptor or the existing character of the panorama / view. In formulating the significance of effect, reasoned professional judgement is required which is explained within the assessment. This is carried out both in terms of the predicted effects on landscape character or on visual amenities. The significance thresholds are predicted as Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible and None, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects

should be demonstrated at different stages (construction stage, operational stage year 0, and year 10).

Table 4: Significance of Effect

Significance	Threshold Definition
Major	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view, that has little or no ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
Moderate	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Minor	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Negligible	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change.
None	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in a neutral effect significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

- 1.8. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix will be used to determine the significance thresholds, through determining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change.

Table 5: Measuring Significance of Effect

		Sensitivity of Receptors			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/ None

- 1.9. It should be noted that where there is no perceptible change in terms of the effect magnitude regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be none.
- 1.10. A written statement summarising the significance of effects is provided, assisted by the tables and matrices. The final judgement relies on professional judgement that is reasonable, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development in the final assessment.

Assessing cumulative effects

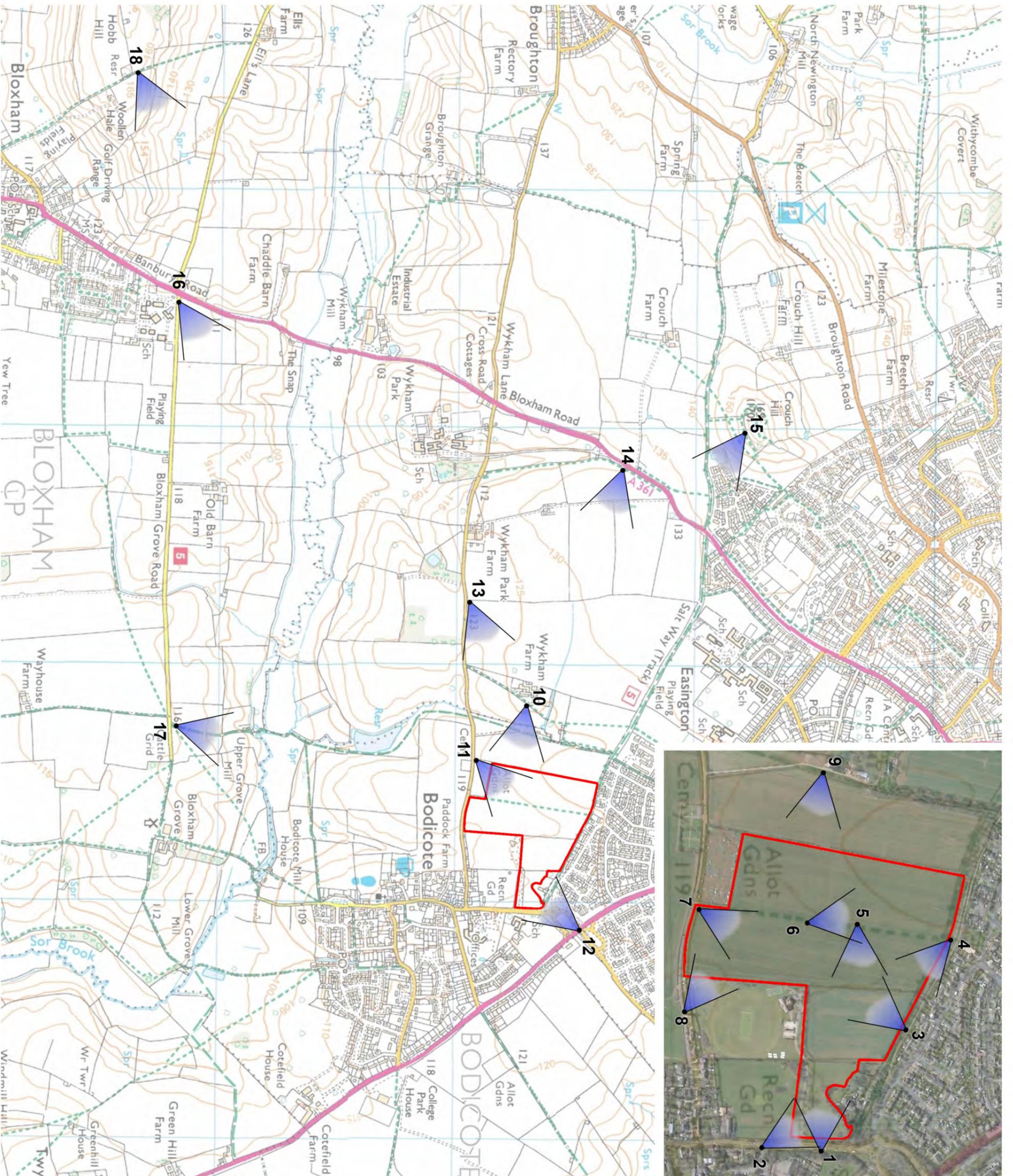
- 1.11. Cumulative effects are additional effects caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments. This can be cumulative landscape effects on the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or cumulative visual effects caused by two or more developments being visible from one viewpoint and/or sequence of views. The scope of cumulative effects should be agreed at the outset to establish what schemes are relevant to the assessment, and what planning stage is appropriate. It is generally considered that existing and consented developments and those for which planning applications have been submitted but not yet determined should be included.

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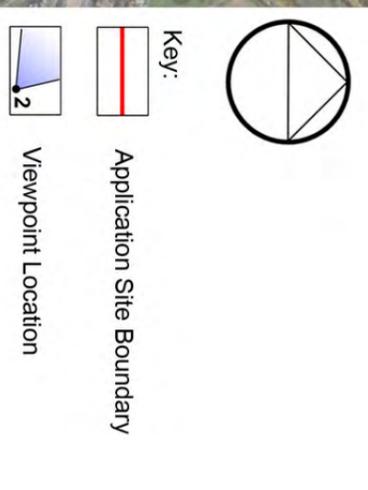
APPENDIX 2

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

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NOTES
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 Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd, West Court, Herdwick Business Park, Noid Way, Banbury OX16 2AF.
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REV	DATE	NOTE	Drawn	CHK'D

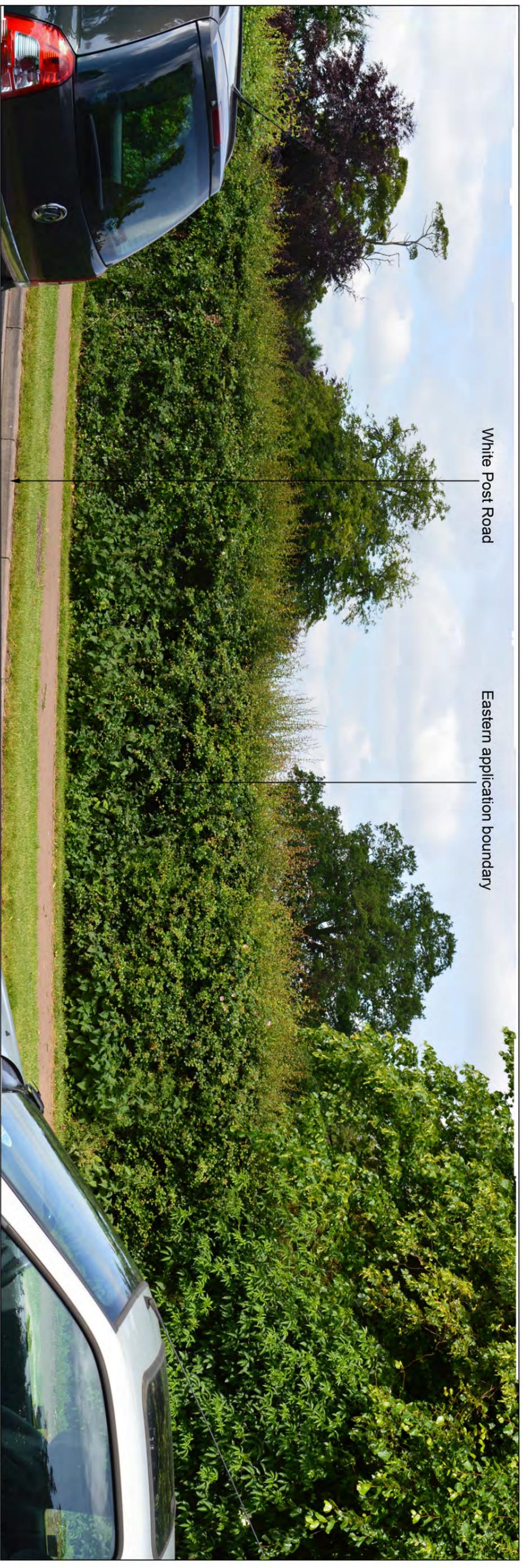
aspect landscape planning

White Post Road, Banbury
Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT
Gladman Development Ltd

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
NTS	JUNE 2015	SLB	RF
DRAWING NUMBER			
5713 / VLP			

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White Post Road

Eastern application boundary

Viewpoint 1



Recreational Ground

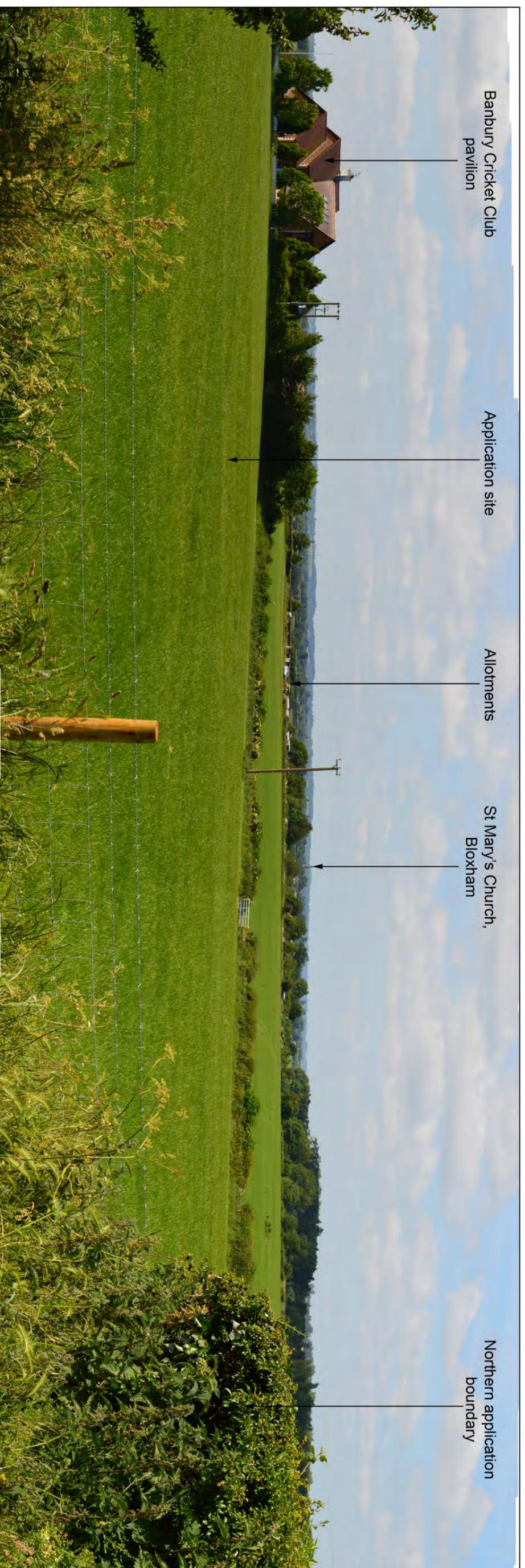
White Post Road

Entrance to the Banbury Cricket Club

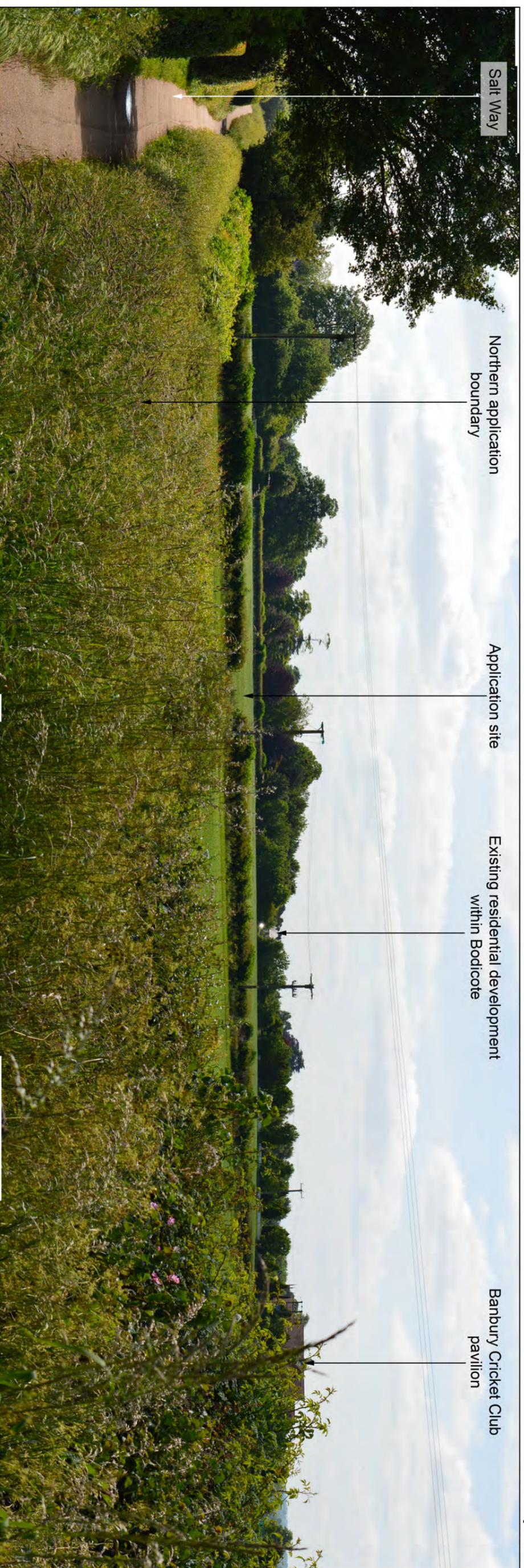
Eastern application boundary

Viewpoint 2

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Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4

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Existing residential development lining
the southern fringe of Banbury



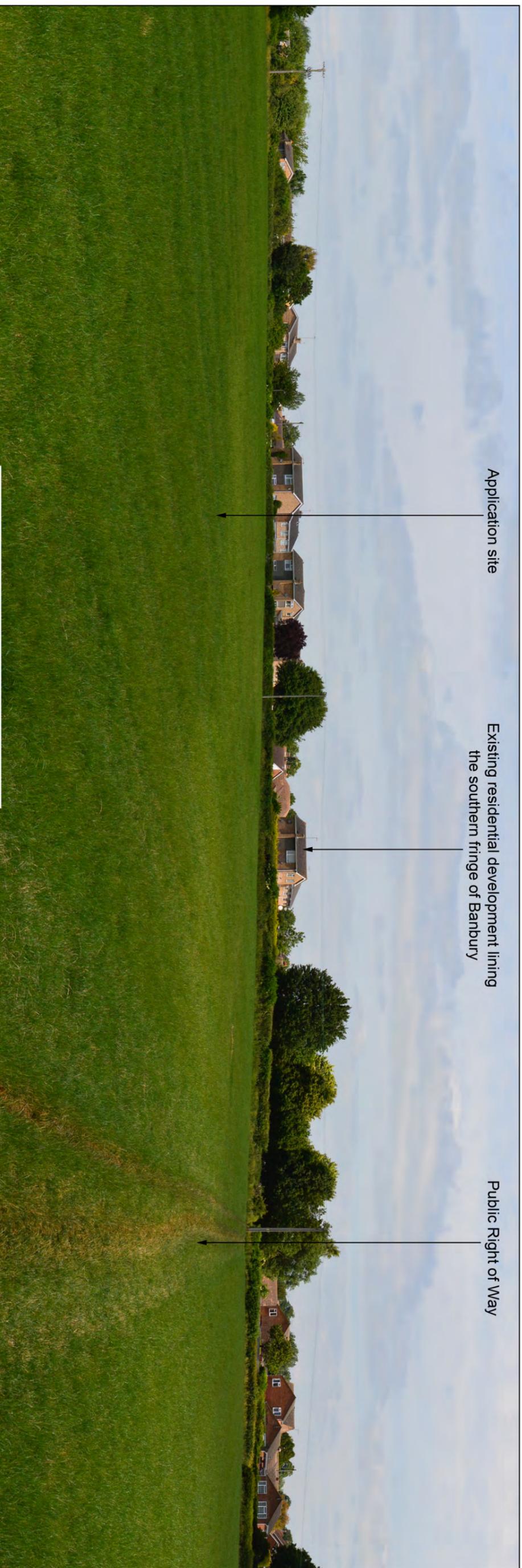
Application site

Viewpoint 5

Application site

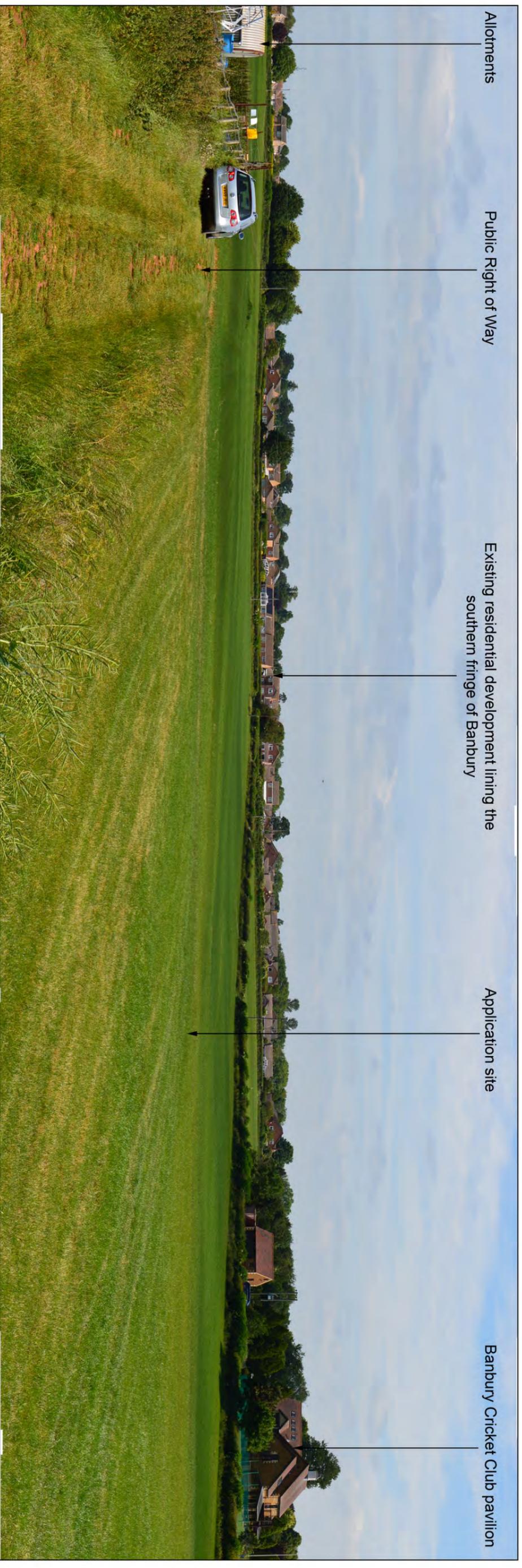
Existing residential development lining
the southern fringe of Banbury

Public Right of Way

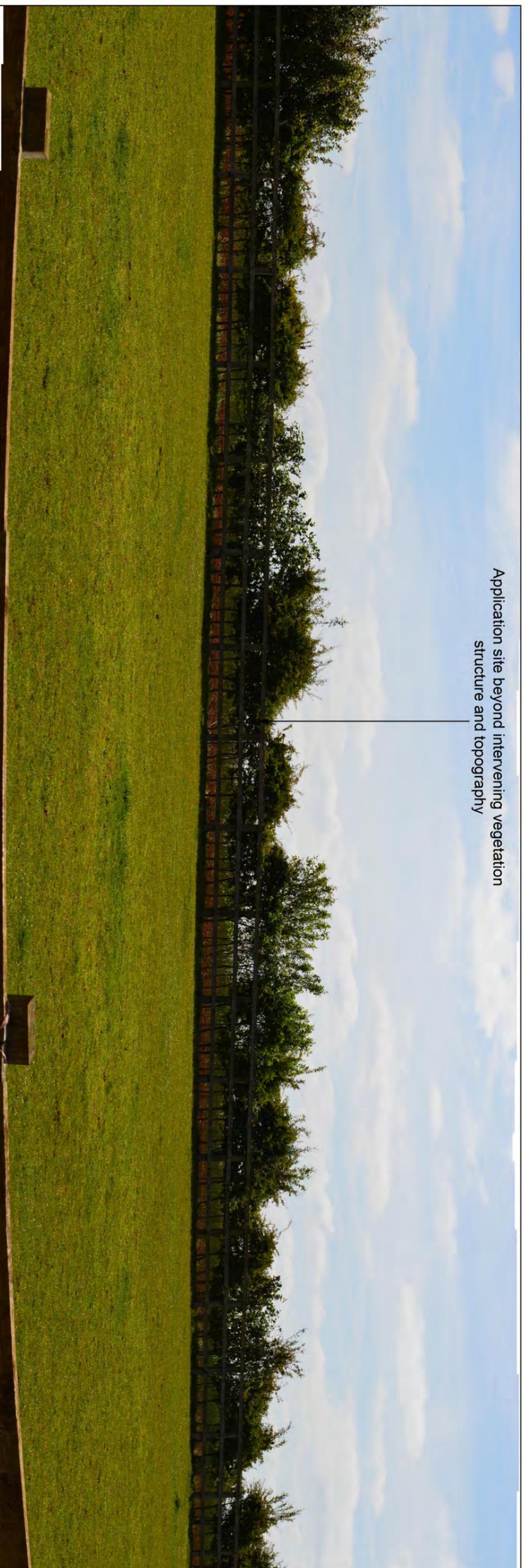


Viewpoint 6

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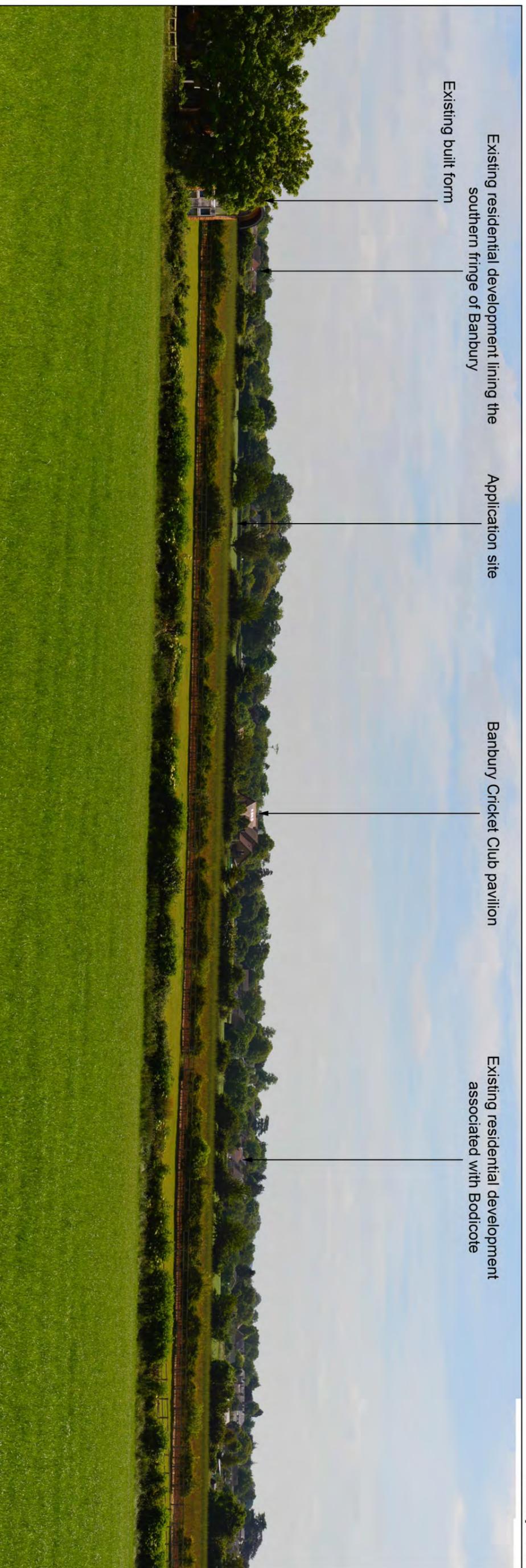


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Application site beyond intervening vegetation structure and topography

Viewpoint 9



Existing residential development lining the southern fringe of Banbury

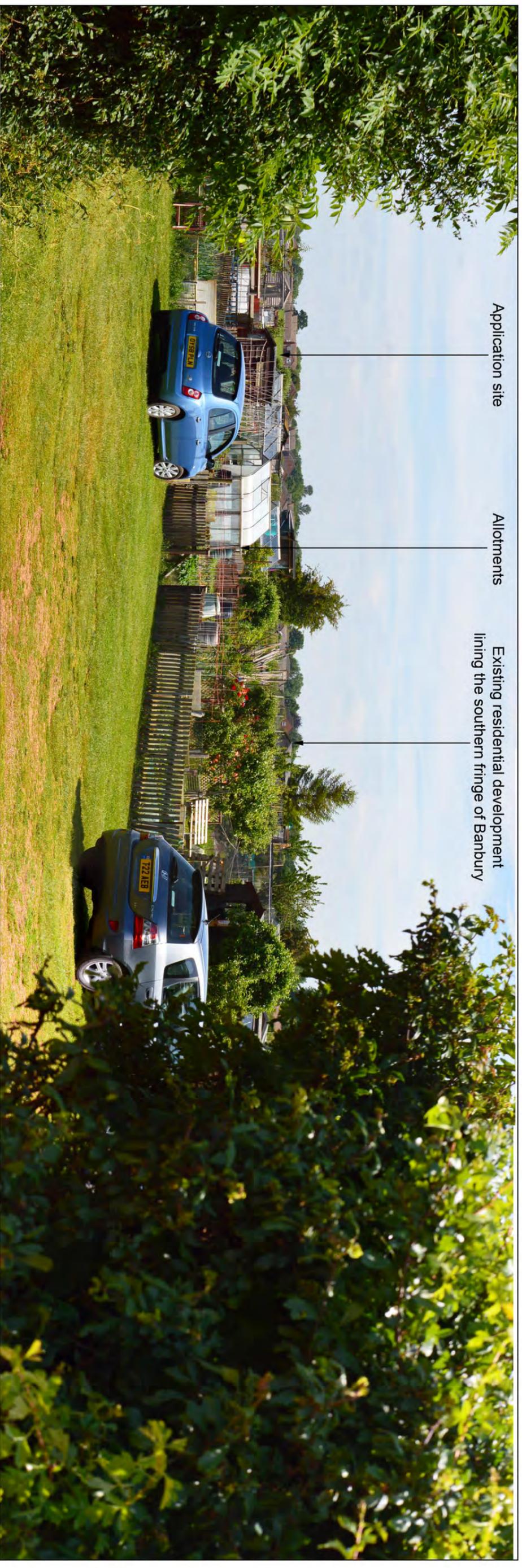
Application site

Banbury Cricket Club pavilion

Existing residential development associated with Bodicote

Viewpoint 10

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Application site

Allotments

Existing residential development lining the southern fringe of Banbury

Viewpoint 11



Oxford Road (A4260)

Application site beyond intervening vegetation structure

Viewpoint 12

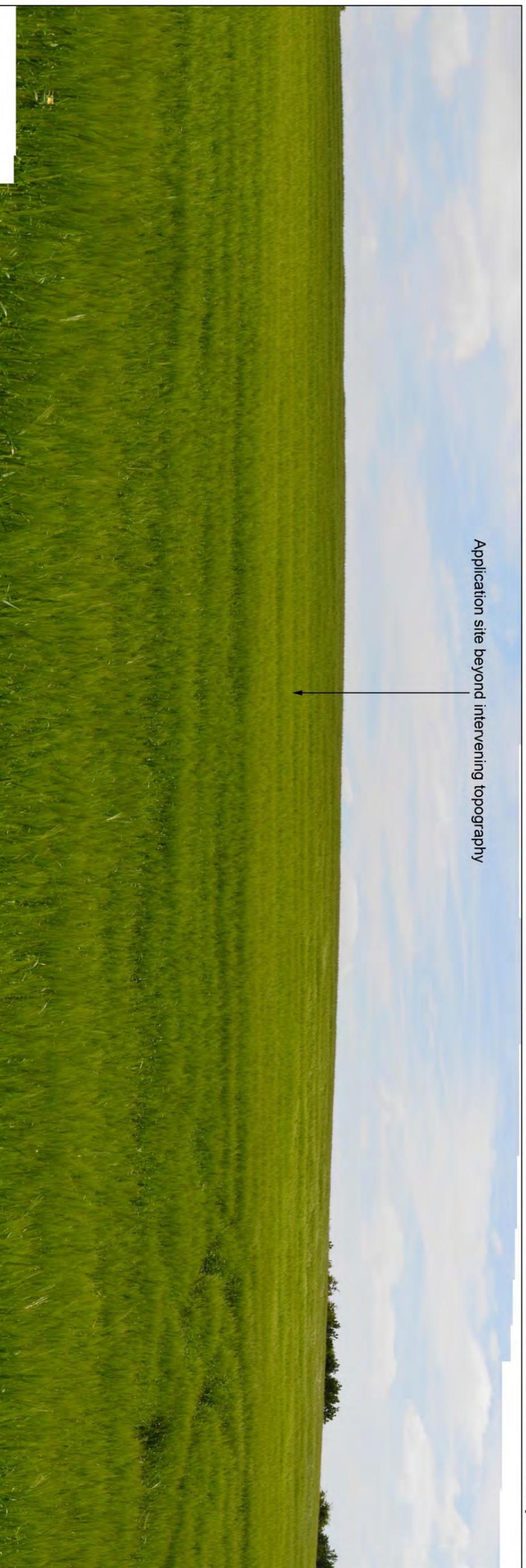
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Wykham Farm Grade II Listed Building

Application site beyond intervening topography and vegetation structure

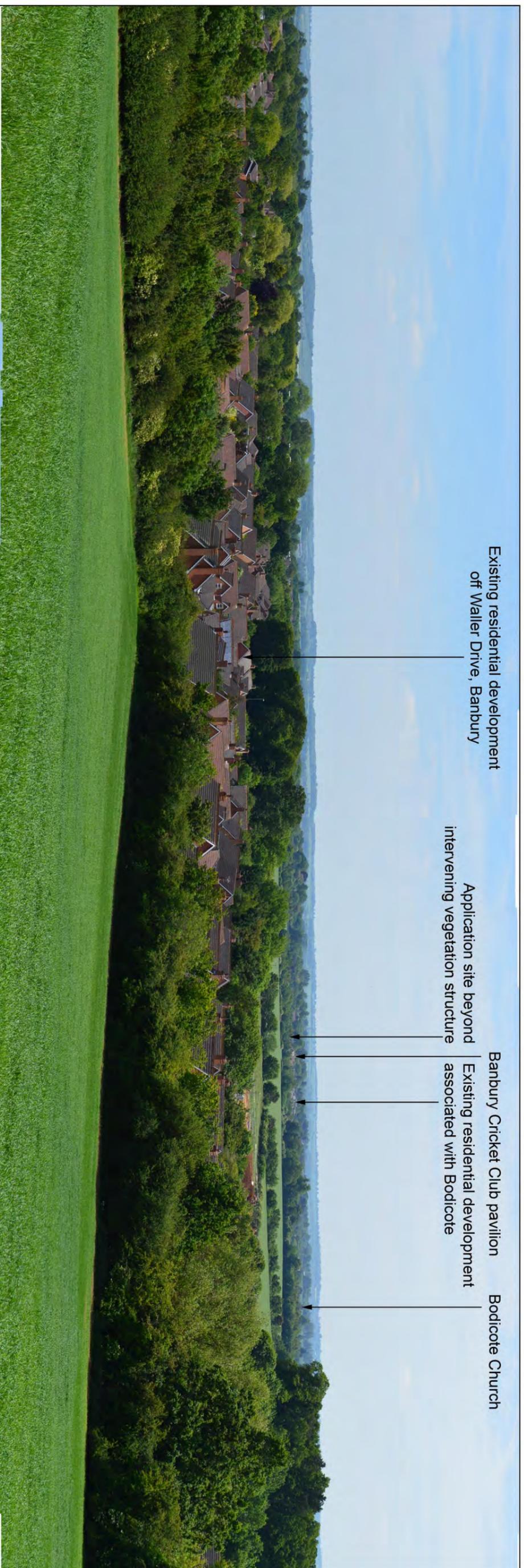
Viewpoint 13



Application site beyond intervening topography

Viewpoint 14

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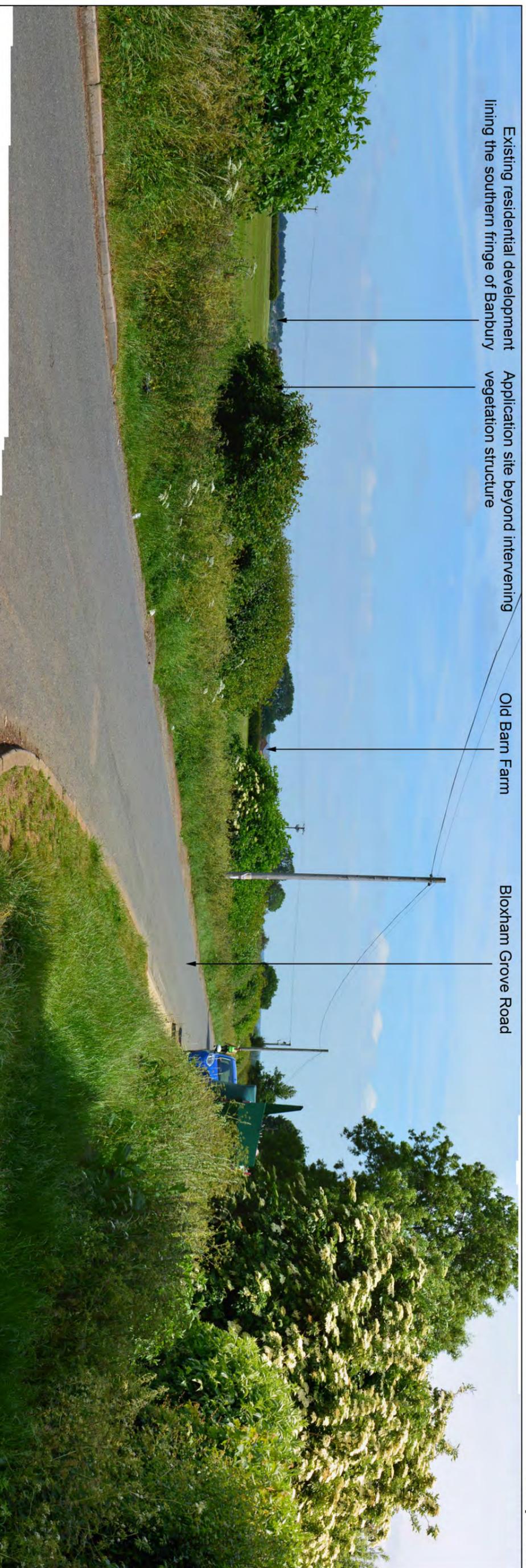
Existing residential development
off Waller Drive, Banbury

Application site beyond
intervening vegetation structure

Banbury Cricket Club pavilion
Existing residential development
associated with Bodicote

Bodicote Church

Viewpoint 15



Existing residential development
lining the southern fringe of Banbury

Application site beyond intervening
vegetation structure

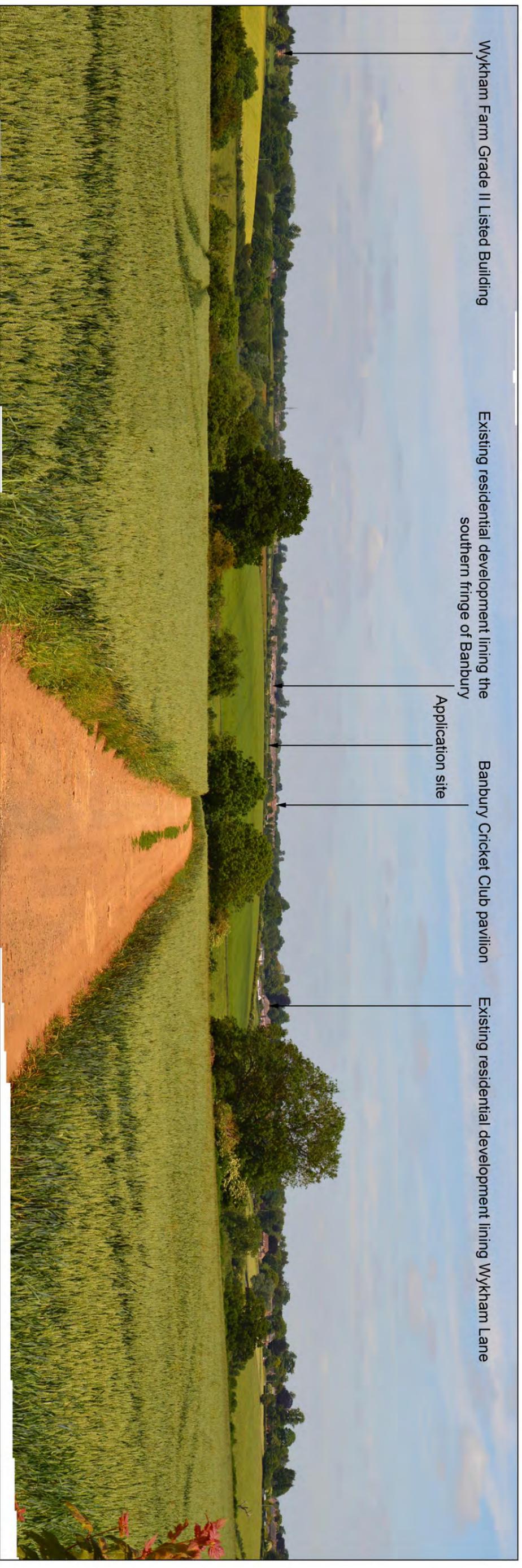
Old Barn Farm

Bloxham Grove Road

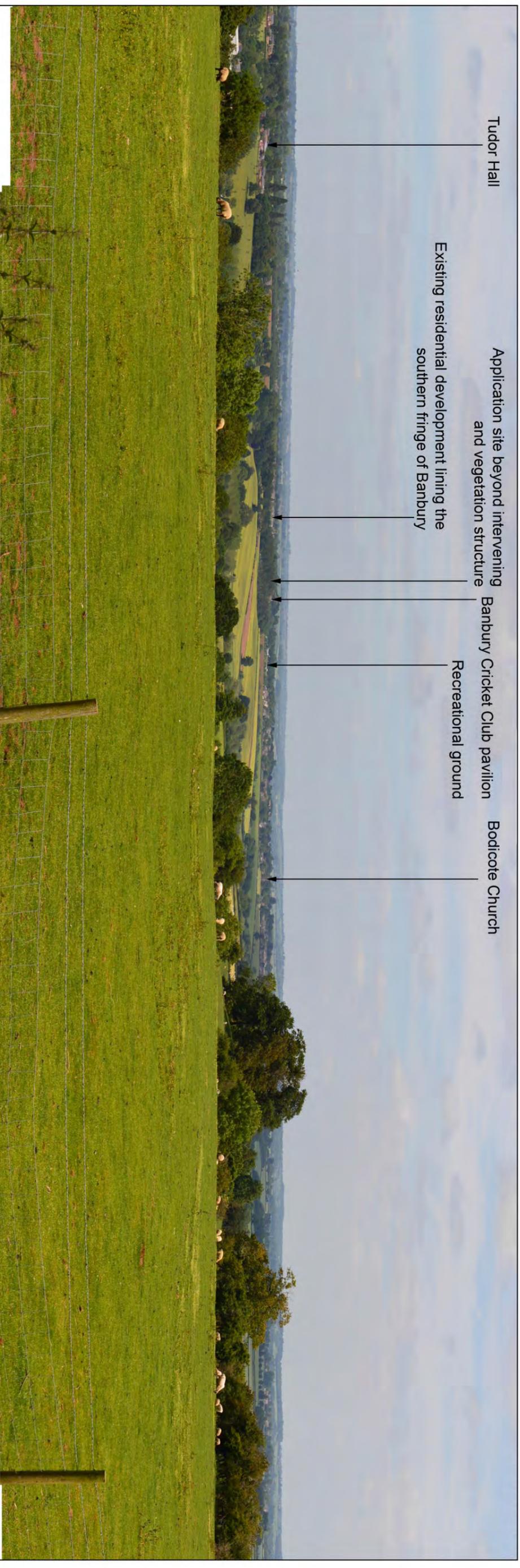
Viewpoint 16

NB IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.

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Viewpoint 17



Viewpoint 18

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APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS 95 (extract)

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95. Northamptonshire Uplands



Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹ Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention,³ we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

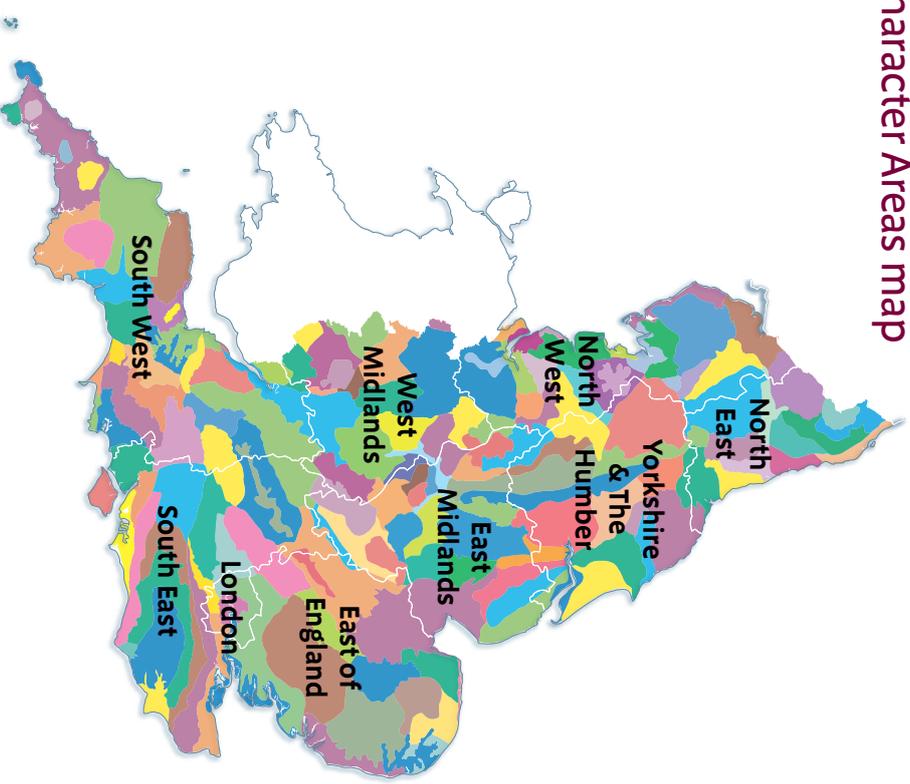
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk.

National Character Areas map



- ¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011); URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf
- ² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011); URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf
- ³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>)

Summary

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) is an area of gently rolling, limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines. Rivers flow out from the NCA in all directions, including several major rivers – the Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise. While there are areas of differing character, there are strong unifying landscape features across the Northamptonshire Uplands, most importantly the extensive areas of open field systems with ridge and furrow and the earthworks of deserted and shrunken settlements which occur throughout. Other features include the strong, mostly Parliamentary enclosure pattern with high, wide, A-shaped hedgerows bounding the largely rectilinear fields with their frequent mature ash and oak trees; the many country houses and their associated extensive areas of historic and nationally important designed parkland landscapes; the distinctive ironstone, cob and brick nucleated settlements with their large stone churches, often with prominent steeples; the narrow lanes with very wide grassy verges; and the small, scattered but prominent broadleaved woods and coverts. There are also wide, long-distance views from the edges and across the ridgetops throughout the area.

Land is in mixed agricultural use, mostly pasture and arable, and reservoirs are a significant feature. Woodland is sparse, with many scattered, small, broadleaved coverts and copses, some in prominent hill-top positions, dotted across the landscape. The few ancient woodlands, such as Badby, take on a special value and interest in an NCA with few other areas of semi-natural vegetation and relatively limited wildlife interest. Flood plain grazing marsh occurs around Banbury and there are small, scattered pockets of

mire, lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland throughout the NCA, some designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their biodiversity interest. The area is also important for farmland birds.

Around the fringes and two main towns, the area has seen extensive development and construction of major strategic road and rail infrastructure, with associated reductions in levels of tranquillity and loss of rural character, though overall the area retains a strong sense of rural tranquillity. The area is particularly important for delivery of sense of history, sense of place, recreation and water availability and some ecosystem services are under pressure from development and agricultural practice, particularly water availability and water quality, soil erosion, soil quality and tranquillity.

[Click map to enlarge](#); [click again to reduce](#)

[Click map to enlarge](#); [click again to reduce](#)

Statements of Environmental Opportunities:

- **SEO 1:** Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people’s enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.
- **SEO 2:** Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.
- **SEO 3:** Conserve, manage and enhance the river catchments and reservoirs, improving water quality and flow management and benefiting biodiversity and recreation through managing soils, diffuse pollution and run-off, reconnecting flood plains and extending natural habitats.
- **SEO 4:** Conserve, maintain and promote local building styles and materials and plan strategic growth, infrastructure development and mineral extraction to ensure they protect remaining areas of high tranquillity, strengthen local sense of place and biodiversity, and increase adaptation for climate change through multifunctional green infrastructure networks, building on existing resources such as canals, rivers and access routes, creating strong ecological and recreation networks.



Wide panoramic views are a key feature of the area, here from the Knightley Way, one of many named long-distance paths.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) extends north-east from the Cotswolds NCA south of Banbury to border the Northamptonshire Vales NCA and Leicestershire Vales NCA around Market Harborough at its northern extent. In the west it borders Dunsmore and Feldon NCA and it shares most of its eastern boundary with the Northamptonshire Vales NCA. A small area in the south-east abuts the Yardley Whittlewood Ridge NCA. It is part of the wider Jurassic 'wolds' landscapes that include the dip slope of the Cotswolds and extend north to the High Leicestershire NCA and the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds NCA. The south-western corner of the NCA is designated as part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The hills are 'the main watershed of Middle England', with wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops. The area is an important supplier of water to towns in surrounding NCAs with many reservoirs and much abstraction from rivers. The River Cherwell rises in the south near Charwelton and flows south. The Tewkesbury Avon rises on the north-eastern edge near Naseby, and flows west then south-west, while the north-east-flowing Welland rises near Sibbertoft. The rivers Tove and Ouse rise here too and flow south-east. The eastern slopes form the upper catchment of the Nene, with the major tributary of the Ise in the far north-east. Topographically, the Upper Nene divides the Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the Cherwell/Ouse plateau, sometimes known as the 'Ironstone Wolds' in the south.

The NCA is crossed by several nationally important transport corridors. It is effectively divided in two from Rugby to Northampton by the M45, M1, A5, the West Coast Main Line railway and the Grand Union Canal. In the south, the M40, A423 and the Oxford Canal cross through, and further north the A14. Urban areas and large towns include Daventry and Banbury. Close by in neighbouring NCAs are Northampton and Milton Keynes, Kettering, Rugby, Coventry, Leamington Spa and Warwick. The many historic houses, parks and gardens, the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way, Bampton Valley Way, Battlefields Trail and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets for people in surrounding areas.



Fawley Park; extensive areas of parkland are a key feature of the area, here being restored through agri-environment funding and grazed by the once locally common Hereford cattle.

Key characteristics

- Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.
- Dominant Jurassic scarp slope of limestone and Lias clay hills capped locally with ironstone-bearing Marlstone and Northampton Sands. Glacial boulder clay covers the northern and eastern areas, with sands and gravels along river valleys.
- The Upper Nene Valley divides the gently undulating Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the hillier Cherwell/Ouse plateau (the 'Ironstone Wolds') to the south and has been exploited for sand and gravel.
- Rivers rise and flow outwards in all directions, including the rivers Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise, and the area forms the main watershed of Middle England.
- Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.
- Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.
- Typical 'planned countryside' with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak. Some ironstone and limestone walls in places and some localised areas of early irregular enclosure.
- Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands, some ancient and often on hill tops, with mires, areas of lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland in the river valleys. Bluebell woods occur in places.
- Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements. Several large historic country estates such as Cottesbrooke Hall and Athorp and many small country estates, with extensive parkland containing a great many mature, veteran and ancient trees.
- Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.
- A dense network of narrow lanes with wide grassy verges, often following ridges, crossed by many strategic road and rail corridors, including the M1, M40, A14, West Coast Main Line railway, Great Western Railway line and the Oxford and Grand Union canals.
- The many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public, the reservoirs, long-distance paths (such as the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way) and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets.

The Northamptonshire Uplands today

An area of gently rolling, rounded limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines and wide, long-distance views across the ridges throughout. It lacks a strong sense of identity, not least because of its very varied landform.

The area forms the 'main watershed of Middle England', with rivers radiating in all directions. At the southern end, the River Cherwell rises near Charwelton and flows south. The Avon rises on the eastern edge near Naseby flowing west and south-west, while the north-east-flowing Welland rises near Sibbertoft. The tributaries of the Tove and Ouse originate in the south-east flanks, flowing south-east. Much of the eastern side of the area forms the upper catchment of the Nene, with its major tributary, the Ise, arising in the north-east. Topographically, the Upper Nene divides the Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the Cherwell/Ouse plateau or 'Ironstone Wolds' to the south.

In the northern half of the NCA, the Northamptonshire Heights have a rolling, gently hilly landform, with long, level views criss-crossed by a regular pattern of high hedgerows with frequent mature trees. Settlement is sparse with some small villages prominently sited on hill tops, and some lying within the small, sheltered valleys, often with large stone churches with prominent steeples. The widely spaced villages and infrequent, isolated farmsteads give the area a remote, empty feel. South of Daventry, the Cherwell/Ouse plateau (known as the 'Ironstone Wolds') is hillier and the undulations are sharper and more frequent. There is less of the glacial boulder clay which dominates the northern area, settlement is more frequent and arable predominates. The two distinctly hilly areas are divided by the low, flat valley of the River Nene and surrounded

to the west, east and north by wide, open, low-lying vale landscapes. The south-western corner of the NCA is designated as part of the Cotswolds AONB.

There are, however, strong unifying landscape elements across the Northamptonshire Uplands. The most historically important of these, found in the remaining pasture fields, are the extensive areas of open field systems with ridge and furrow and the earthworks of deserted and shrunken



Banbury Town Centre.

settlements. Occurring frequently throughout the NCA, they are prominent and evocative in evenings and winter, when low sun casts long shadows and they seem to dominate the landscape. Other unifying features include the high, wide, A-shaped hedgerows (associated with the strong hunting and steeple chasing traditions of the area) bounding the largely rectilinear fields with their frequent mature ash and oak trees; the many historic country houses and their associated extensive areas of designed parkland landscapes and gardens; the attractive and distinctive ironstone, cob and brick villages; and the small, scattered but prominent broadleaved woods and coverts.



Village cottages are built mostly of local ironstone and brick.

Land is mostly in agricultural use, with a mixture of arable and pasture, though around the edge of the area, reservoirs are a significant element within the landcover, and along the Nene Valley, gravel extraction has occurred. Arable is extensive on the more level ground of the ridgetops, especially south of Daventry where the highest levels of field boundary loss have occurred. Here, hedgerows can be quite sparse and low and hedgerow trees intermittent. Limestone and ironstone walls also occur in some places, such as around Lamport.

Woodland is sparse, with many scattered, small, broadleaved coverts and copses, some in prominent hill-top positions, dotted across the landscape and quite frequent in an arc in the south from Badby to Woodend. The few ancient woodlands and bluebell woods, such as Badby, take on a special value and interest where there are few other areas of semi-natural vegetation and limited wildlife interest. Flood plain grazing marsh occurs around Banbury; there is a concentration of acid grasslands west of Northampton and south of Daventry, and of lowland meadow sites in South Northamptonshire, often associated with other semi-natural features; and there are small, scattered pockets of mire, lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland throughout, especially along the river valleys, some designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their biodiversity interest. The area is also important for farmland birds. The Brampton Valley Way and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide important wildlife corridors. Upper parts of the River Nene fall within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA), which seeks to improve connectivity of habitats and restore the ecological network in the Nene Valley.

The predominant field pattern, and a strong unifying factor, is Parliamentary enclosure of the 18th and early 19th centuries imposed on an 'up and down' landscape; the rectilinear pattern is frequently strongly visible, though areas

of earlier piecemeal enclosure are found in places. Straight, narrow enclosure roads with wide, grassy verges, often following ridges, add to a regular, characteristic pattern in the landscape. From the ridges, the essence of the uplands, described by W.G. Hoskins, can be seen: "In this hill country, partly isolated summits and partly high table land in places, the wind blows hard and cold... Up at Naseby next door to Cold Ashby... their voices are louder than anywhere else, they shout at each other to overcome the winter wind."

Settlements are generally small, nucleated villages with distinctive ironstone, cob and red-brick buildings with pantile, clay or thatched roofs, clustered around an ironstone church. Some villages, such as Naseby and the aptly named Cold Ashby,

are on prominent hill-top sites but others lie in sheltered situations at the heads of minor valleys, often set within mature treecover, with an enclosed, intimate, sheltered character and a unity resulting from the distinctive local vernacular.

The modest village houses are a strong contrast to the nationally important great country houses with their strong character and extensive designed parklands and estates containing a great many veteran and mature open-grown trees, providing rare habitat for lichens and invertebrates.

Cottesbrooke, famed for its gracious proportions and extensive parkland, has enabled the survival of extensive open field systems of ridge and furrow; Canons Ashby is built around a medieval monastery; and Althorp House has the grand Georgian elegance of Henry Holland's design. There are also many fine smaller houses, most in local stone, including Ashby St Ledgers, Stanford and Sulgrave. The estate character of the landscape is emphasised by the uniformity of buildings in the estate villages and lodges.

Around the fringes, along the Cherwell and between Rugby and Daventry, many villages have become significantly enlarged by 20th-century development which does not reflect the distinctive local vernacular. The remoteness of the central undeveloped villages is emphasised by the minor roads that serve them, providing a stark contrast to the busy strategic routes of the West Coast Main Line and Great Western Railway and the M1, M40, M45, A14, A45, A5, A508, A422 and A423 roads which cross the area.

Recreation facilities include the Grand Union Canal and Oxford Canal, Pitsford Reservoir, the many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public and long-distance routes such as the Knightley Way, Battelfields Trail, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way.



Estate farmland with typical well managed hedges, many small woods and replanting of boundary trees.

The landscape through time

The area is mainly underlain by sedimentary strata of the lower and middle Jurassic periods. The muds and limestones of the Lias Group, which outcrop in the west of the area, were laid down in a warm shallow sea which was rich in marine life including many species of ammonites. Many of the limestones and sandstones of the Northampton Sands at the base of the Inferior Oolite Group, overlying the Lias Group, are very rich in iron. They were also laid down in a shallow sea, and subsequent weathering of minerals has resulted in the formation of rocks of distinctive colours. Overlying these, the clays and sandy limestones of the Great Oolite Group outcrop in the east of the NCA, continuing in a broad swathe through the central part of the Northamptonshire Uplands. Collectively, these rocks – which belong to the Rutland Formation, Blisworth Limestone and the Blisworth Clay – were deposited near to the shore of a shallow tropical sea.

Overlying the solid geology in the east and north of the area are thick superficial deposits of Quaternary till (boulder clay), with stretches of alluvium (sands and gravels) in the main river valleys, both dating from the Wolstonian glacial cycle. While the area was not glaciated during the Pleistocene, it was affected by extreme periglacial erosion, which has influenced the drainage of rivers including the Cherwell. Soils are closely related to the underlying geology and superficial deposits; here there are mostly types of loamy and clayey soils, often seasonally wet or with impeded drainage and providing mostly Grade 3 agricultural quality land with pockets of Grade 2, good arable land in places, particularly in the river valleys and in the southern half of the NCA around Banbury.

The area forms part of the Jurassic belt of 'wolds' landscapes that stretch from the Cleveland Hills in Yorkshire to Lyme Regis in Dorset, via the neighbouring

Cotswolds. In this NCA, all of the sharper features of the Jurassic scarp slope have been smoothed away by a long process of denudation. The history of the area is in many ways typical of a 'wolds' landscape. It was originally covered in thick woodland over a soil not very attractive to early cultivation. Much of the area, particularly the clay plateau to the north-east and the Lias uplands of the south-east, was cleared for grazing in the later prehistoric and Roman period. There is scattered evidence for settlement of this period, most evident around the edges of the area within the river valleys.

The early Anglo-Saxon settlements were along the river valleys but the middle Saxon period saw the farmsteads (-tons) spreading up onto higher ground, and the outstanding late 7th-century church at Brixworth in the north-east of the NCA indicates that these were sites of major significance. This is the area where the Vikings and Saxons met and the incidence of place names with suffixes of '-by' and '-thorpe' indicates the influence of the Danes and the Danelaw in this area.

By the 11th century, there was quite frequent settlement although at a lower density than the surrounding more fertile areas and the predominant pattern of nucleated settlement had already developed. Up to the mid 14th century, colonisation proceeded rapidly. Most of the woodland was cleared and nucleated villages, surrounded by a sea of open fields in ridge and furrow cultivation, dominated the landscape. The substantial churches reflect this main period of the area's expansion and colonisation, which went into decline following the disasters of the mid 14th century: the population shrank and settlements were deserted for a variety of reasons including disease, the limited potential for cereal growth and the difficulty of maintaining the fertility of these upland soils. Ambitious landlords like the Spencers were able to accumulate large areas of land for grazing; in 1577, their flocks at

Wormleighton and Althorp numbered 14,000. Gradually, arable was largely replaced by sheep farming over much of the area and, as a result of the lack of subsequent cultivation, the NCA is now one of the classic locations for deserted settlements, medieval earthworks and shrunken ends of villages, with nationally important survival of ridge and furrow reflecting the former extent of the open field system. As the population shrank in the 14th to early 16th centuries, and monastic lands were added to the estates of the wealthy and the profitability of wool production continued, the great landscape parks and country houses such as Althorp, Canons Ashby, Cottesbrooke and Holdenby were laid out, some by major designers such as Repton and Brown. The strong landlordship that often went with such parks is reflected in the distinctive common architecture of the planned estate villages and lodges. The Elizabethan and Jacobean houses, notably Holdenby, Althorp and Canons Ashby, are particularly associated with the court life of those periods, the poems of Edmund Spenser and the masques of Ben Jonson.

Tenant and freehold graziers tended to maintain or improve village farmsteads, reflected in the many surviving fine stone-built farmhouses, often with threshing barns attached, of the 16th to early 18th centuries. Many of the surviving historic houses within the villages were originally farmhouses, changing function in the 18th and 19th centuries as new, larger steadings with large barns and cattle courts were built on the fringes of settlements and in newly enclosed fields and the remaining open land was enclosed. While there are areas of irregular earlier enclosure, especially in the north, the predominant enclosure pattern in the NCA is regular Parliamentary enclosure dating from the 18th to 19th centuries.

In the 20th century, the main changes to a substantially remote, rural area were the massive loss of elm trees to Dutch elm disease during the 1970s; the building of major road routes including the M1, M40 and A14 which cross it; the

widespread expansion of arable cultivation and the building of modern farm buildings, loss of permanent pasture, improvement of remaining grassland and consequent rationalisation of field boundaries, and loss of boundary trees and ridge and furrow, particularly in the southern half of the NCA; the construction of reservoirs around the edge of the area; and, more recently, the construction of telecommunications masts and large numbers of wind turbines, some within the NCA for example round Yelvertoft, but mostly in the surrounding areas.

In recent times, there has been significant development pressure in towns in surrounding NCAs such as Northampton, Rugby and Kettering as well as within the NCA in Banbury and Daventry, with much commuter-related development in nearby villages with good road and rail links to local towns and to cities such as Birmingham and London. The development and upgrading of the strategic transport road and rail routes which cross the area and subsequent associated warehouse, industrial and 'out-of-town' shopping and housing developments along these transport corridors have had a significant urbanising impact on the landscape and reduced levels of tranquillity in these areas.



The Oxford Canal, once a busy industrial waterway is now a well-used recreation resource.

Ecosystem services

The Northamptonshire Uplands NCA provides a wide range of benefits to society. Each is derived from the attributes and processes (both natural and cultural features) within the area. These benefits are known collectively as ‘ecosystem services’. The predominant services are summarised below. Further information on ecosystem services provided in the Northamptonshire Uplands NCA is contained in the ‘Analysis’ section of this document.

Provisioning services (food, fibre and water supply)

- **Food provision:** The area is predominantly agricultural in character, with a mix of pasture and arable crops on predominantly Grade 3 quality agricultural land. The area is important regionally for food production and the farmed landscape has changed as market conditions have changed. There has been a shift in cropping patterns in recent years, with a loss of dairy farms, a decline in mixed farms and significant reductions in grazing livestock numbers and also in glasshouse production. Arable, however, has increased significantly, especially the area growing stockfeed, reflecting an increase in intensity of remaining stock production. Recently, some miscanthus has been planted for biomass production, which, if it increases significantly, may affect the area available for food production. There are pressures on water and soil quality and issues with diffuse pollution and soil erosion in places.

- **Water availability:** Water resources from the Nene, Cherwell, Ouse and Avon are heavily exploited and are considered to be restricted, ranging from ‘no water available’ to ‘over-abstracted’, and measures are in place to monitor abstraction rates. The many reservoirs and rivers form an important part of the water supply network to surrounding large towns and to the Grand Union and Oxford canals. The planned major expansions of nearby towns – both inside and around the NCA, including Northampton, Rugby, Daventry and Banbury – will place additional pressure on local water supplies. Increasing future demand from agriculture for irrigation or stock watering could also increase pressure on supply. Climate change may have an impact on water resources, with low rainfall and drought leading to water shortages, reduced water quality and exacerbating low summer flows in rivers, and could lead to an exacerbation of diffuse pollution.



Many of the villages shelter within extensive amenity tree planting.

Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation)

- **Regulating soil erosion:** Around 60 per cent of soils are erosion prone and there are four Defra priority catchments in this NCA – which cover the Upper Cherwell, Upper Avon and River Leam, River Nene and Upper Great Ouse – where soil erosion and management are identified as key issues. Employing soil management measures will improve soil structure and reduce erosion in areas most at risk such as on the ridges and sloping valley sides, and in areas with low soil organic matter levels or compaction. Increasing areas of permanent grassland and wide buffer strips of grassland alongside watercourses in arable areas would reduce erosion risk, especially where such grassland is managed under extensive grazing regimes. An increase in semi-natural habitats would increase the area of land maintained under stable soil conditions, helping to bind soils together, aiding water penetration and reducing erosion, for example through restoring and extending woodland, hedgerows, wetlands and mires.
- **Regulating water quality:** Water quality in the area is in need of improvement, particularly the ecological status, which ranges from good to poor. Pressures include land use change, loss of permanent pasture and parkland, increase in arable production, intensification of agricultural production, and high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. The planned expansion of settlements in the area could have implications for water quality, particularly from increased phosphate from sewage and road run-off, and there is a need to ensure that sustainable water management is adequately built into urban extensions to prevent deterioration of water quality. Wider application of best practice land management (catchment sensitive farming techniques) to areas both within and outside the current priority catchment areas would significantly improve water quality. The Upper Nene also lies within the Nene Valley NIA which seeks to improve water quality. Non-native species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed pose a threat in some areas.
- **Regulating water flow:** The NCA contains the headwaters of four major rivers – the Avon, Ouse, Nene and Cherwell – some with a history of flooding, especially the Avon around Yelvertoft, the Nene around Weedon Bec and the Cherwell around Banbury. Strategic roads including the M1, M40 and A14 can be affected in these areas. Many soils in the NCA have impeded drainage and there is a very low level of woodland cover and a loss of permanent pasture, contributing to the potential for high levels of run-off. Flood storage areas on the flood plains could reduce risk to settlements downstream and the preferred approach to flood management is to investigate flood storage options, with environmental enhancements to improve the natural state of rivers and their habitats such as the planting of riparian woodland and the restoration of permanent grassland, parkland and hedgerows to intercept water and, with their higher carbon soils, reduce run-off and minimise soil erosion. Good soil management to avoid or reduce soil compaction and increase soil organic matter could aid water infiltration rates and reduce run-off. Plans for extensive new development, particularly in flood plains around Weedon Bec and Banbury, will have an impact on flood risk and need additional management.

Cultural services (inspiration, education and wellbeing)

- **Sense of place/inspiration:** Sense of place is provided by the varied undulating hilly landform and many long, low ridgelines. A sense of inspiration is associated with the rural landscape and its visible historical associations, including the extensive ridge and furrow, open ridgelines affording long views and areas of ancient woodland. These senses are strongest in the characteristic designed parklands and estates that surround the many historic country houses. Distinctive, highly attractive, small, nucleated villages are predominantly constructed of ironstone, cob and brick and linked by straight, narrow enclosure roads with wide grassy verges, alongside strong rectilinear field patterns with tall, A-shaped hedgerows and many mature hedgerow trees. Woodland cover is sparse with coverts and spinneys associated with the area's strong hunting tradition. Navigable canals and reservoirs are an important visual component of the landscape. A small area of the NCA (less than 1 per cent) lies within the Cotswolds AONB, reflecting high levels of natural beauty in the area. Development is changing character in some areas and the open nature of the landscape means that it is vulnerable to large-scale development. Major road infrastructure developments and urban areas associated with Daventry, Banbury and the main road/trail corridors do not reflect the local vernacular character, which is becoming highly diluted in these areas. The extensive areas of parkland are characteristic in this NCA and many are at risk through neglect and lack of management of their designed landscapes and, in some cases, arable conversion.
- **Sense of history:** Sense of history is particularly strong and evident especially in the abundant and prominent ridge and furrow field systems and deserted settlements which are of national importance. There are

many archaeological sites, covering all periods of occupation from the Palaeolithic to the Second World War. Scheduled Ancient Monuments include iron-age hill forts, Roman villas, medieval settlements, ridge



Canons Ashby, one of the fine country houses characteristic of the area.

and furrow, and open field systems. Large numbers of non-scheduled archaeological sites reflect the long history of settlement and good state of preservation of early features under permanent, unploughed grassland in parkland landscapes of the 18th and 19th and earlier centuries. The

many manor houses such as Althorp, Canons Ashby and Cottesbrooke as well as their extensive parklands (some laid out by important designers such as Repton and Brown) are key features, many of national importance. Other important landmarks include Naseby, Edgcote and Cropredy battlefields, the Grand Union and Oxford canals, the high numbers of Listed Buildings and the large stone churches, reflecting the past wool-based wealth of the area. Most archaeological sites are small, with little or no public access, and the majority of the nationally important ridge and furrow and settlement sites have no formal protection. The main threats are from ploughing and neglect. There has been significant loss of ridge and furrow and other features through cultivation, reducing the ability to read the history of the area in the landscape and a significant loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and field amalgamation due to the demands of modern agricultural practice.

■ **Tranquillity:** Despite a dramatic decline in tranquillity and an increase in disturbance overall, many parts of the NCA still retain a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity. The remaining areas of parkland and their historic country houses, the ridge and furrow and other historic features, the remaining rural areas of pastoral farmland, the canals, rivers and reservoirs, woodland and semi-natural habitats all play an important role in delivering health and wellbeing benefits to people in the NCA and surrounding area and should be conserved and enhanced. The sparse settlement pattern, narrow country lanes with their wide

verges, distinctive small, attractive villages and far-reaching views are also often associated with feelings of escapism, spiritual refreshment and inspiration and should be conserved.

■ **Recreation:** Rights of way crisscross the rolling landscape, including many long-distance routes offering panoramic views across the NCA and surrounding areas. There is very little publicly accessible land, but the many country houses, gardens and parks which are open to the public are popular recreation destinations, as are Pitsford Reservoir and other reservoirs, the navigable canals and country parks. Ongoing development pressure in the area will lead to further demand and pressure to increase recreation use of the area. There is scope to accommodate this, though careful green infrastructure planning, links and management would be needed to avoid conflicts between users or adverse effects on remaining areas of high tranquillity, biodiversity, archaeological or historic importance, or on soil or water quality. There are also opportunities to increase people's understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area, particularly its strong sense of history.

■ **Biodiversity:** There are nationally important sites for winter wildfowl, woodland, parkland and lowland acid, neutral and flood plain meadows present in the NCA as well as areas of importance for farmland birds and arable plants. While current areas important for biodiversity are small in extent, these remaining areas take on an increased significance for permeability in the countryside.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people’s enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.

For example, by:

- Protecting and conserving and, where appropriate, restoring designated historic assets – including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, registered battlefield sites and Listed Buildings, especially those which are considered ‘at risk’ – and encouraging sensitive management of the outstanding features, including the nationally important open field systems, ridge and furrow and deserted medieval settlements and shrunken ends of villages, protecting archaeological assets from damaging activities such as ploughing, animal burrowing and tree growth, and developing a co-ordinated approach to their management by conservation organisations and farming and landowning interests.
- Protecting, conserving, restoring and enhancing the extensive non-designated historic parklands, their settings, their veteran and ancient trees, and rare fauna and flora, including lichens, invertebrates and bats, to protect their heritage, landscape and biodiversity interest, encouraging the development of comprehensive management plans which respect the historic integrity of parkland design and features, as well as taking into account the needs of their biodiversity, archaeology and modern farming practice.
- Encouraging the surveying, protection, conservation, appropriate management and interpretation of non-designated historic sites, including those on the Historic Environment Record, as well as field patterns and boundaries; and researching and raising awareness of the history and time-depth of the area, improving protection and management of the areas heritage and people’s enjoyment and understanding of historic assets which contribute to the strong senses of place and history.
- Conserving small-scale vernacular features which no longer serve their original purpose, such as water troughs and ponds, but which reflect the past cultural history of the area and contribute to the strong senses of place and history.
- Maintaining field patterns, hedgerows and limestone and ironstone drystone walls (where they are in good condition) and restoring or re-creating both hedgerows and walls using local ironstone and limestone and the Midlands style of hedge-laying, and maintaining the distinctive A-shaped, high, thick hedgerows with their many standard trees, where condition has declined or where they have been replaced by fencing, to maintain and increase habitat connectivity and the cultural influence of farming patterns in the landscape.
- Providing easily accessible sites of archaeological, historical and cultural interest for both educational and public use and encouraging appropriate interpretation of the qualities of the landscape and the importance of its historic buildings, parkland, battlefield sites and archaeological features, to improve understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment.

SEO 2: Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.

For example, by:

- Expanding, restoring and managing the remaining semi-natural habitats – especially remnant hay meadows, species-rich pasture and meadows, parkland, acid and calcareous grassland, purple moor-grass, lowland heath, reedbeds, flood plain grazing marsh, hedgerow and woodland habitats – through appropriate grazing and management, to increase diversity of habitat mosaics and encourage a wide structural diversity and a variety of flowering plants that can provide both feeding and breeding sites for pollinators and pest regulators and increase connectivity through creating corridors, buffers and stepping stones of habitats important for insects and other biodiversity.
- Encouraging sustainable farming methods which produce a wide range of crops, safeguarding food supplies into the future and ensuring the future viability of farms in the area without compromising delivery of other ecosystem services such as water and soil quality, soil erosion and biodiversity.
- Seeking to balance efficient farming production with conservation of the historic environment and biodiversity, promoting farming systems which also maintain and restore the farmed landscape and range of habitats, field boundaries, areas of parkland and woodlands, encouraging retention of remaining permanent pasture, reversion of arable to pasture, (particularly in ex-parkland sites), managing grazing of grassland habitats and neighbouring areas at levels that will encourage good ecological condition and extending the influence of remaining high-quality patches of unimproved grassland by developing links to increase connectivity, improve habitat condition, encourage species diversity, protect soil quality and carbon storage, and increase resilience to climate change.
- Encouraging re-introduction of previously declining traditional cattle breeds such as Hereford and Dairy Shorthorn to diversify the grazing regime, maintain the genetic diversity of agricultural animals against future threats and conserve the agricultural heritage of the area; and encouraging the promotion of local brand meats to try to increase the viability of traditional breeds.
- Encouraging the agricultural practice of hay-making to maintain and enhance the remaining species-rich meadows, and encourage restoration of hay-making to suitable meadows to increase biodiversity and connectivity of the remnant hay meadows and to encourage a variety of flowering plants that can provide both feeding and breeding sites for pollinators and pest regulators which contribute to food provision services.
- Conserving and managing ancient and veteran trees in both parkland and hedgerows to benefit invertebrate fauna and encourage selection

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- and management of future veteran and ancient trees from the current mature stock, to ensure continuity of this rare resource.
- Surveying the road verges of the National Character Area (NCA) to map the location of species-rich verges and to establish whether current verge management is appropriate; and encouraging appropriate management regimes of such verges to ensure that these local features are retained in the landscape, contributing to the semi-natural grassland resource, and maintaining and enhancing species diversity and insect populations.
- Managing arable cropping patterns and arable cultivation, encouraging winter stubbles and wide field margins to encourage priority species such as rare arable plants and the full range of farmland birds and mammals and, where possible, seeking a reduction in the use of pesticides, herbicides and nutrients, to enhance biodiversity and reduce diffuse pollution.
- Encouraging biomass production including miscanthus and short rotation coppice in areas of high yield potential which do not suffer from soil erosion or conflict with food production, important sites for biodiversity, archaeology, historic landscape or views from the ridgelines and avoiding planting biomass crops in fields which are crossed by rights of way or adjacent to popular routes to avoid conflicts with recreation and enjoyment of the countryside.
- Encouraging good hedgerow management in areas of biomass planting, protecting and restoring the traditional Midlands hedgerow style with its high, A-shape and many hedgerow trees in order to mitigate the landscape impacts of biomass crops.
- Encouraging best practice and minimisation of the use of pesticides and herbicides where possible, to minimise impact on pollinators and reduce impacts on water quality; encouraging management of arable land to maximise use of natural pest control methods through beetle banks, grass margins and headlands in fields.
- Developing interpretation of the key features and assets of the area, particularly its geology, farming practices, habitats and biodiversity and providing easily accessible and 'access for all' sites of wildlife, historical and geological interest for both educational and public use.
- Encouraging volunteers to undertake tasks such as surveying and conserving the wildlife, historical, cultural and geological interest to increase knowledge and understanding.



Narrow lanes with wide grassy verges bordered by high, thick hedges occur throughout the area.

SEO 3: Conserve, manage and enhance the river catchments and reservoirs, improving water quality and flow management and benefiting biodiversity and recreation through managing soils, diffuse pollution and run-off, reconnecting flood plains and extending natural habitats.

For example, by:

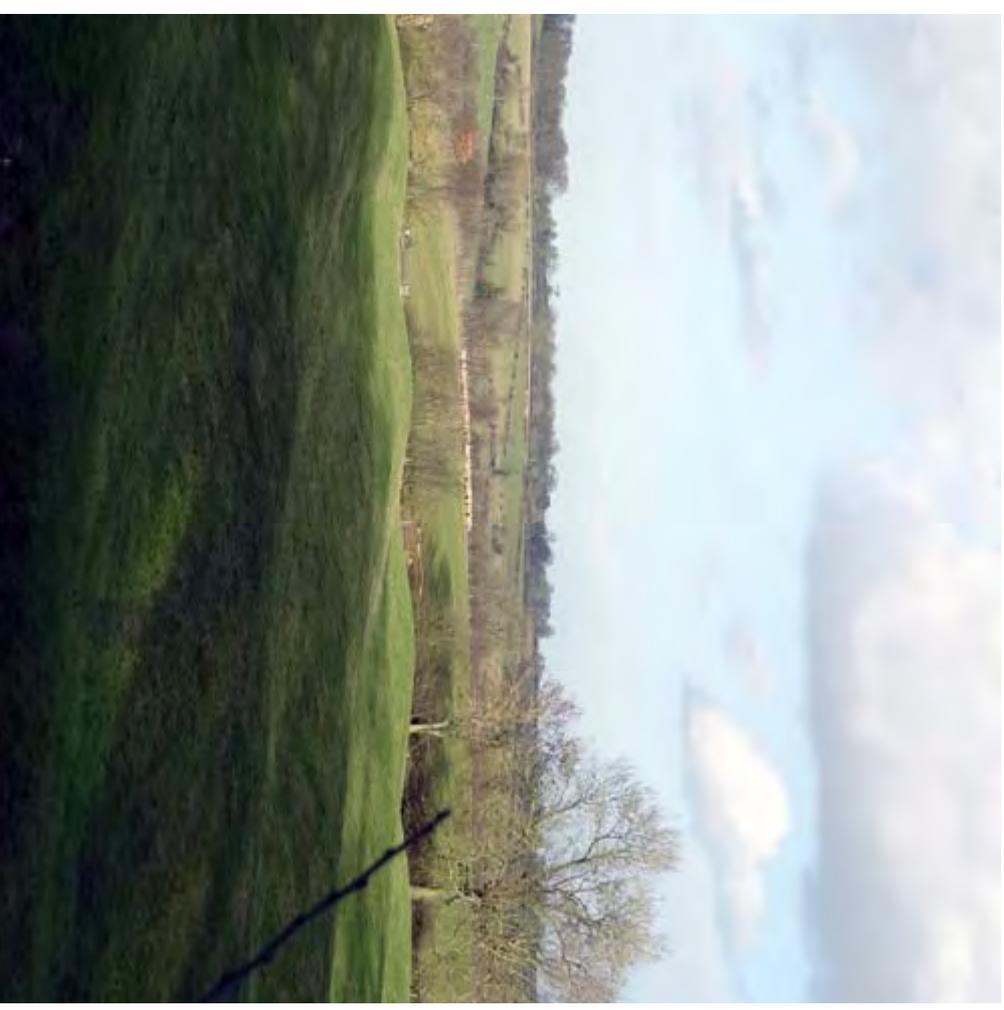
- Enhancing and managing the quality of the watercourses, to maintain them as distinctive features in the landscape and enhance their riparian habitats and wildlife interest, restoring, expanding and linking riparian semi-natural habitats such as wet woodland, valley mires, reedbeds and grazing marsh along watercourses in the valleys; and reconnecting rivers with their flood plain watermeadows to slow run-off and improve water storage capacity, while reducing flood risk and soil erosion, and improving water quality, climate regulation, habitat networks, resilience to climate change and recreation opportunities.
- Promoting sustainable use of local water resources and use of water efficiency measures by commercial, agricultural and domestic users to reduce consumption where possible, especially in new developments, ensuring that any further abstraction is carefully monitored and controlled to avoid having an impact on water flow in the rivers.
- Managing river and reservoir banks, flood plains and riparian habitats to ensure a robust cover of semi-natural vegetation, and ensuring river engineering works are carried out in an ecologically sensitive manner to naturally filter the water, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and reduce poaching by stock through wide buffer strips, fencing, broadleaved woodland and scrub and controlling invasive non-native species which threaten the stability of river banks.
- Working with land managers and authorities in nearby NCAs to address water flow issues at a catchment scale, including implementation of the River Nene Catchment Flood Management Plan⁴.
- Encouraging implementation of the vision and objectives of the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area, including tackling water resource and flow issues and encouraging uptake of advice and grants available through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Schemes targeted on the area to manage watercourses to prevent diffuse water pollution, allow water tables to rise where appropriate, and to promote good soil management in the priority catchments.
- Encouraging best practice in soil management, adopting Defra's Code of Good Practice (2009) and the Environment Agency's 'Think Soils' initiative (2008), to ensure continued sustainable food production which does not compromise other ecosystem services.
- Ensuring that farm infrastructure is able to reduce rates of point and diffuse pollution generated in and around the farms through improved, roofed silage, slurry and manure storage, grey water separation, rainwater storage, improvements to storm overflows and good handling facilities.
- Reducing soil erosion through provision of livestock drinking troughs, sediment ponds and traps, swales with check dams, piped culverts in ditches, resurfacing of gateways, livestock and machinery tracks, watercourse

⁴ River Nene Catchment Flood Management Plan, Summary Report, Environment Agency (December 2009)

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- crossings, gate relocation and hard bases for drinkers and feeders, while ensuring their sensitive design in this high-quality landscape.
- Managing non-riparian woodland, parkland and hedgerows and creating new native woodland to increase water infiltration, slow flows, reduce soil erosion, act as wind breaks, improve soil quality through increased organic matter and soil fauna, and bind soil in proximity, avoiding sites of biodiversity or archaeological interest.
 - Promoting extensive grazing of pasture where possible, protecting wet soils from heavy grazing, poaching and compaction, applying light applications of farmyard manure rather than artificial fertilisers to encourage build-up of soil organic matter to increase carbon storage/retention and drought tolerance of crops; and encouraging techniques such as direct drilling, inclusion of break crops and retention of winter stubble to protect soil.
 - Working with the farming community to promote good nutrient and pesticide management, managing applications of pesticides, slurry and manure to maximise uptake and reduce run-off where possible, by avoiding manure spreading in winter on frozen, hard ground or very wet ground, or when there is no grass growth, and use of biobeds.
 - Seeking to plan cultivation timings carefully and, where possible, minimising machinery and stock movements in wet conditions and avoiding using heavy machinery on wet soils to avoid damage to and compaction of topsoils and improve water infiltration, reducing surface run-off, increasing resilience to drought and encouraging the use of minimum tillage techniques such as direct drilling to reduce soil exposure and break-up.



The Northamptonshire Uplands near Newnham showing an example of the extensive ridge and furrow which occurs frequently on permanent pasture throughout the area.

SEO 4: Conserve, maintain and promote local building styles and materials and plan strategic growth, infrastructure development and mineral extraction to ensure they protect remaining areas of high tranquillity, strengthen local sense of place and biodiversity, and increase adaptation for climate change through multifunctional green infrastructure networks, building on existing resources such as canals, rivers and access routes, creating strong ecological and recreation networks.

For example, by:

- Protecting the remaining areas with a strong sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity, their gently rolling, rounded hills with their many long, low ridgelines, the great variety of landform and the many wide, far-reaching views into and out from the NCA, from tall, vertical or large-scale developments.
- In the part of the NCA which lies in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), conserving and enhancing natural beauty and supporting forms of quiet open-air recreation that do not conflict with the purpose of designation and which value the high-quality landscape and natural environment in this area; and encouraging use of the finer-grained information in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, ensuring that landscape opportunities are maximised in ways which do not conflict with the purpose of designation.
- Maintaining the integrity of historic settlement patterns, houses and historic farm building types and layouts, encouraging use of best practice and traditional techniques and materials in the conservation, maintenance, restoration and repair of listed and other historic buildings, including the use of ironstone, cob and brick with thatch, pantile or clay tile roofs.
- Encouraging sympathetic conversions of historic buildings and new developments in the towns of Banbury and Daventry and in nearby villages which respect the particular character, vernacular styles and materials of each.
- Retaining the distinctive, quiet, rural character of the farmland, villages and farms where it still persists, through maintaining the nucleated settlement pattern and rural lanes, restricting development primarily to the main settlements and ensuring it is appropriate in scale and reflects local vernacular styles and materials.
- Planning a strong landscape framework as a context to potential development expansion around Daventry, Banbury and the main transport corridors, ensuring that new development and infrastructure does not have a negative impact on landscape character; considering the visual impact of modern development, particularly urban intrusion and loss of tranquillity; and managing improvements to minor roads to maintain the existing character of the rural road network with its narrow lanes and wide grassy verges.
- Protecting areas of existing green infrastructure in developed areas, especially parks and urban tree planting, and encouraging their restoration, expansion and replacement.

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- Encouraging green infrastructure planning and provision and urban tree planting in new development which link with surrounding rural areas and recreation provision, reducing the heat island effect, and which reflect and reinforce existing landscape character and integrate new development into the area without challenging the existing strong pattern of settlement and enclosure, or the vernacular styles and materials.
- Encouraging multifunctional restoration and enhancement of gravel extraction sites along the Nene Valley and planning to restore new extraction sites once extraction is complete, to conservation end uses; and creating new wetland habitats and providing access and recreational opportunities.
- Encouraging new development and extensions, where proved necessary, and repair work to existing historic buildings that reflect the local building styles, materials and detailing, and maintain heritage significance, and ensuring that on-farm developments respect the original form, style and materials of adjacent farmsteads, retaining and encouraging sympathetic restoration or conversion of redundant buildings which respects their particular local character, vernacular styles and materials.
- Protecting the remaining strong senses of remoteness and tranquillity in areas away from the main settlements and transport corridors, by controlling development and use of night-time lighting, especially on the higher ground.
- Managing and replanting the areas of mature amenity tree planting which shelter many of the villages, using a wide range of species to build in resistance to new tree diseases and to ensure retention of this distinctive local feature.
- Controlling lighting in new developments and conversions, for example by using down-lighters, timers and sensors, to minimise light pollution.
- Avoiding inappropriate development in flood risk areas and minimising run-off from new development, promoting use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in urban areas to help mitigate the impact of flooding; designing new off-mains developments in rural areas to include sustainable drainage systems to improve water infiltration and protect the aquifers; and promoting best practice to prevent effluent leakage from existing septic tanks.
- Maintaining and expanding public access, including the many long-distance walking routes, encouraging provision of new areas of open access, seeking opportunities to improve and expand the rights of way network, and creating additional multi-user paths.
- Encouraging recreational activities which respect the special qualities of the area and finding ways to manage access, visitor pressure and demand, to prevent conflict between different users or adverse effects on the natural or historic environment.

Additional opportunity

1: Conserve, enhance, expand, connect and manage the many, often visually prominent, small, broadleaved woodlands and covers, areas of wood pasture, sheltering planting around settlements and parkland to enhance biodiversity and landscape character, provide timber and wood products, and assist with regulation of water quality, soil quality and soil erosion.

For example, by:

- Restoring and encouraging management of the existing small, broadleaved and remaining ancient woods, parkland, wood pasture and areas of amenity tree planting around villages, for local timber use and wood fuel, to restore structural diversity, increase woodland connectivity and biodiversity, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and landscape interest, encourage woodland species of birds and retain the benefits to climate regulation of high soil carbon and active carbon sequestration associated with woodland.
- Re-introducing active coppice management where this will enhance woodland habitat and wildlife interest, strengthening hedgerow networks, particularly where hedgerows connect areas of woodland, and encouraging the planting of a wide range of tree species to increase resilience to climate change and new diseases.
- Encouraging new small-scale planting and expansion of existing broadleaved woodland for timber production and to enhance landscape and biodiversity, in appropriate locations where it can be accommodated without compromising key features of the area such as the views from the ridgelines, the open landscape character with prominent scattered small hill-top woods, parkland, archaeological features or priority habitats while respecting the shape and scale of existing woodlands.
- Encouraging sympathetic management of the existing coniferous blocks through thinning, selective felling and reshaping, to develop open glades and softer edges which follow the landform, and increase the proportion of broadleaved species and enhance the ground flora.
- Encouraging planting and management for local timber production of the hedgerow and waterside trees to maintain a well-wooded appearance on enclosed land and along rivers.
- Encouraging the creation of new woodland and tree planting in association with new developments to break up their impact on the landscape, reflecting the existing sheltering planting patterns around some villages in the area, which contribute strongly to their sense of place.
- Encouraging the use of a wide range of tree species in new planting to maximise resilience to climate change and novel diseases, and to reduce reliance on oak and ash.
- Encouraging landowners, farmers, authorities and interest groups to survey and monitor for tree disease and to seek to identify and propagate locally resistant strains of ash and oak.
- Encouraging local and regional markets for biomass and wood fuel to support sustainable woodland management.

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APPENDIX 4

OWLS: UPSTANDING VILLAGE FARMLANDS

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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 Williamscothe. 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 Williamscot. 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.

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APPENDIX 5

CDC: IRONSTONE HILLS & VALLEYS

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CHERWELL DISTRICT
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FOR

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

COBHAM RESOURCE CONSULTANTS
AVALON HOUSE
MARCHAM ROAD
ABINGON
OXON
OX14 1UG

NOVEMBER 1995

7292

Figure 5

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

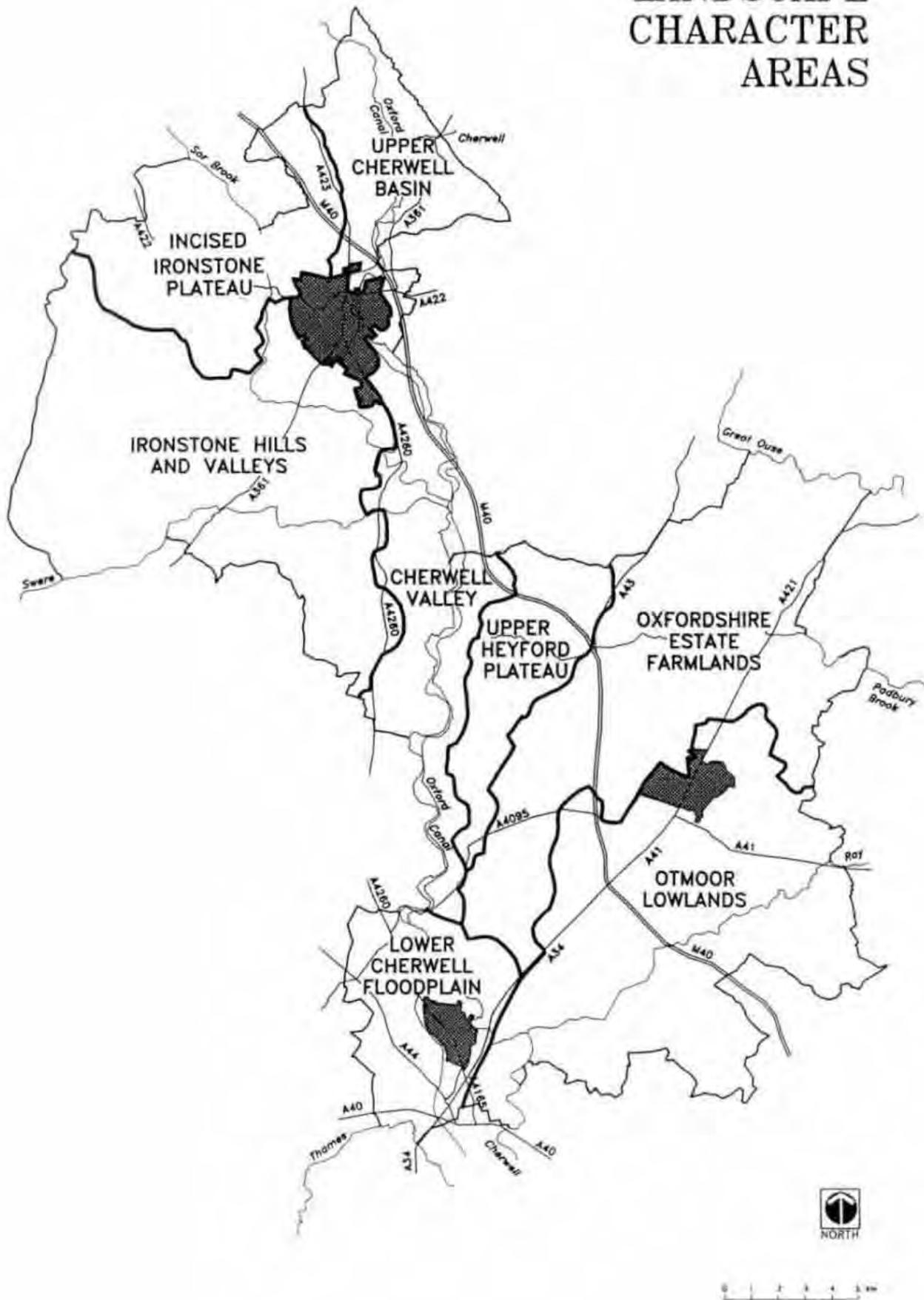
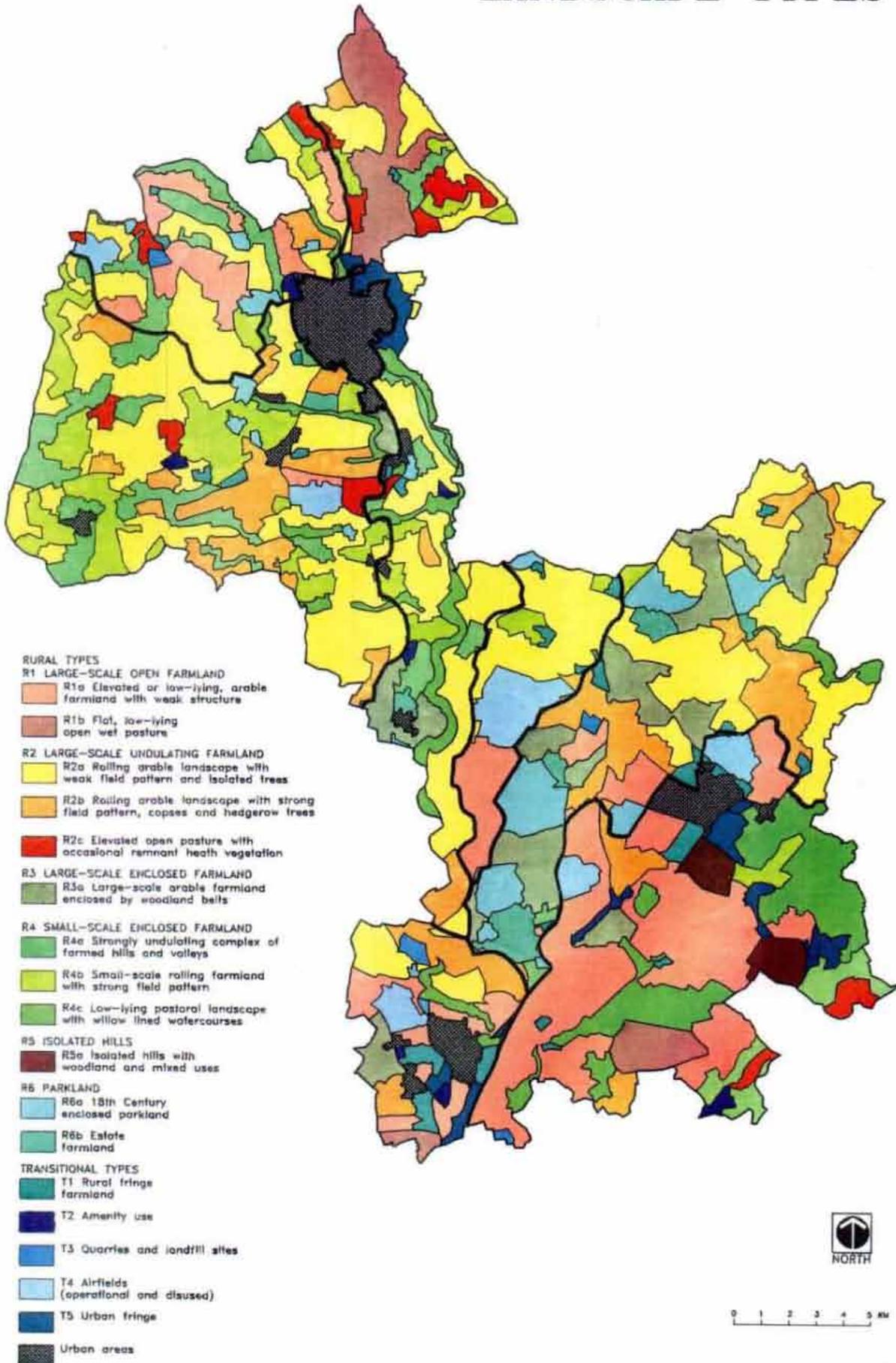


Figure 6

LANDSCAPE TYPES



- 3.32 North-east of Kidlington there is a Roman Villa site, including a well, which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The site of Hampton Gay Deserted Medieval Village is likewise designated and the earthworks are clearly visible. Buildings of interest include Yarnton Manor, a Grade II* listed building, originally dating from the early seventeenth century. The present garden at the Manor was recreated in the late 19th century following the lines of a much earlier seventeenth century layout, and part of the 10 hectare park was once an extensive deer park.

IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS

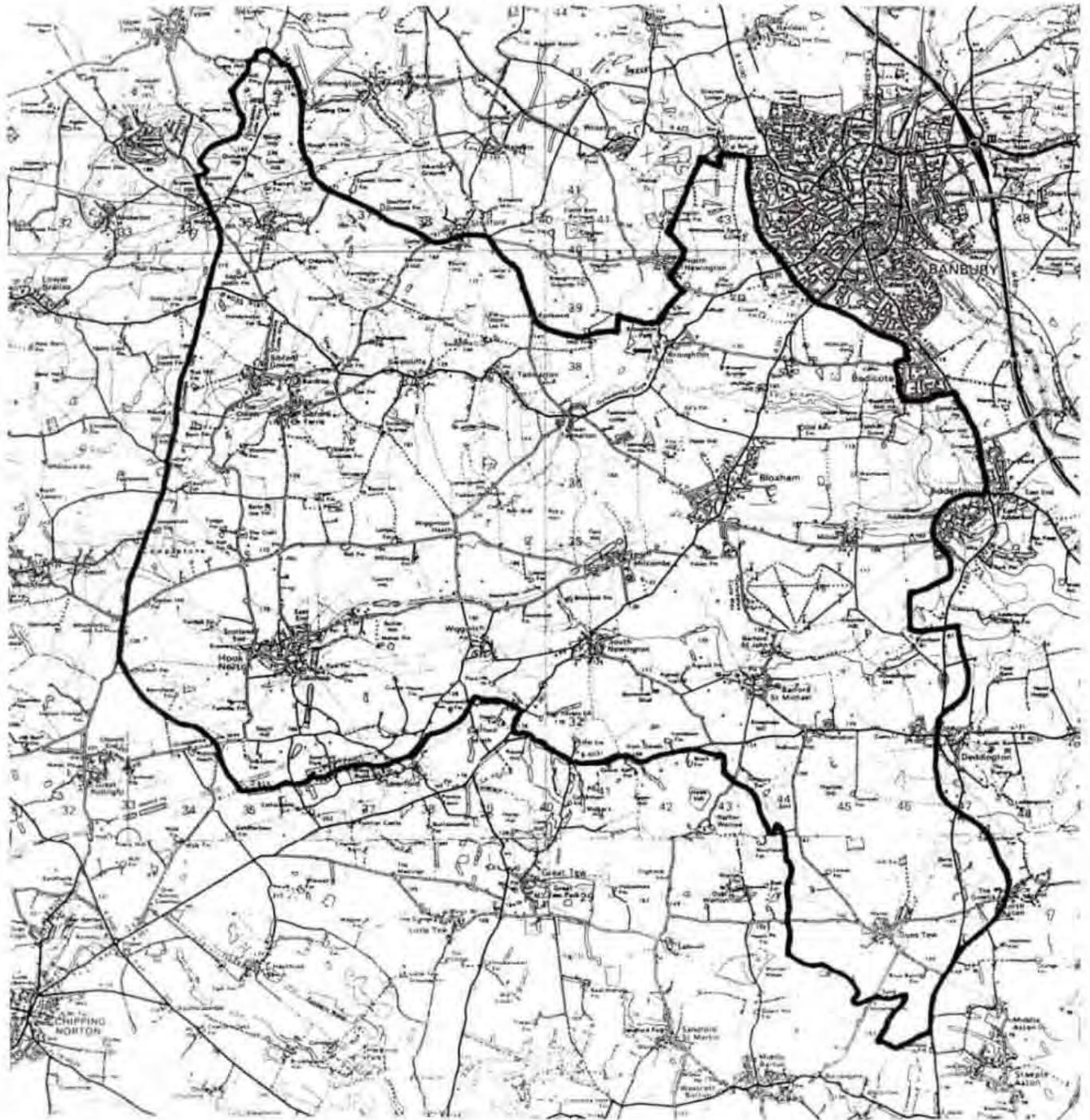
- 3.33 The Ironstone Hills and Valleys are found in the north west of the district, and is one of the larger character areas, extending from the Cherwell Valley to the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire county boundary. This is an upland area which forms part of the northern extent of the Cotswold Hills - indeed, the Cotswolds AONB extends over part of this character area at Epwell. The main distinguishing features are its extremely complex topography and the style of vernacular buildings which is unique to the Banbury region. The unspoilt ironstone villages and tranquil countryside are remote and isolated, particularly towards the west of the character area.

Landform and landcover

- 3.34 The geology of this area is faulted and fairly complex, which gives rise to a correspondingly complicated topography. Marlstone Rock Bed, an iron-bearing limestone with local sandy deposits, overlies the Middle and Lower Lias clays. This highly coloured Ironstone gives the character area its name. Faulting has uplifted an area of White Limestone and Northampton Sandstone, around Tadmerton and the Sibfords. A second line of faults lies along an east west line from Hook Norton, through Wigginton, South Newington and the Barfords.
- 3.35 Since the area is faulted and uplifted, and also cut through by numerous small streams, the landscape is divided into very steeply sided, convoluted valleys with narrow valley bottoms and rolling, rounded hill lines. Underlying geology has given rise to iron rich clay soils of a characteristic red colour, much of which is classed as grade 2 agricultural land.
- 3.36 Main drainage routes follow the fault lines. To the south, the River Swere flows eastwards along fault lines running into the Cherwell and subsequently draining to the south east, into the River Thames. The River Stour rises in the vicinity of Wigginton Heath. Joined by minor streams from the Sibfords, the Stour flows westwards into the Avon. Thus the hills form part of a major watershed which divides the drainage system of the Severn from that of the Thames. The watershed runs northwards through Epwell Hill and Shenlow Hill to Edge Hill and north-eastwards across the Burton Dassett Hills.

Figure 10

IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS



SCALE 1:100,000

- 3.37 Rolling hills with rich soils are considerable agricultural assets and much of this area is in arable cultivation, the main crops being winter cereals with potatoes and sugar beet. In some areas, medium and large arable fields are still surrounded by hedges and the boundaries marked by hedgerow trees. However, much of the higher land and gentler slopes now have a fairly open arable landscape, with local areas where clearance has been so extreme that even post and wire fences have not been retained to demarcate field boundaries.
- 3.38 However, the area is riddled with steep sided valleys and narrow valley floors with a pattern of smaller fields and mixed farming, predominantly permanent pasture. Many hedgerows are unmanaged and growing out, and road verges sometimes include narrow stands of trees, which gives a well-treed impression, although the area lacks larger woodlands. Streams in valley bottoms are locally marked with old willows with some pollarding, and with wet pasture.

Variations in landscape character

- 3.39 Many of the steeper slopes have resisted mechanised arable farming. Here, a pastoral scene of small grazing fields divided by hedgerows prevails on the steepest slopes dominating the scene, the landscape being made up from a **strongly undulating complex of farmed hills and valleys (R4a)**. Wherever the landform levels out slightly, the small fields can be ploughed and crops of winter cereals grown. The resulting landscape is an intricate blend of mixed farming, with small variations in scale and local land use being closely related to topography, a tightly knit **small scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern (R4b)**
- 3.40 Lanes and minor roads run straight along ridges wherever possible, dipping sharply down the valley sides to connect with villages. Hedgerows are mostly dense, well grown barriers, although where arable farming prevails they are closely trimmed. The practice of hedge laying is still continued locally as a means of maintaining a stockproof boundary. Many of the hedges contain mature hedgerow trees, the dominant species being oak and ash, with beech on the limestone outcrops. However, the hedges have an extremely high elm component, and where young trees are regenerating naturally, this is the dominant species.
- 3.41 Wherever the landform opens out sufficiently, intensive use is made of the rich, fertile soils. In these **rolling arable landscapes with weak field pattern (R2a)** fields are large, hedgerows are often weak and gappy, reinforced with fences, and in some places field boundaries have completely disappeared. In one extremely open landscape at Wigginton Heath, new hedges have been planted, bringing some division back into an otherwise 'green desert'. Banks which would have been topped with hedges still remain along roadsides.

- 3.42 In the highest and most exposed areas, where hill tops stand up above the already elevated land, there is **undulating elevated pasture with remnant heath (R2c)** where patches of gorse, bracken and scrubby heath vegetation break up the poor grasslands. These patches contribute considerably to the character of the area, serving as a reminder of its essentially upland heath nature.

Special features

- 3.43 Some of the district's oldest features, the distinctive line of Iron Age hill forts, which top the hills to the west of Banbury, are found in this character area. They include Tadmarton and Ilbury Camps and Madmarston Hill, where the earthworks are still highly visible, although a further three hill fort sites are known. The bivallate hillfort at Tadmarton is the most impressive, although it is now bisected by a road and absorbed into a golf course.
- 3.44 Broughton Castle is also of interest. Built in the early fourteenth century as a fortified manor house, it remains one of the finest and most complete medieval houses in the country. The eighteenth century park by John Davenport includes landscaped grounds with a moat, while the late nineteenth century gardens were laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. The later picturesque parkland at Swerford, which lies partly within Cherwell and partly within West Oxfordshire, was influenced by Loudon.
- 3.45 Sunken lanes are a particular feature of this area, with steep banks rising up on either side of the roads as they dip down the valley sides. Occasionally, these banks are reinforced by drystone walling, many of which are overgrown by hedgerow plants.

INCISED IRONSTONE PLATEAU

- 3.46 The Incised Ironstone Plateau is situated to the north of the Ironstone Hills and Valleys. Both areas have a number of common characteristics, but the plateau landform is substantially different. It is a far less complex, unfaulted, complete unit, divided by streams which create a simple landscape of ridges and valleys which extends around the north-west of Banbury.

Landform and landcover

- 3.47 This area is geologically similar to the Ironstone Hills and Valleys with a layer of Marlstone Rock Bed overlying the Middle and Lower Lias clays. However, the area has a more straightforward topography, consisting of relatively high land forming a level or gently rolling plateau. West of Hornton and at Shenlow Hill the land rises to 200m, with gentle slopes falling eastwards towards Banbury. Tributaries of the Sor Brook have cut down through the plateau creating a series of roughly parallel valleys.

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APPENDIX 6

CDC BANBURY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT & CAPACITY STUDY
ADDENDUM 2014

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Cherwell District Council

**Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and
Capacity Assessment**

Assessment Addendum

(18/08/2014)

Arndale Court, Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 UJ

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creative minds safe hands



4.10.28 Although isolated areas of woodland development would be acceptable within the area, blanket development of woodland would be inappropriate due to the effects upon landscape character. Development of woodland and green infrastructure in association with recreational development would however be possible. There is a Medium capacity for woodland development.

Future Management and Maintenance

4.10.29 Management 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, and the development of a green infrastructure network should be considered.

4.11 Site 111 (formerly Part of Site G)

Site Overview

4.11.1 The area is located on the south east edge of Banbury between Banbury and Bodicote and located immediate south of Salt Way and north of the cricket ground. The north site boundary is formed by Salt Way and the east boundary by White Post Road. To the west and south west is arable farmland extending south to Wykham Road and an area of allotments.

4.11.2 The site is located within Natural England National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands. At a county level, OWLS identifies the area as being within the Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Type.

4.11.3 At the district level, the site is located within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area.

4.11.4 For details relating to OWLS landscape character areas refer to Appendix F.

Key Features and Site Visit Information

4.11.5 A site walkover was carried out on 22nd November 2012 to carry out the 2013 LSCA and a further site walkover was carried out on 26th June 2014 to reassess the area taking into consideration the revised area boundary. See Figure L11 for landscape context and Figure P11 for site record photographs.



- 4.11.6 The area comprises arable farmland, the grounds of a private residential property and day nursery located in the north east corner of the area and an area of grassland associated with the cricket ground. There is a footpath passing through the area in a north to south orientation connecting Salt Way with Wykham Lane.
- 4.11.7 The southern boundary of the west field is not defined as it forms a single field extending from Salt Way in the north to Wykham Lane in the south. The site has low voltage transmission lines passing through it although these are not dominant features of the area.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.11.8 The area comprises a relatively simple arable landscape although the field boundaries are mature and diverse in their composition. The western field is part of a large scale field although divided for the purpose of this study. Within the east of the area there is relatively dense tree cover associated with the residential property and day nursery which was inaccessible for survey purposes. The sensitivity of natural factors is Medium to Low.
- 4.11.9 Within the site area there is one Recorded Heritage Site adjacent to the west site boundary. Abutting the west site boundary there is also an Archaeological Constraint Priority Area. Within the wider heritage study area there are numerous heritage features associated with Bodicote although these are separated from the site area by the cricket ground. The sensitivity of cultural factors is Medium.
- 4.11.10 Within the site area there are few historical remains although the area does have a scenic quality in forming a buffer to the south of Salt Way on the edge of the urban area. The aesthetic value of the area is medium.
- 4.11.11 The area is representative of the local landscape character to the east and forms a unity with the adjacent fields; the field boundaries do however appear to have been removed in some locations. The buildings located within the north east corner of the site are in the local vernacular but the cricket ground pavilion building located immediately outside the southern site boundary is not and this is highly visible from within the area. The overall landscape quality and condition is Medium to Low.
- 4.11.12 The combined Landscape Sensitivity is Medium.



Visual Sensitivity

4.11.13 The area is heavily screened from the north and moderately screened from the west and east by vegetation located on the existing field boundaries. Views are possible into the site area from the cricket ground located to the south although the users are generally inwardly focused. The general visibility of the area is Low.

4.11.14 The area is generally viewed by recreational users walking footpaths and using the adjacent cricket ground. The visual sensitivity of the site to the surrounding visual receptors is Medium.

4.11.15 There is potential to provide mitigation on the site boundaries without altering the characteristics of the existing landscape. This is particularly the case on the boundary with the cricket ground and the southern boundary of the area in the west, which is currently undefined. There is a Medium sensitivity to mitigation.

4.11.16 The combined Visual Sensitivity is Medium to Low.

Landscape Character Sensitivity

4.11.17 The Landscape Character Sensitivity has been derived using 'Table 3 Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity' as set out within Section 3.0 Scope and Methodology.

4.11.18 The Landscape Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium sensitivity and the Visual Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium to Low sensitivity. Using the matrix in Table 3, this results in a Medium to Low Landscape Character Sensitivity for Site 111.

Landscape Value

4.11.19 There is a Recorded Heritage Site located within the west of the area. There are no landscape or ecological designations within the area. The value of designations is Medium to Low.

4.11.20 Much of the site is screened to the north, east and west and as a result there are limited views available into the site area. Views are however possible from within the cricket ground located to the south. The site is moderately tranquil as a result of the distance from main roads. The scenic value and tranquillity of the site is considered to be Medium value.



4.11.21 The site is not accessible for public use however a public footpath does pass through the area and Salt Way passes along the north site boundary, which is a locally important feature. The area is important in preventing coalescence of Banbury and Bodicote and therefore plays an important function in visual terms. The perceived value is Medium.

4.11.22 The value of Site 111 is Medium.

Landscape Capacity

4.11.23 The Landscape Character Sensitivity and Landscape Value are combined as shown in Table 5 to arrive at the potential Landscape Capacity. In general, the potential Landscape Capacity of Site 111 is Medium to High. The potential for each considered development type is discussed further below.

Capacity for Residential Development

4.11.24 Visually the area is relatively well contained and therefore able to accommodate development from a visual point of view, however, the land provides an important buffer between Banbury and Bodicote. The area could accommodate development as long as the site is designed carefully in the eastern section to ensure a feeling of visual and physical separation is maintained. The capacity for recreational development is Medium to High.

Capacity for Employment Development

4.11.25 There is a Low capacity for both industrial and commercial development as this would not be in keeping with the surrounding areas and landscape character.

Capacity for Recreation Development

4.11.26 There is a Medium capacity for both formal and informal recreation. The area could accommodate formal recreation associated with the adjacent cricket ground. Informal use could also take place in the east area of the site as there is already an area of amenity grassland.

Capacity for Woodland Development

4.11.27 The site could accommodate woodland development which would be helpful in maintaining the separation of Banbury and Bodicote however this may look visually awkward within the wider landscape context and therefore is not recommended.



Future Management and Maintenance

4.11.28 Future management of the area should ensure the safeguarding of the landscape context of Salt Way as a historic route. If development occurs consideration should be given to structure planting to the south of the development to restrict long distance views from the south and also to maintain the separation of Banbury and Bodicote.

5.0 Comparison of Data Used

Data Comparison

5.1.1 WYG have compared the data used for the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (WYG, 2013) and that provided for the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Addendum (WYG, 2014).

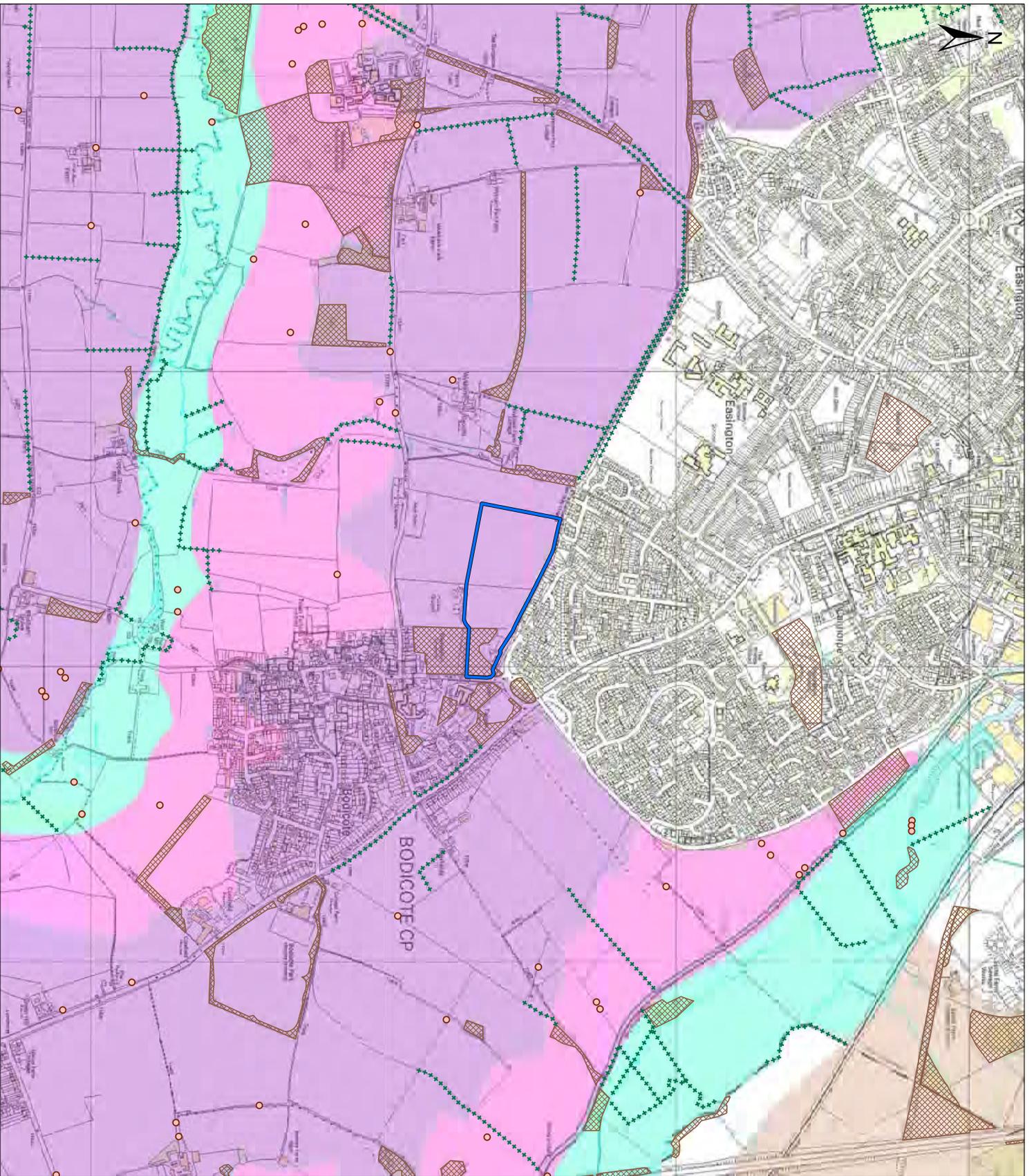
5.1.2 GIS data sets were provided by Cherwell District Council to WYG in November 2012. The following provides a summary review of the differences in data used between the 2013 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment and this Addendum.

Landscape

5.1.3 A review of the datasets provided in relation to landscape features and designations has been carried out as part of this addendum. This related to the following datasets:

- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Possible Old Trees;
- Linear Woodland Features;
- Individual Woodland Parcels;
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study Landscape Character Types; and
- Areas of High Landscape Value.

5.1.4 A review of the mapping provided in 2012 against the mapping provided in 2014 has identified no changes that will result in alterations to the original assessment of areas in landscape terms.



Legend

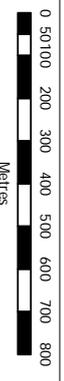
- Site Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park And Garden
- Ancient Woodland
- Possible Old Trees

- Linear Woodland Features

- Individual Woodland Parcels

Landscape Types:

- Clay Vale
- Farmland Plateau
- Farmland Slopes & Valley Sides
- Pasture Hills
- River Meadowslands
- Rolling Village Pastures
- Upstanding Village Farmlands
- Vale Farmland
- Wooded Pasture Valleys & Slopes



TP MA July 2014 V1
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Sheet Size: **A3** Scale of Original: 1:12,500

Client: Cherwell District Council

Project: Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Addendum

Title: Site 111 (formerly part of site G) Landscape

Office: 4124	Project No: A088250	Figure No: L11
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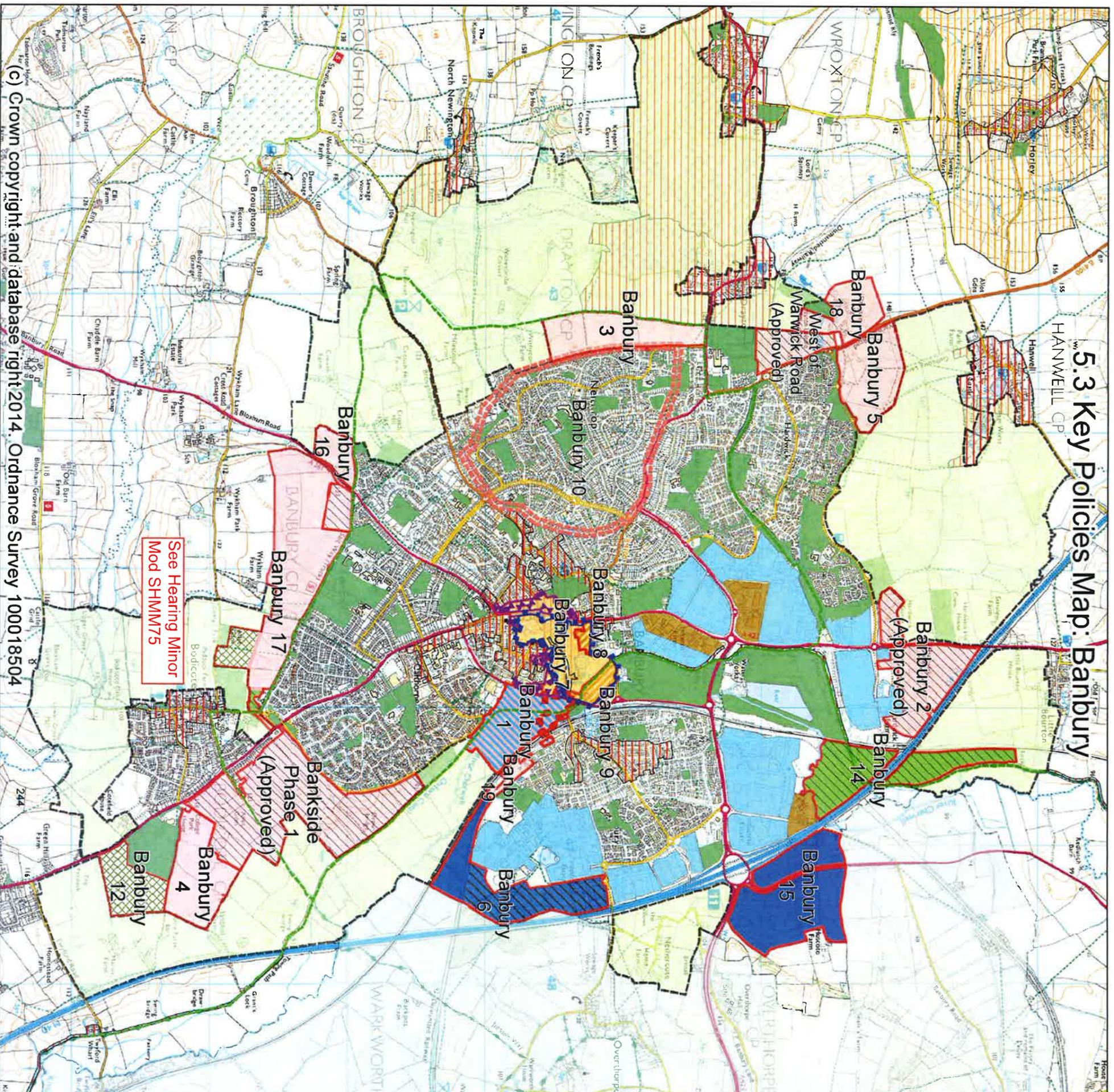
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APPENDIX 7

LOCAL PLAN 2031 EMERGING POLICIES MAP

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5.3 Key Policies Map: Banbury



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Key

- Town Centre Shopping Area (Extended)
- Town Centre Commercial Area
- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Banbury Circular Walk/Oxford Canal Trail
- Existing Strategic Employment Sites (Indicative)
- New Employment Sites
- Approved Employment Sites
- Town Centre Extension (Area of Search)
- Mixed Use (Housing and Employment)
- Bolton Road Development Area
- Spiceball Development Area
- Expanded Town Centre
- Existing Retail Parks
- Strategic Housing Sites
- Approved Housing Sites
- New Green Space and Parks
- Outdoor Sports Provision
- Bretch Hill Regeneration Area (Indicative boundary)
- Green Buffer
- Existing Green Space
- Conservation Target Areas
- Conservation Areas
- Parks and Gardens
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- South Northamptonshire

Strategic Developments:

- 1 Banbury Canalside
- 2 Hardwick Farm, Southam Road East and West (Approved)
- 3 West of Bretch Hill
- 4 Land at Bankside Phase 2
- 5 North of Hanwell Fields
- 6 Employment land west of M40
- 7 Strengthening Banbury Town Centre
- 8 Bolton Road Development Area
- 9 Spiceball Development Area
- 10 Bretch Hill regeneration area
- 12 Proposed Banbury United FC relocation
- 14 Cherwell Country Park
- 15 Employment Land North East of Junction 11
- 16 South of Salt Way - West
- 17 South of Salt Way - East
- 18 Land at Drayton Lodge Farm
- 19 Higham Way

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