

9 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Introduction

- 9.1 This chapter of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of landscape and views.
- 9.2 The chapter has been prepared by LDA Design (see Appendix 1.2 Statement of Expertise)
- 9.3 This chapter makes reference to the following appendices and figures:
- Figure 9.1: Site Location and Context;
 - Figure 9.2: Landscape Character;
 - Figure 9.3: Topography and Woodland;
 - Figure 9.4: Landscape Fabric;
 - Figure 9.5: Access and Recreation;
 - Figure 9.6: ZTV Study and Viewpoint;
 - Figure 9.7: Photograph Panels.
 - Appendix 9.1: Glossary;
 - Appendix 9.2: Methodology;
 - Appendix 9.3: Visualisations and ZTV Studies;
 - Appendix 9.4: National Planning Policy;
 - Appendix 9.5: Local Planning Policy; and
 - Appendix 9.6: Extracts from relevant Landscape Character Assessment

Policy Context

- 9.4 A summary of the planning policy context is set out below. As set out in Chapter 4 of the ES the Site is allocated for residential development as part of the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Documentⁱ (SPD). It is noted that the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

- 9.5 The National Planning Policy Frameworkⁱⁱ (NPPF, February 2019) makes clear that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development (Section 2), and that effective use of land (Section 11); design (Section 12); and effects on the natural environment (Section 15) are important components of this.

- 9.6 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF indicates that decisions should ensure that developments “...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.”
- 9.7 Paragraph 170 requires that decisions should recognise “...the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services”.
- 9.8 In respect of valued landscapes, paragraph 171 notes that planning policy should “distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites”.
- 9.9 Full details of the NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance notes – of relevance to the landscape and visual context - can be found in **Appendix 9.4**. The Planning Practice Guidance notes include Planning Practice Guidance for Natural Environmentⁱⁱⁱ and Planning Practice Guidance for Design^{iv}

Local Planning Policy

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

- 9.10 The Cherwell Local Plan^v was adopted by Cherwell District Council (CDC) on 20th July 2015 and sets out the long-term spatial vision for the District in the period up to 2031.
- 9.11 Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision, requires that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision, and Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation provides size and accessibility standards for different types of provision.
- 9.12 Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, seeks to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the District and secure appropriate mitigation where damage to the local landscape cannot be avoided. Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
- 9.13 Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure, recognises that development proposals, particularly on larger sites, can offer the opportunity to improve the green infrastructure network across the District. Maintenance and enhancement of the District’s green infrastructure network will be secured through protecting and enhancing existing sites and features; forming a multi-

functional network of open spaces; and creating connectivity between sites and the wider countryside beyond.

9.14 Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town sets out a range of landscape related requirements. This includes:

- 40% Green Infrastructure Provision, comprising a network of well managed, high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the open countryside;
- Careful consideration of open space and structural planting around the site to achieve an overall improvement in the landscape and visual impact of the site; and
- A well-designed approach to the urban edge, which relates development to its rural setting and minimises the impact of development when viewed from the surrounding countryside.

9.15 Full details of the Cherwell Local Plan – of relevance to the landscape and visual context - can be found in **Appendix 9.5**.

North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2016

9.16 The North West Bicester SPD^{vi} was published by CDC in February 2016 which expands upon Policy Bicester 1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and provides an over-arching masterplan framework.

9.17 The SPD includes a number of 'Development Principles and Requirements' which should be applied to the development as a whole, as well as individual sites. Landscape related principles include:

- 9 'Green infrastructure and landscape' – this requires planning applications to demonstrate provision of 40% green space and a range of types of green space.
- 9(a) 'Tree planting' – this requires sufficient space to be provided for native tree and shrub planting.
- 9(b) 'Development edges' – this states that edges will be typically more informal in character and should respond well to landscape pattern.
- 9(c) 'Hedgerows, dark buffers and stream corridors' – this requires the retention and enhancement of existing hedgerow / streams to help structure development and provide biodiversity opportunities.

Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD, 2018

- 9.18 The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD^{vii} does not provide detail of landscape character, however, it does provide guidance on how the design of new development should respond to local context.
- 9.19 Chapter 4: Establishing the Structuring Principles requires masterplans to consider relationships to landscape and ecological structures; topography; and edge conditions. Where new 'edges' are created it encourages planting to frame views of development rather than screen it. The layout of the masterplan should consider how the settlement will be viewed from the wider landscape. The layout should also incorporate existing landscape features and create a network of multi-functional green infrastructure.
- 9.20 Chapter 5: Streets and Spaces highlights the importance of streets as part of the public realm and in framing views, and the design of streets should incorporate suitable trees and soft landscape. Public spaces should also be incorporated within masterplans, providing focal points and variety in townscape.

Local Guidance

- 9.21 In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are local guidance documents as follows:
- The Oxfordshire County Council Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) (2004)^{viii};
 - Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (1995)^{ix};
 - Cherwell Countryside Design Summary (1998)^x;
 - ENV07 Bicester Green Buffers Report (2013)^{xi};
 - ENV08 Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013)^{xii}; and
 - ENV13 Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2010)^{xiii}.
- 9.22 To avoid repetition, these are described in the 'Baseline Conditions' section of this chapter as part of the description and analysis of landscape character.
- 9.23 It is acknowledged that ENV06 Bicester Environmental Baseline Report (2013) has been prepared in support of the Local Plan, however, this contains no additional baseline information (that is not recorded in other studies) that is of direct relevance to the landscape and visual context.

- 9.24 In addition, the LEI01 Green Spaces Strategy (2008)^{xiv} and LEI02 Open Space Update (2011)^{xv} provide guidance on open space provision across the District, but do not provide any specific guidance of relevance to the Site context, over and above policies and guidance contained within the Cherwell Local Plan and North West Bicester SPD.

Assessment Methodology

Overview

- 9.25 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition ^{xvi} (GLVIA3) (2013) sets out at para. 1.1 that: "*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and people's views and visual amenity.*"
- 9.26 Paras. 2.20-2.22 of the same guidance indicate that the two components (assessment of landscape effects, and assessment of visual effects) are "*related but very different considerations*".
- 9.27 The assessment methodology for this LVIA draws upon GLVIA3; An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014)^{xvii}; Landscape Institute Technical Information Note (LI TIN) 05/2017^{xviii} Townscape Character; LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals^{xix}; LI Technical Advice Note 01/11 - Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment^{xx}; and other recognised guidelines.
- 9.28 The methodology is described in more detail in **Appendix 9.2**.
- 9.29 It should be noted that in the Short to Medium-term, there will be effects arising during the construction phase, resulting from temporary activities involving the movement of vehicles, use of cranes and building of houses.
- 9.30 Although construction activity is different in nature to the completed development, it is judged that the construction phase would not give rise to effects over and above those of the completed development. While the scale of effect may be larger, the duration of effect is much shorter. Therefore, effects identified within this assessment are judged to apply to the completed scheme in the Medium – term (once construction is complete) and in the longer term (once any proposed planting has matured).

Assessment Terminology and Judgements

9.31 A full glossary is provided in **Appendix 9.1**. The key terms used within this assessment are:

- Susceptibility and Value – which contribute to Sensitivity of the receptor;
- Scale, Duration and Extent – which contribute to the Magnitude of effect; and
- Significance.

9.32 These terms are described in more detail below.

Sensitivity of the Receptor

9.33 **Susceptibility** indicates the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate a proposed development *"without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies."* (GLVIA3, para. 5.40). Susceptibility is defined in Table 9.1 below.

Table 9.1: Susceptibility

High	Undue consequences are likely to arise from the proposed development.
Medium	Undue consequences may arise from the proposed development.
Low	Undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposed development.

9.34 Susceptibility of landscape character areas is influenced by their characteristics and is frequently considered (though often recorded as 'sensitivity' rather than susceptibility) within documented landscape character assessments and capacity studies.

9.35 Susceptibility of designated landscapes is influenced by the nature of the special qualities and purposes of designation and/or the valued elements, qualities or characteristics, indicating the degree to which these may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

9.36 Susceptibility of accessible or recreational landscapes is influenced by the nature of the landscape involved; the likely activities and expectations of people within that landscape and the degree to which those activities and expectations may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

9.37 Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptors (GLVIA 3rd version, para 6.32).

- 9.38 **Landscape Value** is "*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*" (GLVIA3, page 157). Landscape Value is defined in Table 9.2 below.

Table 9.2: Landscape Value

National / International	Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value.
Local / District	Locally or regionally designated landscapes; also areas which documentary evidence and/or site observation indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.
Community	'Everyday' landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.
Limited	Despoiled or degraded landscape with little or no evidence of being valued by the community.

- 9.39 Areas of landscape of greater than Community value may be considered to be 'valued landscapes' in the context of NPPF paragraph 170.
- 9.40 **Sensitivity** is assessed by combining the considerations of susceptibility and value described above. The differences in the tables below reflect a slightly greater emphasis on value in considering landscape receptors, and a greater emphasis on susceptibility in considering visual receptors. Sensitivity is described in Tables 9.3 and 9.4 below.

Table 9.3: Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity				
		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National / International	High	High-Medium	Medium
	Local / District	High-Medium	Medium	Medium-Low
	Community	Medium	Medium-Low	Low
	Limited	Low	Low-Negligible	Negligible

Table 9.4: Visual Sensitivity

Visual Receptor Sensitivity				
		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National / International	High	High-Medium	Medium
	Local / District	High-Medium	High-Medium	Medium
	Community	High-Medium	Medium	Medium-Low
	Limited	Medium	Medium-Low	Low

- 9.41 For visual receptors; susceptibility and value are closely linked - the most valued views are also likely to be those where viewer's expectations will be highest. The value attributed relates to the value of the view, e.g. a National Trail is nationally valued for access, not necessarily for the available views. Typical examples of visual receptor sensitivity are plotted in a diagram

in **Appendix 9.2**.

Magnitude of Effect

- 9.42 **Scale** of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development. Scale is defined in Table 9.5 below.

Table 9.5: Scale

Large	Total or major alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be noticeably changed.
Small	Minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be fundamentally unchanged with barely perceptible differences.

- 9.43 **Duration** of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor as a result of the development would arise. Duration is defined in Table 9.6 below.

Table 9.6: Duration

Permanent	The change is expected to be permanent and there is no intention for it to be reversed.
Long-term	The change is expected to be in place for 10-25 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
Medium-term	The change is expected to be in place for 3-10 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
Short-term	The change is expected to be in place for 0-3 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.

- 9.44 Most effects will be Long term or Permanent; however, Medium- or Short-term effects may be identified where mitigation planting is proposed or local factors will result in a reduced duration of effect (for example where maturing woodland will screen views in future). The effects arising from the construction of the development will usually be Short term.

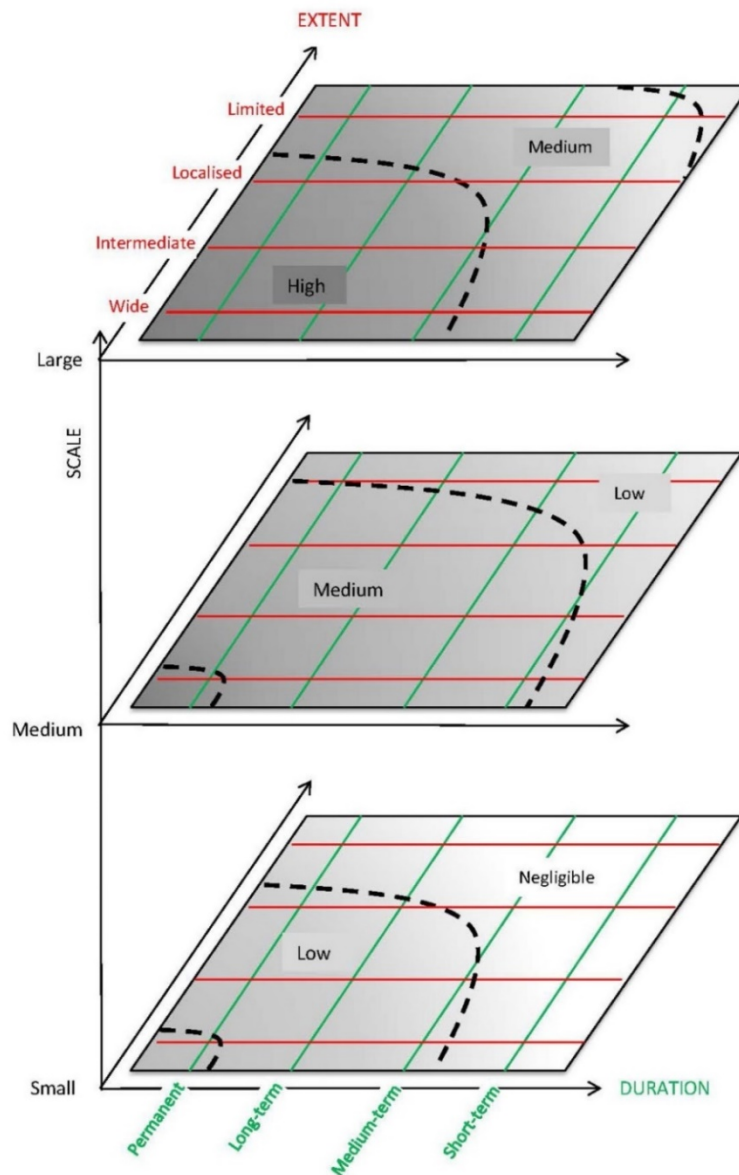
- 9.45 **Extent** of effects is assessed for all receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt. Extent is defined in Table 9.7 below.

Table 9.7: Extent

Wide	Beyond 4km, or more than half of receptor.
Intermediate	Up to approx. 2-4km, or around half of receptor area.
Localised	Site and surroundings up to 2km, or part of receptor area (up to approx. 25%).
Limited	Site, or part of site, or small part of a receptor area (< approx. 10%).

9.46 The **Magnitude** of effect is informed by combining the scale, duration and extent of effect. Diagram 9.1 below illustrates the judgement process.

Diagram 9.1: Magnitude



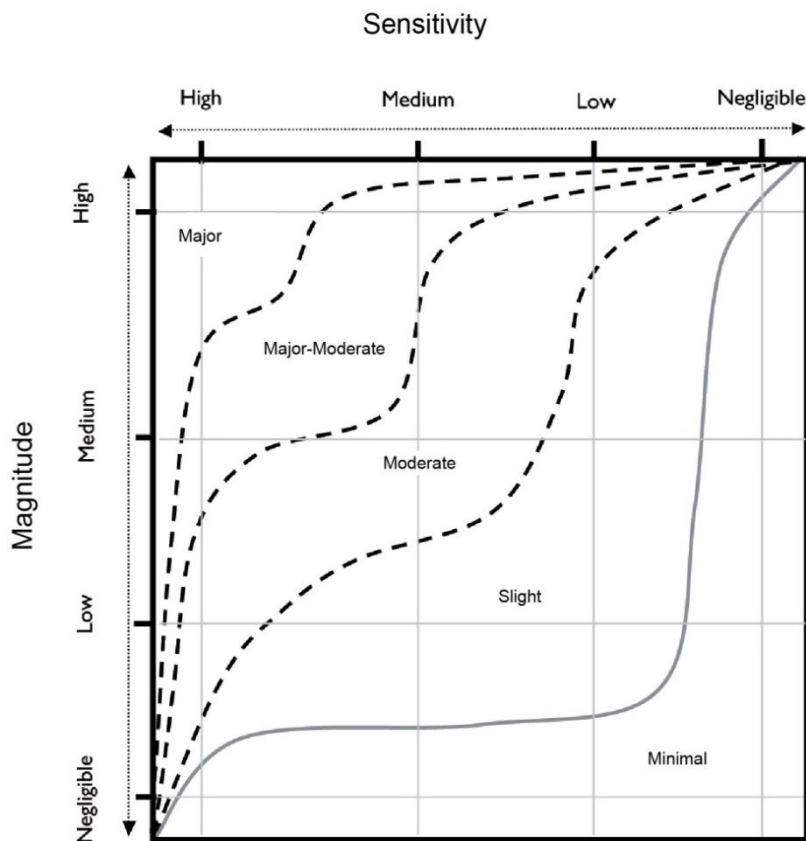
9.47 As can be seen from Diagram 9.1 above, scale (shown as the layers of the diagram) is the primary factor in determining magnitude; most of each layer indicates that magnitude will typically be judged to be the same as scale, but may be higher if the effect is particularly

widespread and long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent or timescale. Where the Scale of effect is judged to be Negligible the Magnitude is also assumed to be Negligible.

Significance

- 9.48 **Significance** indicates the importance or gravity of the effect. The process of forming a judgement as to the degree of significance of the effect is based upon the assessments of magnitude of effects and sensitivity of the receptor to come to a professional judgement of how important this effect is. Diagram 9.2 below illustrates the judgement process.

Diagram 9.2: Sensitivity



- 9.49 The significance ratings indicate a 'sliding scale' of the relative importance of the effect, with Major being the most important and Minimal being the least. "Effects that are Major-Moderate or Major are considered to be significant". Effects of Moderate significance or less are "of lesser concern" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 3.35). It should also be noted that whilst an effect may be significant, that does not necessarily mean that such an impact would be unacceptable, or should necessarily be regarded as an "undue consequence" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 5.40)."

- 9.50 Where intermediate ratings are given, e.g. "Moderate-Slight", this indicates an effect that is both less than Moderate and more than Slight, rather than one which varies across the range. In such cases, the higher rating will always be given first; this does not mean that the impact is closer to that higher rating, but is done to facilitate the identification of the more significant effects within tables. Intermediate judgements may also be used for judgements of Magnitude.

Positive / Adverse / Neutral

- 9.51 Effects are defined as adverse, neutral or positive. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both.
- 9.52 The decision regarding the significance of effect and the decision regarding whether an effect is beneficial or adverse are entirely separate. For example, a rating of Major and Positive would indicate an effect that was of great significance and on balance positive, but not necessarily that the proposals would be extremely beneficial.
- 9.53 Whether an effect is Positive, Neutral or Adverse is identified based on professional judgement. GLVIA 3rd edition indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a "*particularly challenging*" aspect of assessment, particularly in the context of a changing landscape.

Cumulative Assessment

- 9.54 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development.
- 9.55 Only consented developments are considered in accordance with the EIA Regulations, unless specific circumstances indicate that a development in planning should be included. Typically, completed and operational developments are treated as being part of the landscape and visual baseline.
- 9.56 Nine development projects have been identified and agreed with CDC for the basis of cumulative assessment. These can be found in ES Chapter 2. Of these, only 4 schemes are considered to have the potential to give rise to cumulative landscape and visual effects and are included in this assessment.

Residential Amenity

- 9.57 This chapter does not include a separate residential amenity assessment. It is considered that

the effects resulting from the proposed development would fall below the threshold of being "so unpleasant, overwhelming and oppressive that this would become an unattractive place to live" (known as the Lavender Test) and "would not feature in the planning balance, irrespective of how many dwellings were so affected". Further details of the approach to residential amenity in Appendix 9.2: Methodology.

Distances

- 9.58 Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the nearest part of the Site and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Limitations and Assumptions

EIA Scoping

- 9.59 It was agreed through the EIA Scoping process that landscape and visual matters should be scoped into the Environmental Statement. The Council's Landscape Officer agreed with the proposed viewpoint selection presented in the EIA Scoping Report. He also advised that the LVIA should also include representative viewpoints in respect of residential receptors on Charlotte Avenue and Braeburn Avenue which have been incorporated.

Desk and Field Study

- 9.60 The baseline conditions of the Site and the surrounding landscape described in the subsequent sections has been informed by desk-study and fieldwork (undertaken in September 2020 and January 2021).
- 9.61 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study (**Figure 9.6**) has been produced and used as a tool to inform the professional judgements made in this chapter during the iterative masterplan and assessment process. The ZTV study has been modelled on the maximum building height parameters for dwellings and proposed ground levels available at the time of assessment.

Potential Night-time Effects and Lighting

- 9.62 The Site is located adjacent to the existing residential edge of Bicester, and between two residential parcels of the Exemplar scheme that are complete / under construction.

- 9.63 Ambient illumination within the landscape comprises that from residential properties adjoining the Site. It is anticipated that any additional lighting resulting from the Development and subsequently experienced by potential receptors would not be dissimilar to the amount of lighting presently experienced within the general vicinity of the Site.
- 9.64 As such it is judged that any potential night-time effects to landscape character and visual amenity would not exceed the assessed effects presented in this chapter.

Baseline Conditions

Introduction

- 9.65 An overview of the baseline study results is provided in this section with the full baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the 'Likely Significant Effects' section for ease of reference.
- 9.66 This section identifies those landscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are not taken forward for further assessment as effects *"have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further"* (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).

Zone of Theoretical Visibility Study

- 9.67 An initial ZTV study was generated based on the emerging Development parameters, and used to inform study area; viewpoint selection; design decisions; and initial assessment judgements. The ZTV study was used to determine which landscape and visual receptors are likely to be affected and merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects. The ZTV was subsequently updated based on the fixed Development parameters and has informed the professional judgements made in this Chapter. The ZTV study is presented in **Figure 9.6**.
- 9.68 The ZTV is shown on **Figure 9.6**, indicating areas of potential visibility of the Development from the surrounding landscape. The analysis was carried out using a topographic model that included settlements and woodlands (derived from NEXTMAP 25 surface mapping data) as visual barriers in order to provide a more realistic indication of the potential visibility. The Development footprint was modelled at 14m for the vast majority of the Site reflecting building heights of up to 12m and a 2m allowance for potential ground reprofiling. An area of Development around the centre of the Site (within the western parcel, closest to Charlotte Avenue) was modelled at 18m reflecting building heights of up to 16m and again including a 2m allowance for potential ground reprofiling.

9.69 The ZTV represents a theoretical model of the potential visibility of the Development. In reality, landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments, landform and / or buildings found on the ground, but not accounted for within the surface mapping dataset, are likely to combine to screen the Development a greater degree. As a result, the extent of actual visibility experienced on the ground will be less than suggested by the ZTV study.

ZTV and Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)

9.70 The ZTV extends up to around 1km to the north / north-west of the Site, before being curtailed by woodland and topography. This includes a 'band' of woodland blocks extending east-west, between Fringford Road (east) and the B4100 (west). There is some limited, fragmented theoretical visibility further north, from higher ground between Bainton and Stratton Audley Road.

9.71 The ZTV is very limited to the east of the Site, largely contained by field boundaries and woodland belts to the east of the Church of St Laurence. There is some fragmented theoretical visibility further east, to the north of Caversfield, from open land between Fringford Road and Buckingham Road. There is no theoretical visibility from within Caversfield itself.

9.72 The ZTV extends along a relatively narrow tract of land to the south east of the Site, along the alignment of the A4095 and the A4421 Skimmingdish Lane, which form part of the northern 'relief road' around Bicester.

9.73 The ZTV extends up to around 1km to the south / south-west of the Site, before being curtailed by the A4095 Lords Lane and the railway line. Both are prominent features in the landscape, with the A4095 lined by mature belts of trees; and the railway line, which is on a slight embankment and is also tree lined. Further south-west, beyond the railway line, theoretical visibility extends across the relatively flat and open fields between the railway line and the B430 Middleton Stoney Road.

9.74 The ZTV extends up to around 0.5km to the west of the Site, up to around the edge for Bucknell. However, the theoretical visibility does not encompass the village itself, and is curtailed by mature tree and hedgerow planting to the east of the village, primarily around Bucknell Manor House and its grounds.

9.75 The ZTV was subsequently tested in the field. It was determined that that the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) - i.e. the area within which the Development is most likely to be visible – is much more limited than the ZTV and is described as follows:

- The ZVI extends up to around 1km to the north / north-west of the Site, encompassing public footpaths and roads extending through the countryside, but does not extend beyond the band of woodland blocks;
- The ZVI extends up the B4100 to the east of the Site (which forms the Site boundary), encompassing the road itself, but visibility from the Church of St Laurence is extremely limited and there is not visibility from beyond the church grounds;
- The ZVI extends up to 350m to south-east of the Site, encompassing residential properties / roads as part of the Exemplar scheme, but does not extend beyond the B4100;
- The ZVI extends up to around 1km to the south / south-west of the Site, encompassing residential properties / roads as part of the Exemplar scheme and the countryside beyond (which forms part of the wider North West Bicester Allocation), but does not extend beyond mature planting along the A4095 Lords Lane and the railway line and does not include these routes themselves; and
- The ZVI extends up to around 0.5km to the west of the Site, encompassing footpaths on the eastern edge of Bucknell, but does not extend beyond the mature tree and hedge planting around the village.

9.76 Overall it is concluded that the ZVI is limited to an area of no more than 1km from the Site boundary and typically encompasses parts of the Exemplar scheme; and roads and footpaths in the surrounding landscape. There is no apparent visibility from the built up areas of Bicester, Bucknell, and Caversfield.

Landscape Character

9.77 Paragraphs 5.13-5.15 of GLVIA3 indicates that landscape character studies at the national or regional level are best used to 'set the scene' and understand the landscape context. It indicates that Local Authority Assessments provide more detail and that these should be used to form the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character – with (appropriately justified) adaptation, refinement and interpretation where required.

9.78 Relevant landscape character assessments are:

- National Character Area Profile - 107 Cotswolds (NE420) ^{xxi}The Oxfordshire County Council Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) (2004);
- Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (1995);
- Cherwell Countryside Design Summary (1998);
- ENV07 Bicester Green Buffers Report (2013);
- ENV08 Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013); and

- ENV13 Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2010).

9.79 Copies of relevant maps and character assessment descriptions of areas taken forward for assessment are included in **Appendix 9.6**.

National Character Area Profile - 107 Cotswold

9.80 The Site falls on the fringes of the Cotswolds National Character Area (NCA). This is described as an "open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys"; and that "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".

Oxfordshire County Council Wildlife and Landscape Study, 2004

9.82 The Oxfordshire County Council Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) places the Site within the 'Wooded Estatelands' landscape character type. This is described as a largely arable landscape with rolling topography with localised steep slopes and woodland blocks of variable sizes.

Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment, 1995

9.84 At the more local level, the Site falls within the 'Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands' landscape character type as identified in Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment, which is consistent with 'Wooded Estatelands' landscape character type as defined by OWLS. Much of the land is in arable cultivation, with woodlands which divide and enclose the landscape. There are also long views across rolling open fields where there are substantial breaks in tree cover.

Cherwell Countryside Design Summary (1998)

9.85 The Countryside Design Summary places the Site within the 'Ploughley Limestone Plateau' countryside character area. This is described as an undulating landscape, with higher plateaus to the north-west and lower lying valleys to the south-east. Woodland is identified as being relatively extensive and disrupts views across the landscape.

ENV07 Bicester Green Buffers Report, 2013

9.86 The Bicester Green Buffers Report identifies potential 'green buffers' between the edge of Bicester / areas of planned growth and surrounding villages in order to protect the identity

of existing settlements. Green Buffer 8 proposes a retained gap between the north-western edge of the Site (as defined by the North West Bicester Eco-town allocation) and Bainton Road to prevent coalescence of Bucknell and the Eco-town. The report notes that the masterplan for the Site / Eco-town should consider the relationship between the new urban and the landscape setting; and potentially incorporate green infrastructure along this boundary.

ENV08 Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, 2013

- 9.87 The Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment provides an analysis of sensitivity and capacity in relation to the allocated sites within the Cherwell Local Plan. The assessment identifies that the wider North West Bicester Eco-town allocation is 'generic' in its composition of arable farmland, hedgerow boundaries, scattered farmsteads and field drainage ditches.

Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, 2010

- 9.86 The Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment also considers the allocation of strategic sites at Banbury and Bicester, whilst identifying opportunities for green infrastructure provision and landscape enhancement. The assessment finds that the wider North West Bicester Eco-town allocation has few distinguishing landscape features, and that the site lack tranquillity due to proximity to local transport routes. Visually the Site is relatively well contained and views from Bicester and Bucknell are screened by intervening vegetation.

Site-scale Landscape Character and Fabric

- 9.87 Field study has confirmed that the Site (and the landscape immediately surrounding the Site) is largely consistent with description of landscape character as summarised in the preceding sections. The Site itself comprises predominantly arable farmland and contains two distinct areas of woodland to the south and is 'typical' of the wider countryside surrounding Bicester.
- 9.88 The Site is heavily influenced by the urban area, located between new housing development to the north and south, which forms the 'Exemplar scheme, and in close proximity to a number of key roads. The Site is also relatively well visually contained within the landscape, bound by mature hedgerows and adjoining areas of built development, which further accentuates its relationship to the existing built-up area.
- 9.81 The western Site boundary is open and there is intervisibility between the western part of the site across adjoining arable fields, however, widespread intervisibility is limited by mature field boundaries and woodland blocks in the surrounding landscape. There is no intervisibility

between the Site and the village of Bucknell due to planting around the Manor House.

- 9.89 The eastern Site boundary is also relatively open and adjoins B4100, Home Farm and St Laurence Church. However, intervisibility with the village Caversfield to the east and the surrounding countryside to the north-east is prevented by the mature tree and woodland planting around St Laurence Church and the adjacent Caversfield House.

Visual Receptors

- 9.88 Visual receptors are *"the different groups of people who may experience views of the development"* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). In order to identify those groups who may be significantly affected the ZTV study, baseline desk study and Site visits have been used.
- 9.89 The different types of groups assessed within this report encompass local residents; people using key routes such as roads; cycle ways, people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using Public Rights of Way (PRoW); or people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with areas of settlement, PRoW and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common.

Representative Visual Receptors

- 9.90 Thirteen representative viewpoints have been selected to assess the effects on visual receptors. These are listed in Table 9.8 below are shown on **Figure 9.6**.

Table 9.8: Representative Visual Receptors

Viewpoint Reference & Location	Approx. Distance from the Site	Receptors
Viewpoint 1 View from Charlotte Avenue (between the western and eastern Development Site parcels)	8m	Residents and visitors of the of the 'Exemplar scheme
Viewpoint 2 View from B4100 Banbury Road / St Laurence Church	14m	Visitors to church and motorists
Viewpoint 3 View from Wintergreen Fields	16m	Residents and visitors of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation
Viewpoint 4 View from Haricot Vale Road	16m	Residents and visitors of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation
Viewpoint 5 View from Charlotte Avenue (south of Development Site)	30m	Residents and visitors of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation

Viewpoint Reference & Location	Approx. Distance from the Site	Receptors
Viewpoint 6 View from Braeburn Avenue	110m	Residents and visitors of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation
Viewpoint 7 View from PRoW 148/7	130m	Recreational users of footpath
Viewpoint 8 View from B4100 Banbury Road / Charlotte Avenue	250m	Residents and visitors of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation / motorists
Viewpoint 9 View from Fringford Road / Aunt Ems Lane	470m	Residents of Caversfield and motorists
Viewpoint 10 View from Bainton Road	540m	Residents of Bucknell and motorists
Viewpoint 11 View from A4095 / Lucerne Avenue	600m	Residents of Bicester and motorists
Viewpoint 12 View from junction of PRoW 148/8, B4100 and Bainton Road	745m	Recreational users of footpath / motorists
Viewpoint 13 View from PRoW 148/9 / Bucknell Road	800m	Recreational users of footpath / motorists

Visual Receptor Groups

- 9.82 Visual effects are assessed for groups of visual receptors within close proximity of each other and that are judged to experience similar visual effects arising from the proposed development. These are referred to as 'visual receptor groups' and include motorists on local roads, users of rights of way and residents of settlements.
- 9.83 The following visual receptor groups have been identified within the extent of the ZVI and are taken forward for detailed assessment. The extents of the Visual Receptor Groups are summarised in Table 9.9 below.

Table 9.9: Visual Receptor Groups

Visual Receptor Group and Location	Distance and Direction
Receptor Group 1 Residents of Exemplar Scheme to north of the Site	North, between around 0 – 0.25km
Receptor Group 2 Residents of Exemplar phase development to the south of the Site	South, between around 0 – 0.35km
Receptor Group 3 Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south / south-west of the Site, between the Site and Bicester	South / south-west, between around 0 – 1km
Receptor Group 4 Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the west / north-west of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and wooded ridge	West / North-west, between around 0 – 1km

- 9.84 It is judged that for those visual receptors located outside of the ZVI there would be little to no visibility of the Development, and that effects would be Negligible at most. Therefore, visual receptors located outside of the ZVI are not taken forward for detailed assessment.

Key Routes

- 9.85 The A4095 Lord Lane runs along the northern boundary of Bicester, forming part of the northern 'relief road' around Bicester, approximately 600m to the south of the Site. Desk and field study have concluded there are limited views of the Site from this route due to the dense vegetation along the northern edge of the road, and the intervening built-form of the Exemplar scheme. There are also generally no views from A4095 Southwold Lane and the A4421 Skimmingdish Lane further east.
- 9.86 The B4100 Banbury Road runs to the east of the Site, between Bicester and Banbury. Desk and field study have confirmed there will be views of the Site from a section of some 2km of the B4100 as it passes to the north and east of the Site.
- 9.87 The Bicester to Banbury railway line runs to the south-west of the site. Desk and field study have concluded there are limited views of the Site from this route due to the vegetation along the railway line, trees / hedgerows within the intervening landscape.
- 9.88 Therefore, only the B4100 Banbury Road is taken forward to the assessment.

Recreational Routes

- 9.89 There are no long distance / promoted routes or cycle routes within the Study Area.

Accessible and Recreational Landscape

- 9.90 There are no accessible or recreational landscapes within the Study Area.

Specific Viewpoints

- 9.91 No specific viewpoints have been identified from Ordnance Survey Mapping within the Study Area or have been identified through consultation with CDC Officers.

Landscape Designations and Value

Designated Landscapes

9.92 There are no nationally or locally designated landscapes within the Study Area.

Local Landscape Value

9.93 Within the study area there are a range of features that contribute to the value of the local landscape, namely the pattern of woodland; network of PRoW; rural lanes; and the historic village of Bucknell.

9.94 Although all of these features are likely to be valued locally, none of these assets demonstrate that the landscape is more than an 'everyday' landscape or provide recognition of its wider value.

Future Baseline

9.95 In the absence of the Development coming forward, it is likely that the Site would remain as arable farmland and woodland. However, it would remain heavily influenced by the surrounding urban area.

Likely Significant Effects

Introduction

9.96 This section sets out the effects that the Development would have on both landscape and visual receptors. Effects are considered in the medium-term, once construction is complete, but before proposed planting has fully established; and in the long-term, taking account of the established vegetation.

The Development

Overview

9.97 As set out in Chapter 3 of the ES, the Development is for up to 530 dwellings, with associated access, open space, landscape planting and drainage infrastructure.

Site Fabric

- 9.98 The Development will result in minimal changes to existing vegetation on-Site. The vast majority of the existing woodland and majority of hedgerow boundaries will be retained and enhanced.
- 9.99 It is likely that there will be removal of small sections of the existing hedgerow vegetation to facilitate access into the Site and between development parcels. Where possible – as part of the detailed design stage - any access points should utilise existing gaps in the hedgerows and consideration given to whether road widths can be narrowed to retain landscape / habitat connectivity.
- 9.100 Over 40% of the Site will be delivered as green infrastructure as shown on 'Multi-functional Green Space' Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2). This includes a new landscape corridor along the north-western Site boundary to help integrate the new housing into the landscape, creating an appropriate interface with the adjoining countryside; providing a degree of visual screening; and connecting with existing hedgerows to the north and south.
- 9.101 It is anticipated that this will comprise a new hedgerow boundary punctuated by hedgerow trees and copses, which is consistent with the existing landscape character and features.
- 9.102 A new hedgerow boundary is also proposed along the eastern 'green corridor' that runs north-south across the Site's western parcel. The existing hedgerow boundary has largely been removed and currently comprises a post and wire fence.

Design approach in respect of landscape and visual matters

- 9.103 While the Development will inevitably result in a change to the character of the Site and its immediate surroundings, the design of the Development has been informed by the local landscape and visual context. Key design principles which are incorporated into the Development parameters – and described in ES Chapter 3 - include:
- Retaining and enhancing existing woodland, tree belts and hedgerows to help structure the Development; integrate development new housing into the landscape; and provide the basis of multi-functional green infrastructure;
 - Utilising existing boundary features and proposed green infrastructure to create appropriate interfaces with surrounding development and allowing for the continuation of spaces and routes through the Site and beyond;

- Ensuring appropriate treatment of the western extent of the Site, creating a transition between development and countryside and establishing a 'green edge' to the new outer boundary of Bicester;
- Careful consideration of building heights to ensure that the Development relates well to the scale of surrounding housing, whilst allowing flexibility for taller elements to help define key streets / spaces; and
- Orientation of the key access road within the Site's eastern parcel to align with St Laurence Church and allow for views towards the Church tower.

Effects of Construction Phase

- 9.104 In the Short to Medium-term, there will be temporary effects arising during the construction phase. The total anticipated construction period will be approximately 5 years, although the Development is likely to occur within a number of different phases during this time.
- 9.105 Impacts during the Construction Phase will include the effects of vehicles and plant within the Site and in surrounding areas including earth-moving equipment, cranes, lorries and other vehicles; the erection, use and dismantling of scaffolding, use of small cranes/platforms and the creation of stockpiles of materials and construction compounds. Other components typical of construction activities, such as workers' facilities, stockpiles of materials, lighting of specific areas (such as construction or storage compounds) will also result in temporary landscape and visual effects.
- 9.106 Although construction activity is different in nature to the completed development, it is judged that the construction phase would not give rise to effects over and above those of the completed development. While the scale of effect may be larger, the duration of effect is much shorter. Therefore, effects identified within this assessment are judged to apply to the completed scheme in the Medium – term (once construction is complete) and in the longer term (once any proposed planting has matured).
- 9.107 As set out in the 'Mitigation Measures' section of this chapter, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be prepared for the construction phase. While this will not directly reduce or mitigate the landscape and visual effects of construction activity, it will play an important in ensuring considerate construction activity and that the identified woodland, trees and other landscape / habitat features are appropriately protected during the construction phase.

Effects of Completed Development

9.108 Medium-term effects are assessed during the period following completion (approximately between Year 1 and Year 15), when construction is complete but before proposed mitigation planning has fully established. During this period, effects will gradually reduce as planting along site boundaries and within the development establishes. During this early part of this period, effects are likely to be at their greatest. Permanent effects – once the vegetation has established (Year 15+) – are also assessed.

Effects on Landscape Character

9.109 As defined by the ZVI, the effects on landscape character would be generally contained to an area of no more than 1km from the Site boundary and typically encompassing parts of the Exemplar scheme of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation and are areas of surrounding countryside. There would be no significant effects of landscape effects on the built up areas of Bicester; Bucknell; and Caversfield.

9.110 No **large scale** effects are predicted. Given the existing settlement context, despite the changes to the land-use and character of the Site itself, it is concluded that the baseline environment will not be fundamentally changed by the completed Development.

9.111 **Medium scale** effects would be limited to the Site and its immediate context; and up to up to approximately 0.5km to the north-west of the Site. The Development would be a notable feature in the landscape, and would be particularly prominent to the north-west due to the lack of Site boundary features, however, it would be perceived within the context of Exemplar scheme. In addition, the vast majority of existing landscape features would be retained, helping structure the Site and provide integration.

9.112 **Small-negligible scale** effects would be experienced beyond 0.5km to the north-west of the Site. While the Development will remain a new feature within the landscape, it would be perceived in the context of existing settlement and not disrupt the wider pattern of settlement, arable fields and woodland.

9.113 Beyond the areas described above, effects on landscape character would rapidly decrease to a **negligible scale**, being largely indiscernible from the Exemplar scheme and/or not a prominent features within the surrounding landscape.

9.114 Given the number of different landscape character and capacity studies which relate to the Site and Study Area, the most relevant and detailed study upon which to base the assessment

of landscape effects is the Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment, supplemented by the findings of the Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013) and Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2010), and observations from Site-based work.

9.115 The Site and surrounding areas falls within the 'Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands' landscape character type as identified in Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment. It is characterised primarily by the extensive parklands and estate farmlands which lie in a band across Oxfordshire, from Bletchingdon on the edge of the Cherwell Valley in the south, around to the north of Bicester and up to the county boundary with Northamptonshire. Landform and landcover are described as follows:

"This character area is situated upon White Limestone and Cornbrash, a bluish-grey limestone which contains shell debris and has a high clay content. Both bands trend south-west to north-eastwards, rising up to about 120m in the north in a series of gentle undulations. A major watershed divides the area on an east-west alignment. Streams rising around Stratton Audley and Bucknell drain southwards into the River Ray and hence the Thames river system, while streams to the north of Fringford and Stoke Lyne join Padbury Brook and the Great Ouse river system, flowing eastwards to drain into the Wash. This area is noticeably the better wooded than the rest of Cherwell District, with considerable plantations which are associated with extensive areas of parkland. Much of the land is in arable cultivation where the wooded character persists, with woodlands which divide and enclose the landscape on a large scale, there are also long views across rolling open fields where there are substantial breaks in tree cover. Particularly towards the north of the area, woodland cover decreases and the countryside opens out. This is a typical English landscape scene of gently rolling hills clothed with a patchwork of fields punctuated by hedgerow trees and copses. In some areas this is disappearing, resulting in a more open landscape where only lines of trees remain to mark a previous field boundary".

9.116 Specially in relation to the Site, the study states that the landscape to the north of Bicester opens out into a rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern copses and trees. Key characteristics include:

- *"Patchwork of arable and pasture defined by well maintained hedges.*
- *Many of the hedges contain regularly spaced mature hedgerow oaks.*
- *Road verges are generous widths, and often have a ditch and hedge on either side.*
- *Views over the rolling countryside are punctuated by numerous small copses and coverts.*
- *In places the structure of the landscape is disappearing as intensive arable use has resulted in the removal of field boundaries."*

9.117 The study identifies areas 'special features' within the landscape, none of these are of

relevance to the Site or study area. However, the study does not define the sensitivity of the landscape.

- 9.91 The Cherwell Countryside Design Summary generally aligns with the description of landscape character as set out within the Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment, highlighting the extensive woodland cover and undulating landform. It goes on to recommend that new development avoids exposed and prominent locations, and utilises areas that are 'protected' by topography, settlement and woodland. However, the study does not define the sensitivity of the landscape.
- 9.118 The Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment provides an analysis of sensitivity and capacity in relation to the sites within the Cherwell Local Plan. The assessment identifies that the wider North West Bicester Eco-town allocation is relatively generic in its composition of arable farmland, hedgerow boundaries, scattered farmsteads and field drainage ditches. The landscape is described as being of 'medium' quality; 'medium-low' value; 'medium' overall sensitivity; and 'medium-high' landscape capacity for residential development.
- 9.119 The Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment also considers the allocation of strategic sites at Banbury and Bicester, whilst identifying opportunities for green infrastructure provision and landscape enhancement. The assessment identifies that the landscape sensitivity of the wider North West Bicester eco-town allocation is judged to be 'low' as it has few features to distinguish it. It states that "*...the site lacks tranquillity due to traffic on the M40 and the ring road and its scenic value is ordinary. The bridleway forms an attractive route but overall the site's value is low apart from the ecological value for Water Voles and Great Crested Newts.*" Accordingly the assessment identifies that the allocation has a 'high' capacity to accept development and green infrastructure.
- 9.120 Given the Site is immediately adjacent / between the Exemplar scheme; contains few distinguishing or rare landscape features; and occupies an area of flat, lower-lying farmland that is not prominent in the wider landscape (as opposed to the more open, rolling landform further north-west), it is judged that the landscape is of **low susceptibility** to the Development.
- 9.121 As noted in 'Baseline Conditions' section of this chapter, the landscape is considered to be an 'everyday' landscape with no recognition of its wider value. Furthermore, the various landscape studies find that the North West Bicester site to be of relatively low value and with a relatively high capacity to accommodate development. The landscape character area is therefore judged to be of **community value**. It is judged that the landscape is of **low sensitivity** overall.

[Effects on landscape character – within site and immediate surroundings](#)

- 9.122 Medium scale effects would be confined to the Site itself; and its immediate context; and up to approximately 0.5km to the north-west of the Site. This would affect a localised part of the study area overall.
- 9.123 In relation to the Site itself there would be a loss of arable farmland and change of land-use to an area of settlement. However, the retention and enhancement of the existing woodland, tree belts and hedgerows - combined with a comprehensive landscape strategy - would help integrate the Development into the landscape.
- 9.124 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape, the medium-term and permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of a **medium magnitude** and of **moderate-slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.

[Effects on landscape character – north-west of site up to 0.5km](#)

- 9.125 Beyond the Site to the north-west (up to 0.5km) the open character of surrounding countryside would be altered by the proximity to the new settlement area and lack of robust boundary features. However, Development would be perceived in the context of existing residential land-uses and would also be generally consistent with the scale and pattern of residential land uses to the north and south of the Site. The medium-term effects would be of **medium-low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.
- 9.126 The permanent effects would reduce to a small scale, owing to proposed new green infrastructure along the western Site boundary. The new hedgerow punctuated with hedgerow trees and copses would help integrate the Development into the landscape and would create an appropriate, characteristic new landscape feature. This would result in effects of a **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.

[Effects on landscape character – north-west of site between 0.5 – 1km](#)

- 9.127 Beyond 0.5km to the north-west of the Site, up to around the 1km extent of the ZVI, the effects would reduce to small-negligible scale over a limited area. While the Development will

remain a visible within the landscape, it would not be a prominent or uncharacteristic feature in the landscape. The Development would also be perceived in the context of the wooded backdrop, created by the various woodland blocks to the north-east of Bicester. The medium-term and permanent effects would be **negligible magnitude, minimal significance** and **neutral** on balance, owing to limited change to the overall landscape character or pattern.

[Effects on landscape character – remainder of Study Area / Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands](#)

9.128 Elsewhere within the study area, the wider effects on landscape character would be of negligible scale, **negligible magnitude, minimal significance** and **neutral** as there would be limited or no intervisibility with the Development.

9.129 Overall in relation to the wider Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands, it is considered that the Development would only affect a very small part of a much broader LCA and would not affect the overall pattern of extensive parklands and estate farmlands. In particular the Development would not have any discernible effects upon the more open, rolling landscape to the further to the northwest of Bicester, with the housing (and wider allocated area) generally located on lower lying ground on the edge of the town, that is well defined by existing woodland belts, copses, and field boundaries. The Site also relates well to existing road infrastructure, with primary roads defining the northern, eastern and southern extents of the wider allocated area.

Effects on Views

9.130 The location of representative viewpoints are shown on **Figure 9.6** and annotated photographs from each representative viewpoint are shown on **Figure 9.7**.

9.131 For ease of reference the viewpoint description, description of effects and scale of effect for each viewpoint is set out on the relevant photograph. The scale of effect at each viewpoint is summarised in Table 9.10 below.

Table 9.10: Representative Visual Receptors and Scale of Effects

Viewpoint Reference & Location	Approx. Distance from the Site	Scale of Effects Adverse / Neutral / Positive	
		Medium-term (Year 1)	Permanent (Year 15)
Viewpoint 1 View from Charlotte Avenue (north of Development Site)	8m	Medium Neutral	Medium Neutral

Viewpoint 2 View from B4100 Banbury Road / St Laurence Church	14m	Small Neutral	Small Neutral
Viewpoint 3 View from Wintergreen Fields	16m	Large Adverse	Large Adverse
Viewpoint 4 View from Haricot Vale Road	16m	Medium Neutral	Medium Neutral
Viewpoint 5 View from Charlotte Avenue (south of Development Site)	30m	Small Neutral	Small Neutral
Viewpoint 6 View from Braeburn Avenue	110m	Small Neutral	Small Neutral
Viewpoint 7 View from PRoW 148/7	130m	Large Adverse	Large Adverse
Viewpoint 8 View from B4100 Banbury Road / Charlotte Avenue	250m	Small -Negligible Neutral	Small-Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 9 View from Fringford Road / Aunt Ems Lane	470m	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 10 View from Bainton Road	540m	Small Neutral	Small Neutral
Viewpoint 11 View from A4095 / Lucerne Avenue	600m	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 12 View from junction of PRoW 148/8, B4100 and Bainton Road	745m	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 13 View from PRoW 148/9 / Bucknell Road	800m	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral

- 9.132 Each of the viewpoints is a 'sample' of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors – including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction.
- 9.133 **Large scale** visual effects, where the Development would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view would be limited to a relatively small number of locations where there are open, unrestricted, short range views of the Site. From Wintergreen Fields (which adjoins the Site's eastern parcel) and PRoW 148/7 (which is in close proximity to the Site's western parcel) there would be a visible change from arable fields to a new area of settlement.
- 9.134 **Medium scale** visual effects, where the Development would form a partial alteration to the view, would be limited to a relatively small number of locations where views are partially filtered by intervening vegetation. From Charlotte Avenue (between the Site's western and eastern parcels) and the B4100 / St Laurence Church, there would be a visible change from arable fields to a new area of settlement, albeit the Development will be either partially

screened by existing boundary vegetation and/or seen in the context of the existing Exemplar scheme.

- 9.135 **Small scale** visual effects, where the Development would form a minor alteration to the view - such that post development the baseline will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences - would be limited to a relatively small number of locations in close proximity to the Site, where views are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation. From both Braeburn Avenue (north of the Site) and Charlotte Avenue (south of the Site) the Development would be largely screened by existing boundary vegetation and seen in the context of the existing Exemplar scheme.
- 9.136 Small scale visual effects would also be experienced in a small number of 'middle-distance' locations, up to around 0.5km from the Site boundary. From B4100 Banbury Road (close to the junction with Charlotte Avenue) there are views of the Site's eastern parcel, however, views are filtered by the hedgerow along the roadside and the mature planting along the eastern boundary. From Bainton Road, there are open views across the western end of the Site's western parcel where is no existing boundary feature, however, Development will be seen in the context of the existing Exemplar scheme and against a wooded backdrop, and as such, would not be dominant feature on the skyline.
- 9.137 Beyond the areas described above the effects would reduce to a **negligible scale** as the Development would be generally screened by intervening buildings, vegetation and / or landform within the landscape; or the Development would form a very limited change to the existing view.

[Visual Receptor Groups](#)

- 9.138 This assessment focuses on effects on groups of visual receptors, incorporating effects on views from public spaces and streets within settlements (or around the houses in areas with isolated dwellings), and the routes and accessible landscape in the surrounding countryside.
- 9.139 Residents and visitors within these communities are assessed to be of **high – medium sensitivity** (Community Value and High Susceptibility) overall.
- 9.140 The assessment of effects on settlements focuses on the visual amenity of public spaces, though views from groups of dwellings will also be noted in the descriptions. Effects on private residential amenity are a separate matter, and only require assessment when a development is likely to be 'overwhelming' or 'overbearing' (as set out within the 'Methodology' section), which is not the case in respect of this Development.

Visual Receptor Group 1: Residents and visitors of exemplar phase development to north of the Site

- 9.141 From the residential area to the north of the Site, views of the Site's eastern and western parcels are generally limited to those spaces, roads and properties that adjoin the Site boundaries, namely Braeburn Avenue and Haricot Vale Road. Views are partially screened by existing boundary vegetation, however, there are more open views across the Site where the boundary vegetation is lower / breaks exist. There also likely to be more open views into / across the Site from first floor windows of certain properties.
- 9.142 The existing views are typically urban in nature, with housing / streets visible either in the foreground or middle distance, extending out along Charlotte Avenue; and with various urbanising features visible, such as play areas and street furniture. There are also generally no longer distance views across the wider countryside. In views across the Site's eastern parcel, long distance views are curtailed by the trees and woodland surrounding Caversfield House and St Laurence Church, and the church tower itself is largely screened from view. In views across the Site's western parcel, views are curtailed by the woodland along the southern Site boundary and internal boundary vegetation. Elsewhere, views from within the residential area – such as Watercress Close, Sage Street and Blueberry Drive – are heavily filtered by intervening built form.
- 9.143 At completion, the scale of effect would generally be medium-small scale over a limited area, confined to a limited stretches of streets and spaces. Where visible the Development will be seen at short-distance and will alter existing views of arable fields. However, the Development will be partially screened by retained and enhanced boundary vegetation. Furthermore, views of new housing will be entirely consistent with the existing settlement context and there will be no loss of views across the wider countryside beyond the Site. The Development would also be generally consistent with the scale of existing residential land uses. While the parameters allow for slightly taller buildings of up to 16m (including an additional 2m for ground reprofiling), these will be located closer to centre of the Site and would help structure / define the urban area.
- 9.144 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape and providing additional screening, the Medium-term and Permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the existing residential context.

Receptor Group 2: Residents of Exemplar scheme to the south of the Site

- 9.145 From the residential area to the south of the Site, views of the Site's eastern and western parcels are generally limited to those spaces, road and properties that adjoin the Site, namely a short section of Charlotte Avenue (closest to the Site) and Wintergreen Fields. Views are partially screened by existing boundary vegetation, however, there are more open views across the Site where the boundary vegetation is lower / breaks exist. There also likely to be more open views into / across the Site from first floor windows of certain properties.
- 9.146 The existing views are typically urban in nature, with housing / streets visible either in the foreground or middle distance, extending out along Braeburn Avenue. There are also generally no longer distance views across the wider countryside. In views across the eastern parcel, long distance views are curtailed by the trees and woodland surrounding Caversfield House and St Laurence Church, however, the church tower itself is prominent landmark in the views. In views across the Site's western parcel, views are curtailed by the woodland along the southern Site boundary and the north-south tree belt running through the centre of western parcel.
- 9.147 Elsewhere, views from within the residential area – such as Cranberry Avenue, Bramley Avenue, Blueberry Drive, Pippin Close and Tayberry Close – are heavily filtered by intervening built form. From properties / connecting lane at the northern end of Pippin Close and Tayberry Close there are views of the Site's eastern parcel across the intervening arable field, however, views are heavily filtered by intervening hedgerows and tree belts.
- 9.148 At completion, the scale of effect would generally be small scale over a localised area, with views from various streets and spaces extending from Charlotte Avenue. Where visible the Development will be seen at short-distance and will alter existing views of arable fields. However, the Development will be partially screened by retained and enhanced boundary vegetation. Furthermore, views of new housing will be entirely consistent with the existing settlement context and there will be no loss of views across the wider countryside beyond the Site. The Development would also be generally consistent with the scale of existing residential land uses. While the parameters allow for slightly taller buildings of up to 16m (including an additional 2m for ground reprofiling), these will be located closer to centre of the Site and would help structure / define the urban area. The proposed 'heritage enhancement zone' will also be a positive feature, allowing for framed views across the eastern parcel towards St Laurence Church.
- 9.149 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape and providing additional screening, the Medium-

term and Permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the existing residential context.

- 9.150 For the limited area of Wintergreen Fields, the scale of effect would increase to large scale as a consequence of particularly open views / low boundary hedgerow and disruption of views to the landmark church tower. This would result in effects of **medium magnitude** and of **moderate significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the degree of change to the visual context. However it is acknowledged that the design of the eastern parcel incorporates a viewing corridor along the main street in order to creating a viewing corridor towards the church tower. Through the detailed design and layout, it may also be possible to create other viewing corridors through the Development and/or create 'incidental' views in between buildings.

Receptor Group 3: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south-east / south / south-west of the Site, between the Site, Calversfield and Bicester

- 9.151 From the countryside and settlement edges to south-east / south / south-west of the Site, views of the Site's eastern and western parcels are typically screened by intervening vegetation in the landscape, including woodland blocks, tree belts and hedgerow boundaries.
- 9.152 The existing views are generally from roads, with limited PRow in this area, and are urban fringe in nature, with intermittent views of the Exemplar scheme seen in the context of surrounding countryside and transport routes.
- 9.153 At completion, the scale of effect would generally be negligible scale over a localised area. The Development will not generally be visible, and where are more open views of new housing with be consistent with the existing settlement context / not a prominent feature in view.
- 9.154 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape and providing additional screening, the Medium-term and Permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of **negligible magnitude** and of **minimal significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the indiscernible change to the existing visual context.
- 9.155 It is acknowledged that from along the B4100 Banbury Road between Calversfield and Bicester there are views towards the Site's eastern parcel. This is discussed in further detail below in

relation to the assessment of effects on 'Key Routes'.

Receptor Group 4: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the east / north-east of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and the wooded ridge

- 9.156 From the countryside to east / north-east of the Site, views of the Site's eastern parcel – and parts of the western parcel - are typically screened by intervening vegetation in the landscape, including woodland blocks, tree belts and hedgerow boundaries within the Site itself. However, there are more open, uninterrupted views over the western end of the western parcel, with no field boundary defining the outer edge of the Site, from key routes including PRow 148/7 and Bainton Road, where gaps in the road-side hedgerows exist.
- 9.157 Further north-west, beyond Bainton Road, views of the Site become more filtered by intervening field boundaries and undulations in the landform, and are eventually screened by the woodland blocks within the landscape.
- 9.158 The existing views are more rural in nature, with the Exemplar scheme not a prominent feature in the view south-east, and fields and woodland visible in other directions. However, rooftops of the Exemplar scheme houses are visible above intervening vegetation and the traffic along the B4100 is a visible and audible feature in the view.
- 9.159 At completion, the scale of effect would be small scale over a localised area. The Development will be visible at short to middle-distance, and this will be perceived as extending the existing settlement area further north-west, out into the existing countryside. However, the Development would not be a prominent feature in the view and would be seen in the context of existing housing. The proposed green infrastructure along the western boundary will be beneficial, helping integrate the Development into the landscape. The retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site – including the woodland along the southern edge – will help integrate the Development into the landscape and will ensure there is a 'well treed' backdrop to the Development.
- 9.160 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape and providing additional screening, the Medium-term and Permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the noticeable degree of change to the visual context.
- 9.161 For the limited area of PRow 148/7, the scale of effect would increase to **large scale** as a

consequence of particularly open views / lack of existing boundary features. This would result in effects of **medium magnitude** and of **moderate significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the degree of change to the visual context. However, it is acknowledged that the proposed green infrastructure along the western boundary will help integration and provide low-level screening. This edge treatment is likely to comprise a hedgerow, trees and copses, which is consistent with existing landscape pattern / features and will provide a similar edge condition to the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation.

[Key Routes: B4100 Banbury Road](#)

9.162 The B4100 Banbury Road extents from the centre of Bicester in the south to Adderbury in the north-west, just south of Banbury. For a stretch of the road of some 2km from around the B4100 / Charlotte Road junction (the southern entrance to the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation) to the B4100 / Bainton Road junction, there are intermittent views of the Site, described as follows:

- From around the Charlotte Road junction, the Site is visible but largely screened by intervening vegetation.
- Further north, the Site becomes screened by Home Farm and surrounding vegetation.
- As the road turns north-west and passes the Church of St Laurence, the B4100 adjoins the Site's eastern parcel, and there relatively open views across the Site albeit the existing boundary hedgerow and trees along the Home Farm access provide a degree of screening.
- Further north-west, the Site becomes screened by the built form of the Exemplar scheme and existing road side vegetation
- Further north-west, beyond the B4100 lay by / lorry park, there are more open views to the western end of the western parcel, with no field boundary defining the outer edge of the Site and relatively low and gappy hedgerow along the road corridor
- Further north-west, between the junctions with Bainton Road, the western end of the western parcel remain visible but views of the Site become more filtered by intervening field boundaries and undulations in the landform, and are eventually screened by the woodland blocks within the landscape.

9.163 Around Charlotte Road junction, it is judged that the Development will be partially screened by intervening vegetation; not a prominent feature in view; and seen in the context of existing housing. There will be more open views of Development as the B4100 passes St Laurence Church but viewed in the context of existing housing and existing and proposed landscape features will occupy foreground views and provide a degree of screening. The proposed

'heritage enhancement zone' will also be a positive feature, allowing for framed views into the Site.

- 9.164 Beyond the lay-by / lorry park, there will be relatively open views of the Development and this will be perceived as extending the existing settlement area further north-west, out into the existing countryside. However, the proposed hedgerow and copse planting along the north-west Site boundary will be beneficial, helping integrate the Development into the landscape. The retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site – including the woodland along the southern edge – will also help integrate the Development into the landscape and will ensure there is a 'well treed' backdrop to the Development.
- 9.165 At completion, the scale of effect would generally be small scale over limited stretches of the road. Overall, the Development will not fundamentally change the visual character / context of this route; and in all views the Development will either be partially screened and/or seen in the context of existing housing.
- 9.166 While the maturity of the proposed planting would be beneficial in the longer-term, helping integrate the Development into the landscape and providing additional screening, the Medium-term and Permanent effects would not be discernibly different following completion (at Year 1) and once planting has established (Year 15). This would result in effects of **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the existing residential context.

Mitigation Measures

- 9.167 The mitigation of landscape and visual impacts has been addressed from an early stage in the design process, and consideration of the potential impacts of the proposed development has been an important part of the development of the proposals and associated landscape works. Key design principles of the proposed Development are set out at the start of the 'Likely Effects' section and include the careful consideration of the extent of development and building heights; retention and enhancement of woodland and hedgerows; and creation of green corridors and open space.
- 9.168 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be prepared for the construction phase. While this will not directly reduce / mitigate the landscape and visual effects of construction activity, it will play an important in ensuring considerate construction activity and that the identified woodland, trees and other landscape / habitat features are appropriately protected during the construction phase.

Residual Effects

9.169 It is considered that the implementation of these mitigation measures would not alter the overall assessment findings. The significance of effects for landscape and visual receptors would therefore remain as assessed.

Cumulative Effects

9.170 Nine development projects have been identified and agreed with CDC for the basis of cumulative assessment. These can be found in Chapter 2.

9.171 The following schemes do not have the potential to give rise to cumulative landscape and visual effects, by virtue of them being largely complete / considered part of the baseline environment, the development is within the existing urban area and there is no potential for cumulative effects, and – in the case of Land North and Adjoining Home Farm Banbury Road – coincides with the Site and will not come forward together with the Development:

- B: Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Caversfield
- C: Land North and Adjoining Home Farm Banbury Road
- E: North and South Arcade At Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Charlotte Avenue
- F: Adjoining And North East Of A4095 And Adjoining And South West Of Howes Lane
- G: Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Phase 2 Charlotte Avenue

9.172 It is considered that only the following schemes have the potential to give rise to cumulative landscape and visual effects:

- A: Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Banbury Road
- D: Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester
- H: Land Adjacent To Bicester Road And South West Of Avonbury Business Park
- I: Proposal for New Highway Aligned With Howes Lane

9.173 Together, these schemes form part of the wider North West Bicester Eco Town allocation (the broad extent of which is illustrated on **Figure 9.1**) and for the purposes of this assessment, are considered a single project.

Landscape Effects

9.174 The landscape within the Study Area is considered to be Low Sensitivity overall.

- 9.175 The Development is predicated to have Medium scale effects on the Site itself and its immediate context, effecting a Localised part of the study area. Overall this would result in cumulative effects of a **Medium Magnitude** and of **Moderate-Slight Significance**. It is judged that effects would be **Adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.
- 9.176 In combination with the remaining North West Bicester Eco Town developments, it is considered this would result in Large scale effects, effecting an Intermediate part of landscape within the study area. Overall this would result in cumulative effects of a **High Magnitude** and of **Moderate Significance**. It is judged that effects would be **Adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.
- 9.177 This is a largely inevitable consequence of a strategic allocation, and the various evidence base documents identify this area as having relatively low value and relatively high capacity to accommodate new development.
- 9.178 While the detail is not known at this stage, the various development proposals will be required to retain and enhance existing landscape features and accommodate a minimum of 40% green infrastructure on site. This will ensure the development proposed are well integrated into the landscape and positively respond to existing landscape structure.

Visual Effects

- 9.179 The majority of visual receptors are considered to be of High-Medium Sensitivity overall.
- 9.180 For Visual Receptor Group 1: Residents and visitors of exemplar phase development to north of the Site and Receptor Group 2: Residents of Exemplar phase development to the south of the Site, there are unlikely to be any cumulative effects. While elements of the North West Bicester Eco Town developments will be visible from certain locations within and around the Exemplar phase development, they will not be visible 'in combination' with the Development.
- 9.181 For Receptor Group 3: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south-east / south / south-west of the Site, between the Site, Caversfield and Bicester, the Development is predicated to have negligible scale effects over a localised part of the study area. Overall this would result in effects of a **negligible magnitude** and of **minimal significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the indiscernible change to the existing visual context.
- 9.182 In combination with the remaining North West Bicester Eco Town developments, it is

considered this would result in medium scale effects, effecting an intermediate part of the study area. The settlement area would extend up to the A4095 on the northern edge of Bicester, and alter existing views across the currently open, undeveloped countryside. However, development would remain partially screened by the dense vegetation along the northern edge of the road.

- 9.183 This would result in effects of a **medium magnitude** and of **moderate significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.
- 9.184 For Receptor Group 4: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the east / north-east of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and wooded ridge, the Development is predicted to have a medium-small scale effects over a localised part of the study area. Overall this would result in effects of a **medium-low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the noticeable degree of change to the visual context.
- 9.185 In combination with the remaining North West Bicester Eco Town developments, it is considered this would result in large scale effects, effecting an intermediate part of the study area. The settlement area would extend up to / across the Bucknell Road, between Bicester and Bucknell, altering the existing views across the currently open, undeveloped countryside.
- 9.186 This would result in effects of a **high magnitude** and of **major-moderate significance**. It is judged that effects would be **adverse** on balance, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement.
- 9.187 For the B4100 Banbury Road, the Development is predicted to have a small scale effect over limited stretches of the road. Overall this would result in effects of a **low magnitude** and of **slight significance**. It is judged that effects would be **neutral** on balance, owing to the existing residential context.
- 9.188 In combination with the remaining North West Bicester Eco Town developments, it is considered this would continue to result in small scale effects, over limited stretches of the road. The settlement area would 'fill in' the existing gap between A4905 Lord's Lane and the southern extents of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation, but would be viewed in the context of existing housing and views of new housing with be entirely consistent with the existing settlement context.
- 9.189 Overall, it is considered there will be greater landscape and visual effects when considering

the Development in combination with the wider Bicester Eco Town allocation, with the cumulative schemes affecting much larger tract of the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands, and being a more visually prominent in views from within and around the northern edge of Bicester. However, it is considered that this is an inevitable consequence of the proposed allocation, and sensitive design (including comprehensive landscape strategy) will ensure that new housing can be well integrated into the landscape.

Summary

- 9.190 The assessment method for this LVIA draws upon the established GLVIA3; An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014), Landscape Institute Technical Information Note (LI TIN) 05/2017 regarding townscape character; and LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals, and other recognised guidelines.
- 9.191 The baseline conditions of the Site and the surrounding landscape has been informed by desk-study and fieldwork (undertaken in September 2020 and January 2021). A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study (**Figure 9.6**) has been produced and used as tools to inform the professional judgements made in this LVIA during the iterative masterplan and assessment process.
- 9.192 The Site and surrounding areas falls within the 'Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands' landscape character type as identified in Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment. Specially in relation to the study area, the study states that the landscape to the north of Bicester opens out into a rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern copses and trees. Various evidence base studies have been produced that conclude the area of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation contains few distinguishing or rare landscape features; occupies an area of flat, lower-lying farmland that is not prominent in the wider landscape (as opposed to the more open, rolling landform further north-west); and has a high capacity to accommodate development.
- 9.193 Visually the Site is not highly prominent in the surrounding landscape, located between two residential parcels of the Exemplar scheme that are complete / under construction; bound by existing trees and hedgerow; and set within a generally well wooded landscape. Views of the site are Site are generally limited to an area of no more than 1km from the Site boundary and typically encompasses parts of the 'exemplar phase' of the North West Bicester ecotown allocation; and roads and footpaths in the surrounding landscape. There is no apparent visibility from the built up areas of Bicester; Bucknell; and Caversfield.
- 9.194 The design of the Development has been informed by the local landscape and visual context.

Key design principles which are incorporated into the Development parameters include retaining and enhancing existing woodland, tree belts and hedgerows; creating new multi-functional green infrastructure; and ensuring appropriate treatment of the western extent of the Site, creating a transition between development and countryside.

- 9.195 Although construction activity is different in nature to the completed development, it is judged that the construction phase would not give rise to effects over and above those of the completed development.
- 9.196 The landscape effects on the site and its immediate surroundings would be no more than **medium magnitude** and **moderate-slight adverse**, owing to the change from arable farmland to an area of settlement. Landscape effects would reduce to **low magnitude** and **slight adverse** to the north-west of the Site (up to 0.5km); **negligible magnitude** and **minimal neutral** beyond 0.5km to the north-west of the Site, up to around the 1km extent of the ZVI; and negligible magnitude and minimal neutral within the remainder of the Study Area. The retention and enhancement of the existing woodland, tree belts and hedgerows - combined with a comprehensive landscape strategy - would help integrate the development into the landscape. The Development would also be generally consistent with the scale and pattern of residential land uses to the north and south of the Site and would not be a prominent or uncharacteristic feature in the wider landscape.
- 9.197 For Visual Receptor Group 1: Residents and visitors of exemplar phase development to north of the Site and Receptor Group 2: Residents of Exemplar phase development to the south of the Site, the visual effects would be **low magnitude** and **slight neutral**. Development will be seen at short-distance and will alter existing views of arable fields. However, the Development will be partially screened by retained and enhanced boundary vegetation. Furthermore, views of new housing will be entirely consistent with the existing settlement context and there will be no loss of views across the wider countryside beyond the Site.
- 9.198 It is acknowledged that from Wintergreen Fields, effects would be **medium magnitude** and **moderate adverse** as a consequence of particularly open views / low boundary hedgerow and disruption of views to the landmark church tower.
- 9.199 For Receptor Group 3: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south-east / south / south-west of the Site, between the Site, Calversfield and Bicester the permanent visual effects would be **negligible magnitude** and **minimal neutral**. The Development will not generally be visible, and where there are more open views of new housing will be consistent with the existing settlement context / not a prominent feature in view.

- 9.200 For Receptor Group 4: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the east / north-east of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and wooded ridge, the permanent visual effects would be **low magnitude** and **slight adverse**. The Development will be visible at short to middle-distance, and this will be perceived as extending the existing settlement area further north-west, out into the existing countryside. However, the proposed green infrastructure along the western boundary will be beneficial, helping integrate the Development into the landscape. The retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site – including the woodland along the southern edge – will help integrate the Development into the landscape and will ensure there is a 'well treed' backdrop to the Development.
- 9.201 It is acknowledged that for the limited area of PRoW 148/7, the scale of effect would be would be **medium magnitude** and **moderate adverse** as a consequence of particularly open / short range views.
- 9.202 For the B4100 Banbury Road, the permanent effects would be **low magnitude** and **slight neutral**. From key locations along this route there would be views towards the Site, in particular from where the B4100 adjoins the Site's eastern parcel / around St Laurence Church, however, the Development will not fundamentally change the visual character / context of this route; and in all views the Development will either be partially screened and/or seen in the context of existing housing.
- 9.203 The mitigation of landscape and visual impacts has been addressed from an early stage in the design process, and consideration of the potential impacts of the Development has been an important part of the development of the proposals and associated landscape works. Key design principles include the careful consideration of the extent of development and building heights; retention and enhancement of woodland and hedgerows; and creation of green corridors and open space.
- 9.204 It is considered that the implementation of these mitigation measures would not alter the overall assessment findings. The significance of effects for landscape and visual receptors would therefore remain as assessed.
- 9.205 There will be greater landscape and visual effects when considering the Development in combination with the wider Bicester Eco Town allocation, with the cumulative schemes affecting much larger tract of the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands and being a more visually prominent in views from within and around the northern edge of Bicester. However, it is considered that this is an inevitable consequence of the proposed allocation, and sensitive design (including comprehensive landscape strategy) will ensure that new housing can be well

integrated into the landscape.

9.206 Table 9.11 contains a summary of the likely significant effects of the Development.

Table 9.11: Table of Significance – Landscape and Visual Effects

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/Temporary)	Significance (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*							Residual Effects (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)	
				I	UK	E	R	C	B	L		
Effects on landscape character – within site and immediate surroundings	Temporary and Permanent	Moderate-Slight Adverse	Embedded in design								X	Moderate-Slight Adverse
Effects on landscape character – north-west of site up to 0.5km	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Adverse	Embedded in design								X	Slight Adverse
Effects on landscape character – north-west of site between 0.5 – 1km	Temporary and Permanent	Minimal Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Minimal Neutral
Effects on landscape character elsewhere within the study area	Temporary and Permanent	Minimal Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Minimal Neutral
Effects on Visual Receptor Group 1: Residents and visitors of exemplar phase development to north of the Site	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Slight Neutral
Effects on Receptor Group 2: Residents of Exemplar phase development to the south of the Site	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Slight Neutral
<i>Effects on Wintergreen Fields</i>		<i>Moderate Adverse</i>										<i>Moderate Adverse</i>
Receptor Group 3: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south-east / south / south-west of the Site, between the Site, Calversfield and Bicester	Temporary and Permanent	Minimal Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Minimal Neutral
Receptor Group 4: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the east / north-east of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and wooded ridge	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Adverse	Embedded in design								X	Slight Adverse
<i>Effects on PRow 148/7</i>		<i>Moderate Adverse</i>										<i>Moderate Adverse</i>
Visual effects on key routes: B4100 Banbury Road	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Neutral	Embedded in design								X	Slight Neutral
Cumulative Effects												

Effects on landscape character within study area	Temporary and Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Embedded in design							X	Moderate Adverse
Receptor Group 3: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the south-east / south / south-west of the Site, between the Site, Calversfield and Bicester	Temporary and Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Embedded in design							X	Moderate Adverse
Receptor Group 4: Recreational users and motorists within the countryside to the east / north-east of the Site, between the Site, Bucknell and wooded ridge	Temporary and Permanent	Major-moderate Adverse	Embedded in design							X	Major-moderate Adverse
Visual effects on key routes: B4100 Banbury Road	Temporary and Permanent	Slight Neutral	Embedded in design							X	Slight Neutral

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; E = England; R = Regional; C = County; B = Borough; L = Local

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