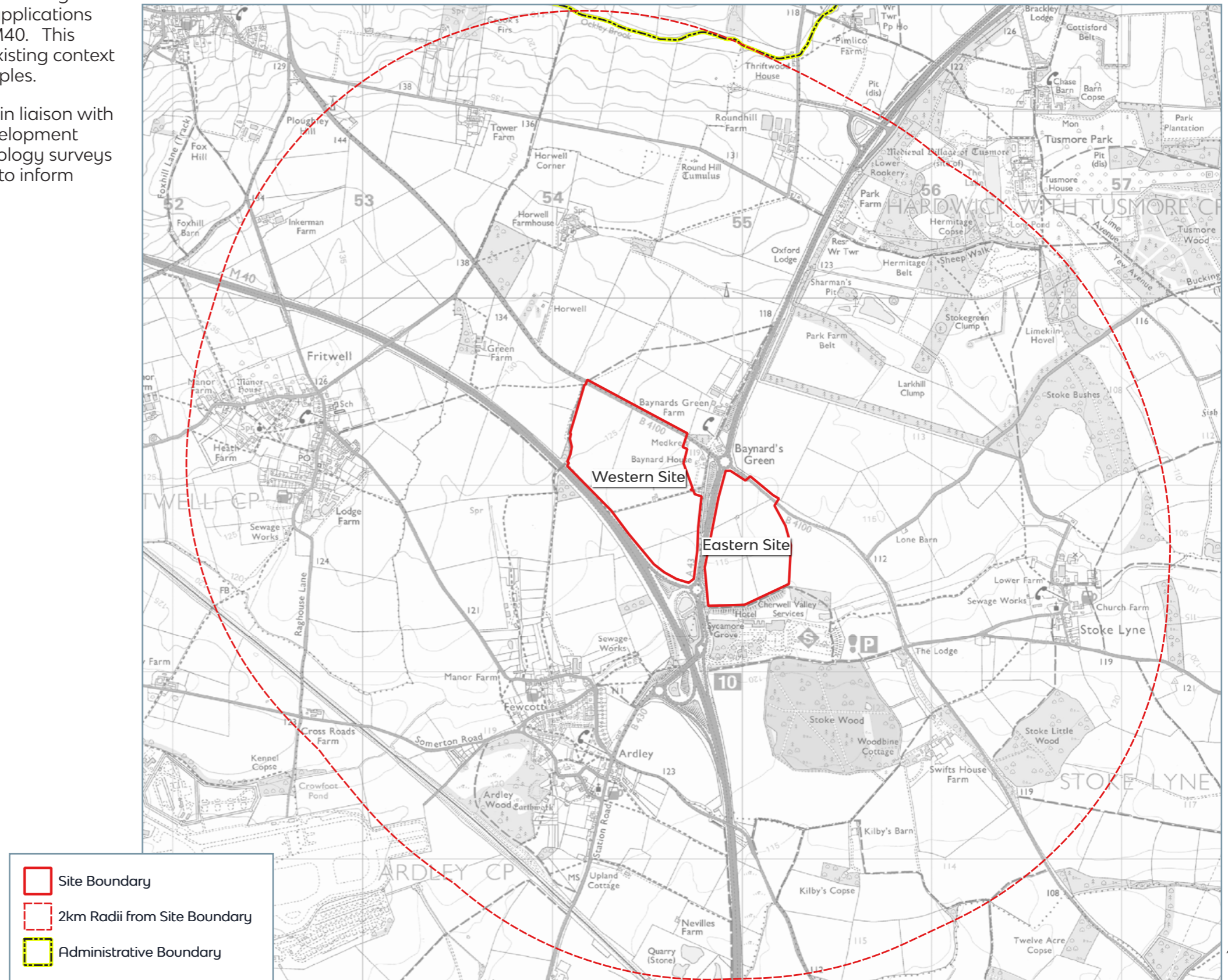


# 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Tyler Grange has prepared this Appendix to the Design Report in support of Albion Land's planning applications for the development of Land at Junction 10, M40. This Appendix includes an appraisal of the sites existing context and describes the design concepts and principles.
- 1.2 The following Appendix has been developed in liaison with Cornish Architects who has prepared the development proposals for the Site. Arbouricultural and Ecology surveys undertaken by Tyler Grange have been used to inform development proposals.

**Plan 1: Site Location**



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## 2: Landscape Setting

2.1 The Site is formed of a number of hedgerow bound, arable fields that extend to approximately 68ha in area. Large scale arable fields are also situated to the east and west of both Site's with areas of woodland located to the south of the Eastern Site associated with Cherwell Valley Services. A PRow traverses the Western Site, no such access is possible for the Eastern Site although a PRow does follow it's southern boundary. A number of residential properties are located on land between the Site and junction of the A43 and B4100 adjacent to the Site although built form within it is limited to a single agricultural building. The Site is bound by the B4100, a single carriageway road which runs between Bicester and Banbury to the north and bisected by the A43 running north-south and the M40 is situated to the southwest.

Plan 2: Landscape Setting

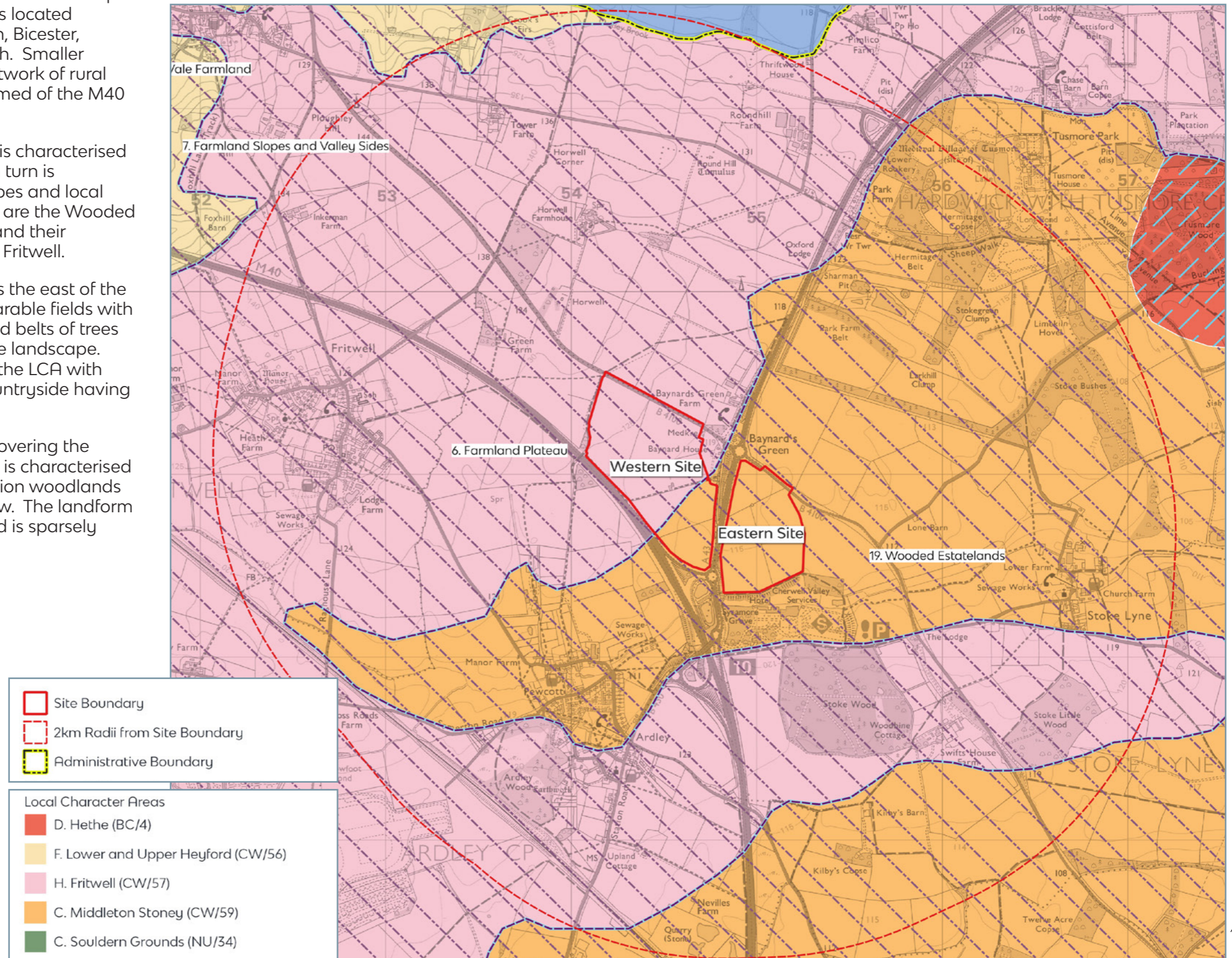


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### 3: Landscape Character

- 3.1 Oxfordshire supports a variety of habitats and landscapes. The area of Oxfordshire in which the Site is located is sparsely settled, the largest conurbation, Bicester, is situated approximately 5km to the south. Smaller settlements are linked by an extensive network of rural roads with the strategic road network formed of the M40 motorway and A43 also a feature.
- 3.2 Regionally, this part of North Oxfordshire is characterised by the Cotswolds character area which in turn is subdivided into a number of character types and local landscape areas. Of relevance to the Site are the Wooded Estatelands and Farmland Plateau LCTs and their respective LCAs of Middleton Stoney and Fritwell.
- 3.3 Middleton Stoney LCA is situated towards the east of the Cotswolds and is characterised by large arable fields with woodlands associated with parklands and belts of trees and hedgerows also strong features of the landscape. There is a rolling landform present within the LCA with small settlements present in the wider countryside having a strong vernacular.
- 3.4 Fritwell LCA is situated with the plateau covering the elevated, northern part of the county and is characterised by large arable fields and areas of plantation woodlands while hedgerows are generally clipped low. The landform is level or gently rolling within the LCA and is sparsely settled.

**Plan 3: Landscape Character**

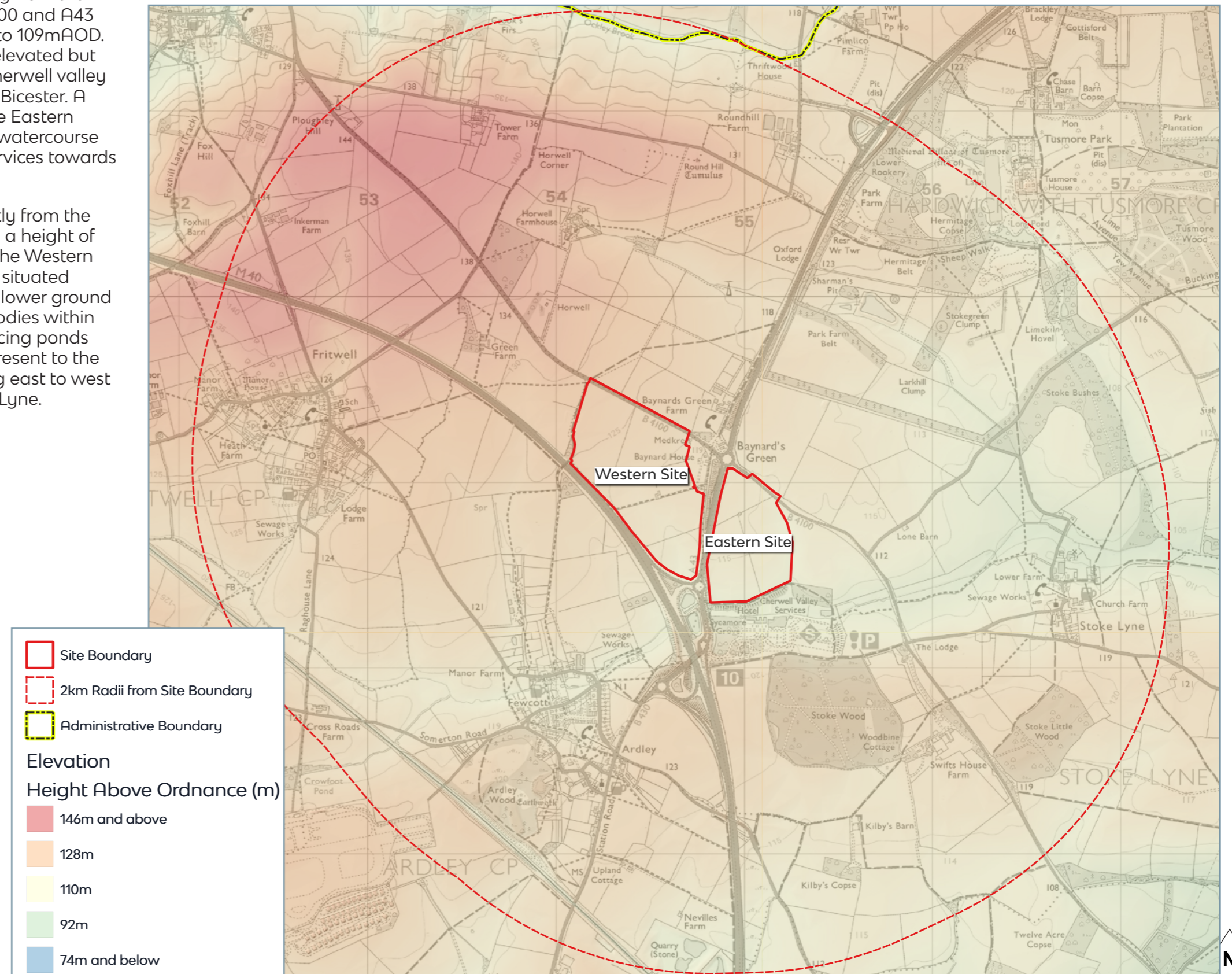


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## 4: Topography

- 4.1 The topography of the Eastern Site falls gently from the northwest corner near the junction of the B4100 and A43 to the south east, from a height of 116mAOD to 109mAOD. The wider setting of the Eastern Site is of an elevated but broad, even plateau situated between the Cherwell valley to the west and lower ground that surrounds Bicester. A small water body is present in the north of the Eastern Site located within a hedgerow, with a small watercourse running east to west from Cherwell Valley Services towards Stoke Lyne outwith the Site boundary.
- 4.2 The topography of the Western Site falls gently from the northwest corner towards the southeast from a height of 128mAOD to 111mAOD. The wider setting of the Western Site is of an elevated but broad even plateau situated between the Cherwell valley to the west and lower ground that surrounds Bicester. There are no water bodies within the Western Site however a number of balancing ponds associated with Junction 10 of the M40 are present to the south along with a small watercourse running east to west from Cherwell Valley Services towards Stoke Lyne.

Plan 4: Topography



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## 5: Visual

- 5.1 The Site is located on an elevated plateau situated between the Cherwell Valley to the northwest and the lower and flatter landscape situated to the north of Bicester, as such there are few elevated positions to experience the Site.
- 5.2 Areas of woodland associated with Cherwell Services merge with Stoke Wood and Stoke Little Wood to limit many views from the south and southeast. Similarly, the belts of woodland delineating Tusmore Park will curtail many views towards the Site from the north and northeast.
- 5.3 Views from the east will be reduced by small pockets of tree cover and linear woodlands present between Stoke Lyne and the Site. The network of PRoW extending across the Site towards Tusmore Park in the north and Ardley with Fewcott and Fritwell in the south and west will experience a range of views however the majority will contain hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland that will serve to filter views towards the Site. Views from residential properties adjacent to the Site will be filtered by tree cover located at the property boundary or with gardens.
- 5.4 Roadside treebelts associated with the B4100 and A43 and the linear woodlands situated to the west of the M40 will provide visual screening from the west of the Site.

View towards the Site from the east



View towards the Site from the west



View towards the Site from the southeast



## 6: Opportunities and Constraints

6.1 The following text set out a number of local environmental sensitivities and landscape and visual considerations within the Site that informed the evolution of the proposals and illustrated in the plan opposite.

### Opportunities

- Retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation to assist the integration of the Development in the landscape.
- Use of locally endemic tree and shrub species in proposed planting to increase opportunities for wildlife.
- Potential to improve GI connections to the wider landscape by providing green corridors through and around the Site.
- Potential to associate Development with road infrastructure to facilitate screen planting along more sensitive open aspects of the Site and consolidate built form within Site.
- Increase the biodiversity value of internal landscapes through the use of locally appropriate meadow species.

### Constraints

- Views from settlements and PRoW likely to be altered by proposals appearing above existing tree lines and hedgerows.
- Loss of hedgerows and trees within the Site which are characteristic of the local area will need to be kept to a minimum
- Alignment of PRoW in the Western Site will require a sensitive diversion through or around the Site.
- The movement of wildlife across the Site, such as bats will need to be protected and wherever possible enhanced.

Plan 5: Opportunities and Constraints Plan



## 7: Landscape Strategy

- 7.1 The indicative landscape strategy has been carefully considered to mitigate potential landscape and visual impacts identified during the design development process. It has also been designed to create a pleasant working environment and appropriate setting.
- 7.2 Design principles that will be applied at the detailed design stage will include:
- Retention of the majority of the good quality trees present along the boundaries of the Site to provide containment and visual screening.
  - Retention of the existing hedgerows along the M40, A43 and B4100 road corridors.
  - Enhancement of hedgerows to provide new thicker hedgerows.
  - Removal of any trees identified in the arboricultural report as dead, dying or dangerous and replacement with trees of a similar species such as beech or oak.
  - Establishment of a native woodland of between 15 to 20m wide along the eastern boundary of the Site to connect the existing woodland blocks and provide containment and visual screening for the Development.
  - Provide new hedgerows up to 2m wide with hedgerow trees running north south to separate the diverted PRow from the Development Site.
  - All planting will be locally native species or species that reflect the local landscape character.
- 7.3 The indicative landscape strategy will follow the principles identified above and be formed around the retained landscape features. These will be enhanced and supported by new landscape elements comprising of the landscape character areas described over the following pages.:

**Plan 6: Indicative Landscape Strategy Plan**



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## 8: Landscape Principles and Guidance

### Retention, protection and enhancing existing vegetation and habitats.

- 8.1 An arboricultural survey of the existing trees and hedgerow on site was carried out by Tyler Grange. Drawing references 14047/P03, sheets 1 – 8 inclusive with supporting information 14047\_TSS01 are included as part of this application.
- 8.2 The ecological and landscape features identified to be maintained, protected and enhanced within both Site's are hedgerows and trees. These features will maintained, protected and enhanced to achieve the following objective:  
*To ensure that a thriving and diverse hedgerow and tree infrastructure is retained, and successfully managed in order to maximise biodiversity, landscape and recreational values within the Site.*
- 8.3 During construction all retained hedgerow habitat and associated field perimeter trees will be suitably protected from mechanical damage and compression of the root area, for example by using high visibility fencing erected approximately 2m from the outside edge of retained hedgerows. All retained trees will be protected by barriers or ground protection around the calculated RPA or other defined constraints as detailed by the separate Arboricultural Assessment or the relevant section of BS5837 (2012) – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

### Hedgerows:

- 8.4 All retained hedgerow sections (East site; H12, H13, H16 and H17, West Site; H1, H2, H3, H4, H8 and H9) are to be protected throughout the construction phase, with only the predetermined sections removed or breached as illustrated in the tree removal plan.
- 8.5 The approach taken for hedgerows is to maintain and enhance their nature conservation and landscape value through the management of their height, form and species composition, in order to safeguard and enhance ecological and landscape value.
- 8.6 Where a hedge is open or gappy, through loss of shrubs or erosion, it will be necessary to replant gaps with new plants. Gapping up species should replicate a mix of appropriate existing native hedge species that can be found within the locality.

### Existing trees

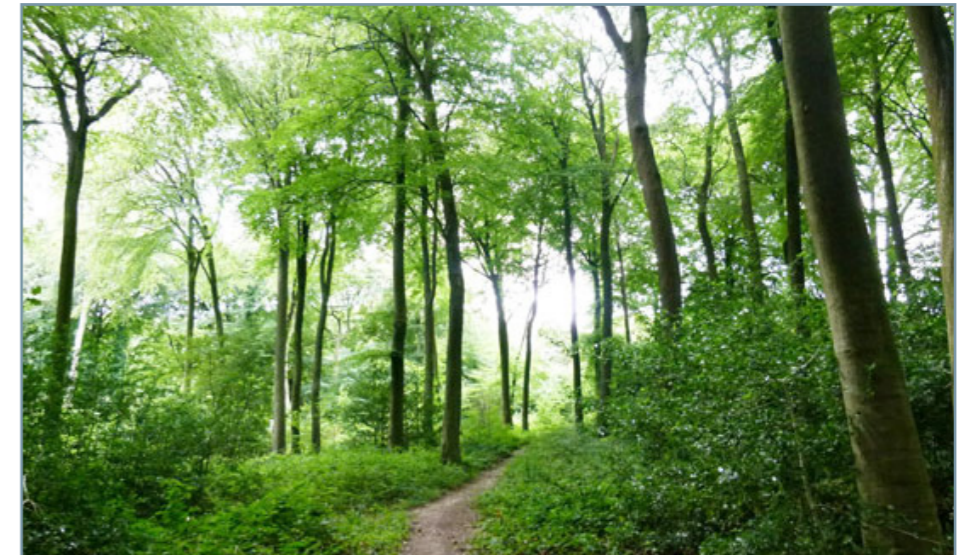
- 8.7 All retained trees (East Site; T9 and West Site; T1, T3, T4T7 and T8 in addition to tree groups G3 and G6) are to be protected throughout the construction phase, with only the predetermined trees removed as illustrated in the tree removal plan. All existing trees will be protected by appropriate fencing to protect their Root Protection Area (RPA) during construction works. Within the RPA the existing ground level will be maintained undisturbed and that no temporary soil or rubbish heaps are formed, nor materials stored and that no services are laid.
- 8.8 An inspection of the existing trees will determine any general work that may need to be undertaken, such as pruning or removal of dead wood. Tree works should follow best practice procedures as set out in BS 3998:2010 Tree works - Recommendations.



## 9: Landscape Character Areas:

### Semi natural woodland screen planting

- 9.1 Description – a tree and shrub mix with a substantial content of native species such as oak and beech found in the local landscape character areas. This includes nurse and climax species, and species which will grow to sufficient height to fulfil a screening function (particularly of larger vehicles and lower building elevations) and include sufficient variety to provide a habitat value. Trees will be planted in a random mix or in non-geometrical groupings. Where possible semi natural woodland planting will form extensions of existing woodland blocks and belts as this will increase their value as habitat corridors.



### Wet woodland/scrub

- 9.2 Description – a shrub/tree mix with a substantial content of native species found in the damper local landscape character areas and tending to be associated with the River Meadowlands. This includes species which tolerate occasional flooding and may need to be maintained to prevent growth to tree size and to retain good lower storey growth such as white willow. Wet woodland/scrub planting occurs near SUDS attenuation ponds or in areas requiring assisted drainage. Planting will provide a good habitat value by increasing diversity in plant species in and around the attenuation ponds, although it can also fulfil low level screening and amenity value functions. Wet woodland/scrub will be planted in a random mix or in non-geometrical groupings.



### Native Hedgerow planting

- 9.3 Description – hedge planting comprises locally prevalent hedge species which are substantial native in composition such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle. It will undergo regular maintenance, promoting dense growth at all levels. Hedgerow planting will be located on highway boundaries. Often hedges bound agricultural fields and have an important wildlife linkage function. They sometimes also act as a low level visual screen of vehicles and headlights whilst allowing some views to the surrounding countryside.



## 9: Landscape Character Areas:

### Specimen tree planting

- 9.4 Description – specimen tree planting comprises single, well shaped trees planted in feathered or standard form with the intention of establishing early effect or individual trees in the landscape. They are located in association with hedge planting to reflect the existing hedgerow trees. They are generally planted for an amenity purpose or to reflect the existing local landscape character with species including oak and beech.



### Neutral grassland

- 9.5 Description – neutral grassland comprises meadow grass and herbaceous species and has a good habitat value. It reflects the species found in the local landscape and requires a mowing regime which encourages low fertility and floristic diversity. Areas will be seeded with appropriate mixes to develop a sward which is visually attractive and easy to maintain. The vegetation type is used to create areas of open space associated with the Development to allow views across the Site, and occasionally for visibility reasons. The planting will be situated in conjunction with amenity grass verges and sometimes with specimen trees.



### Amenity grassland

- 9.6 Description – amenity grassland comprises low / moderate diversity dominated by perennial rye species and requiring a mowing regime which encourages a range of sward lengths. Areas will be seeded with appropriate mixes to develop a sward which is visually attractive and easy to maintain. The vegetation type is used to create areas of open space associated with the Development to allow views across the Site, and occasionally for visibility reasons. The planting will be situated in conjunction with neutral grassland and sometimes with specimen trees.

