

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

WATER EATON LANE, KIDLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE

November 2022

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landscape

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Hill Residential Ltd.

November 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

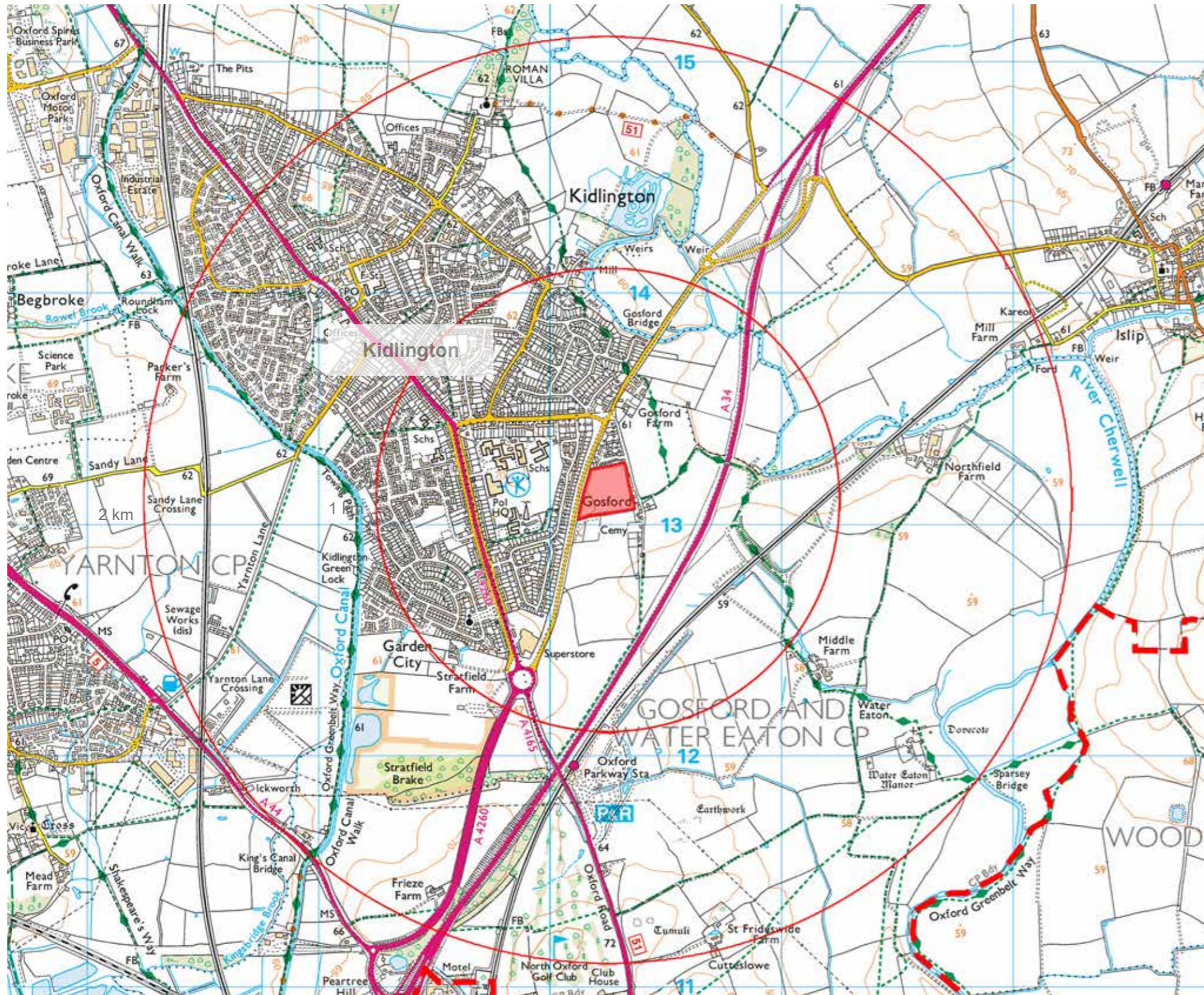
- 1.1.1 GUARDA has been commissioned by Hill Residential Ltd. to provide a Landscape and Visual Appraisal in relation to a Full application for the erection of 96 new residential dwellings on land off Water Eaton Lane, Kidlington, Oxfordshire - the Site. This document sets out the baseline situation with regards to the Site and the proposed development.
- 1.1.2 This report reviews the existing and emerging planning policy relevant to landscape and visual amenity. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken which identifies the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. This has been achieved through the following process:
- Review existing and emerging planning policy relevant to landscape;
 - Summarise the characteristics of the landscape surrounding the Site with reference to existing studies;
 - Identify and assess the condition of landscape elements within the Site;
 - Identify the visual envelope from which the Site and any future development may be seen;
 - Make recommendations to minimise landscape and visual effects, and where appropriate provide positive enhancement; and
 - Identify effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

1.2 SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The description of the landscape at Water Eaton Lane, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, and the surrounding landscape character and visibility are based on a period of desk study and field survey carried out in July and August 2022 by a chartered landscape architect. The weather was clear and visibility was good.
- 1.2.2 This Landscape Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with the guidance contained within the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002) and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) and is proportionate to the type and scale of the development.
- 1.2.3 Within the report a clear distinction is made between landscape character and visual amenity:
- Landscape Character: the physical characteristics or elements of the landscape, which together establish the character of the area e.g. geology, topography, hydrology, land cover, land use, vegetation and settlement pattern i.e. the landscape as a resource; and,
 - Visual Amenity: the area from which the site and the development is likely to be visible, and the extent or degree of its visibility within the landscape to people.
- 1.2.4 The methodology used is based on the GUARDA Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Methodology which is available if required.

1.3 STUDY AREA

- 1.3.1 The Site is situated on the south eastern edge of the village of Kidlington in Oxfordshire and is located to the west of Water Eaton Lane, and to the east of Bicester Road. The Site is located in the authority area of Cherwell District Council and, is allocated for development in the Local Plan Partial Review as site PR7a – Land at South East Kidlington. The boundary of the Site and the extent of the study area is shown on **Figure 1: Study Area and Location Plan**.
- 1.3.2 The defined study area is centered on the Site and is based on the visual envelope of the site and the proposed development i.e. the area from which views of the development may be visible, informed by topographical maps and field survey undertaken on 11 July 2022.



KEY

- Site Boundary
- District Boundaries

Study Area

1 km from Site

2 km from Site



Location within Oxfordshire

August 2022
Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3

Ordnance Survey data © Crown



Figure 1. Study Area and Location Plan

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1.1 National Government have identified areas of landscape importance and developed policies and recommendations that relate to the protection of the built and natural environment.
- 2.1.2 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) was formally adopted on the 20th July 2015 and contains strategic planning policies for development and the use of land.

2.2 NATIONAL POLICY

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018 (and last updated 20 July 2021) and sets out the Government's planning policies for England.
- 2.2.2 The current NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through plan-making and decision-taking. The NPPF outlines three mutually dependent dimensions or roles for the planning system:
- *Economic - building a strong economy and supporting growth;*
 - *Social - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and creating a high quality built environment; and*
 - *Environmental - protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.* “
- 2.2.3 The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities in different areas. In terms of plan-making all planning authorities should therefore positively seek opportunities to meet development needs in their areas.
- 2.2.4 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2.5 The NPPF sets out seventeen planning objectives that should underpin all plan-making and decision-taking. These include inter alia seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard

of amenity for all existing and future occupants; conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, including allocating land of lesser environmental value; making effective use of land including promoting mixed use development; and meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

- 2.2.6 In terms of delivering sustainable development, key objectives relevant to this proposal include:

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places: (para 126-130)

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

- 2.2.7 In addition to the above, new Paragraph 131 states:

“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to

climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined (Unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate), that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (para 174-178).

A number of planning policies associated with conserving and enhancing the natural environment, relevant to this proposal include:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.*

2.2.8 On Habitats and biodiversity: (para179-182), a number of planning policies associated with protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, relevant to this proposal include:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

2.3 DISTRICT POLICY

Cherwell local plan

2.3.1 The Site falls within the Cherwell District Council local planning authority administrative boundary. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), provides a statement of land use policies and proposals for the District.

2.3.2 Policies within the Local Plan which are relevant to landscape include:

2.3.3 Policy PSD 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council will always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (or other part of the statutory Development Plan) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

2.3.4 Policy ESD 6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood risk and demonstrate that:

- There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year storm event with an allowance for climate change (the design storm event)*
- Developments will not flood from surface water up to and including the design storm event or any surface water flooding beyond the 1 in 30 year storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.*

Development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water

will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.

2.3.5 Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS will require the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as LLFA and SuDS Approval Body, and proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features.

2.3.6 Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:

- In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources*
- The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District*
- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted.*
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity*

- *Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity*
- *Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably*
- *A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long term suitable management.*

2.3.7 Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

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.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside*
- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography*
- *Be inconsistent with local character*
- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity*
- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate.

2.3.8 Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential

2.3.9 Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:

- *Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16)*
- *Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling,*

and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond

- *All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.*

2.3.10 Section C - Policies for Cherwell's Places (C.5 Our Villages and Rural Areas)

2.3.11 In 'Meeting the Challenge of Developing a Sustainable Economy in the Villages and Rural Areas' the Local Plan states:

Most of rural Cherwell's economically active residents commute to their workplaces, and less than a quarter of them work within 5km of home. There are limited employment opportunities in Cherwell's villages. Kidlington is the exception to this pattern. In recent years it has developed its high technology, office and airport offerings, positioning itself to absorb the potential overflow from Oxford University's spin off businesses. Kidlington is well connected with easily accessible business premises, and is well positioned to continue to provide for overflow needs from Oxford.

The key economic issues facing the villages and rural areas are:

- *The need to support the economic role of Kidlington.*
- *The need to support the economic role of Kidlington.*

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review

2.3.12 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need was adopted on 7 September 2020, effectively as a supplement or addendum to the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, and forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the district.

2.3.13 The Site forms the northern part of the "land south east of Kidlington" identified for development within the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review (LPPR), as one of six strategic housing sites. This effectively means that the Site has been removed from the Green Belt and the principle of development on the Site is accepted.

PR7a Land South East of Kidlington Development Brief (June 2022)

2.3.14 . A comprehensive development brief, PR7a Land South East of Kidlington Development Brief (June 2022) has been prepared jointly between Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, landowners and key stakeholders as guidance for future planning applications.

2.3.15 The Development Brief includes a review of the site's context including the LPPR strategic vision and spatial strategy and the site specific development constraints and opportunities. Based on this analysis it goes on to provide a site specific vision and comprehensive development principles addressing land use, character, layout, green infrastructure, movement, utilities, healthy place making and sustainable design.

2.3.16 Policy PR7a of the LPPR sets out the policy requirements for the site which include:

- Residential development
 - 430 net dwellings on 21 hectares of land
 - 50% affordable housing
- An extension to Kidlington Cemetery on 0.7 hectares of land within the developable area.
- 11 hectares of land to provide formal sports facilities for the development and for the wider community and green infrastructure within the Green Belt.
- Provision for required emergency services infrastructure.
- Play areas and allotments within the developable area.
- Contributions towards community facilities.

2.3.17 The Development Framework plan (refer to inset map) reflects the vision and the requirements of Policy PR7a.

2.3.18 Detailed design requirements which underpin the delivery of this development framework are set out in the Chapter 6 and are summarised below:

Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

2.3.19 The development is to comply with and where possible exceed the local and national standards for sustainable development. This includes mitigating and adapting to climate change, increasing local resource efficiency, minimising carbon emissions, promoting decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy and ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased.

Healthy Place Shaping

2.3.20 Healthy place shaping is a strategic priority for both Oxfordshire's Health & Wellbeing Board and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board) which is using the Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal to embed healthy place shaping in the planning process, especially in light of emerging evidence from local and national experience of Healthy New Towns (including the initiatives at Barton Park and Bicester Healthy New Towns) and the significant positive impact on health and well-being. This is reflected in the guiding principles of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

Character and Layout

2.3.21 The site is to be developed as an extension of Kidlington with frontage to Bicester Road and connectivity with surrounding streets and footpaths. Retained Green Belt in the south of the site will be enhanced and will include a new outdoor sports facility, habitat and informal parkland. Green corridors 'greenways' will be created running north-south and east-west through the site linking characterful spaces for play and recreation and providing connected walking, cycling and wheelchair user links.

Green Infrastructure

2.3.22 In line with Policy PR7a the site will retain and enhance a significant area of green infrastructure in the southern part of the site. In addition, the development will provide a green infrastructure network with connected wildlife corridors within the developable area. Together these and other features will form a multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network across the whole development site and will provide a range of ecosystem services.

2.3.23 Of importance to this appraisal is the 'Maintenance and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows' and 'Retention of existing drainage features and new sustainable drainage features'

2.4 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

2.4.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) give further guidance on the detail of the Council's development plan and provide further guidance on proposed development. Of particular relevance to this proposal is the Cherwell Residential Design Guide (2018).

Cherwell Residential Design Guide (2018)

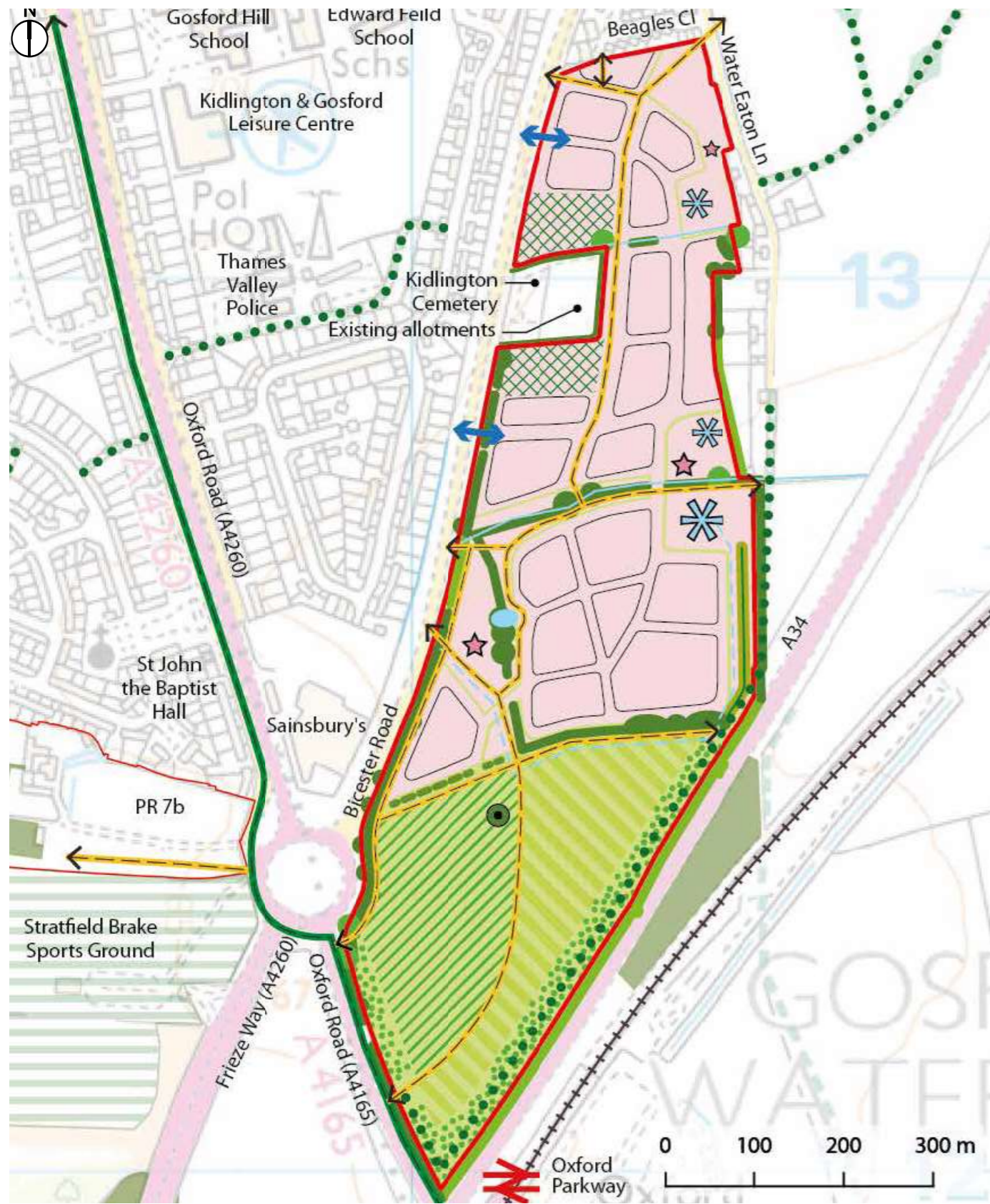
2.4.2 The Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD is a technical guide which provides masterplanning and architectural design guidance, clarity and advice on the design standards expected from residential development in Cherwell.

2.4.3 In 'Chapter 2: Cherwell's Special Character', the SPD states that new development in Cherwell should promote:

- *Development informed by an understanding of the historic evolution and character of the District*
- *The creation of new places which fit well with the pattern and character of local towns and villages*
- *Development which is locally distinctive and reinforces the different characters of the north and south of the District*
- *Development which is located appropriately in response to landscape and topography*
- *Use of appropriate local materials and detailing (see also chapter 7)*
- *Or a truly innovative approach to architecture and design*

2.4.4 In 'Chapter 3: Responding to the Site and it's Context', the SPD states that new development in Cherwell should promote:

- *Meaningful analysis which is appropriate to the stage and nature of the project and positively informs the project brief and design process*



- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary of adjoining sites
- Cherwell Local Plan**
Partial Review allocations
- Residential
- New public green space/park
- Development brief proposals and existing features**
- Proposed green spaces within developable area
- Informal public parkland, habitat creation and woodland planting
- Area for expansion of cemetery and allotments
- Woodland planting and habitat creation
- Zone to contain formal sports facilities
- Sports pavilion and car park (indicative location)
- Priority Habitat Inventory
- Moderate quality hedgerows and trees
- Other hedgerows and trees
- New hedgerows
- Indicative location for noise attenuation bund (to be confirmed through detailed assessment)
- Ditch retained and buffered by public open space, and integrated into site drainage
- Indicative SuDS feature
- Standing water
- Drainage attenuation features (indicative location)
- Play area (indicative location)
- ↔ Vehicular access*
- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Strategic cycle route
- New public walking and cycle routes

Fig. 1: Development framework

* subject to highway testing

Inset Plan of the Development Framework Plan.
PR7a Land South East of Kidlington Development Brief Draft for Consultation

- *Designs which are responsive to local conditions, which fit naturally with the landscape and settlement pattern and are distinctive to Cherwell*
 - *Engagement with the Council and local stakeholders during the analysis process*
- 2.4.5 In 'Chapter 4: Establishing the Structuring Principles', the SPD states that new development in Cherwell should promote:
- *A robust masterplan structure which is grounded in a solid understanding of the constraints and opportunities of the site and its setting*
 - *A clearly articulated vision for the character of the scheme to establish a locally distinctive place which sits comfortably with its surroundings*
 - *Connectivity between the masterplan and the surrounding settlement.*
 - *A land use mix which provides community focus, including public buildings, that directly responds to local needs and is in line with local planning policy*
 - *Continued engagement with the Council and local stakeholders as the masterplan is developed*
- 2.4.6 In 'Chapter 5: Streets and Spaces', the SPD states that new development in Cherwell should promote:
- *A connected and legible network of streets*
 - *Street design responsive to hierarchy, character and location*
 - *A movement network and street design which encourages walking and cycling over vehicle movements*
 - *Design of the street in three dimensions creating a comfortable sense of enclosure by buildings*
 - *Traffic calming integrated as part of the street layout and urban form*

- *Integrated design of all elements within the street including parking, bins, utilities, SuDS, trees and signage*
- 2.4.7 In 'Chapter 8: Innovation and Sustainability', the SPD states that new development in Cherwell should promote:
- *Consider sustainability objectives at the masterplan, plot and building scale*
 - *Incorporate innovation in a manner which reinforces the principles of good urban design*
 - *Create robust places which can adapt to future changes in the way we live and use technology*
 - *Create healthy buildings which provide a safe and comfortable environment for their inhabitants*

2.5 DESIGNATIONS

- 2.5.1 There are no statutory designations within the Site itself, however, there are a number of designations within the wider study area.

Statutory designations

- 2.5.2 Rushy Meadows Local Nature Reserve is situated approximately 2 km to the north west of the Site and is an area of wet meadows which supports a rich diversity of grassland flora and fauna. Rushy Meadows is also a designated SSSI (refer to Figure 2: Policy Constraints Plan).
- 2.5.3 The site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for several SSSI's, including Rushy Meadows SSSI to the north west; and Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI, Wolvercote Meadows SSSI, Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common and Green SSSI, to the south west (refer to Figure 2: Policy Constraints Plan).

Heritage Designations

- 2.5.4 There are no Listed buildings within the Site, however, there are a number of Grade II and Grade II* Listed Buildings within the wider

study area especially within the Kidlington Conservation Areas to the north west of the site.

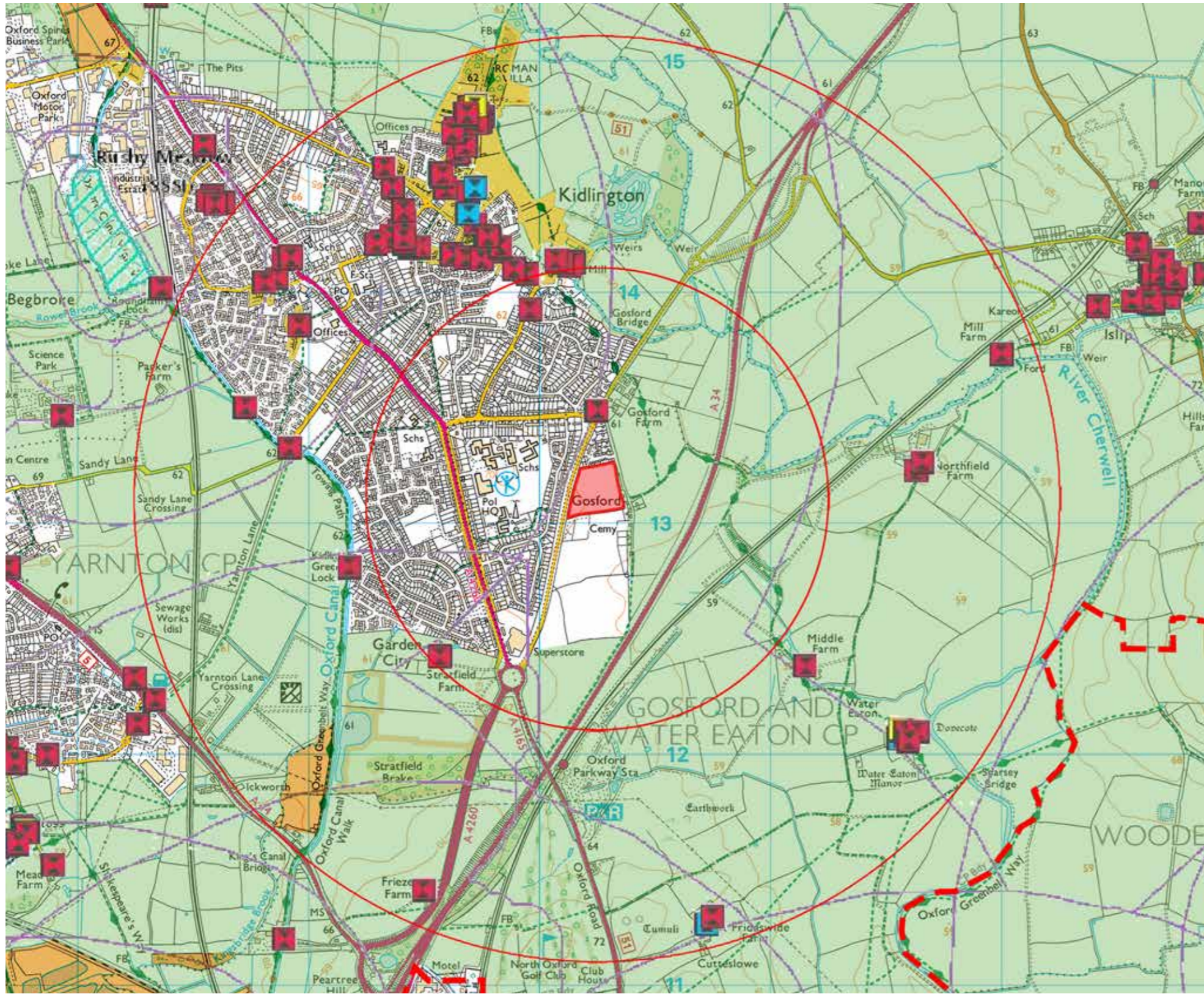
- 2.5.5 There are six conservation areas within Kidlington, five of which lie within the study area, with the exception being Langford Lane Wharf (refer to Figure 2: Policy Constraints Plan). These include:
- Church Street (designated 1974)
 - High Street (designated 1991)
 - The Rookery (designated 1991)
 - Crown Road
 - Langford Lane Wharf
 - The Oxford Canal

Environmental Designations

- 2.5.6 There are several areas of Deciduous Woodland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, and Lowland Meadows identified in the Priority Habitat Inventory by Natural England within the study area. There are no Priority Habitats within the Site itself (refer to Figure 3: Habitats Plan).

Public Rights of Way

- 2.5.7 There are several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the vicinity of the Site and a number in the wider landscape (**refer to Figure 7. Visual Analysis**). Those in close proximity to the Site are:
- PROW BR 229/5/10 (Bridleway) to the east of the Site;
 - PROW FP 229/4/30 (Footpath) to the south of the Site;
 - PROW FP 229/14/10 (Footpath) to the west of the Site; and
 - PROW FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way) to the east of Site.
- 2.5.8 The Oxford Green Belt Way is a 50 mile circular route through the Oxford Green Belt surrounding the city of Oxford.



KEY

- The Site
- District Boundaries

Statutory Designations

- SSSI Impact Zone
- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Local Nature Reserve

Historic Designations

Listed buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

- Conservation Area

Non-statutory Designations

- Local Wildlife Site

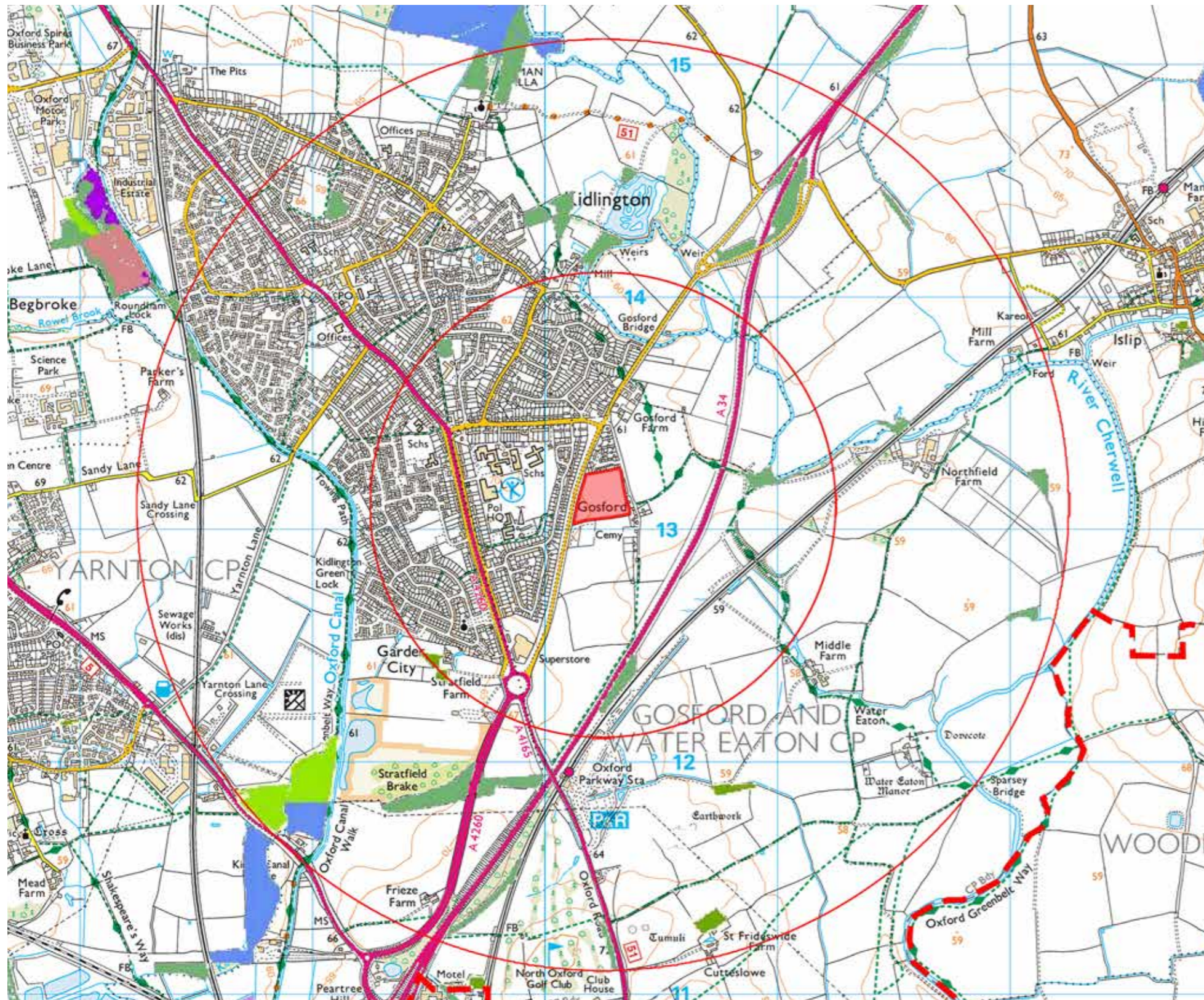
Information compiled from MAGIC and Ordnance Survey

August 2022
Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3



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Figure 2. Policy Constraints Plan



KEY

- Site Boundary
- District Boundaries

Priority BAP Habitats

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Deciduous Woodland
- Semi-improved grassland
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Meadows

August 2022
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Figure 3. Habitats Plan

3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1.1 The character of the landscape evolves over time as a result of the interaction of human activity and the natural environment (people and place). Attributes used to assess landscape character include:

- Physical – geology, landform, climate, soils, landcover;
- Cultural and Social – land use, settlement, enclosure and history; and,
- Aesthetics – colour, texture, pattern, form and perception.

3.1.2 The published landscape character types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the study area from National to District level are described below and are shown on “**Figure 4. Landscape Character**”.

3.2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.2.1 The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 108 - Upper Thames Clay Vales as defined by Natural England, which covers an extensive area of low-lying land extending from west of Swindon through to Aylesbury in the east, and completely encircles the Midvale Ridge (NCA 109).

3.2.2 Within this character area, the Site is located somewhat centrally and adjacent to the northern edge of the Midvale Range (NCA 109), just north of Oxford.

3.2.3 Key characteristics of the Upper Thames Clay Vales include:

- The large river system of the River Thames drains the Vales, their headwaters flowing off the Cotswolds to the north or emitting from the springline along the Chilterns and Downs escarpments. Where mineral extraction takes place, pits naturally fill with water, and limestone gravels from the Cotswolds give rise to marl formation. There are a high number of nationally important geological sites.
- Woodland cover is low at only about 3 per cent, but hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees are frequent. Watercourses are often marked by lines of willows and, particularly in the

Aylesbury Vale and Cotswold Water Park, native black poplar.

- Wet ground conditions and heavy clay soils discourage cultivation in many places, giving rise to livestock farming. Fields are regular and hedged, except near the Cotswolds, where there can be stone walls. The Vale of White Horse is made distinct by large arable fields, and there are relict orchards on the Greensand.
- Wetland habitat attracts regionally important numbers of birds including snipe, redshank, curlew and lapwing and wintering wildfowl such as pochard. Snake’s head fritillary thrives in the internationally important meadows. The area also supports typical farmland wildlife such as brown hare, bats, barn owl, tree sparrow and skylark.



NCA Area 111 - Northern Thames Basin
Natural England (2014) NCA Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin,

- Brick and tile from local clays, timber and thatch are traditional building materials across the area, combined with limestone near the Cotswolds and occasional clunch and wicert near the Chilterns.

3.3 COUNTY AND DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) 2004

3.3.1 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study was jointly commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, Natural England and The Earth Trust in 2004 and provides a county and district level landscape character assessments for Oxfordshire.

3.3.2 The Site is located within the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 17). This is a widely distributed landscape type and it is largely associated with clay vale landscapes adjacent to river systems. To the south of the county it borders parts of the rivers Thames, Cherwell, Thame and Ock. To the north, it lies adjacent to the rivers Evenlode and Cherwell.

3.3.3 The key landscape characteristics of this LCT are listed below:

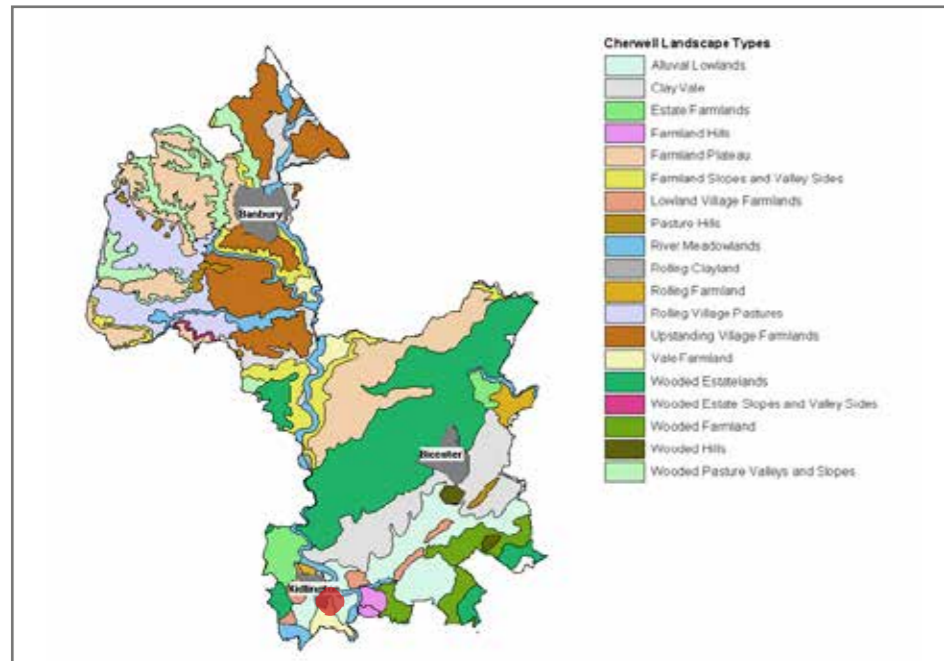
- A gently rolling landscape associated with clay soils
- Medium to large regularly-shaped arable fields and more localised smaller grass fields
- A well-defined hedgerow pattern with characteristic hedgerow trees
- Occasional ditches and minor streams bordered by crack willows and ash
- A nucleated pattern of small, compact villages

3.3.4 The assessment describes this area as:

“a vale landscape defined by regularly-shaped, arable fields enclosed by hawthorn hedges and hedgerow trees. A nucleated settlement pattern is also a characteristic feature of the landscape type.”

3.3.5 On 'Land Use and Vegetation' the assessment notes: "This landscape is dominated by intensive arable farming, although there is some semi-improved grassland around villages and adjacent to watercourses. Woodland is not a prominent feature, and is largely confined to a few discrete small plantations around Berrick Salome and Kingham. Linear belts of crack willow, poplar and ash border some ditches and streams throughout the landscape type. Watercourse trees are a notable feature along roadside ditches, particularly around Langford Brook and Berrick Salome."

3.3.6 On 'Cultural Pattern' the assessment notes: "The field pattern is characterised by medium to large-sized, regularly-shaped arable fields, enclosed by a well-defined pattern of hawthorn and elm hedges. The latter tend to be taller where they border roads. Grass fields are generally smaller in size. Some roadside hedges are species-rich with dogwood, wild privet, field maple and willow."



Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, 2004
Cherwell Landscape Character Types

Hedgerow trees are a prominent and unifying feature within many roadside hedges and include species such as oak, ash and crack willow. They are particularly significant around Berrick Salome, Newington and Marston. Combined with the watercourse trees, they impart an overall sense of enclosure and help to filter distant views. The settlement pattern is characterised by a nucleated pattern of well-defined, small villages and sparsely scattered farms. The vernacular character is prominent in the villages of Berrick Salome, Charney Basset and Kingham. However, building materials vary depending on the locality. In the Vale of White Horse, the main building materials are red bricks or timber-framed houses with red bricks with either thatched roofs or clay tiles. Limestone and stone tiles are more characteristic of the Cotswolds, whereas the warm brownish ironstone and slate roofs are more typically associated with villages such as Adderbury within The Northamptonshire Uplands."

3.3.7 On 'Biodiversity' the assessment notes: "An intensively farmed landscape dominated by arable fields enclosed by species-poor hedges and trees. There are few woodlands, but trees bordering watercourses are a characteristic feature. There is only a limited range of priority habitats including calcareous and marshy grassland and species-rich hedgerows with trees."

3.3.8 On 'Key Characteristics' (relating to biodiversity) the assessment notes:

- Predominantly low to low-medium bioscores/biobands.
- Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland and treelined watercourses. There are few priority habitats, except some calcareous and neutral marshy grassland, fen and species-rich hedgerows with trees.

3.3.9 On 'Forces for Change' the assessment notes:

- Although the hedgerow network is generally intact, in places it is becoming fragmented and intensively managed in areas dominated by arable farming. This is particularly apparent around the local character areas of Clifton Hampden, Peartree Hill, Farmoor and Charney Basset.

- The M40 corridor, in the Cherwell Valley to the east of Adderbury, intrudes into an otherwise rural and sparsely settled landscape.
- Landscapes on the fringes of settlements, such as Banbury and Oxford, are particularly vulnerable to change. The area between Oxford and Kidlington is criss-crossed by roads, with their associated junctions and services. There is also a significant impact from railways, hotels, golf courses and park and ride car parks. Even in relatively small settlements such as Adderbury, there is a business park and a recently established golf course. Their localised impact on the landscape has been mitigated to some extent by screen planting, although not always with native tree and shrub species characteristic of the area.
- There is a low to moderate impact from modern residential development within villages.
- Culham Laboratories have had a localised impact with their large complex of modern buildings and landscaped grounds. The dispersed nature of the buildings and ornamental planting has had an urbanizing effect on the rural setting.

3.3.10 The landscape strategy is as follows;

"Conserve and enhance the well-defined pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses. Minimise the impact of built development through appropriate location, choice of building materials, and the use of locally characteristic tree and shrub species".

3.3.11 Guidelines on the landscape strategy include:

- Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type.
- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and where appropriate, pollarding willows.

- *Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.*
- *Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.*
- *Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that are appropriate to this landscape type. This ranges from the red brick and clay tiles of the Vale, the limestones and stone tiles of the Cotswolds, through to the ironstones and slate tiles of the Northamptonshire Uplands.*

3.3.12 The key recommendations for this landscape character type are:

- *Safeguard and enhance landscape character of the hedgerow network and tree-lined watercourses.*
- *Ensure that all priority habitats are in favourable condition and management*



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KEY



The Site



District Boundaries

National Landscape Character

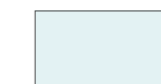
Natural England, National Character Area Profile 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales

County Landscape Character

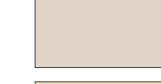
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study 2004: LCT 17 Vale Farmland

District Landscape Character

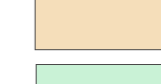
Cherwell District within Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study 2004



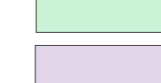
LCT 1 - Alluvial Lowlands



LCT 3 - Clay Vale



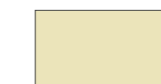
LCT 4 - Estate Farmlands



LCT 5 - Farmland Hills



LCT 8 - Lowland Village Farmlands



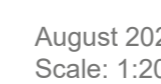
LCT 10 - River Meadowlands



LCT 12 - Rolling Farmland



LCT 17 - Vale Farmland



LCT 21 - Wooded Farmland

August 2022

Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3



Figure 4. Landscape Character

3.4 THE SITE AND LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.4.1 The Site is situated to the east of Bicester Road, and to the west of Water Eaton Lane, south of Beagles Close on the south eastern edge of Kidlington. It is contained by built form to the north at Beagles Close and a strong tree belt to the west, south and east along Bicester Road, the Kidlington cemetery and Water Eaton Lane respectively.
- 3.4.2 The Site is relatively flat and consists of a single parcel of land within a larger 32ha area which has been outlined as one of six strategic housing sites within the Cherwell Local Plan. The main features of the site are shown on “**Figure 5. Site Analysis**” and “**Figure 6. Site Views A-F**”.

Topography

- 3.4.3 The relatively square Site is situated on generally flat land which falls north eastwards with the low point in the north east corner. This area is within Flood Zone 2 and 3. The contours and direction of slope are shown on the Site Analysis plan (refer to Figure 5: Site Analysis Plan). The highest point of the Site is at the south western corner at approximately 65m AOD and falling to approximately 60m AOD at the north eastern corner.
- 3.4.4 In the wider landscape the topography generally falls north eastwards towards the River Cherwell. The landscape rises to the south east of the Site to approximately 100AOD at Woodeaton.

Landuse

- 3.4.5 The Site is currently accessed from Water Eaton Lane in the north eastern corner and is in agricultural use.
- 3.4.6 The site is agricultural land with hedgerows and tree belts bounding the western, eastern and southern boundaries. There are adjoining properties along the northern boundary and on the south eastern corner of the site.

3.4.7 Vegetation

- 3.4.8 With reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Landscape Planning Limited September 2022, there are strong tree belts on the west and eastern boundaries and Category A and Category B trees which provide good visual amenity. The vegetation contains mature Oak and Ash trees on the western, eastern and southern boundaries.
- 3.4.9 There is little vegetation to the northern boundary and south east corner of the Site except for vegetation with in rear gardens of properties on Beagles Close and Water Eaton Lane.
- 3.4.10 Along the extent of Bicester Road is a line of Poplar which are a visual feature in the wider landscape.

Landscape Character

- 3.4.11 The site is situated in the center of the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 17) as defined in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study 2004. A key characteristic of this landscape character type are regularly-shaped, arable fields enclosed by a well-defined hedgerow pattern with characteristic hawthorn hedgerows and hedgerow trees. In this respect, the Site is characteristic of this landscape character type.
- 3.4.12 The well defined vegetation to the boundaries of the Site provides enclosure from the wider landscape. Its visual relationship with the properties on Beagle Close and the powerline across the Site has an urbanising effect on the character of the Site.

Settlement Character

- 3.4.13 Kidlington is a large village to the north of Oxford. Historically, Kidlington developed as a number of small, scattered settlements and this pattern persisted until the expansion and subsequent unsympathetic ribbon development of the 20th century. The historic areas of the village have been designated as conservation areas.

- 3.4.14 The Kidlington Conservation Area Appraisal states that there is a great variety of historic building types and that the universal use of limestone and the use of stone slate for roofing is a uniting factor in the area. The conservation areas are free of modern plastic windows and recent alterations have generally been in sympathy with the properties.
- 3.4.15 Outside of the conservation areas development has been less sympathetic and includes many different architectural styles from the 1930s with 20th-century materials and examples of weatherboard, render and brick.
- 3.4.16 The Conservation Area is physically separated from the Site by the intervening modern village of Kidlington, and there is no visual link between the Site and the Conservation Area.
- 3.4.17 Development along Bicester Road is linear and largely contained by vegetation to the south of Water Eaton Lane. Development along Water Eaton Lane is linear and confined to the west. The large front gardens and open farmland to the east create a rural character. Buildings are of mixed size and age, and there are several bungalows and chalet bungalows within Beagles Close and a few examples along Water Eaton Lane.



Example of built form within the Conservation Area (Church Street)

Listed Buildings and Surrounding Built Form

- 3.4.18 There are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the Site, but there is a Grade II Listed Building approximately 350m to the north of the Site. There is no visual relationship between this heritage asset and the Site due to intervening residential dwellings at Beagles Close.
- 3.4.19 Along Water Eaton Lane, materials, detailing and architectural styles are mixed. There are examples of red brick, render and cladding to the north and further south are examples of brick, stone, render and weatherboard cladding.
- 3.4.20 Residential properties on Beagles Close to the north of the Site, consists of two storey detached and semi-detached properties and bungalows. Materials and detailing within Beagles Close consist of a mix of white and brown weatherboard cladding, buff brick and concrete profiled tiles. Several of the properties which adjoin and face the Site have elevations with windows facing the Site.
- 3.4.21 Boundary treatments along Water Eaton Lane consist predominantly of mixed coniferous, native and ornamental clipped hedges and



Examples of materials within built form within Beagles Close



Examples of bungalows along Beagles Close



Examples of built form along Water Eaton Lane

large front gardens. Views to the surrounding countryside to the east are glimpsed due to the strong native hedgerow and trees along Water Eaton Lane.

Relationship to Green Belt

- 3.4.22 As part of the wider allocation, the Site has been removed from the Green Belt. It adjoins Green Belt land to its east. However, the Site is visually contained due to the tree belt on the eastern boundary.

Summary of the Landscape Resource

- 3.4.23 From the site based evaluation undertaken for this Appraisal, the Site and its immediate context on the edge of Kidlington exhibit some characteristics which are identified in the various landscape character assessments described previously. The tree belts to the boundaries of the site provide strong landscape features to the edge of the village which contrasts with the more open countryside to the east and south and residential areas to the north and west.
- 3.4.24 These features contribute positively to both the character of the Site in providing a sense of enclosure and to the wider landscape

of the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type. As such, the Site is assessed as making a Medium contribution to the wider local landscape character.



Stone cottages at Bramley Close



Aerial imagery from Google Earth, July 2022

Key

- Site boundary
- ↙ Viewpoint locations for Site Views A-E
- ↗ Contours and direction of slope
- Significant existing trees
- Existing hedgerows and tree belts
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Key views into the site
- Overhead cables/telegraph poles
- Bridleway
- Footpath

* Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)
PR7a Development Brief (Jan 2022)



Figure 5. Site Analysis

Existing hedgerow and tree belt along Water Eaton Lane

Row of Poplars along Bicester Road

Properties with rear gardens facing the Site, along Beagles Close



Site View A: From the north-east corner of Site looking south-east

Gappy hedgerow to southern boundary

Row of Poplars along Bicester Road

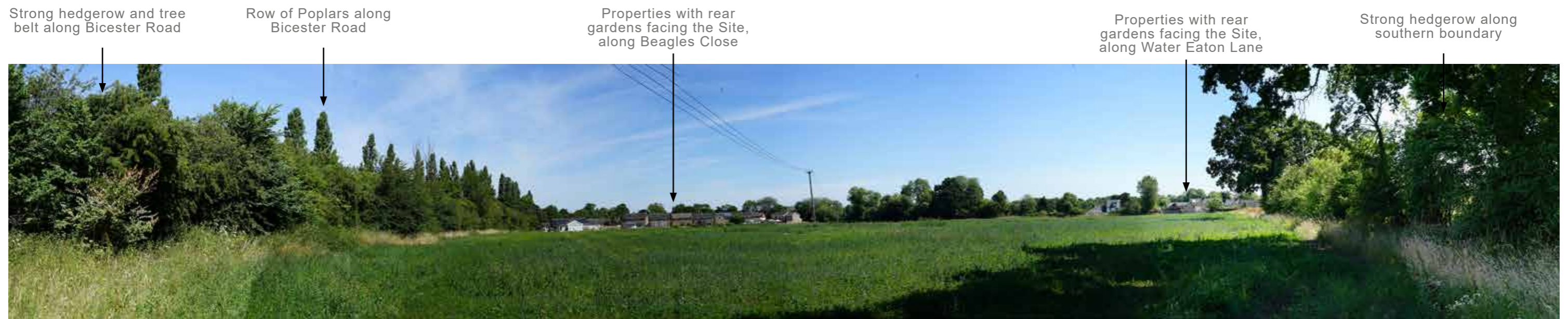
Properties with rear gardens facing the Site, along Beagles Close

Properties with rear gardens facing the Site, along Water Eaton Lane



Site View B: From the south-east corner of Site looking north-west

Figure 6. Site Views A-E



Site View C: View from south-west corner of Site looking north-east



Site View D: View from western Site boundary looking east

Join-line of photograph

Figure 6. Site Views A-E continued

Large Oaks to southern boundary (T5/T6)

Large Oaks to southern boundary (T2/T3)



Site View D continued: View from western Site boundary looking east

Number 15

Properties with rear gardens facing the Site, along Beagles Close

Existing hedgerow and tree belt along Water Eaton Lane

Properties with rear gardens facing the Site, along Water Eaton Lane

Large Oaks to southern boundary (T5/T6)



Site View E: View from north-west corner of Site looking south-east

Figure 6: Site Views A-E continued

4. VISUAL AMENITY

- 4.0.1 The following section examines the visibility of the site from the surrounding area. This appraisal is based on a manual assessment of topography and aerial images which are refined by the field survey (refer to **Figure 6: Site Views A-E** above, **Figure 7. Visual Analysis** and **Figure 8. Representative Views** below).
- 4.0.2 A site visit was undertaken on 11/07/2022. The weather was clear and visibility was good. The trees were in full leaf providing a best case scenario in terms of screening.

4.1 VISIBILITY

Views from the Site

- 4.1.1 Views from the Site are predominantly contained by a combination of existing boundary vegetation and built form associated with properties on Beagles Close and to the south east corner along Water Eaton Lane (refer to Site Views A-E).
- 4.1.2 There are open views to properties along Beagles Close from the Site due to a lack of screening vegetation (refer to Site Views A-E).

Views towards the Site

- 4.1.3 There are near distance framed views towards the Site at the entrance of the Site on Water Eaton Lane (Viewpoint 1) and from near the junction of Beagles Close, over the closed board fence of the property at the corner of Beagles Close (Viewpoints 2) and from Beagles Close looking south (Viewpoint 3). Views towards the Site are predominantly screened by the boundary vegetation and properties along Beagles Close.
- 4.1.4 There are glimpsed near distance views to the Site from Water Eaton Lane through gaps in the tree belt (refer to Viewpoint 4). There are glimpsed views towards the north western corner of the Site from Bicester Road where the strong tree belt along the western boundary ends and properties at Beagles Close begin (refer to Viewpoint 13).
- 4.1.5 Views towards the Site from PRow FP 229/4/30 which extends southwards from Water Eaton Lane are screened by the tree group

and hedgerow along the southern boundary (refer to Viewpoint 8).

- 4.1.6 Views from Bicester Road are largely screened by the strong tree belt which runs along the western boundary (refer to Viewpoints 9,11 and 12).
- 4.1.7 Long distance views towards the Site from PRow 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way) to the east of the Site are screened by the strong hedgerow and tree belts along Water Eaton Lane and vegetation to the eastern boundary of the Site (refer to Viewpoints 14-15).
- 4.1.8 There are progressive long distance views towards the Site from PRow BR 229/5/10. However, views into the Site are screened by the strong hedgerow and tree belts along Water Eaton Lane (refer to Viewpoints 16-17).

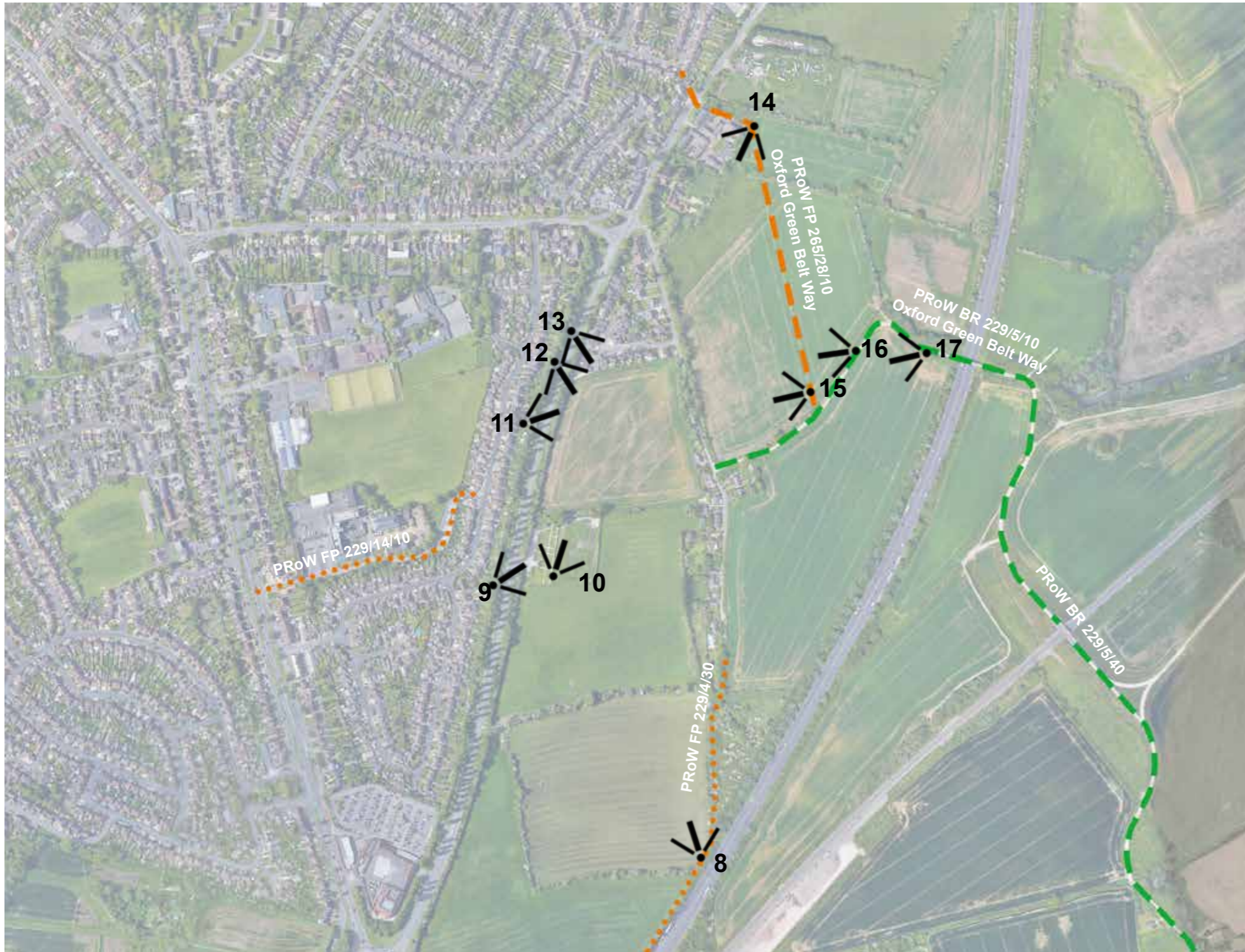
Summary of Visual Amenity

- 4.1.9 Consideration of the views and visual amenity during the site visit has been undertaken during Summer (July) when most of the vegetation was in leaf. As a result, the views shown (in the photographs) represent a best case scenario, in terms of the level of screening provided by existing vegetation.
- 4.1.10 All views are from public viewpoints and have been categorized by location in relation to the Site and the visual receptors. There are near distance glimpsed views into the Site from the entrance in the north eastern corner and from Beagles Close which are not screened by existing vegetation or built form along Water Eaton Lane and Beagles Close. Although there are some mid to long distance views towards the Site from Public Rights of Way in the wider landscape, where users have a high sensitivity to change, the Site is well screened by the existing tree belts - particularly those on the eastern and western site boundaries.
- 4.1.11 With reference to the visibility of the Site, the overall visual amenity of the Site, within the context of the Vale Farmland Landscape

Character Type (LCA 17), is deemed to offer Low visual amenity.

4.2 REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

- 4.2.1 Representative views demonstrating the visual amenity of the Site are shown in **Figure 7. Visual Analysis** and **Figure 8. Representative Views** below:



LEGEND

- The Site
- Viewpoint locations
- Footpath
- Long distance footpath (Green Belt Way)
- Bridleway



Inset of near distance views

August 2022
Scale: Not to scale @ A3



Figure 7. Visual Analysis



Viewpoint 1: From Water Eaton Lane at site access looking south west



Viewpoint 2: From Water Eaton lane at junction with Beagles Close looking south

Figure 8. Representative Views

Approximate extent of site

Large Oaks to southern boundary (T5/T6)

Large Oaks to southern boundary (T2/T3)

Number 15

Row of Poplars along Bicester Road



Viewpoint 3: Views from Beagles Close looking south from cul-de-sac at Number 15

Approximate extent of site

Existing hedgerow and tree belt along Water Eaton Lane



Viewpoint 4: Views looking north west from Water Eaton Lane

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

No 66 Water Eaton Lane
with rear garden facing
the Site

Row of Poplars
along Bicester
Road

Existing hedgerow and
tree belt along Water
Eaton Lane



Viewpoint 5: Views looking north west from Water Eaton Lane

No 72 Water Eaton Lane
with rear garden facing
the Site



Viewpoint 6: Views looking north west from Water Eaton Lane

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

No 72 Water Eaton Lane

Water Eaton Lane

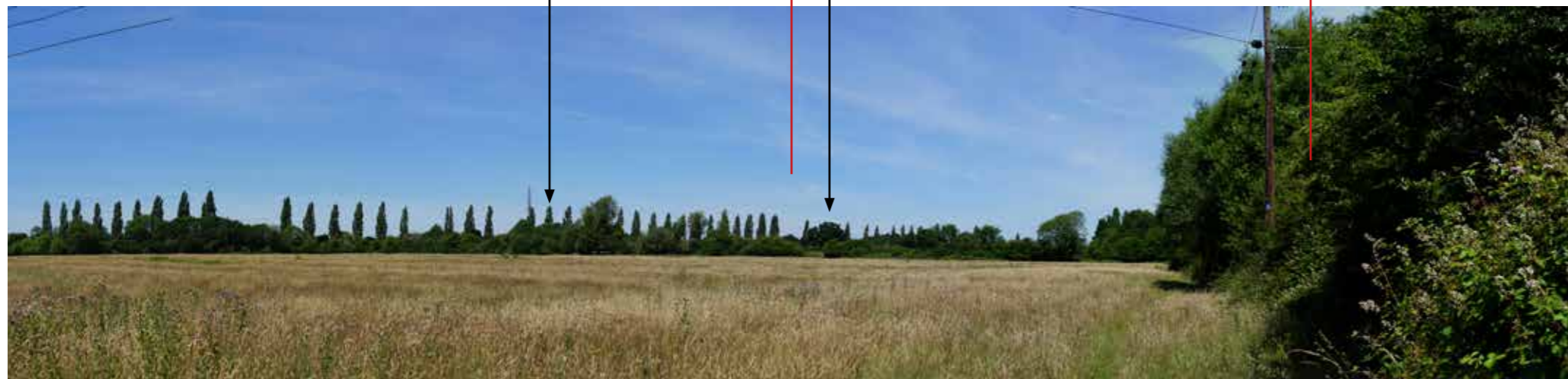


Viewpoint 7: Views looking north west from Water Eaton Lane

Row of Poplars along
Bicester Road

Large Oaks to
southern boundary
(T2/T3)

Approximate extent of site

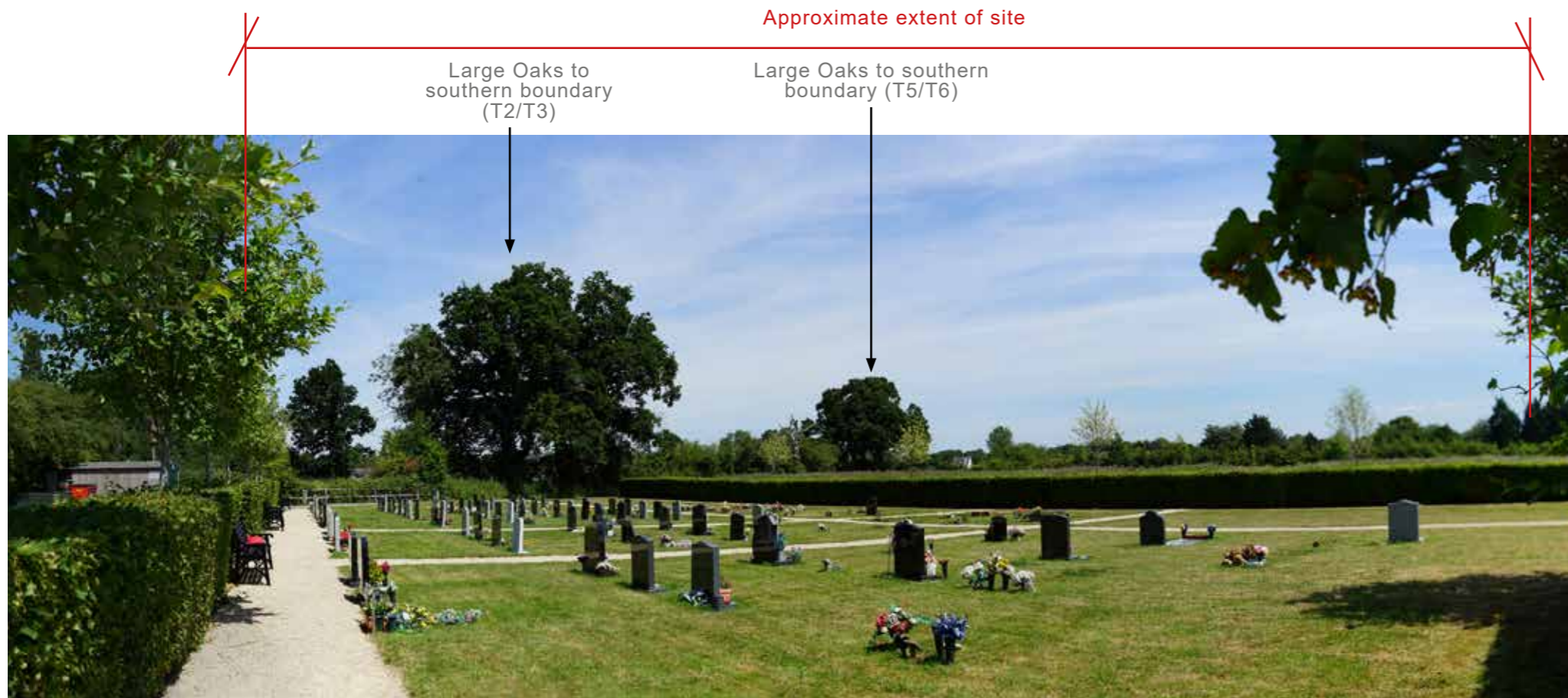


Viewpoint 8: Views looking north from PRow FP 229/4/30

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views



Viewpoint 9: Views looking north east from Bicester Road at entrance to cemetery



Viewpoint 10: Views looking north from Kidlington Cemetery

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

Approximate extent of site

Row of Poplars
along Bicester
Road



Viewpoint 11: Views from Bicester Road looking east

Approximate extent of site

Number 15



Viewpoint 12: Views from Bicester Road looking south east

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

Approximate extent of site



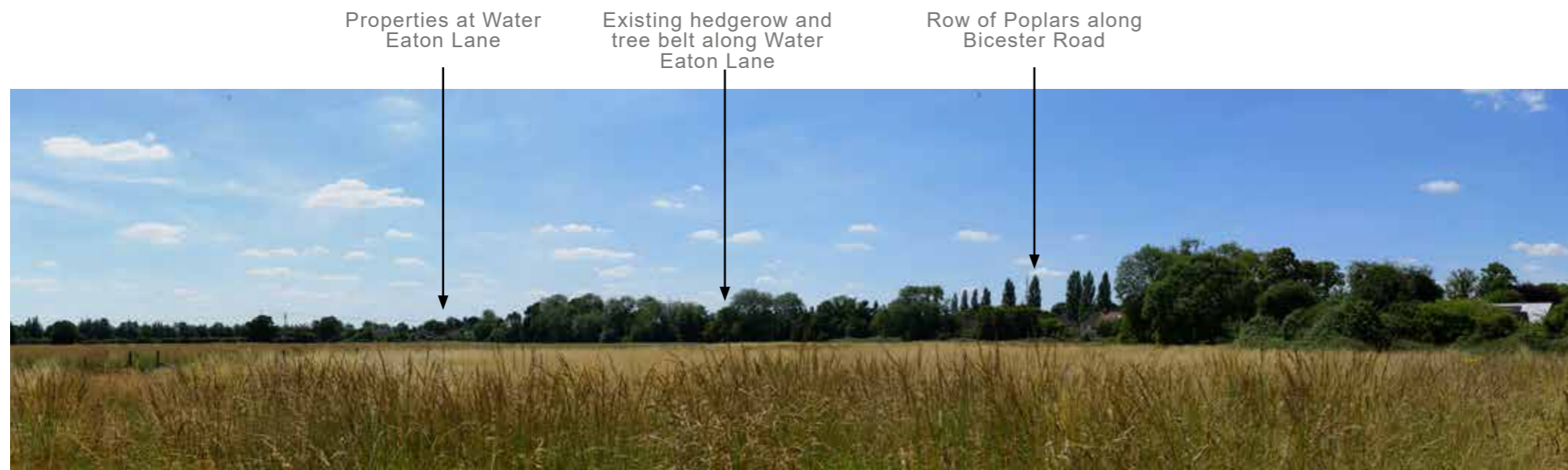
Viewpoint 12 continued: Views from Bicester Road looking south east

Approximate extent of site

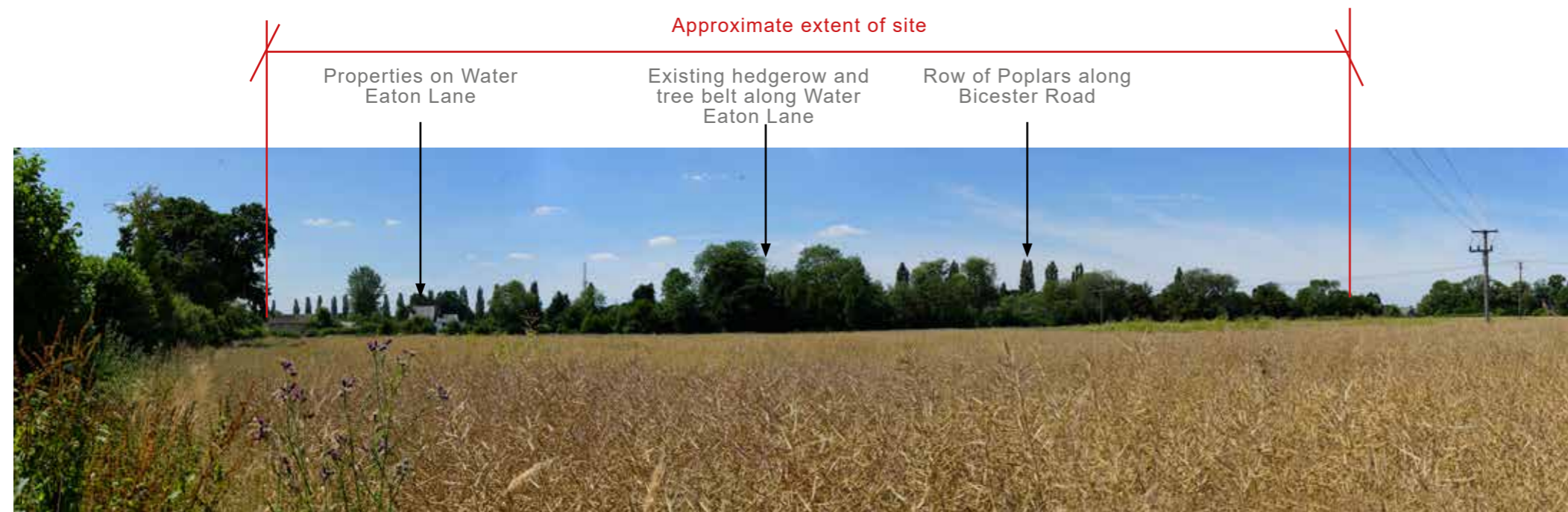


Viewpoint 13: Views from Bicester Road looking south east

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

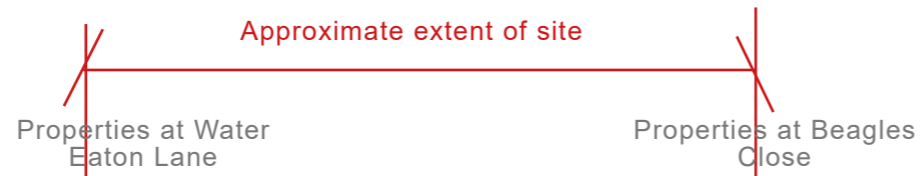


Viewpoint 14: Views looking south west from PRoW FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way)



Viewpoint 15: Views looking west from PRoW FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way) near junction with BW 229/5/10

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views



Viewpoint 16: Views looking west from PRow BR 229/5/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way)



Viewpoint 17: Views looking west from PRow BR 229/5/10 near bridge over A34 (Oxford Green Belt Way)

Figure 8 continued. Representative Views

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.0.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of the future potential residential development of the Site.

5.1 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

5.1.1 The proposed development forms a Full application for the erection of 96 new dwellings on land to the south east of Kidlington and includes:

- proposals to provide new access from Bicester Road;
- 0.7ha cemetery extension;
- 100sqm Local Area for Play (LAP);
- new bus stops;
- integrated SUDS strategy;
- pedestrian/cycleway; and
- associated landscaping.

5.1.2 Full details of the proposals and its design development are set out in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Hill Residential Ltd.

5.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.2.1 The review of current planning policy, in conjunction with the findings of the landscape and visual appraisals, provide the basis for identifying the potential landscape and visual effects of the development of the site.

5.2.2 The design of the proposed development should be well-integrated into the landscape and townscape which surrounds the site; the treatment of the Site boundaries, will be key to maintaining the character of the Site and its wider landscape setting.

5.2.3 As has been demonstrated in the baseline landscape and visual appraisals, the Site's location adjacent to existing residential areas on two sides and enclosed on two sides by strong tree belts, means it has a limited contribution to the wider landscape

of the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type. The tree belts to the east and west contribute positively to the character of the landscape especially in views from the east from PRow within the wider landscape.

5.2.4 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study for the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type defines the strategy and guidelines for managing change as 'Conserve and Enhance'. Several guidelines of particular relevance to the Site are as follows;

- *Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.*
- *Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.*
- *Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.*
- *Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that are appropriate to this landscape type.*

5.2.5 As part of a landscape led approach, the principles of the scheme have been developed from the landscape and visual baseline studies which identified a number of constraints and opportunities. which are set out below:

5.3 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Landscape Constraints and Opportunities

5.3.1 The proposed development site consists of a fairly square parcel of land between Water Eaton Lane to the east, Bicester Road to the west, adjoined by residential development at Beagles Close to the north, and the Kidlington Cemetery to the south. The Site is

enclosed by boundary vegetation with mature trees /tree belts to the west, south and east, and residential development to the north.

5.3.2 The vegetation and mature trees contribute positively to the landscape character of the Site and the wider Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 17). These strong vegetation belts form a robust edge to the parcel of land (the Site) which contrasts with the more developed residential areas to the north of the Site, and is a valuable transition and corridor between the Site and the wider countryside to the south and east. These features have been identified as constraints to the proposed development and will be retained.

5.3.3 The north eastern corner of the Site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. An integrated SUDs system will be required to mitigate flood risk.

5.3.4 The study has highlighted there are significant opportunities to establish a development that maintains a strong green urban edge to Kidlington and creates a sensitive transition to the surrounding open countryside of the Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 17). This includes:

- Retaining and enhancing (increasing) the existing vegetation and mature trees and ensuring space for long term management is provided.
- Strengthening the existing pattern of vegetation and creating a varied landscape structure with interlinked green infrastructure and open space through the development to provide multi purpose benefits.
- Maintaining the rural character of Water Eaton Lane which provides a strong settlement boundary between Kidlington and the open arable landscape to the east.
- Providing new recreational opportunities including cycling and pedestrian links through the Site to connect with the wider road and footpath network.
- Retaining and enhancing the existing vegetation, and providing new habitats for wildlife by improving ecological connectivity in

order to achieve 10% net gain in biodiversity.

- Introducing areas of new native tree planting and tree-lined streets to key roads which interlink with strategic open space as part of the green infrastructure network. This will:
 - Break up the built form into discrete areas;
 - Improve ecological connectivity;
 - Provide opportunities for recreational open space and informal play areas (LAP - Local Area for Play); and
- Enhancing biodiversity and creating opportunities for wildlife and casual recreation through the provision of interlinked green/blue infrastructure corridors and integrated SuDS. To include:
 - New habitats for wildlife including wetland areas;
 - Facilitating the movement of wildlife within connected networks;
- Incorporating an integrated SuDS in the form of swales, rain gardens, ponds/wetland areas and attenuation areas.

Visual Constraints and Opportunities

5.3.5 The Site is relatively well contained by existing vegetation and trees to its boundaries and adjacent built form to the north. In visual terms, the most important considerations of the Site are:

- Near distance views from properties at Beagles Close which have open views across the Site.
- Glimpsed views from Water Eaton Lane;
- Views from Bicester Road (largely contained by vegetation) and the proposed Site access;
- Views from Kidlington Cemetery (partially contained by vegetation);

5.3.6 The baseline assessment demonstrates that the site is visually enclosed and visibility of the Site from PROW within the wider landscape is minimal.

5.3.7 Development of the Site provides opportunities to:

- Strengthen the existing vegetation along Water Eaton Lane and the eastern Site boundary to protect views from the open countryside to the east of the Site;
- Substantially increase the level of vegetation within the site with new native hedgerow and tree planting to provide a strong green infrastructure network to provide opportunities for informal recreation, improve visual amenity and benefit wildlife.
- Provide an integrated SuDS system which provides opportunities to improve visual amenity, benefit wildlife and mitigate flooding.

5.3.8 The landscape opportunities and constraints of the Site are shown on Figure 9: Constraints and Opportunities Plan and informed the landscape strategy refer to figure 10; Landscape Strategy Plan.

















5.4 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

5.4.1 As part of the iterative design process undertaken for the proposed development a number of pre-app discussions have taken place with Cherwell District Council to inform the layout of the proposals.

5.4.2 Discussions with the LPA during three pre-app meetings took place on the 11th August 2022; 3 October 2022; and 13 October 2022; and a Public Consultation was held on the 28th September 2022. These meetings helped to further the design. Comments received from local residents during the Public Consultation have helped design development especially in regards to boundary treatments.



LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Contours and direction of slope
-  Existing trees to be retained
-  Existing hedgerows and Tree Belts to be retained, strengthened and enhanced.
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Key views into the site
-  Overhead cables/ telegraph poles
-  Bridleway
-  Rear facing gardens adjoining site
-  Buffer zone for Local Area for Play (LAP) 5m to nearest dwelling.
-  Potential public open space
-  Potential cemetery extension
-  Potential access point from Bicester Road
-  Potential access links
-  Potential link to existing cemetery
-  Potential footpath route
-  Potential footpath/ cycleway
-  Southern parcel*

* Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) PR7a Development Brief (Jan 2022)

Aerial Map: Google Pro






















Scale: Not to scale



Figure 9. Opportunities and Constraints Plan



LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Existing trees to be retained
-  Existing hedgerows and Tree Belts to be retained, strengthened and enhanced.
-  Proposed hedgerow to cemetery
-  Proposed buffer planting
-  New development parcel
-  Proposed SUDs features (recommended by engineer)
-  Public open space
-  Cemetery extension
-  Local Area for Play (LAP) as shown in PR7a development brief.
-  Proposed bus stop
-  'Bicester Road Frontage' character area
-  'Main Street' character area
-  'Green Edges' character area
-  Access point
-  Pedestrian links
-  Rear facing gardens adjoining site
-  Buildings fronting onto public open space
-  Main tree lined spine road
-  Secondary roads
-  Proposed footpath route
-  Proposed footpath/cycleway
-  Potential link of access - to be agreed with resident at No.15

* Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)
PR7a Development Brief (Jan 2022)

NOTE: Strategy Plan informed by the development brief and masterplan for PR7a



Aerial Map: Google Pro

Scale: Not to scale

Figure 10. Landscape Strategy Plan

5.5 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

5.5.1 The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (drawing reference 22027-GUA-DR-L-001, refer to Figure 11. Illustrative Landscape Plan) has been developed with reference to the site constraints and opportunities outlined above and sets out the principles of the Landscape Mitigation and the design considerations. This includes:

- Retention and enhancement of existing vegetation, where possible, including trees, vegetation and field boundaries to maintain the character of the Site and the wider landscape and to increase biodiversity. This will maintain the character of the Site and surrounding countryside located within the Green Belt and deliver on the guidelines to 'Conserve and Enhance' set out in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study;
- Ensuring space for the long term management of the existing vegetation network is provided. Housing fronting onto existing vegetation with private roads to achieve this. This also provides a buffer to the development as built form is set back from the boundaries.
- Introduction of new planting to reinforce the green infrastructure on site and connect it to the wider landscape.
- Connections of proposed green infrastructure to the proposed cycle and pedestrian network.
- Provision of open space between the proposed development and the existing Beagles Close development to minimize the impact of the new development on residential visual amenity and offer a new communal area for Kidlington and residential areas along Water Eaton Lane.
- Provision of a Local Area for Play (LAP).
- Implementation of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including swales within the Site (outside the Root Protection Areas of existing trees) and enhancements using the existing topography to accommodate it seamlessly into the existing landscape.
- Ecological enhancements, as per the ecologists' recommendations to achieve a net gain in biodiversity to be

carried out in close collaboration with the project ecologist.

5.5.2 All areas of new planting to provide a rich habitat for wildlife and will be of native species, increasing ecological connectivity and bio diversity across the Site. Additional features such as bird boxes and feeders, and bat boxes within the gardens will enliven them, create interest and provide ecological enhancement.

LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN



Scale: Not to scale

Figure 11. Landscape Masterplan

6. LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This section of the report considers the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The assessment of potential effects has been undertaken during construction, on completion of the scheme (Year 1) and at Year 15 when proposed vegetation has matured.

Construction effects

6.1.2 During the construction phase, impacts on landscape components within the Site will result from direct changes in land use and alterations to the existing topography, along with the provision of temporary infrastructure such as access and new highway works, site compounds and parking, the storage of materials, erection of temporary fencing/hoardings, use of operational plant and general construction works. All are uncharacteristic features of the landscape, however the effects of the construction phase will be temporary in nature and limited to 12-18 months. All construction works will be carried out in full accordance with best practice to avoid, reduce or limit the extent of effects as far as possible.

Effects of the Permanent Development and Mitigation

6.1.3 The key aspects of the mitigation includes the retention and enhancement of the existing landscape structure and the green infrastructure corridor to the east as set out in the Land Use Parameter Plan and Landscape Parameter Plan. To take into account the establishment of the proposed development (especially new vegetation), the effects have been assessed in the short to medium term (from Year 1) and long-term (15 Years and beyond). As such, the effects of the development at Year 1 are broadly the same as at construction and effects reduce by Year 15, as vegetation matures.

6.1.4 The assessment of effects has been undertaken based on the submitted Landscape Masterplan including:

- 22027-GUA-DR-L-001 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan
- 22027-GUA-DR-L-002 Outline Soft Landscape Proposals
- 22027-GUA-DR-L-003 Outline Hard Landscape Proposals

6.2 ASSESSING LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.2.1 The landscape effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative.

6.2.2 The effect of the proposed changes to the Site, specifically on the identified landscape receptors (attributes) has been assessed including consideration of changes to the existing landscape resource, the introduction of new elements within the landscape and changes to the local perception of the Site.

6.2.3 As the Site is enclosed and does not have any association with other development sites an assessment of Cumulative effects has not been undertaken.

6.2.4 The following assessment of landscape effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer Chapter 5).

6.3 LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

6.3.1 With reference to the baseline landscape appraisal, the following landscape elements and characteristics (in no particular order) have been identified as potential receptors of landscape effects of the proposed development:

6.3.2 Landscape receptors identified during the baseline landscape assessment which may be affected by the Proposal are as follows:

6.3.3 Landscape receptors identified during the baseline landscape assessment which may be affected by the Proposal are as follows:

- The overall character of the Site including
 - Land use
 - Topography
 - Trees and Vegetation on the boundaries of the Site.
- Vale Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 17).
- Settlement Character, in close proximity to the Site.

6.4 LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

6.4.1 The susceptibility (ability) of the landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences on the local landscape character is assessed on:

- the potential for mitigation;
- the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the proposed development; and
- the extent of the proposals being in accordance with management or policy objectives.

6.4.2 The susceptibility of the landscape and its landscape components (the landscape receptors) is classified on a sliding scale from high to low.

6.4.3 Those landscape components, which make a notable contribution to character and can not accommodate the proposed development or change without affecting the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies have a high susceptibility, while those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape and can accommodate the change without affecting the baseline situation have a low susceptibility.

6.4.4 There are no Statutory nature conservation sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats and Species (BAP sites) in or near to the Site and the site is not covered by any landscape quality designations. However, it does contain important hedgerows to the eastern, southern and western boundaries which contribute to the character of the Site and are susceptible to the proposed development. This vegetation separates the Site from the more open landscape to the east within the Green Belt. The overall landscape susceptibility of the Site to the proposed development is assessed as **Medium**.

6.4.5 The assessment of landscape effects for the identified landscape receptors are set out below and should be read in conjunction with the Methodology in Appendix 3.

6.5 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 6.5.1 This section of the report considers the scale of the effects of the proposed development on landscape character. The scale of Effects is considered in terms of the Sensitivity of the landscape and its features combined with the Magnitude of Change. Effects can be Adverse or Beneficial.
- 6.5.2 The effects of the proposals on the landscape resource are set out below and summarised in Table 1 at the end of the section.

Land Use

- 6.5.3 The proposed development will result in permanent changes in land use as the Site changes from green field land to a high quality residential development. These changes in land use, will be localised in extent to within the Site boundary and there will be no effect on the character of the wider landscape.
- 6.5.4 The effect of the proposed development on land use is permanent and in the context of the urban built form is considered to be **Moderate Adverse**. It should be noted that any development will give rise to a permanent change in land use and as the Site is allocated for development the principle of development is accepted.

Topography

- 6.5.5 The design of the proposed building relates to the topography of the Site. There will be temporary changes to the existing ground levels during construction of the buildings with stock piling of soils. There will also be permanent minor changes in levels associated with the SuDS scheme as the swales and attenuation area are dug. These effects will be localised in extent to within the Site boundary and are considered to be **Minor Adverse**.
- 6.5.6 It is anticipated that there will be no off-site removal of soil and the changes in levels will be graded into the natural topography of the Site. The layout ensures that there is no impact on adjacent trees as all changes in level are outside the RPAs of nearby trees. The long term changes to the topography of the Site will be **Negligible**.

Trees and Vegetation

- 6.5.7 The scheme has been sensitively designed to minimise the impact on trees which contribute positively to the character of the Site and its wider landscape and the visual amenity of users of the Water Eaton Lane and the wider PRow network.
- 6.5.8 Tree removal is negligible due to the intention to retain trees from the outset. All Category A and B trees are retained and there is some removal of Category C and U trees (refer to AIA prepared by EnviroArb-Solutions -September 2022 for full details).
- 6.5.9 The main tree losses relate to the need for some roads to pass through existing hedgerows to site access routes (highways, footpaths and cycle routes) and the associated visibility splay from the new junction onto Bicester Road.
- 6.5.10 The development is also set back from these existing vegetation to allow space for growth and management. The root protection areas of retained trees are to be respected in accordance with BS5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction as recommended in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. As long as these measures are adhered to, there will be a **Minor Adverse** effect on trees and vegetation within the Site during Construction.
- 6.5.11 Although the proposed development will result in the removal of a number of low grade trees and hedgerows within the Site, the development will provide a significant uplift in tree numbers and species within the site boundary. There will be tree lined avenues and scattered naturalistic planting in open spaces areas. The diversity of species will also future proof the landscape in the light of potential impact of disease (such as ash dieback) and increase the biodiversity potential of the tree scape. The new trees will also provide a large increase in tree canopy cover and ecosystem service provision (carbon sequestration, carbon storage, pollution mitigation and mitigating surface water runoff).
- 6.5.12 The proposed landscape scheme includes a significant number of new trees which are predominantly native species, new native hedgerows, areas of native scrub and wild flower meadows,

wet meadows and marginal wildflowers within the swales and the attenuation area, as well as ornamental planting beds and hedges throughout the built form. These measures will improve the character of the Site and result in a net gain in the number of trees on the Site. Although the effect of new planting will be minimal initially, in the long term, there will be a **Minor Beneficial** effect on the level of vegetation within the Site, improving visual amenity for new residents and the wider community and increasing biodiversity across the Site to improve its ecological value.

Overall Character of the Site

- 6.5.13 The Site will permanently change from green field land on the edge of Kidlington to a high quality residential development. It should be noted that as an allocated Site, the principle of development is accepted. The proposed scheme has been landscape led and retains the important hedgerows to the east, south and west which contribute to the character of the Site and the wider landscape. Large areas of connected open space/ green infrastructure are proposed that will provide an attractive setting to the proposed development and provides different areas of usable green space with grassland meadows and new tree planting; a large buffer to the retained hedgerows with swales providing an offset to proposed built form to Water Eaton Lane.
- 6.5.14 Although there is some removal of low grade vegetation the landscape masterplan proposes extensive areas of new planting which will integrate the proposed development into the existing built form and provide **Minor Beneficial** effects to the level of vegetation and the character of the Site in the long term.

Landscape Character

- 6.5.15 Existing vegetation within the Site and in neighbouring properties adjacent to the Site, provides a level of structure and screening to the wider landscape of the Vale Farmland Landscape in which the Site is located. As noted in the baseline assessment, the hedgerow to the southern boundary of the Site separates the Site from the open countryside to the south which is allocated for development

under Policy PR7a. Therefore, the main interface the Site has to the wider landscape is to the east, where it is separated by a relatively strong hedgerow/tree belt to Water Eaton Lane. As this vegetation is to be retained and enhanced within an area of open space on the eastern side of the Site, there will be a minimal effect on the wider landscape. The effect on landscape character is considered to be **Minor Adverse** due to the Site's strong association with existing built form on the edge of Beagles Close and Bicester Road.

6.5.16 The landscape scheme will result in a net gain in the number of trees on the Site. These trees, as well as the enhancements to the existing hedgerow, new areas of shrub planting and wildflower grassland will locally increase biodiversity and the ecological value of the Site. Although the effect of this planting will be minimal initially, in the long term as vegetation matures the proposed development will be well screened from Water Eaton Lane by the enhanced hedgerow which will form a strong settlement edge to the area and retain the rural character of Vale Farmland Landscape within the Green Belt. As a result, the long term effects of the proposals on the wider landscape character of the Vale Farmland or the Green Belt will be a **Negligible**.

Settlement Character

6.5.17 The Site is located on the edge of residential areas at Beagles Close to the north and to Bicester Road to the west and will be adjoined to the south through further development under Policy PR7a.

6.5.18 The proposed development is landscape led and responds to both the landscape and settlement character in close proximity to the Site. Large areas of connected open space/ green infrastructure are proposed that will provide an attractive setting to the proposed development and provides different areas of usable green space with grassland meadows and new tree planting; a large buffer to the retained hedgerow/tree belt with swales providing an offset to proposed built form to the quiet Water Eaton Lane and the rural countryside to the east. This hedgerow/tree belt will form a robust settlement edge to the area.

6.5.19 Although it is recognised that there will be temporary disruption during the construction phase of the development, on completion the proposed new dwellings will sit back from both Bicester Road and Water Eaton Lane. As such, the proposed development has been designed to integrate into the settlement edge of Kidlington in this location. Adverse effects are minimised through embedded mitigation and in the long term will contribute positively to the settlement character of the area. The proposed landscape scheme sets out how this is achieved and in the long term, there will be a **Minor Beneficial** effect on the settlement character of Kidlington.

6.6 SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.6.1 The assessment of the potential landscape effects demonstrates that the effect of the proposed development is limited and there will be some beneficial long term effects.

6.6.2 The proposed development has been designed to optimise the Site's development potential whilst minimising affects on the landscape resource. The proposed development has been designed to respond positively to the character of the Site and its local landscape setting. The proposed development has sought to minimise the effect on the Site's character by retaining the existing hedgerows/ tree belts to the Site boundaries. The proposals also include significant measures to provide a high quality development with new cycle and pedestrian links and interlinked green spaces which increases the ecological value of the Site.

6.6.3 Although there will be a permanent loss in greenfield land, the Site is allocated for development and the principle of development is accepted. Development of the Site will result in a high quality development on the edge of Kidlington with good links to the village and is considered to be in a sustainable location. As long as the principles of the mitigation as set out in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan are implemented, the long term effects on landscape and settlement character will be negligible and there will be increase in the level of tree cover and diversity across the Site resulting in long term Minor Beneficial effects to the character of the Site.

7. VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of the future potential development of the Site.

7.1.2 As with the assessment of landscape effects, the assessment of potential visual effects has been undertaken during construction, on completion of the scheme (Year 1) and at Year 15 when proposed vegetation has matured.

Construction and Temporary Effects

7.1.3 During the construction phase visual impacts will arise from

Table 1. Summary Table of Landscape effects

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Significance / Scale of Effect
Site features						
Land use	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Medium Negative	Permanent Moderate Adverse
				Completion Year 1	No further change	No further Change
				Completion Year 15		
Topography	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
				Completion Year 1	Low Negative	Temporary Minor Adverse decreasing to Negligible
				Completion Year 15	Negligible	
Boundary trees and vegetation.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
				Completion Year 1	Low Negative	Minor Adverse increasing to Minor Beneficial
				Completion Year 15	Low Positive	
The overall Character of the Site	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
				Completion Year 1	Low Negative	Minor Adverse decreasing to Minor Beneficial
				Completion Year 15	Low Positive	

Table 1. Summary Table of Landscape effects continued

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Significance / Scale of Effect
Landscape and Settlement Character						
The character of the Vale Farmland Landscape Type (LCT 17)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
				Completion Year 1	Low Negative	Minor Adverse
				Completion Year 15	Negligible	decreasing to Negligible
The Settlement Character of Kidlington	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	Temporary Moderate Adverse
				Completion Year 1	Low Negative	Moderate Adverse
				Completion Year 15	Negligible	decreasing to Negligible

construction activities including the construction traffic; site compounds and parking; the storage of materials; erection of temporary fencing and hoardings; operational plant; and the construction of buildings, roads and landscape. The effects of construction works will generally be short term and temporary in nature. All construction works will be carried out in full accordance with best practice to avoid, reduce or limit the extent of negative visual effects as far as possible.

7.1.4 This will include the erection of hoarding to limit the influence of ground level construction activities on near distance views.

Effects of Permanent Development and Specific Mitigation

7.1.5 The spatial layout of the buildings, open space and strategic tree planting as well as the protection of existing vegetation has been designed to protect or reduce the effects on visual amenity of the receptors identified in the baseline assessment.

7.1.6 Strategic tree planting proposed within the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan will visually integrate the development into the surrounding landscape. The changes to the landscape of the permanent built development are long term. On completion, strategic tree planting will have a minimal effect and there is generally no change to the scale of visual effects. As tree planting matures the magnitude of change will decrease, reducing the scale of effect by Year 15.

7.1.7 The assessment also considers the effect of seasonal changes where appropriate, as the level of screening provided by vegetation is far greater in summer when vegetation is in leaf.

7.2 ASSESSING VISUAL EFFECTS

7.2.1 The visual effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. The potential visual effects have been informed by the visual appraisal supported by plans and photographs. The effects on visual amenity have been considered throughout the year, e.g. in the summer months when screening vegetation is most effective and in winter when trees are not in leaf.

7.2.2 Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative.

The assessment involves a systematic identification and description of the visual effects, supported by plans and photographs.

7.2.3 The following assessment of visual effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation and the principles of the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan set out in Chapter 6.

7.2.4 Assessment of the scale of visual effects relating to the proposed development is considered with regard to the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of change in view. The magnitude of change in view is considered in light of:

- The distance of the receptor to the development;
- The size and scale of the development
- The geographical extent of the area influenced;
- Duration; and
- Reversibility.

7.2.5 For the visual receptors identified in the baseline study, the degree of change which the proposals will engender is described and assessed. The assessment has made informed judgments applicable to visual amenity throughout the year, with consideration of seasonal views, e.g. including the summer months when screening vegetation is most effective. In assessing the visual effects, the influence of time, particularly the growth of new vegetation can be substantial. The post completion effects have therefore been assessed at two stages (Year 1 and Year 15). The time that new planting takes to establish is dependent on species, stock size, the nature of the growing conditions and other factors such as maintenance and vandalism.

7.2.6 The following assessment of visual effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer Chapter 6).

7.3 VISUAL RECEPTORS

7.3.1 Consideration of the study area, via desk research and field survey, during the baseline appraisal has identified a limited number of locations from which the Site is visible. The following section identifies the primary viewpoints and people or visual receptors within the study area that are likely to be affected by the

change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. In accordance with GLVIA3, the emphasis is on public viewpoints.

7.3.2 Visual receptors who may experience a change in their view as a result of the proposed development have been identified as follows:

Transport Routes

- Users of Water Eaton Lane; representative Views 1,2 and 4-7;
- Users of Beagles Close; representative Views 2,3;
- Users of Bicester Road; representative Views 9 and 11-13;

Public Rights of Way and Footpaths

- Users of PRoW FP 229/4/30; representative View 8;
- Users of PRoW FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way); representative Views 14 to 15;
- Users of PRoW 229/5/10 near bridge over A34 (Oxford Green Belt Way) representative Views 16,17;

Private and Residential views

- Residents of Water Eaton Lane; representative Views 1,2 and 4-7;
- Residents of Beagles Close; representative View 2,3;

Other Users

- Users of Kidlington Cemetery and allotments

7.4 VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

7.4.1 The likely value placed upon views by people or the visual amenity of the locality is evaluated to help assess the effects of the proposed development.

7.4.2 An important element in identifying the visual effects of a Proposal is to assess the existing visual receptors (people who see the view) and their susceptibility to changes in views and

visual amenity.

7.4.3 As such the sensitivity of the receptor is a combination of:

- The susceptibility of the visual receptor (the viewer); and
- The value attached to the views or visual amenity.

7.4.4 In accordance with GLVIA the sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent on a number of interlinked considerations namely the location and context; the number of people likely to be affected by the change; the expectations and occupation of each receptor; and the importance of the view.

7.4.5 Users of higher sensitivity generally include users of rights of way such as recreational walkers, equestrians and cyclists, along with others engaged in cultural pursuits whose occupation is the enjoyment of the outdoor environment. Users of lower sensitivity generally include users of major trunk routes and A Roads where the primary focus is getting to the intended destination rather than appreciation of their surroundings. Particularly scenic, slow or local routes are generally of medium sensitivity.

7.4.6 With reference to the limited visibility of the Site as outlined in the baseline assessment in Section 4, the overall susceptibility of the Site on the identified visual receptors is assessed as **Medium**. Although the Site is adjacent to the Alban Way, there are limited views into the Site due to intervening vegetation. There are no locally important views and the informal routes through the Site have a strong urban context. There are residential views across the Site and limited views from the wider countryside.

Visual Sensitivity

7.4.7 GLVIA3 provides guidance on the relative sensitivity of different visual receptors (Page 113-114). In summary, the most sensitive receptors are:

- Residents at home;
- People engaged in outdoor activities whose attention is focused on the landscape and view; and
- Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views are

an important part to the experience.

7.4.8 The least sensitive receptors are:

- People engaged in outdoor sports or activities which do not depend on an appreciation of views; and
- People at their place of work (although this can vary).

7.4.9 The sensitivity of road users varies. People on busy or main routes are considered to have medium or low sensitivity, whilst users of rural roads or scenic routes will have medium or even high sensitivity. Pedestrians have a higher sensitivity than motorists.

7.4.10 The assessment of visual effects are set out below and are summarised in Table 2 at the end of this chapter. The table should be read in conjunction with the Methodology in Appendix 3.

7.5 EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

Transport Routes

Users of Water Eaton Lane; representative Views 1,2 and 4-7;

7.5.1 Construction activities will be occasionally visible in progressive views from Water Eaton Lane to the east of the Site, where there are gaps in the intervening hedgerow/ tree belt. However, views will be predominantly screened by this vegetation especially in summer when trees are in leaf. Users of the lane are in close proximity to the Site so there will be local disruption in terms of noise, but there will be no construction traffic using the lane itself. These effects are considered to be **Minor Adverse** and temporary in nature.

7.5.2 On completion, the proposed development, as viewed from Water Eaton Lane will be partially screened by the existing intervening hedgerow which is retained. The hedgerow is to be enhanced by gapping up and introducing new trees and native buffer planting to increase age and species diversity and maintain/improve the rural character of the lane. In addition to this proposed built form is set back from the boundary with an open space buffer with

grassland swales, private drives and front gardens. Although the effect of this planting will be minimal initially, in the long term this new tree planting and gapping up of the hedgerow will mature and will visually combine with the existing hedgerow to provide a strong visual screen. There will be a **Negligible** effect on visual amenity with the increased level of vegetation on views from Water Eaton Lane.

Users of Beagles Close; representative Views 2,3;

7.5.3 There are limited views from Beagles Close as residential properties to the northern Site boundary block views. However, the Site is visible, beyond fencing from the cul-de-sac at Number 15 (View 3). Construction activities and the emerging new dwellings will be visible in conjunction with the existing built form this particular view. The overall effects on users of Beagles Close are considered to be Minor adverse and will be temporary in nature.

7.5.4 Proposed new tree and hedgerow planting to the northern Site boundary will break up views of the new built form as it matures. In the long term, in the context of the predominantly urban view the effects on visual amenity of users of Beagles Close will reduce to **Negligible**.

Users of Bicester Road; representative Views 9 and 11-13

Bicester Road is a tree lined road on the western boundary of the Site and has a 40mph speed limit. There is a footpath on its western side. Views towards the Site are limited by intervening vegetation. However, a short section of vegetation will be removed to provide access to the Site and its associated visibility splays. Construction activities will be predominantly screened by the existing vegetation, except for where the new Site access is proposed. At this point there will be channeled views into the Site with the existing hedgerow on either side. Construction activities and the emerging dwellings will be partially visible at this point. There will be oblique views to the two three storey apartment blocks on either side of the Site entrance although the existing vegetation in front of them is retained, there will be some crown lifting of the

mature trees to provide adequate visibility splays. From further away, construction activities will be less visible. The overall effect on the visual amenity of users of Bicester Road during construction and year 1 will be Minor Adverse.

- 7.5.5 The proposed development incorporates a tree lined avenue from the Site entrance on Bicester Road. New tree planting along this road will improve the appearance of the street scene and soften the proposed built form in views from Bicester Road. Although the effect of this planting will be minimal initially, in the long term, the effect on the change in visual amenity, is considered to be **Negligible**.

Public Rights of Way and Footpaths

Users of PRoW FP 229/4/30; representative View 8;

- 7.5.6 PRoW FP 229/4/30 extends south from Water Eaton Lane to the south east of the Site. Views towards the Site are predominantly screened by intervening vegetation along the footpath. A gap in the vegetation near where the path meets the A34 allows a view towards the Site across land within the PR7a allocation to the south of the Site. The poplar trees along Bicester Road are clearly visible on the skyline; as are the two oak trees (T2 and T3) near the cemetery, beyond intervening hedgerows. Construction activities, especially the taller elements such as cranes and the emerging new dwellings will be visible, above and beyond the intervening hedgerows. As such, there will be temporary **Moderate/ Minor Adverse** effects during construction due to the High sensitivity of footpath users. It is noted that depending on the phasing of the development to the south, it is possible that this view from PRoW 4/30 will already have changed.
- 7.5.7 The long term effect of the proposed development on this view will be as a result of future development within the two foreground fields within allocation PR7a. As such, there is no proposed mitigation to reduce the effects on the visual amenity of these users.

Users of PRoW FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way); representative Views 14 to 15

- 7.5.8 PRoW FP 265/28/10 is part of the Oxford Green Belt Way to the east of the Site. The Site is screened by the hedgerow/ tree belt along the eastern boundary of the Site to Water Eaton Lane and the tall Poplar trees along Bicester Road are visible on the skyline beyond. Existing built form along Water Eaton Lane is also visible. Construction activities (especially the taller elements) and the emerging dwellings will be just visible above and beyond this vegetation and will result in a temporary Moderate/Minor Adverse effect.

- 7.5.9 Embedded mitigation within the proposals includes the set back of built form away from the eastern boundary so that the eastern boundary forms a robust settlement edge to the development. Tree planting within the open space which forms this set back will add to this green edge. As this planting matures the effects of the proposed development will reduce to **Minor Adverse**.

Users of PRoW 229/5/10 near bridge over A34 (Oxford Green Belt Way) representative Views 16,17;

- 7.5.10 From PRoW 229/5/10 which is also part of the Oxford Green Belt Way to the east of the Site views are screened by the hedgerow/ tree belt along the eastern boundary of the Site to Water Eaton Lane. The tall Poplar trees along Bicester Road are visible on the skyline beyond. There is also further foreground vegetation to the boundaries of the intervening fields. Construction activities (especially the taller elements) and the emerging dwellings will be just discernible above and beyond this vegetation and will result in a temporary Moderate/Minor Adverse effect due to the Sensitivity of footpath users.

- 7.5.11 Embedded mitigation within the proposals includes the set back of built form away from the eastern boundary so that the eastern boundary forms a robust settlement edge to the development. Tree planting within the open space which forms this set back will add to this green edge. As this planting matures the effects of the proposed development will reduce to **Minor Adverse**.

Private and Residential views

Residents of Water Eaton Lane; representative Views 1,2 and 4-7; and reverse Site views B, C and D

Construction activities will be clearly visible by residents of Water Eaton Lane to the east of the Site. Nos 66 and 72, and to a lesser extent No 80, back onto the site. There are varying levels of garden vegetation within the rear gardens of these properties and there is a broken/ gappy hedgerow to the eastern Site boundary which provide a degree of screening. However, views are predominantly open and construction activities and the emerging buildings will be clearly visible resulting in a temporary Major Adverse effect.

- 7.5.12 Embedded mitigation within the proposals to protect the visual amenity of these residents includes the set back of built form away from the eastern boundary. Tree and native buffer planting within the open space which forms this set back and gapping up of the hedgerow to the eastern boundary will increase the level of screening for existing residents of Water Eaton Lane. As this planting matures the effects of the proposed development will reduce to **Moderate Adverse**.

Residents of Beagles Close; representative View 2,3 and reverse Site views A-D

- 7.5.13 Residents of Beagles Close to the northern boundary of the Site have open views into the Site. Odd numbers 3-13 are two storey detached dwellings which are angled to the Site. No 15 is a bungalow which backs directly onto the Site and No 28 Water Eaton Lane) on the corner of Beagles Close is a two storey property with its side elevation to the boundary of the Site and open oblique views across the Site. There is little garden vegetation within these properties and there is no boundary vegetation within the Site to screen views of the proposed development. Construction activities and the emerging buildings will be clearly visible from all of these properties resulting in a temporary Major Adverse effect on residential visual amenity.

- 7.5.14 Embedded mitigation within the proposals to protect the visual amenity of these residents includes the set back of built form away from the northern boundary. Tree and native buffer planting within

the open space which forms this set back will provide a level of screening to break up the new built form for existing residents of Beagles Close. As this planting matures the effects of the proposed development will reduce to **Moderate Adverse**.

Other Users

Users of Kidlington Cemetery and Allotments

7.5.15 Kidlington Cemetery and allotments are situated to the south west of the Site, off Bicester Road and are surrounded by a strong hedgerow. A number of mature oak trees to its northern boundary with the Site are a valuable landscape feature. The proposals include land to extend the allotments and these trees will be retained. There are oblique views towards the Site across the cemetery and construction activities will be visible above and beyond the boundary hedgerows. Views will vary depending on distance and angle of view. The effect of the proposed development on users on the cemetery is considered to be Moderate Adverse during construction and are temporary in nature.

7.5.16 The landscape masterplan proposes new hedgerows to the boundaries of the extended cemetery and allotments to protect the visual amenity of both current and future users. Although the effect of this planting will be limited initially, in the long term the effect on visual amenity will reduce to **Minor Adverse** in the long term.

7.6 SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

7.6.1 This assessment of landscape and visual effects demonstrates that the effect of the proposed development on the wider landscape is limited and that the most adverse effects occur in close proximity to the Site, particularly to the residential properties at Beagles Close and Water Eaton Lane which overlook the Site.

7.6.2 The proposed development has been designed to respond positively to the character of the Site and its local landscape setting. The proposed development has sought to minimise the effect on the Site's character by retaining the existing tree belts to

its boundaries and provide an open space set back to the eastern boundary to maintain a strong green edge to both the proposed development and the village of Kidlington.

7.6.3 The proposals include significant measures to provide a high quality development with tree lined streets, connected open space areas and a new cycle route. The landscape masterplan proposes new tree, hedgerow and native buffer planting as well as wildlife meadows and areas of wet meadows which will increase the ecological value of the Site and integrate the proposals into the wider landscape.

7.6.4 Although there will be adverse effects to residential amenity to existing residents in close proximity to the Site, as the site changes from greenfield land, the effects on the wider footpath network are negligible due to the Site's limited visibility and enclosure provided by the strong vegetation to the Site's boundaries which are retained.

Table 2. Summary Table of Visual effects

Visual Receptor	VP	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Significance / Scale of effect
Transport Routes							
Users of Water Eaton Lane	1,2 and 4-7	Medium	Low	Low	Construction	Medium negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Medium negative	Minor Adverse decreasing over time
					Completion Year 15	Low negative	Negligible
Users of Beagles Close	2, 3	Low	Low	Low	Construction	Medium negative	Temporary Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Medium negative	Minor Adverse decreasing over time
					Completion Year 15	Low negative	Negligible
Users of Bicester Road; representative	9 and 11-13	Medium/ Low	Low	Low	Construction	Medium negative	Temporary Moderate Adverse to Negligible
					Completion Year 1	Medium Negative	Moderate Adverse decreasing over time to
					Completion Year 15	Low Negative	Minor Adverse

Table 3. Summary Table of Visual effects continued

Visual Receptor	VP	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Significance / Scale of effect
Users of Public Rights of Way and Footpaths							
Users of PRow FP 229/4/30	8	High	Medium	High	Construction	Low	Temporary Moderate Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Low	Moderate/ Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 15	N/A	
Users of PRow FP 265/28/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way);	14-15	High	Medium	High	Construction	Low	Temporary Moderate/ Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 15	Negligible	decreasing over time Minor Adverse
Users of PRow 229/5/10 (Oxford Green Belt Way)	16-17	High	Medium	High	Construction	Low	Temporary Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Low	Moderate/ Minor Adverse
					Completion Year 15	Negligible	decreasing over time Minor Adverse

Table 4. Summary Table of Visual effects continued

Visual Receptor	VP	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Significance / Scale of effect
Private and Residential views							
Residents of Water Eaton Lane	1 to 3 B-D	Medium	High	High	Construction	High negative	Temporary Major Adverse
					Completion Year 1	High negative	Major Adverse decreasing over time
					Completion Year 15	Medium negative	Major /Moderate Adverse
Residents of Beagles Close; representative	2,3 A-D	Medium	High	High	Construction	High negative	Temporary Major /Moderate
					Completion Year 1	High negative	Major Moderate Adverse
					Completion Year 15	Medium negative	decreasing over time Major /Moderate
Other Users							
Users of Kidlington Cemetery and Allotments	17	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction	Medium Negative	Temporary Moderate Adverse
					Completion Year 1	Medium Negative	Temporary Moderate Adverse
					Completion Year 15	Low Negative	decreasing over time to Minor Adverse

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.0.1 This landscape and visual appraisal demonstrates that the proposed development, located on the eastern settlement edge of Kidlington will have a limited effect on the landscape of the Vale Farmland Landscape, in which the Site is situated. It demonstrates that there are limited views from Public Rights of Way and adverse effects on visual amenity are restricted to users of local roads and residents, in close proximity to the Site.
- 9.0.2 The Site is situated in a semi urban location on relatively flat ground which is influenced by existing residential properties on Beacles Close and Water Eaton Lane. The Site is enclosed by existing mature hedgerows to the east, south and west which screen it from the wider rural landscape to the east within the Green Belt.
- 9.0.3 The Site forms part of a wider allocation for residential development of 430 dwellings on 21 hectares of land, as set out in Cherwell District Council's Development Framework Plan for PR7a - Land South East of Kidlington. This proposed development, which forms the northern part of the allocation is for 96 new dwellings with new access from Bicester Road, an extension to Kidlington cemetery, a Local Area for Play (LAP), a new bus stop, an integrated SUDS strategy, a new pedestrian/cycleway and associated landscaping.
- 9.0.4 The proposed development has been landscape led and has been designed to respond to the local landscape and settlement character of Kidlington and its surrounding countryside. The proposals, as set out in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan ensure that the design responds positively to the character of the Site and its local landscape setting as well as minimising the effects on visual amenity.
- 9.0.5 The proposed development has sought to minimise the effect on the wider landscape by retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerows to the eastern, southern and western boundaries and to use these strong landscape features to provide a mature landscape setting to the development and to maintain the Site's sense of enclosure from the wider landscape. The proposals include significant measures to provide a high quality development which improves the recreational and ecological connectivity across the Site.
- 9.0.6 In landscape terms, although there is a permanent change in land use from a green field Site this change is accepted through the allocation. The location, scale, density and massing of the proposed new buildings and level of green infrastructure and open space has been informed by both the Development Framework Plan for PR7a and the constraints and opportunities of the Site. Although there will be a permanent change in land use, the important landscape features which provide a mature landscape setting to the Site and provide screening of the proposed development from the surrounding landscape are retained.
- 9.0.7 The masterplan proposes numerous measures to provide an attractive setting to the proposed development, improve connectivity, create an integrated drainage strategy and to assist in achieving biodiversity net gain through the use of green infrastructure. Significant tree planting throughout the Site will improve age and species diversity and there will be Minor Beneficial effects on the level of vegetation within the Site, increasing its biodiversity and ecological value.
- 9.0.8 The visual appraisal determined that the visibility of the Site is limited to near distance residential views from properties on Beacles Close and Water Eaton Lane. Views from Water Eaton Lane and footpaths in the wider landscape are restricted by the strong vegetation to the boundaries of the Site. The assessment of visual effects demonstrates that the effect of the proposed development is limited to those receptors in close proximity to the Site. There will be adverse effects to residential amenity to existing residents especially during construction. However, the proposed development has been designed to minimise the long term effects on these receptors through the design of the layout and long term effects will reduce over time as landscaping matures.
- 9.0.9 The assessment has demonstrated that there are Negligible effects on the wider footpath network due to the Site's limited visibility and enclosure provided by the strong vegetation to the Site's boundaries which is retained and enhanced.
- 9.0.10 With reference to the policies of the Local Plan, the appraisal confirms that the mitigation measures associated with the proposed development, as recommended in this report, will maintain the character of the Site's residential location and the features which contribute positively to both the character of the landscape and visual amenity.
- 9.0.11 It should be acknowledged that any development will give rise to change in the landscape of the area and the views of receptors. The degree of change and nature of the change will influence the judgment as to its acceptability and will need to be balanced with the overall benefits delivered by the scheme. This LVA demonstrates that, there will be some permanent and temporary adverse effects especially during construction and particularly to those receptors in close proximity to the Site.
- 9.0.12 In conclusion, it is considered that the Site and the receiving environment has the capacity to accommodate the proposals. Although there are some adverse effects, these are restricted to the Site itself and as an allocated Site, the permanent change in land use, is accepted. The proposals would not result in harm to the surrounding landscape character or the visual environment and represents an appropriate development located in a sustainable location on the edge of Kidlington.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 –Sources of Information

APPENDIX 2 - Glossary

Appendix 3 - Methodology

APPENDIX 1 – SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Updated July 2021
- Planning practice guidance <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031
- Cherwell Residential Design Guide (2018).
- PR7a Land South East of Kidlington Development Brief, Cherwell District Council, June 2022

- Natural England, National Character Area (NCA 108) Upper Thames Clay
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study 2004

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA 3), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage), 2002
- Historic England, The National Heritage List for England, (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>).
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>).
- Ordnance Survey maps (1:25000 Explorer Series), © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved.

APPENDIX 2 – GLOSSARY

- **Analysis (Landscape)** - The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.
- **Assessment (Landscape)** - An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.
- **Classification** - A process of sorting the landscape into different types or character areas using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to the different kinds of landscape.
- **Countryside** - The rural environment and its associated communities.
- **Diversity** - Where a variety of qualities or characteristic occurs.
- **Element** - A component part of the landscape (e.g. roads, hedges, woods).
- **Enhancement** - Landscape improvement through restoration, reconstruction or creation.
- **Environment** - Our physical surroundings including air, water and land.
- **Field pattern** - The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.
- **Heritage** - Historical or cultural associations.
- **Landcover** - Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
- **Landform** - Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land.
- **Landscape** - Human perception of the land conditioned by knowledge and identity with place.
- **Landscape character** - The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. Usually referenced to a place or area, landscape character reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
- **Landscape character type** - A landscape character type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern nationwide. Not referenced to place i.e. open moorland.
- **Landscape effects** - Change in the elements, characteristics, character and quality of the landscape as a result of development. Effects may be positive or negative.
- **Landscape feature** - A prominent eye-catching element, for example church spire or hilltop.
- **Landscape quality (or condition)** - Is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements, which make up the character in any one place.
- **Landscape resource** - The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
- **Landscape sensitivity** - The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.
- **Land use** - The primary use of land, including both rural and urban activities.
- **Methodology** - The scientific approach and techniques used for the study.
- **Mitigation** - Measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.
- **Perception (of landscape)** - The psychology of seeing and possibly attaching value and/or meaning (to the landscape).
- **Receptor** - Physical landscape resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience the effect.
- **Sense of place** - The essential character and spirit of an area: genius loci literally meaning 'spirit of place.'
- **Sustainability** - The principle that the environment should be protected in such a condition and to such a degree that ensures new development needs the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,
- **Visual amenity** - The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.
- **Visual effect** - Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction).
- **Visual envelope** - Extent of visibility to or from a specific area or feature.
- **Worst-case situation/scenario** - Principle applied where the environmental effects may vary, for example, seasonally to ensure that the most severe effect is assessed.
- **Zone of visual influence** - Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect visual amenity.

APPENDIX 3 – METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Assessment Approach

- A3.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the guidance contained within the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002) and the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3) produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). This study assesses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
- A3.2 Throughout the report, a clear distinction is made between the *landscape context* (the landscape as a resource) and the *visual context* (views/visual amenity):
- Landscape Context: the physical characteristics or elements of the urban and rural environment, which together establish the character of each area e.g. geology, topography, hydrology, land cover, land use, vegetation and settlement pattern; and
 - Visual Context: the views of the Site and the proposed development, and the perception in the change of these views by individuals both living in and visiting the area.
- A3.3 The assessment of landscape character and visual amenity is both a subjective and objective process. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed, by following a systematic and robust step by step process, rational and transparent conclusions can be drawn.
- A3.4 The process of LVIA is therefore based on the following principles and processes:
- Baseline appraisal of the landscape resource and visual amenity of the Site and the surrounding landscape, including desk based research and field surveys to identify the nature of the existing resource. Sources of information for the desk study are listed in Appendix 1;
 - Identification of the individual receptors likely to experience change from the proposal;
 - A description of the effects, both adverse and beneficial; and
 - An assessment of the relative importance/significance of the effects identified.

- A3.5 For the purposes of this report, the term 'impact' refers to the cause of the change and 'effects' are the results or changes on the landscape and visual context.
- A3.6 It is important to recognise that the LVIA process can be an integral part of the design process. Following an initial appraisal of the baseline, primary mitigation and enhancement measures can be fed back into the development proposals and its design as part of an iterative approach. Additional secondary mitigation and monitoring measures including construction management practices to avoid or reduce landscape and visual effects are identified where necessary.
- A3.7 The review of current and draft planning policy, in conjunction with the findings of the baseline survey, provide the basis for identifying the potential landscape and visual effects of the development of the site.
- A3.8 The Guidelines emphasize that any LVIA should be in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. This Methodology sets out the range of potential activities for an Assessment; for smaller projects, the principles will be followed but the scope of work may be reduced.

Baseline Appraisal of the Landscape Context

A3.9 The baseline study includes a combination of desk and fieldwork in order to identify the existing character of the landscape, and the elements, features and combinations of features and less tangible attributes such as their aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to it.

A3.10 The location of the Site is identified in the published National Character Areas Profiles, County and Local Landscape Character Assessments, supplementary planning documents such as green infrastructure proposals, countryside strategies, and published mapping.

A3.11 This analysis provides an understanding of the landscape components within the site that contribute to the landscape;

- topography, land-cover, land use, vegetation, settlement and buildings for example;
- Landscape character and its key characteristics that contribute it; and
- The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape;

Identifying Landscape Receptors

A3.12 As part of the baseline study the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposals, often referred to as the landscape receptors, are identified. These include the overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

Landscape Value

A3.13 As part of the baseline study the value of the landscape is assessed taking into account the presence of statutory and non-statutory designations and the reasons for their designation, in conjunction with the objectives for the District Landscape Character Assessment including:

- Landscape quality- the condition and overall strength of character

of the site and surrounding area;

- The importance, value or special qualities placed on the landscape including scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreation value, perceptual aspects including tranquillity, and cultural association.
- The objectives of landscape strategies and guidance.

A3.14 These are summarised in Table 1.

Value	Designations / Landscape Quality Landscape designations, condition and strength of character and degree to which the landscape is representative of the wider area
High	Internationally or Nationally Important Landscapes e.g.: National Park, AONB, Registered Parks and Gardens, National Trust Land, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct landscape structure with strong pattern and intact features / few detractors or uncharacteristic features present. • Features noted as highly distinctive and/or rare and in excellent condition. • Management objectives require conservation of landscape character.
Medium	Landscapes Important at a Regional/District Level e.g.: Special Landscape Areas / Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognisable landscape structure and characteristic patterns / some detracting features present. • Features noted as a particularly characteristic and/valuable component of the landscape. • Management objectives require conservation and restoration of landscape character.
Low	Ordinary landscapes / not designated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degraded landscape structure with fragmented pattern and poor legibility of character / detracting features notable within the landscape. • Common features and/or in poor condition. • Management objectives required restoration of landscape character.

Table 1. Assessing Landscape Value

Baseline Appraisal of the Visual Context

A3.15 The Visual Baseline Appraisal is an evaluation of the existing visual amenity in the locality of the Site and the contribution that the Site makes to existing visual amenity.

A3.16 Specific evaluations from identified viewpoints are used for the assessment of visual effects. A viewpoint is a place from where there is a potential view of the Proposals and the visibility of the Proposals is the extent to which they may be seen from public viewpoints and private properties. Viewpoints fall broadly into three groups:

- Representative: illustrating views from within a wider area e.g. views representative of a group of houses or a street or along a public right of way;
- Specific: demonstrating views from key locations such as visitor destinations or recognised viewpoints, views from protected landscapes or with particular cultural associations; and
- Illustrative: demonstrating a particular effect or specific issue e.g. restricted visibility in an area where views might be anticipated.

A3.17 All public places and residential properties that might have a view of the Proposals are identified. Unless special circumstances prevail, access is not made to the interior of residential properties. The orientation of dwellings and surrounding vegetation that may influence views are noted. If the visual survey is made when vegetation is in leaf, an assessment is also made of the likely winter views.

A3.18 At each viewpoint, baseline photographs are taken to record the existing view. All photographs are taken during the day with a digital camera at a focal length of 50mm and an eye height of 1.65m in accordance with technical guidance and best practice. The weather and visibility at the time of the survey is recorded.

Identifying Visual Receptors

A3.19 The location of people who may experience changes in views

(visual receptors) is identified and representative viewpoints are recorded. Information about the type of views are also recorded; for example the elevation of the view; a full, partial or glimpsed view; the proportion of the development that would be visible; the distance of the viewpoint from the development; the scale and proximity of the view of the development; whether the view is stationary, transient or sequential.

A3.20 Distance is dependent on the nature of the setting. A close view is defined as a view from within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. Other views are defined as:

- Local: within 0.5km of the development
- Medium distant: 0.5km to 2km from the development
- Distant: 2km or more from the development.

A3.21 The visual receptors may include:

- Users of properties: such as residents, employees or visitors;
- Users of public rights of way: public footpaths, bridleways, byways and informal paths;
- Users of transport routes: main roads and residential streets; and
- Places accessible to the public, including open space areas, gardens and other destinations.

Value of Views / Visual Amenity

A3.22 The existing visual amenity from principal viewpoints is assessed using published surveys if they exist or using the professional judgement of an experienced landscape architect using the criteria in Table 2 to define the value attached to particular views and a judgment on visual amenity.

A3.23 The visual amenity/value of existing views was noted in the baseline appraisal taking into account the presence of statutory and non-statutory designations (including those from heritage assets), and with reference to other indicators such as appearance in guidebooks or maps.

Level	Visual Amenity
High	Visual amenity assessed as good to excellent; an area of high scenic value to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally recognised or important views such as those protected by policy e.g. National Park / AONB or a national trail / route. • Designed views. • Views to or from designated heritage assets, views from recognised tourist destinations, views marked on maps or referred to in art / literature.
Medium	Visual amenity assessed as average to good to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views which are locally recognised including those protected by local policy eg. visually important open space or special landscape area. • To or from locally important heritage assets. • Views from local destinations and well used footpath routes.
Low	Areas of average to low visual amenity to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views which are not recognised or have limited value, such as footpaths which are not well used. • Detracting features may be clearly apparent.

Table 2. Assessing Visual Amenity

Assessing the Landscape Effects

A3.24 The landscape effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative. The assessment involves a systematic assessment of the changes to the landscape receptors identified in the baseline assessment.

A3.25 The assessment of the landscape effects requires a methodical consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of change from the proposed development.

Assessing Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptors

A3.26 The sensitivity of the landscape receptors is defined by a combining judgments of their susceptibility to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as defined in the baseline appraisal.

$$\text{Landscape Value} + \text{Susceptibility} = \text{Landscape Sensitivity}$$

A3.27 The sensitivity of the landscape / landscape components is classified on a sliding scale from high to low and is determined by a combination of value and susceptibility as set out in the matrix in Table 3.

		LANDSCAPE VALUE		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
SUSCEPTIBILITY	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Table 3. Sensitivity Matrix

Landscape Susceptibility to change

A3.28 The susceptibility (ability) of the landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences on the local landscape character is assessed on:

- the potential for mitigation;
- the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the proposed development; and
- the extent of the proposals being in accordance with management or policy objectives.

A3.29 The susceptibility of the landscape and its landscape components is classified on a sliding scale from high to low as set out in Table 4.

A3.30 Those landscape components, which make a notable contribution to character and can not accommodate the proposed development or change without affecting the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies have a high susceptibility, while those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape and can accommodate the change without affecting the baseline situation have a low susceptibility.

Landscape sensitivity

A3.31 Those landscape components, which make a notable contribution to the character and can not accommodate the proposed development or change without affecting the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies are of high sensitivity. Those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape and can accommodate the change without affecting the baseline situation are of low sensitivity.

Level	Landscape Susceptibility to Change
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features which are dominant within the landscape and are fundamental in defining the distinct landscape character of an area. • Important characteristics and features forming an intrinsic part of the landscape. • Distinctive individual or rare features. • No or very limited potential for substitution or replacement. • A landscape of strong positive and distinctive character with limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development without affecting the baseline situation. • Low potential for replacement or for mitigation
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally important and notable features that contribute to the overall character of the area. • Features and elements protected by local policy. • Some potential for substitution or replacement. • A landscape of positive character with some evidence of erosion with some capacity to accommodate the proposed development without affecting the baseline situation. • Specific opportunities for replacement, restoration or enhancement.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements that make a limited contribution to the overall character of the area. • Features or elements that are uncharacteristic and detract from the landscape character of the area. • Good potential for substitution or replacement. • A landscape of ordinary character with some evidence of erosion and capacity to accommodate the proposed development without affecting the baseline situation. • Opportunities for restoration and enhancement.

Table 4. Assessing Landscape Receptor Susceptibility

Magnitude of Landscape Change

A3.32 The description of the magnitude of change includes the likely extent, scale and duration of:

- Changes to the existing landscape fabric (eg the loss of trees and hedges or other landscape features)
- New elements introduced to the Site (built and natural)
- Changes to local perceptions of the Site.

A3.33 The descriptions inform a judgement on the magnitude or extent of change on the landscape classified on a sliding scale from High to Negligible based on the criteria established in Table 5. Changes can be positive or negative.

A3.34 A High magnitude of Change is described as a prominent and notable change potentially occurring over or influencing a wide area and a Low or Negligible Magnitude of change describes changes that are small and/or are restricted to the site level.

A3.35 The effect of the proposed changes to the Site and the identified landscape receptors considers the changes to the existing landscape resource, the introduction of new elements within the landscape and changes to local perceptions of the Site. These changes are assessed during construction, on completion of the scheme (Year 1) and at Year 15 when proposed vegetation has matured.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	LANDSCAPE CHANGE EXPERIENCED as a result of the Proposals	
	Negative	Positive
<p>HIGH</p> <p>Changes relate to a wide area and will be apparent as such in the wider landscape of the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in the permanent loss of characteristic landscape elements and features/characteristics and/or their setting; • Introduce uncharacteristic or dominant elements; • Be at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • Substantially erode landscape character and/or condition; • Undermine any designation or the nature of a vulnerable landscape; • Be at complete variance with the landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; • Be incapable of mitigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the majority of existing landscape components and/or enable the full restoration and/or replacement of characteristic landscape elements and features; • Introduce new landscape elements and features that through good design enables a sense of place to be fully restored; • Have a strong contextual fit with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape; • Substantially enhance landscape character and/or condition; • Deliver substantial landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; and be fully capable of mitigation.
<p>MEDIUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in the partial loss or alteration of characteristic landscape elements and features and/or reduce or remove their setting; • Introduce uncharacteristic components alongside characteristic features or elements; • Be at odds with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • Be a noticeable change, although not necessarily uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape; • Result in a deterioration of landscape character and/or condition; • Be at variance with the landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; and be capable of some mitigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing key features and/or enable partial restoration of characteristic landscape elements and features; • Introduce new landscape elements and features that through good design enables sense of place to be restored; • Fits well with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • Enhance landscape character and/or condition; • Deliver some landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; • Be capable of mitigation to deliver local benefits.
<p>LOW</p> <p>Changes are localised in extent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in the temporary or minor loss or alteration of landscape elements and features and/or reduce their setting; • Introduce some uncharacteristic components alongside characteristic features or elements; • Not quite fit with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • Be a discernible change, although not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape; • Result in a minor deterioration of landscape character and/or condition; • Not fulfil landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; • Be capable of mitigation that maintains existing scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development would from the baseline condition; • Retain existing key features and/or allow limited restoration of characteristic landscape elements and features; • Introduce new landscape elements and features that through good design enables some sense of place to be restored; • Respects the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; • Enables limited enhancement of landscape character and/or condition; • Deliver limited landscape objectives and policy guidelines for the area; • Be capable of mitigation to ensure that the proposals would blend in well with the surrounding landscape.
<p>Negligible</p>	<p>The development would introduce barely discernible elements or physical change to the landscape from the baseline condition. Key characteristics of the landscape and its integrity are unaffected.</p>	

Table 5. Assessing Magnitude of Landscape Change

Assessing the Visual effects

A3.36 The visual effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative. The assessment involves a systematic identification and description of the visual effects, supported by plans and photographs.

A3.37 The assessment of the visual effects requires a methodical consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of change from the proposed development.

Assessing Sensitivity of the Visual Receptors

A3.38 The sensitivity of the people and user groups within the visual envelope of the Site (visual receptors), is defined by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value of the views which were identified during the baseline study.

$$\text{Susceptibility} + \text{Value} = \text{Sensitivity}$$

A3.39 The sensitivity of the visual receptors is classified on a sliding scale from high to low and is determined by a combination of value and susceptibility as set out in the matrix in Table 6.

		VALUE / VISUAL AMENITY			
		SENSITIVITY	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
SUSCEPTIBILITY	HIGH	High	High	Medium	
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low	
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low	

Table 6. Sensitivity Matrix

Visual Susceptibility to change

A3.40 Susceptibility is classified on a sliding scale from High to Low based on the criteria set out in Table 7.

Visual Sensitivity

A3.41 In accordance with GLVIA, the sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent on the location and context of the view, the number of people likely to be affected by the change, the expectations and occupation/activity of the receptor and the importance of the view, including the presence of designations.

A3.42 Those receptors which are classified as being of high sensitivity include users of rights of way or nearby residents, while those of low sensitivity may include people in their place of work or travelling through the landscape in cars or other modes of transport. The assessment of views from private residences, particularly those bordering the site is based on representative views from groups of dwellings or streets based on the nearest possible publicly accessible location.

A3.43 Local residents tend to have a high sensitivity to visual changes; the most important views being those from homes, although residents will also be sensitive to views from the wider landscape when travelling or walking. Views from private property are not a material consideration in determining planning applications unless the proposed change is so intrusive as to cause unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

A3.44 Other users of higher sensitivity generally include users of rights of way including recreational walkers, equestrians and cyclists, along with others engaged in cultural pursuits whose occupation is the enjoyment of the outdoor environment. Users of lower sensitivity generally include users of major trunk routes and A Roads where the primary focus is getting to the intended destination rather than appreciation of their surroundings. Particularly scenic, slow or local routes are generally of medium sensitivity.

Level	Visual Susceptibility
<p>HIGH</p> <p>Observers whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape and recognised views</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific recognised or important views, including those identified within and protected by policy. These views may include tourist destinations and those marked on maps. Designed views particularly from within and to historic landscapes. Residential properties with views from the main living space during daylight / waking hours (predominantly ground floor). Users of rights of way and recreation trails. Users of land with public access including Open Access and National Trust land.
<p>MEDIUM</p> <p>Views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of the activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential properties with views from rooms not from the main living space unoccupied during daylight / waking hours (predominantly first floor rooms) or at distance from the Site. Those playing or spectating at outdoor sports or undertaking formal outdoor recreation. Users of local and scenic/tourist routes and low levels of traffic.
<p>LOW</p> <p>Attention is focused upon the activity and not the wider landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users of trunk and main roads travelling at speed to an intended destination. Places of work, in particular office based or indoor workers.

Table 7. Assessing Visual Receptor Susceptibility

Magnitude of Visual Change

A3.45 Changes to views identified during the baseline study and the subsequent effect on visual receptors were identified and described with reference to the following:

- The nature of the view of the development e.g. full or partial views, or only a glimpse;
- The proportion of the development or particular features that would be visible;
- The distance of the viewpoint from the Site;
- Whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and/or proximity or whether it would comprise a small, minor element in a panoramic view;
- Whether the view is stationary/fixed, transient, or one of a sequence of views experienced along a route or moving vehicle; and
- The nature of the change resulting from the development through the removal or introduction of features (both natural and man-made) and any associated changes to the profile of the skyline, visual simplicity/complexity, enclosure/openness and scale.

A3.46 The description was used to inform a judgement on the magnitude of change or the extent of change on the visual receptors, classified on a sliding scale from High to Negligible based on the criteria established in Table 8. High is described as a prominent and notable change in the view with Low or Negligible a small and/or barely perceptible degree of change in a wider composition. The nature of the effect can be either positive or negative. There may be instances where an impact results in an effect that is neither; these are considered to be neutral in nature.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	VISUAL CHANGE EXPERIENCED as a result of the Proposals	
	Negative	Positive
<p>HIGH</p> <p>Changes effect a large number of receptors;</p> <p>A wide area;</p> <p>The duration of the view is prolonged, uninterrupted and/or unavoidable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal results in the total, permanent loss of a highly valued view. • Proposal introduces dominant or discordant elements altering the composition or balance of the view. • Proposal introduces features not already present on/or part of the skyline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal removes substantial visual detractors. • Proposal introduces positive elements that substantially enhance the composition of the view. • Development introduces an immediately apparent landmark or feature.
<p>MEDIUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is clearly visible and recognisable but not prominent in views. • Proposal introduces elements that are not necessarily already characteristic and/or are incongruous; • Development may form skyline features amongst existing development and/or vegetation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal removes some visual detractors. • Proposal is a visible but characteristic element complementing the composition of the view.
<p>LOW</p> <p>Changes effect a low number of receptors;</p> <p>A localised area;</p> <p>The duration of the view is fleeting or interrupted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is only a minor component or slightly uncharacteristic part of the view and does not introduce incongruous features. • Proposal does not alter the overall composition of the view or dominance or balance of elements within it and therefore might be missed by a casual observer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal removes limited visual detractors. • Proposal is only a minor component of the view and complements the composition and balance of existing elements.
<p>NEGLIGIBLE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is perceived as a background component in a view or are subservient to other elements within it. • The development would be barely discernible. 	

Table 8. Assessing Magnitude of Visual Change

Assessing the Significance (scale) of Landscape and Visual Effects

A3.47 The significance(or scale) of both the landscape and visual effects is a function of the sensitivity of the landscape / visual receptor and the magnitude of change that they would experience:

$$\text{Sensitivity} + \text{Magnitude of Change} = \text{Significance}$$

A3.48 Effects can be considered to be Adverse, Neutral or Beneficial and may vary over time, as set out in Table 10. Generally, the effects of a development are assessed on completion of the scheme. However the effects during the construction phase should also be considered (these might be particularly relevant in long term or large scale projects such as mineral extraction projects).

A3.49 In accordance with the GLVIA, significance is not absolute and whilst a judgement is made on both the overall sensitivity of each identified receptor and the magnitude of change, the conclusion is based on the professional judgement of the assessor.

A3.50 The nature and relative significance of the effects depends on the degree to which the Proposals:

- Complements, respects and fits into the existing landscape and views;
- Enables retention, enhancement or restoration of landscape character and visual amenity and delivers landscape guidelines and/or policy aspirations; and
- Influences the visual context and in particular strategic and important views.

		MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE Landscape/ Visual			
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
SENSITIVITY	HIGH	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Neutral
	MEDIUM	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Neutral
	LOW	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor	Neutral

Table 9. Significance / Scale of Effect Matrix

LEVEL	SIGNIFICANCE / SCALE OF EFFECT
Major Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the landscape character type to a major degree with a total loss or major alteration to key attributes. • Proposed changes cannot be mitigated and will be completely uncharacteristic and/or introduce elements that are totally uncharacteristic of the surrounding area. • The Proposals would be visually intrusive and would result in a substantial deterioration to visual amenity;
Moderate Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the landscape character type to a moderate degree with a partial loss of key attributes. • Proposed changes cannot be fully mitigated and will be uncharacteristic and/or introduce elements that are prominent but may not be substantially characteristic of the surrounding area. • The Proposals would be visually intrusive and would result in a noticeable deterioration to visual amenity.
Minor Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the landscape character type to a minor degree with a minor loss of key/characteristic elements/features; • Proposed changes cannot be fully mitigated and will be uncharacteristic and/or introduce elements that may not be uncharacteristic of the surrounding area. • The Proposals would cause limited visual intrusion and would result in a barely perceptible deterioration to visual amenity;
Negligible/Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the proposals will be in keeping with the landscape character type; • Proposed changes result in the removal of incongruous/ intrusive elements and the introduction of new elements; • The development would result in very limited change to the existing landscape resource or visual amenity.
Minor Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce/complement the landscape character type to a minor degree and make a minor improvement to landscape character;. • Proposed changes result in the removal of incongruous/ intrusive elements and the introduction of new elements and/or introduce elements that are characteristic of the surrounding area maintaining landscape character. • The Proposals would visually complement the existing view and would result in a barely perceptible improvement to visual amenity.
Moderate Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the landscape character type to a moderate degree and make a noticeable improvement to the landscape character through well-designed planting and mitigation measures; • The Proposals would fit in well with and enhance the key elements or features of the landscape and/or introduce elements that maintain and/or enhance landscape character. • The development would visually integrate into the existing view and would result in a noticeable improvement to visual amenity;
Major Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the landscape character type to a major degree and substantially mitigate an existing adverse effects with a major improvement to the local landscape character by restoring the integrity of a damaged landscape; • The development would entirely fit in well with and substantially enhance the key elements or features of the landscape and/or introduce elements that substantially enhance landscape character. • The development would visually integrate into the existing view and would result in a substantial improvement to visual amenity.

Table 10. Assessing Significance/ Scale of Landscape and Visual Effects

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

A3.51 Where several developments are affecting the same landscape, an assessment of cumulative effects may be required.

A3.52 The Guidelines (7.3) define cumulative effects as follows:

- *'Cumulative effects - the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together' (Scottish National Heritage (SNH), 2012, 4)*
- *Cumulative landscape effects can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it (SNH, 2012:10)*
- *Cumulative visual effects can be caused by combined visibility, which occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint and/or sequential effects which occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments' (SNH 2012: 11).*

A3.53 The Guidelines (7.28) state that *'the emphasis must always be on the main project being assessed and how or whether it adds to or combines with the others being considered to create a significant cumulative effect'.*

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