

# Water Eaton

PR6a : Land East of Oxford Road

Environmental Statement Appendix 10.3:  
Landscape Strategy Document

**Bellway**

  
**STRATEGIC  
LAND**



WE / LAN3 / P01



# WATER EATON

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2023



BELLWAY HOMES LIMITED AND CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Bellway Homes Limited and Christ Church, Oxford to provide a Landscape Strategy in relation to Land to the East of Oxford Road.

This document supports the emerging masterplan for the site and sets out further detail relating to the design approach. The key components of the strategy are as follows:

- 1 This Landscape Strategy is based on a robust assessment and evaluation of the existing site landscape character and a detailed understanding of the site's unique sense of place.**
- 2 The strategy considers the local context and provides links to the existing countryside and the settlement.**
- 3 Views to and from the countryside are integrated into the site layout and the visual relationship between the development and the wider landscape forms a key component of the landscape strategy.**
- 4 The landscape strategy aims to create a soft transition between the settlement edge and the countryside, creating a permanent and defensible boundary to the green belt.**
- 5 High quality green infrastructure is embedded into the scheme and applies Building with Nature principles to the site.**





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# CONTENTS

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SECTION 1: Introduction and Purpose	5
.....	
SECTION 2: Assessment and Evaluation	8
.....	
SECTION 3: Landscape Strategy	16
.....	
SECTION 4: Implementation and Management	30
.....	

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# SECTION 1: Introduction and Purpose



# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## Introduction

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Bellway Homes Limited and Christ Church, Oxford to provide a Landscape Strategy Document to support the planning application for development at Land East of Oxford Road to the north of Oxford.

The site is located on the northern edge of Oxford between Oxford Road to the west, Oxford Parkway Park and Ride to the north and Cutteslowe Park to the south. It lies on the district boundary between Oxford and Cherwell District Council (CDC) and is situated within the administrative area of CDC.

The site consists of six medium to large sized arable fields and is bound by Oxford Road along its western boundary. It is bordered to the north and east by further agricultural land but remains influenced by urbanising features including Oxford Parkway Park and Ride to the north, Oxford Road to the west and the settlement edge of Cutteslowe and Cutteslowe Park bordering the site to the south.

The proposal would deliver a sustainable, residential led development which provides high-quality green infrastructure and accessible open space with links to the wider countryside. The landscape strategy draws on the local landscape and ecological context to create a unique sense of place.



Site Location and Overview



## Purpose

This document supports the masterplan for Water Eaton, providing additional detail on the landscape strategy for the site - including its planning, design and implementation. The document presents the initial design concepts and sets out the scope of a more detailed landscape strategy which will be developed as the design process evolves.

## Building with Nature

Building with Nature (BwN) sets out a framework which ensures development proposals deliver high-quality green infrastructure networks. It showcases what successful implementation of green infrastructure within developments looks like and accredits developments which have fulfilled the standards set out within the framework. The standards are divided into four groups which are:

- Core Standards;
- Wellbeing Standards;
- Water Standards; and
- Wildlife Standards.

These highlight opportunities to adopt a holistic approach to designing developments. This ensures that proposals optimise the multifunctionality of a development, so that it can positively respond to issues such as climate change resilience, biodiversity net gain, place making, connecting people and nature, sustainable water management and delivering wildlife enhancement. Section 3 of this report discusses the Building with Nature principles and how they have been applied to the proposed development.

## Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a key component in delivering sustainable development. It provides an opportunity to achieve biodiversity net gain and enhances the landscape quality of a development area. It can be defined as the following:

According to the European Commission:

*“Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services”.*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) glossary defines green infrastructure as:

*“A network of multi-functional green spaces and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits to nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity”.*

Green infrastructure can comprise a wide range of features, such as parks, gardens, green spaces, green roofs, green walls, street trees, verges along roads, meadows, wetlands, rivers, canals and lakes. Because of the inclusion of lakes and waterways it is sometimes called ‘green and blue infrastructure’.

## Setting Out the Approach

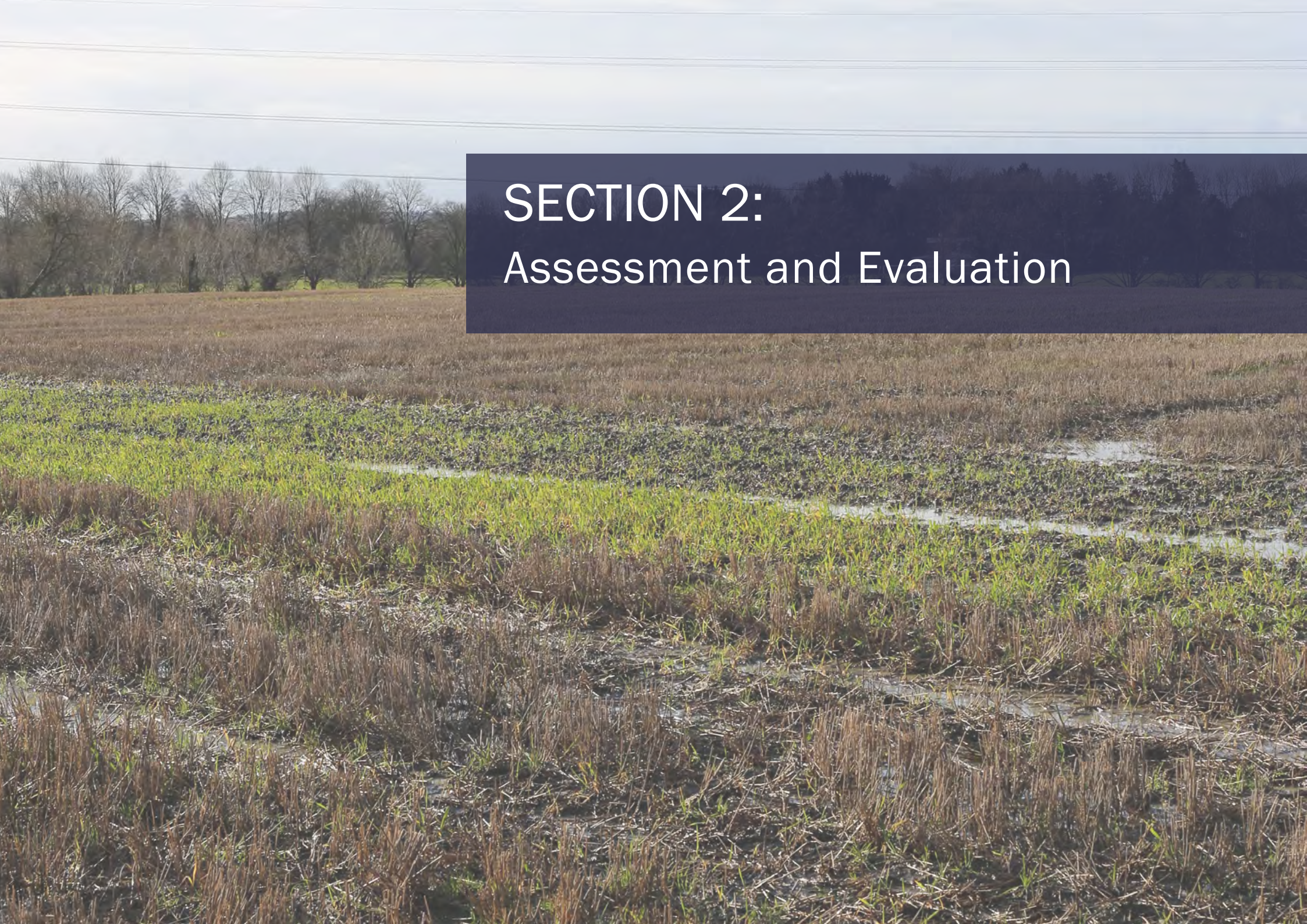
This document provides detail on the approach to the landscape strategy, showing where the green infrastructure can be preserved, enhanced, connected and expanded to create a biodiverse and multi-functional landscape setting for the development:

**Section 2** commences with a detailed site assessment, landscape character evaluation and review of policy and best practice guidance. It also explains the Landscape and Visual baseline assessment work undertaken and summarises how this informs the landscape design process.

**Section 3** presents details of the project concepts and how this will inform the design and development of a masterplan using the landscape and habitat structure of the site as a starting point.

**Section 4** provides initial thoughts on the Implementation and Management plans for the development.



A landscape photograph showing a wetland or marsh area. The foreground is dominated by dense, tall grasses, some of which are green and others brown, indicating a mix of active and dormant vegetation. A narrow, shallow stream or channel of water flows through the center of the field. In the background, there is a line of bare trees under a cloudy sky. A dark blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

## SECTION 2: Assessment and Evaluation



## SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

### Planning Policy Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

The NPPF sets out strategic planning policies for England. It emphasises a presumption in favour of sustainable development and identifies key requirements to ensure an appropriate design response.

#### Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1) Partial Review - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (Adopted 2020)

The Cherwell Local Plan (CLP) sets out policies for CDC and its future development. It includes several policies of relevance to the site, including Policy PR6a - Land East of Oxford Road, which allocates the site for future development.

#### Relevant Policies:

##### Policy PR5- Green Infrastructure

*"Strategic developments provided for under policies PR6 to PR9 will be expected to protect and enhance green infrastructure".*

##### Policy PR6a- Land East of Oxford Road

The policy identifies key requirements expected of development within the site as a whole. The following are considered relevant to defining a coherent landscape strategy:

*"6. The provision of public open green space as an extension to Cutteslowe Park on 11 hectares of land in the location shown and including land set aside for the creation of wildlife habitats and for nature trail/circular walks accessible from the new primary school";*

*"7. The creation of a green infrastructure corridor on 8*

*hectares of land incorporating a pedestrian, wheelchair and all weather cycle route along the site's eastern boundary within the area of green space shown on the policies map";*

*"25. The provision of a landscaped green infrastructure corridor at the eastern settlement edge which links Cutteslowe Park to Oxford Parkway, minimises the visual and landscape impact of the development, creates an appropriate setting for the listed St. Frideswide Farmhouse and Wall, and provides a clear distinction between the site and the Green Belt";*

*"26. The provision of connecting green infrastructure corridors running east-west";*

*"27. The provision of an active frontage along Oxford Road while maintaining a well treed streetscape"; and*

*"28. The public open green space/extension to Cutteslowe Park and agricultural land to be kept free of buildings to avoid landscape impact".*

#### Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review - Landscape Character and Capacity Study (2017)

The site lies within an area defined as "LCSA38 North Oxford Triangle". Key findings of the study include:

- *"There is a medium capacity within the site for residential development as this would form a natural extension to the northern edge of Cutteslowe resulting in infilling of land between the A4165 Oxford Road and the A34 for the central and west parts of the site";*
- *"There is a medium potential to accommodate woodland within the site area"; and*
- *"The agricultural land may be improved through the reinstatement and gapping up of hedgerow field boundaries and the management of the existing shelter belt/woodland buffers located along the road and rail corridors".*

### Best Practice Guidelines

The Landscape Strategy will be underpinned by best practice principles and will adhere to the following published guidance documents:

- Building with Nature; and
- Manual for Streets.

## Baseline Assessment

This section summarises the landscape baseline as presented in EDP's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and gives an overview of other published assessments. It includes mapping that defines the existing landscape character and context of the site. It includes:

- Published Landscape Character;
- Terrain analysis;
- Historic landscape features;
- Existing landscape fabric; and
- Views and visibility.

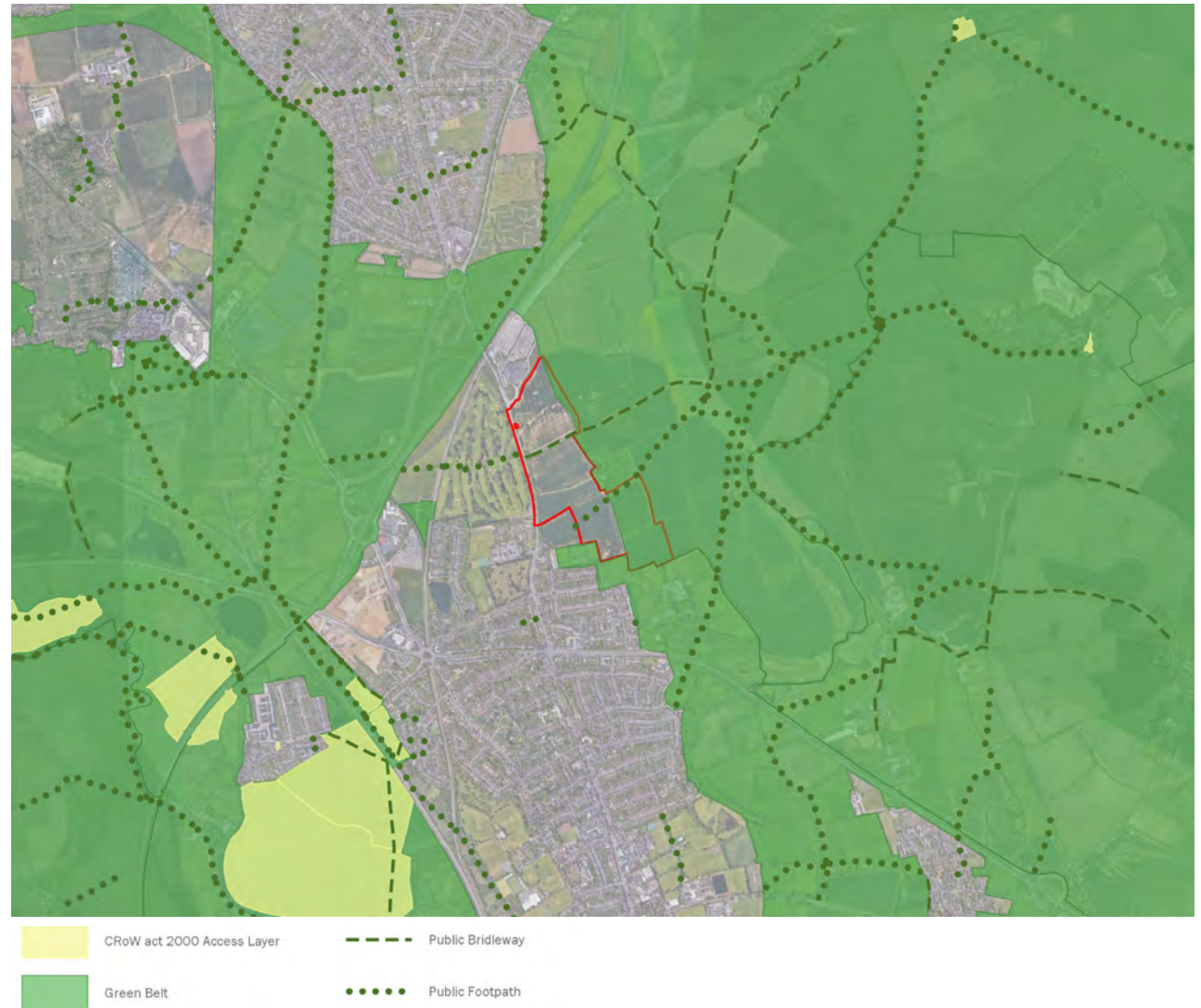
## Strategic Landscape Context

From a strategic landscape perspective, Water Eaton is situated along a main road between two areas of settlement - Kidlington to the north and Oxford to the south of the site. The Oxford Parkway Park and Ride is located to the north of the site and is a transportation hub that provides connectivity to Oxford and the wider regional railway network. Generally the site is well connected through existing traffic networks. It is allocated for development in local policy and lies next to a site that is permitted for development.

The site is located in an area of agricultural land which borders open countryside to the east. It is served by an extensive network of footpaths and public rights of way which ensure access and connectivity to the wider countryside. Cutteslowe Park within the northern settlement edge is the largest park in Oxford and has a strong visual connection with the area of land the site is located on.

Historic context is quite apparent within the site, due to the proximity to St Firdeswide's Farm on its boundary and Water Eaton Estate to the north-east of the site.

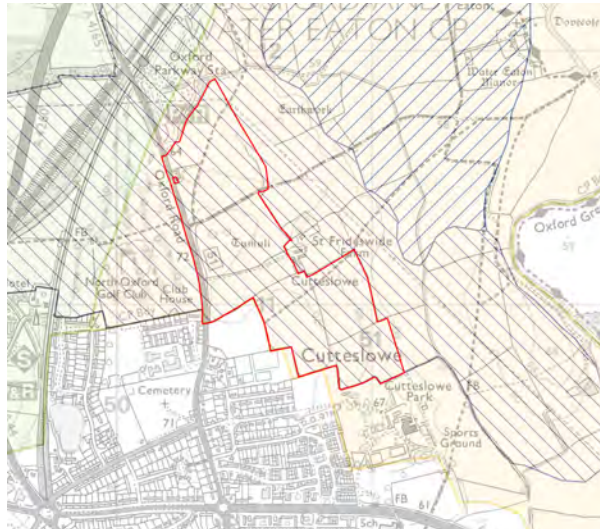
## Landscape Context









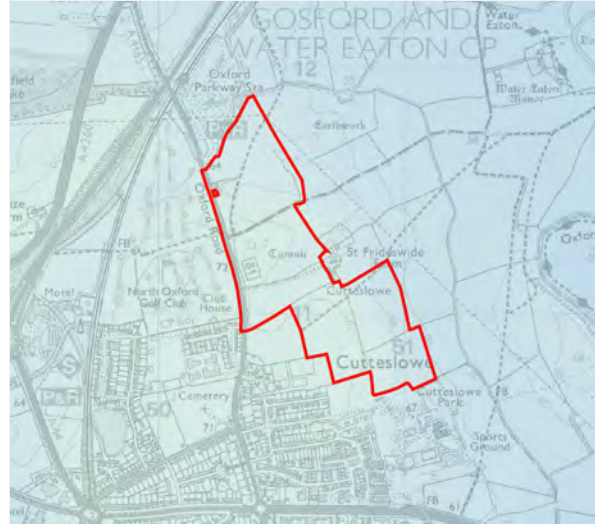
# SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

## Assessing the Landscape Context:



### Published Landscape Character:

-  Otmoor Lowlands
-  Lower Cherwell Floodplain
-  Vale Farmland
-  Alluvial Lowlands



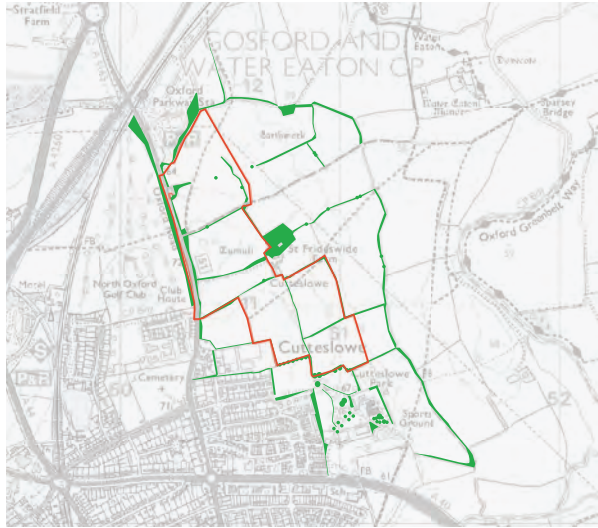
### Topography:

The site is located within a predominantly low-lying area. There is a noticeable dip in the east around the River Cherwell and in the west around the Oxford Canal. There are no other variations of note in the local landform within the study area.



### Historic Character:

Aside from the removal of field boundaries and the extension of the local settlement areas to the south, the landscape of the site and surrounding area is relatively similar in character and features to the landscape mapped in the early to mid-19th century. Historic mapping shows St Frideswide's Farm and surrounding areas of planting. Water Eaton estate and Manor Farm is clearly shown. Water Eaton Copse to the north-east of the site has been removed. The existing network of footpaths appears to be based on historic routes shown on the historic mapping.



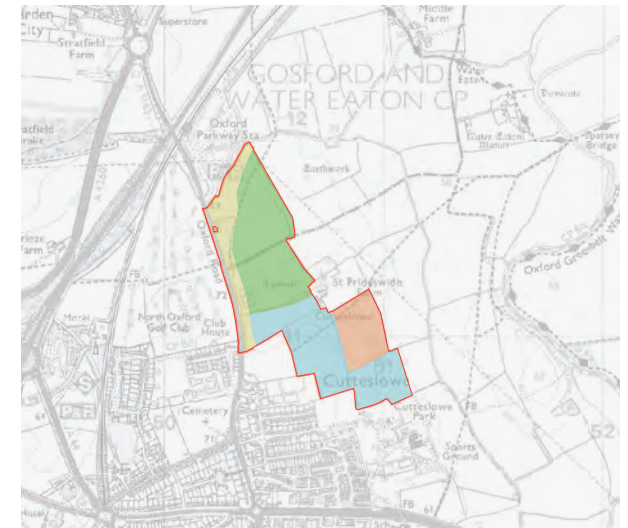
**Existing Landscape Fabric:**

Large arable field parcels separated by linear hedgerows of varying size and quality. Sporadic large hedgerow trees located within existing hedgerows or within fields as left over features from historic hedgerows. Extensive vegetation cover around St Frideswide’s Farm and at the settlement edge to the south. Dense belt of vegetation to Oxford Road in the west and the Park and Ride in the north. Overall, the local landscape is considered to be of medium value.



**Site Terrain Analysis:**

The site wide terrain analysis shows that the site is generally low-lying. The highest areas are within the western and central extent of the site. Slight undulations in the local terrain result in a low lying area to the south-east of the site.



**Site Landscape Character Areas:**

- Agricultural Land near Settlement Edge
- Agricultural Land near Oxford Road and Park and Ride
- Open Agricultural Land North
- Open Agricultural Land East



## SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

### Landscape Character and Features

#### Published Landscape Character

On a national scale, the site falls within NCA 108: Upper Thames Clay Vale. This area is generally described as “a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland”. On a regional scale, the site and surrounding area fall within the Oxford Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) and the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (CDLA).

Within the OWLS, the site lies in the Vale Farmland area. Key characteristics relevant to the site are listed below:

- “Gently rolling landscape associated with clay soils”;
- “Medium to large regularly shaped arable fields”;
- “Areas of woodland and parkland to north-east in association with Tyttenhanger Park”; and
- “Occasional ditches and small streams”.

Key characteristics of the CDLA relevant to the site are listed below:

- “Substantial areas of land are in arable cultivation”;
- “Fields are large and regular with weak boundaries”; and
- “Very few trees to interrupt views across the floodplain”.

#### Site Landscape Character

The site’s vegetation patterns are defined by its agricultural land use. The site consists of six medium to large sized arable fields and is bound by Oxford Road to the west, which features extensive vegetation along the road. Hedgerows form the typical field boundary within the site and feature intermittent hedgerows trees. The southern boundary of the agricultural fields is defined by maintained hedgerows with some trees which enclose the sports pitches at Cutteslowe Park.

Landscape features of note within the site include native hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, predominantly Oak and a deciduous tree belt along the eastern edge of Oxford Road. Hedgerows define most of the eastern boundary of the site, except for an open section along the north-east boundary of the northern field, where fields have been amalgamated

The terrain of the site is predominantly flat and gently slopes towards the east of the site, which increases to the east of St Frideswide’s Farm. There are no watercourses within the site.

The topography and overlying pattern of hedgerows and vegetation afford expansive views of the countryside to the east from within the site. The visual connection with the wider landscape is a key component of the site’s landscape character.

A number of key features around the site have an influence on its character including St Frideswide’s Farm on the eastern boundary of the site and Water Eaton Estate to the north-east of the site. The nearby settlement edge and Cutteslowe Park to the south of the site form the visual backdrop to the majority of the site. Development along Oxford Road and Banbury Road to the south is predominantly residential. The low-lying terrain is prone to flooding, particularly around the River Cherwell and within the south-eastern extent of the site.

The site is representative of the Vale Farmland character area in that it features medium to large fields with occasional ditches and a well-defined network of hedgerows. It also features elements that are typical of the Otmoor Lowlands, which include an arable land use, regular fields with weak boundary features and few trees to interrupt views across the floodplain.



*Agricultural Land Use within the Site*



*Hedgerow and Trees at Cutteslowe Park*



*Site Use and Boundaries*



*Extensive Boundary Vegetation to Oxford Road*



*Development Context on Oxford Road*



*Hedgerow as Boundary Feature within the Site*

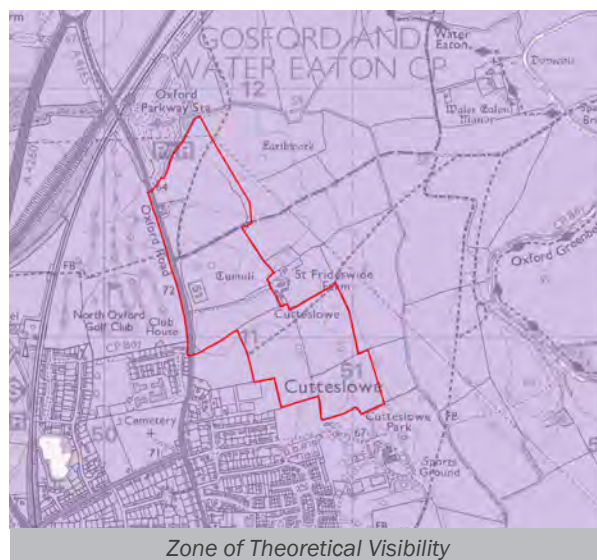


## SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

### Visual Appraisal

EDP has carried out a comprehensive visual appraisal of the proposed new development, testing potential visibility using Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling and field work. Findings of the visual assessment indicate that:

- 1 Given the scale and nature of the proposed development there would inevitably be some adverse effects on visual receptors. However, where views are available, the proposed development would be integrated within an extensive and far reaching green infrastructure network, which provides many benefits to biodiversity and landscape character;
- 2 Built development on the settlement edge is an established and frequent component of the visual character of the area. Existing built form and transportation infrastructure can reduce the sensitivity of its surrounding landscape if it's perceptually apparent, and therefore an urbanising influence;
- 3 Views of the wider countryside provide an attractive context for development proposals within the site. Opportunities to screen development through structural planting and create key visual links towards the countryside exist; and
- 4 Anticipated visual effects of note are considered to be limited to changes to views from Public Right of Way (PRoW), both within and proximal to the proposed development and the areas of development on the settlement edge to the south of the site.



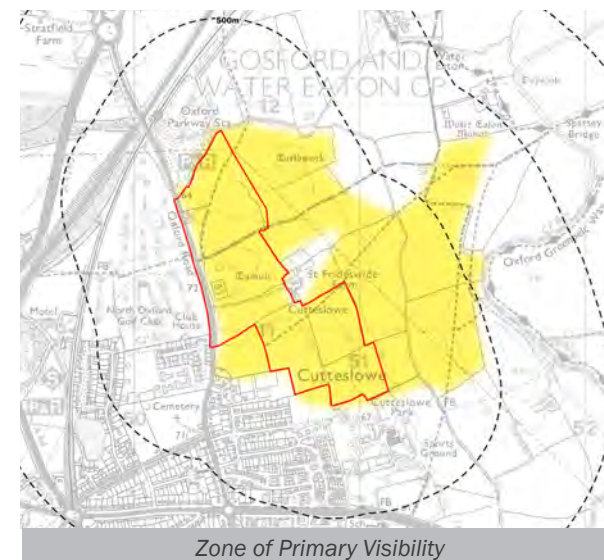
Zone of Theoretical Visibility

--- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

#### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The starting point for an assessment of visual amenity is a computer-generated 'zone of theoretical visibility' (ZTV). The ZTV is derived using digital landform height data only and therefore, it does not account for the screening effects of intervening buildings, structures or vegetation, but it does give a prediction of the areas that, theoretically, may be able to experience visual change; it therefore provides a basis for a more detailed field assessment.



Zone of Primary Visibility

--- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)

Zone of Primary Visibility

#### Zone of Primary Visibility

The ZTV is then refined by walking and driving local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive at a more accurate, 'field-tested' zone of primary visibility (ZPV). The ZPV is where views of the proposed development would normally be close ranging and open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle.



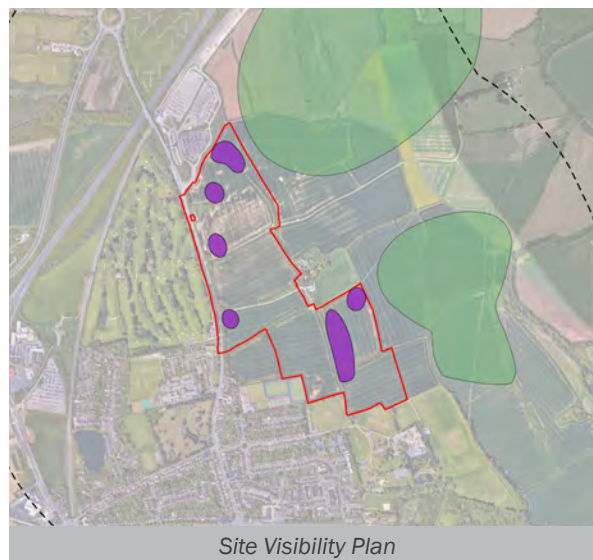


Viewpoint Location Plan

- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)
- Zone of Primary Visibility
- Photoviewpoint Location
- Wireline Location

### Viewpoint Location Plan

Within the ZPV, there are many individual points at which views towards the site are gained. Nineteen viewpoints that are considered representative of defined receptor groups have been identified and are shown in the above viewpoint location plan.



Site Visibility Plan

- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)
- Zone of Primary Visibility

### Site Visibility Plan

The Site Visibility Plan assesses the visual amenity of the site in relation to the visibility of the site as well as visibility from within the site. This considers prominent areas of visibility in long distance views and short distance views looking towards the site. It also considers areas within the site which have the most visibility into the wider countryside.

### Key Design Considerations:

- Opportunity to create a high-quality landscape setting for development at Water Eaton that responds to the local context in a positive way. This would include the transformation of agricultural land to an enhanced area of accessible green space in the east and south-east of the site. This area would be easily accessible and would provide a soft transition from development to the open countryside adjoining the site to the east;
- Visual analysis indicates that there is a visual relationship between the site and the open countryside to the east. There is potential to provide an extensive buffer along the site's eastern edge and towards the settlement edge in the south. This would limit visibility of the site from the north-east and east. The setting of St Frideswide's Farm would be enhanced through the additional boundary vegetation; and
- Opportunity to create access routes through the site which run alongside green infrastructure links and accommodate existing footpaths through the site. These links could be used to enhance visual connections to the wider countryside and maintain a strong connection to the surrounding landscape.



# SECTION 3: Landscape Strategy





## Concept

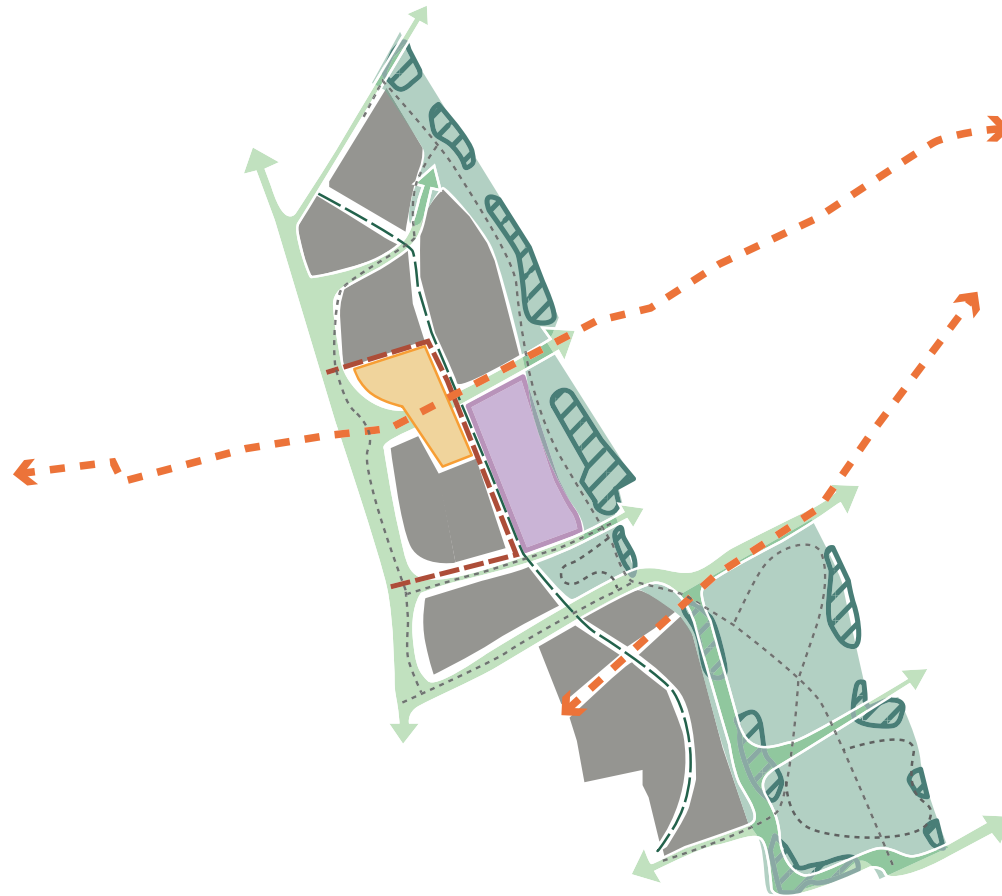
Water Eaton would be developed from a landscape and ecological placemaking perspective. Rather than regarding ecological and landscape features as separate entities, a holistic design response will apply BwN principles to enhance biodiversity and connect people with nature.

The local context, including its landscape and visual character, would be retained where possible and connected with the site. Outdoor spaces would form a key component of the development to provide interactive and inclusive spaces for the wider community.

Existing hedgerows forming part of the site's landscape structure and fabric are retained and incorporated into the site layout. Where existing tree cover along Oxford Road is lost, extensive replacement planting will take place to ensure the Oxford Road frontage remains a key green corridor.

Existing footpaths are retained and embedded into the scheme. Where possible and appropriate, additional connections to the countryside and the settlement are created.

The site's eastern boundary provides the opportunity to form a transition between the built development and the wider countryside. Visual connections form a key component of the design, ensuring built form is screened but visually present to incorporate the proposals within the local landscape. The eastern boundary to the countryside creates a gateway, that connects the community with the local landscape.





# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

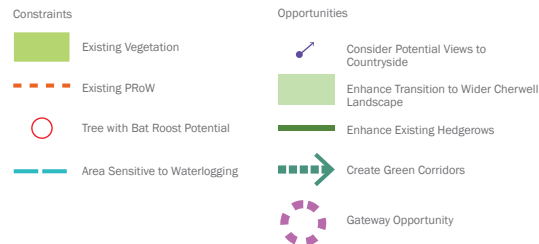
## Design Principles

The following diagrams set out the key considerations and principles that underpin the Landscape Strategy. They consider the existing context and potential design responses to the baseline condition of the site. These principles would form the underlying structure to the masterplan for Water Eaton.

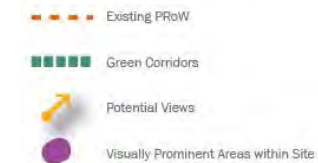
## Building with Nature Objectives

- Optimise multifunctionality and connectivity
- Create a resilient landscape with positive response to Climate Emergency;
- A landscape appropriate to historic and local character contexts;
- Maximise Environmental Net Gains; and
- Deliver a high-quality landscape that bring people closer to nature.

### 1. Constraints and Opportunities



### 2. Visual Connectivity with the Countryside



### 3. Character Areas



#### 1 Transition Space

- Opportunity to provide buffer planting to create a distinctive boundary to the site;
- Potential to create a soft transition between the area of development and the wider countryside; and
- Opportunity to incorporate the existing hedgerows and planting at St Frideswide's Farm into permanent boundary feature.

#### 2 Oxford Road Boundary

- Potential to create green spine along Oxford Road which creates a visual buffer to the development; and
- Additional green infrastructure links could be linked with the existing vegetation to form an extensive network.

#### 3 Countryside Gateway

- Opportunity to maintain open character of site and create an area of Public Open Space that corresponds with Cutteslowe Park;
- Respond to landscape context with water sensitive design, incorporating SUDs and a blue corridor; and
- Create a multifunctional green space that forms a soft transition to the countryside.

#### 4 Central Hub

- Potential to create a central hub which has pedestrian, cycle and vehicular links to the wider site; and
- Provide network of pedestrian and cycle routes which are accompanied by corridors of vegetation.

#### 5 Southern Corridor

- Retain and enhance existing vegetation through the southern corridor to ensure a soft edge towards the settlement in the south; and
- Potential to create additional green infrastructure links to the wider site.



# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Landscape Strategy

The Landscape Strategy has been developed based on the outlined design principles. The plan illustrates potential responses to the site and its context to create a cohesive and multifunctional landscape.

-  Site Boundary
-  Existing PRoW
-  Indicative Location of Footpaths
-  Indicative Location of Cycle Route
-  Proposed Main Access Route
-  Proposed Landscape Buffer Planting
-  Proposed Multifunctional Green Space
-  Proposed Green Corridors
-  Proposed Community Hub
-  Indicative Location of School
-  Indicative Development Area



## Biodiverse Landscapes



Running throughout all aspects of the design is the goal of enhancing biodiversity. This will be achieved at the strategic scale with habitat creation designed to connect to and expand adjacent habitats.

Landscape proposals are coordinated with ecological and arboricultural assessments to maximise potential habitat benefits. Species selection will be a mix of natives and non-natives to ensure a climate resilient selection.

## Water Sensitive Landscapes



A holistic approach to water management and SuDS will be applied to the site. Opportunities for drainage elements such as ponds and ditches have been identified at a strategic level to ensure an appropriate response to water sensitive areas and to enhance biodiversity. Where possible, access to water landscapes will be provided which enables interaction on a communal level.

## Interactive Landscapes



Spaces that enable communal engagement and activity encourage connections with the local landscape and community. Interactive landscapes ranging from play spaces to informal education spaces and allotments are provided as part of the scheme.

Revitalising traditional habitats such as orchards and encouraging food rich species within the wider landscape can further enhance biodiversity across the site while enabling the community to take ownership of the landscape.

## Active Landscapes



Active landscapes provide opportunities to move and come together as a community. Play and tranquil spaces through to longer distance running routes and bike trails take advantage of the diversity of habitats and features within and around the site. Spaces have been designed to support community gatherings, clubs and informal meeting spaces.

Cycle and pedestrian routes are provided within the site which promote climate friendly modes of travel.



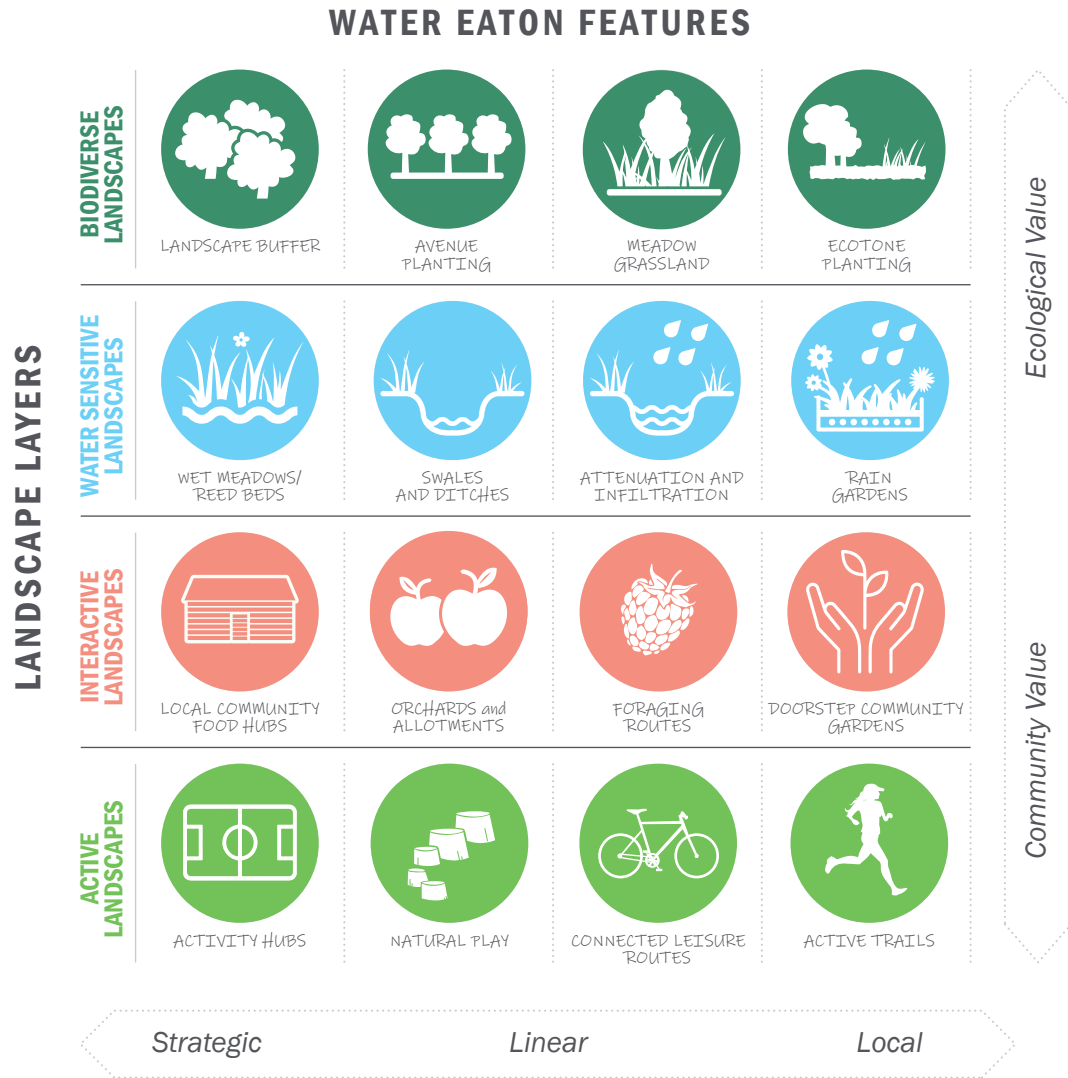
# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Landscape Structure

A landscape structure is the breakdown of features that contribute to the creation of a diverse and characterful green infrastructure network at Water Eaton. The structure is made of a suite of landscape features organised into four landscape layers categorised by their community or ecological value.

The structure allows for the easy codification of the landscape features supported with guidance defining how, where and why they should be assigned, in accordance with the higher level green infrastructure strategies. The structure allows for a greater degree of flexibility within the masterplan, whilst providing a greater level of detail in the green infrastructure design and overall landscape vision.

The matrix opposite shows our initial approach to the structure. The matrix is organised vertically and horizontally: landscape layers make up the vertical rows, arranged on a sliding scale from a higher ecological value to a higher community value; and the landscape features are arranged horizontally against each category, arranged by scale from strategic to linear to local.



# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY





# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Biodiverse Landscapes



### Landscape Buffer Planting

- New planting along eastern development edge to soften transition between site and wider countryside.
- Use of native and climate resilient species to enhance biodiversity and habitat value.



### Avenue Planting

- Avenue planting along proposed roads and Oxford Road to enhance tree cover within the site is in line with national policy.
- Green Infrastructure is created across the site to form a consistent network.



### Meadow Grassland

- Creation of varied types of grassland to expand local habitats.
- Meadow planting to enrich landscape areas and increase biodiversity.



### Ecotone Planting

- Appropriate planting to create a natural transition zone between habitat areas and movement corridors for wildlife
- Planting to act as an access management tool as well as to increase biodiversity.

## Water Sensitive Landscapes



### Wet Meadows/Reed Beds

- Wet meadows and reed beds to be designed as part of sustainable drainage system.



### Swales and Ditches

- Proposed network of drainage features throughout the site and within open spaces and streets.
- Variations in character – narrow channels and broader swales to increase biodiversity.



### Attenuation and Infiltration

- Basins designed to create varying landform.
- Include permanently wet areas to increase biodiversity.



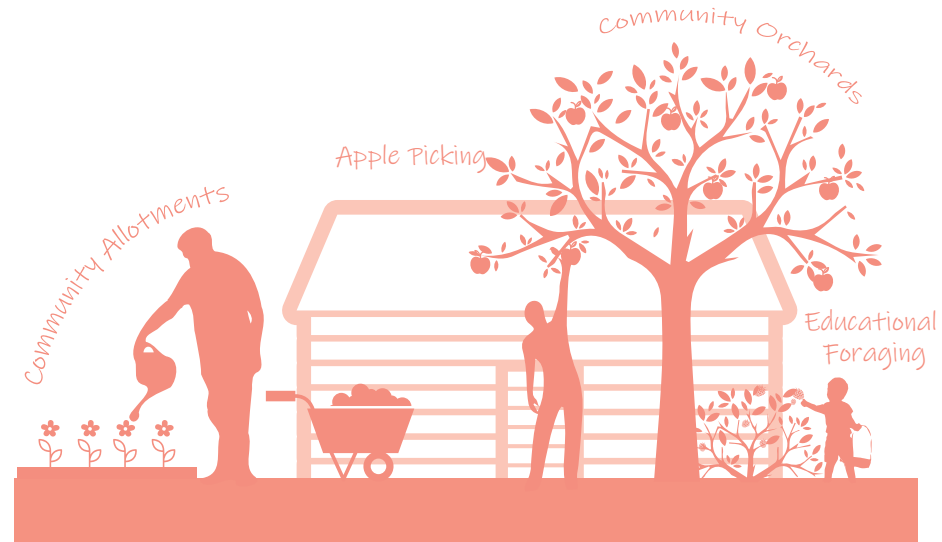
### Rain Gardens/Bio Retention Areas

- Designed to manage run-off in streets and plazas.
- Vibrant and diverse planting to create visual interest and increase biodiversity.



# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Interactive Landscapes



### Local Community Food Hubs

- Local farm shop/cafe serving residents and surrounding communities with local produce.



### Orchards and Allotments

- Community orchards and allotments for community engagement.
- Suitable for social gatherings such as spring blossom picnics and 'apple days'.



### Foraging Routes

- Seasonal foraging and education trails.
- Street and parkland trees to include fruit and nut varieties.



### Doorstep Community Gardens

- Street based pocket community gardens for ease of access.
- Herb gardens, fruit bushes, kids planters.

## Active Landscapes



Opportunities for Alternative Recreation



Community Sports



### Activity Hubs

- Formal sports pitches within school grounds and opportunity for informal kick about spaces within POS.
- Opportunities for bike routes and trim trails.



### Natural Play

- Interactive play opportunities.
- Opportunity to use natural features like logs and boulders.



### Connected Leisure Routes

- Footpath and cyclepath connections.
- Bridlepath and equestrian routes.



### Active Trails

- Natural play, fitness, nature and art trails.
- Park runs.



# SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## Building with Nature Standards

### Core Standards

**1** *Standard 1: Optimise Multifunctionality and Connectivity*

The proposed development incorporates a series of walking and cycle routes, which connect with the existing network of routes that is either present within the site or within its context.

**2** *Standard 2: Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency*

The scheme provides a network of walking and cycling routes which are connected to Oxford and the wider countryside. Bus routes are located on Oxford Road which further provide sustainable transport routes.

The proposed species selection for the landscape strategy uses a mix of native and non-native species, to provide variety and ensure the proposed landscape features are future proofed.

**3** *Standard 3: Maximises Environmental Net Gains*

The scheme incorporates extensive areas of open space and planting, which provide quiet spaces for people and wildlife.

**4** *Standard 4: Champions of Context Driven Approach*

The proposed scheme and Landscape Strategy respond to the local context and ensure that key landscape character features are retained and visual connections with the countryside are kept intact.



**5** *Standard 5: Creates Distinctive Places*

The scheme incorporates high quality Green Infrastructure which feeds into the scheme's overall layout. Distinctive areas are designed to create a sense of place and identity.

**6** *Standard 6: Secures Effective Place-keeping*

This strategy outlines key management principles for the proposed landscape within the scheme.

## Wellbeing Standards

### 7 Standard 7: Brings Nature Closer to People

The scheme's location and proposed design incorporate natural areas and open spaces and provide easy access to the wider countryside.

### 8 Standard 8: Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places

The scheme incorporates areas of open space, walking and cycling routes and communal gardens which are designed to be freely accessible without requiring payment or the consumption of goods.

## Water Standards

### 9 Standard 9: Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management

Sustainable drainage features such as attenuation basins, ditches and swales have been incorporated into the scheme. Where appropriate, attenuation basins are designed to permanently hold water for biodiversity benefits.

### 10 Standard 10: Brings Water Closer to People

The proposed attenuation features would include appropriate planting to enhance amenity and biodiversity value. Where appropriate, information boards or informal play features could promote interaction with these features.



## Wildlife Standards

### 11 Standard 11: Delivers Wildlife Enhancement

The scheme retains existing hedgerows and proposes locally relevant new habitats within the site. There is a commitment to enhance biodiversity net gain within the site and provide extensive tree planting along Oxford Road.

### 12 Standard 12: Underpins Nature's Recovery

New habitat creation is proposed and strategically located within the site to enable wider connectivity with landscape features and areas of habitat in the local context.





# SECTION 4: Implementation and Management

# SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

## Implementation and Management

This section provides an overview of the management principles that should be applied to the proposed Landscape Strategy. The general maintenance objectives alongside the proposed landscape typologies and their management requirements are set out below:

- To support and enhance the establishment of a sustainable landscape that creates a high quality green infrastructure network and defines a permanent Green Belt boundary along its eastern edge;
- To create a site that provides seasonal interest, legibility and enjoyment for residents and visitors to Water Eaton;
- To enhance ecological value in both biodiversity terms and human amenity, bring the benefits of a range of wildlife and the restorative effects of natural environments to residents and visitors;
- To integrate the natural and urban character of the landscape; and
- To achieve and maintain a high standard of repair, functionality, safety and aesthetic appeal of the proposed landscape using sustainable management techniques as far as possible.

### Maintenance Objectives for the Landscape Strategy

The following is a list of maintenance objectives that should be achieved to ensure the proposed landscape strategy is able to establish and thrive within the site:

- Comply with sound horticultural and ecological practice;
- Promote healthy growth and establishment of all plants, trees, grass, wildflower areas;
- Control the spread of invasive weed species;
- Maintenance to coincide with, and promote flowering periods and stem colour (species-specific where required); and
- Enable development of optimum plant form, shape, and planting density in accordance with relevant British standards.

### Planting Typologies

The open spaces and planting proposed within the site have been divided into eight typologies. The below provides an overview of these, their general characteristics and outlines a high level management approach.

#### *Eastern Landscape Buffer*

The eastern landscape buffer is the main green corridor incorporated within the site and accommodates a series of

formal and informal open spaces, including the area of open space in the south-east corner of the site. The landscape strategy for the eastern landscape buffer incorporates a series of landscape typologies, which respond to the site's context and provide a soft transition between the proposed scheme and the countryside in the east. Play areas, cycle and walking routes, allotments and informal spaces are included along the eastern corridor. The proposed tree and shrub groups form a dense, yet visually permeable buffer to enable visual connections with the countryside and create a newly defined green belt boundary.

#### *Tree Groups*

An essential component of the proposals is the provision of new areas of tree group planting. As well as performing a structural visual mitigation role, the woodlands form part of the overall strategy to enhance the habitats across the site to promote ecological interests and frame views out towards the wider countryside in the east. Their composition is predominantly native woody species, with the potential to incorporate non-natives for climate resilience.

#### *Avenue and Specimen Tree Planting*

Proposed avenue and specimen tree planting throughout the site would comprise a selection of medium to large trees. Extensive tree planting is proposed along the Oxford Road frontage. The proposed palette of trees is broadly native in composition and designed to accommodate a range of habitat types. Additionally, areas of fruit trees are proposed to introduce a productive landscape component into the corridors.

The tree planting palette includes predominantly native species that respond to the character of the surrounding



## SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

landscape. Where appropriate, non-native species are also used to create visual diversity and ensure the proposed landscape scheme is climate resilient.

### *Shrub/Scrub Planting*

Shrub planting provides amenity and habitat value. This is incorporated as native scrub within wilder areas of planting and as more formal ornamental shrub to go alongside amenity areas. The key difference in these applications is the management regime, whereby scrub would be left to grow more naturally, while the areas of shrub planting would be cut more regularly and managed to fit more formalised parameters.

### *Existing and Proposed Hedgerows*

Hedgerows are a key component of the landscape character and structure present in the site and local context. Existing hedgerows are retained where appropriate and integrated into the proposed site layout. Additional hedgerows are proposed to enforce the local vegetation patterns and create green corridors across the site. The eastern boundary is partially defined by an existing hedgerow and will be enhanced with a proposed hedgerow, which is in keeping with the local field boundaries. Hedgerows are composed of native species mixes to maximise biodiversity benefits.

### *Grasslands*

As part of the ecological enhancements for the landscape scheme, wildlife corridors are to be enhanced with additional meadow and rough grassland throughout the site to provide a species rich understorey to the existing and proposed tree groups, extending beyond the proposed woodland extents to contribute to both aesthetic quality and habitat creation.

Once established, the maintenance regime for areas of meadow and rough grassland would be significantly less than intensive manicured lawns, reducing the need for regular maintenance; reducing cost and minimising the impact on biodiversity within these valuable wildlife corridors.

### *Amenity Grassland*

Amenity grassland is sown where there is potential high frequency of users, in and near play areas and adjacent to footpaths within wider open spaces to promote a variation in grass mixes composition and diversity.

Roadside verges are to be sown with appropriate amenity seed mixes to produce a fine, drought tolerant turf that does not require an intense mowing regime.

### *Attenuation Features*

As part of the sustainable drainage strategy, attenuation basins would reinforce and contribute to ecological connectivity within the site. These would be predominantly seeded with water tolerant wet meadow mixes. Where permanent water is retained, these attenuation basins and ecological ponds would be planted with a marginal planting mix to promote ecological diversity and provide an amenity for both residents and visitors to enjoy.

### *Footpaths and Hard surfaces*

Within the open spaces and eastern landscape buffer, footpaths are predominantly 2-3m wide with resin bonded surfacing. Where these are shared cycle and pedestrian routes, widths may vary to accommodate both uses.

Within the central part of the site, where asphalt surfaces dominate, permeable surfacing would be used for footpaths where appropriate.

Additionally, informal mown footpaths are provided within seeded and grassed areas.



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