



Application Submission for
Bicester Motion: Innovation Quarter (IQ)
at Former RAF Bicester

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

For

Bicester Motion

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Ver Issued: D3
30-6-23

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The IQ (Innovation Quarter) concept was created to facilitate an increasing demand from automotive technology businesses seeking premises that provide locality to Oxfordshire's iconic 'Motorsport Valley' which sits at the heart of a global cluster of high-performance technology, motorsport and advanced engineering companies.
- 1.2 Bicester Motion has attracted these leading technology companies by providing a unique and compelling alternative to the out-of-town science parks often associated with these types of businesses. Bicester Motion provides an attractive offering where technology businesses have the ability to showcase their research, technology and products to the public taking advantage of the demonstration tracks with close proximity to town of Bicester and City of Oxford.
- 1.3 This updated LVIA is submitted as a Section 73 application to vary the existing parameter plans.
- 1.4 This LVIA updated report has resulted from a process of desktop study, site appraisal and analysis to the current guidelines of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment. The report has been prepared by Anthony Stiff BSc MA CMLI, Managing Director of ASA Landscape Architects, a landscape architect with over 35 years' experience.
- 1.5 The report has addressed the landscape and visual impact of the IQ development on the site itself, its wider setting of the former RAF Bicester and of the wider landscape. It covers
- 1.6 The development is located on the furthest south west boundary of the site near to existing large-scale commercial development and adjacent to a busy road. There is a new substation opposite the site and the residential edge of Bicester is set behind a swathe of mature vegetation. The landscape character is predominantly sub-urban with commercial/industrial influences.
- 1.7 The design team has worked closely with, and has been led by, landscape and heritage specialists.
- 1.8 A key feature of the site is that it lies on the extreme periphery of the airfield well outside the perimeter track. The latter defines the actual operational flying field and

the openness of this is a key characteristic of the site as a whole. The IQ site does not impinge on the openness of the flying field. Another key feature is the visual link between the wider Bicester site and the rural, distant landscape. These views are not affected by the IQ development.

- 1.9 There are also important views from the main Technical Site and Watchtower. The view will change and the IQ development will clearly be visible, but it will not be dominant in the view and will be seen against a backdrop of existing commercial/industrial development. The architectural form and design will be sympathetic to the existing built heritage. This S73 Application is a new application for 7 buildings but the principle of this quantum of development has already been agreed in the previous consent for 6 buildings.
- 1.10 The design team has been landscape and heritage-led, but has worked collaboratively to evolve the design to an agreed scale, mass, form and height. The buildings form a cohesive grouping, with consistent heights, footprints and design. The buildings at 10.5m high, are below the height of hangers on the Technical Site and also below those of the nearby Bakel Factory. The sinuous layout sets the buildings back from the road and is sympathetic to the form of this part of the site.
- 1.11 Local views and receptors from the Skimmingdish Lane and some residential properties, and including cyclists and pedestrians to the south will experience some localised adverse impacts in the view, however these are predicted to be up to Moderate and would be mitigated in the medium to longer term by the establishment of tree planting within the site boundary that would break up the mass of the buildings and help to screen the views. Compared to the previous scheme the impacts are less as the buildings are set back from the road and thus avoid the perception of continuous development parallel with the road.
- 1.12 Within the site itself views are sensitive, being within the setting to the Conservation Area and including numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There will be a change to some views, for example from the former Watchtower and nearby Scheduled Monument (SAM). Some of the buildings will appear closer than the previous scheme in this view however, the development is not out of scale with or inappropriate for the site and the change to the view will result in less than significant

harm.

- 1.13 The new buildings will not compete visually with the historic structures and the form and materials used for the new buildings will be sensitive to those already used within the site. The predicted views WFVPs 7, 12 and 16 illustrate the massing and form. In the round, taking account of the existing and future uses and context of the site, the visual impact is considered to be acceptable.
- 1.14 The proposals will not be out of character or inappropriate for the re-purposed site. The current proposals will have localised impacts within one peripheral area of the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that the IQ buildings will not dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the Main Technical Site. The cumulative effects of the IQ development, though significant within its own peripheral zone, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall.
- 1.15 In terms of planning policy and in particular Cherwell Local Plan Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a short-term local impact on nearby landscape receptors including residential, road and roadside footpath users, but these impacts will be mitigated over time with proposed new structural tree planting.
- 1.16 The Heritage Impact Assessment has concluded that the proposed development will help to ensure that the site and its constituent buildings have a sustainable future, thus preserving those collective memories. The proposals do not involve the demolition of any of the existing structures. The proposals will make the heritage assets (SAM) (Seagull Trenches and Pill Boxes) more publicly available. The new uses associated with Bicester Motion will help to create new memories that will add to the site's communal value.
- 1.17 The Heritage Report by Worledge Associates states that there is no significant harm to the SAM. There will be no impact on areas of high tranquillity. The site is not an area of high tranquillity being subject to aircraft noise, road noise on two sides and existing motoring uses, including ex-army vehicles. The screening effect of the IQ buildings may be beneficial in reducing traffic noise to this land parcel.
- 1.18 Overall, in landscape and visual terms, the IQ development will have site level and local level impacts, but these impacts will be partly mitigated over time, as new planting

establishes and matures. The impacts on key features of the existing Bicester Heritage site and the wider landscape are considered to have less than significant harm.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 ASA Landscape Architects was appointed in April 2023 to update this assessment in support of a Section 73 application to vary the existing parameter plans.

Scope of This Study

- 2.2 The purpose of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process is to inform and assess the impact of a development proposal on two aspects related to landscape and the public's enjoyment of it. These aspects are firstly the landscape setting itself and second the visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding areas from which views are possible. In this case there is also a focus on the impacts on the site itself due its place in terms of its heritage significance and the part that landscape character plays in helping define the key characteristics of the site, and also how landscape issues help to maintain the understanding of the way which the former RAF aerodrome functioned.

Methodology

- 2.3 The methodology for the LVIA is derived from the Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013. The methodology also draws from: Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland Swanwick C and LUC 2002. The report is based on a combination of desk-based research and field survey work.
- 2.4 The latest guidance in the 3rd edition of the LVIA guidance has not changed the basic method of assessment from the previous guidance (Version 2) but has placed an emphasis less on formulaic methods and more on the judgement of a qualified and experienced professional. While this report does use matrices, these are not based on numeric values. Instead they use descriptive scales to inform the overall judgement and conclusions of the report and to provide a degree of transparency that would otherwise be lacking. The way in which the field data and other data compiled as part of the study are interpreted is defined by the Assessment Methodology contained in Appendix B. This methodology has been developed over a period of time and has been found to be robust, providing transparency and traceability of the findings of the report.
- 2.5 The LVIA process makes a distinction between the landscape effects and visual effects. Landscape effects are those which affect individual components of the landscape, its

pattern and composition, or its perceptual qualities such as openness or tranquillity. Visual effects are those experienced by individuals or groups of people who are likely to view the development.

2.6 The LVIA process carried out for the study comprised of:

- A baseline study to identify the existing landscape character and likely landscape and visual ‘receptors’. This was carried out through a process of desk study and field observation. This process has identified landscape parcels within the site and their relative sensitivity and capacity for development. There has also been a strong emphasis on a collaborative approach between landscape, heritage and ecological disciplines comprising design workshop and site studies, with the joint findings of the relevant specialists feeding into the architectural and masterplan proposals to inform the quantum of development for the site. The extent and complexity of the study is proportionate to the scale and size of the proposed development.
- The identification of the landscape and visual effects likely to result from the development;
- An assessment of the significance of these effects through an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors, and the likely magnitude of change that the receptors will experience compared to the existing landscape and visual baseline. Assessment Methodology and Criteria are set out in Appendix B.
- An initial assessment of cumulative impacts, assessing at a high level the effects of multiple developments within the site is contained within the report. The Cumulative Effects Methodology is also set out in Appendix B.

3 The Existing Landscape Context

Site Location

- 3.1 The IQ site location is shown on Figure 1. The site is part of former RAF Bicester which continues as an active airfield with associated hangars, technical site and various ancillary buildings in which many diverse commercial enterprises/organisations have now been established. The wider Bicester Heritage site is home to over 40 businesses and hosts many events each year. The range of businesses include historic motoring specialists and an active flying field with aviation specialists.
- 3.2 This former RAF Bicester is a large-scale site set within a partly suburban and partly semi-rural setting with open expanses of grassland and established hedgerows, interspersed by a network of historic hard-standing associated with the historic aerodrome activities and buildings.
- 3.3 There are significant urban and commercial influences from the adjacent buildings and their uses to the south; the northern urban extension of Caversfield, Bicester to the south and adjacent busy roads. Nearby commercial development to the south (British Bakels Factory) is of a large, industrial scale (VP27). Skimmingdish Lane has housing all along its southern edge. The context of the IQ site is therefore predominantly suburban/commercial/industrial.
- 3.4 The nearest settlements are at Caversfield on the other side of the A4421 (0.4km to the west, which encompasses the previous RAF Bicester Domestic site), the northern edge of Bicester (0.55km to the south) Stratton Audley (2.44km to the north east) Launton (1.2km to the south east). The cumulative effects of urban influences impart a significant urban fringe character on the north east and south east boundaries of the site.
- 3.5 Other than the northern edge of Bicester and associated suburb of Caversfield to the west, there is very little development in the surrounding countryside other than scattered villages and isolated farmsteads and houses. Beyond the extent of the flying field (on the north east edge of the wider site) lies the Stratton Audley Quarry, now disused, which is now in parts designated as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Local Wildlife Site.

Topography

- 3.6 The former airfield site lies in relatively low-lying ground at around 83m Above

Ordnance Datum (AOD). The ground falls away gently over the extent of the airfield to approximately 75m. The IQ site is at around 75m. The site naturally rises from east to west – starting from 74.3m and reaching 76.0m.

- 3.7 Land to the north and north east rises beyond Stratton Audley (80m AOD) and near to Stratton Audley Park at 110m AOD providing some remote views back towards the wider site from the countryside (2.5km away). Views towards the IQ site are difficult to perceive from remote views being screened out by intervening horizons of trees. Similarly, there are potential views towards the airfield from near to Poundon (4.9km) to the east where land rises to 116m AOD. There are local high points near Abrosden (Graven Hill 113m AOD) 4km to the south west, Upper Arncott (108m AOD) 7km away visible from within the site above the boundary tree line. Considerably further away to the south (9-10km away) there is land at 197m AOD at Muswell Hill, though this is too remote for any significant views back towards the airfield. None of these locations were found to have significant views.

Land Use

- 3.8 The wider landscape is broadly rural to the north and east, and urban to the north west, south and west. As mentioned previously, the busy roads (particularly to the north west and south west) dominate the local landscape in terms of landscape and visual impacts and also noise and pollution. The main Technical Site itself is an established centre for over 40 businesses connected with historic cars. Former Stratton Audley quarry is unused and lies vacant. The IQ site has mostly been occupied by self-sown scrub. The heritage assets contained within this area have been gradually obscured by vegetation and have been lost to view.

Statutory Designations and Rights of Way (Figure 1)

- 3.9 Figure 1 shows the currently recorded statutory designations and public rights of way for the study area which has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. The whole of Former RAF Bicester (Technical Site and Domestic site) is designated as a RAF Bicester

Conservation Area.

3.10 The Conservation Area boundary is shown below.



Conservation Area Boundary

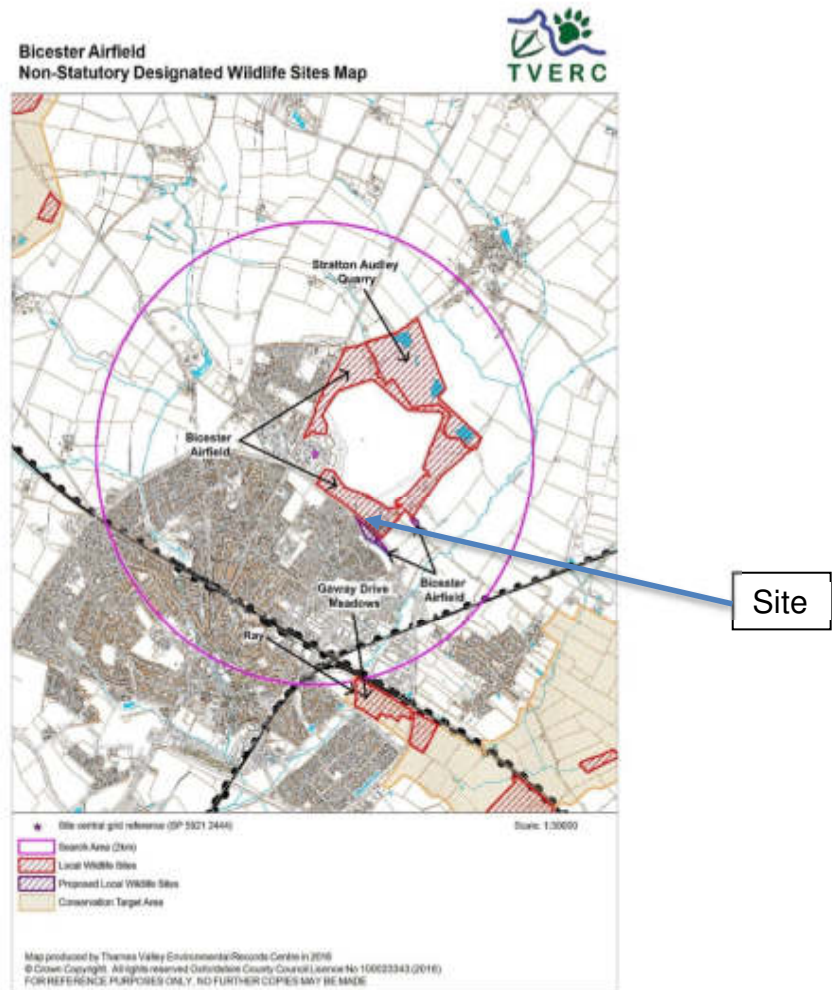
3.11 There are a 10 Scheduled Monuments within the wider Bicester site comprising various former war-time structures, including Mushroom Pill Boxes, Seagull Trenches and Bomb Stores. There are 21 buildings and structures designated as listed buildings, associated with the RAF Bicester Technical Site. The nearest SAM is 30m and the nearest listed building (Watchtower) is 420m away. (See Figure 1)

3.12 There is an extensive network of public rights of way (PRoWs) (Shown on Figure 1) within the countryside around the site. To the north east of the site footpath 371/7/10 and 371/7/20 circulates the part of the disused Stratton Audley quarry site before returning to Stratton Audley.

Non-statutory designations:

3.13 The application site is within Bicester Airfield Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is a site of county importance, designated for presence of Habitats of Principal Importance Lowland Calcareous Grassland and also Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed

Land. The land covered by the LWS contains a range of protected and notable species.



4 Landscape Planning Context

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 12 sets out the Government’s approach to design and achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 130 explaining that planning decisions should ensure developments will add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, establish a strong sense of place and are sympathetic to the local character and history of the surrounding building environment and landscape setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development should be designed with best practice in mind in terms of sustainability and design.
131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 131 goes onto reference that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environment and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to separate Tree Report
132	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 132 also states, ‘Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development should be designed with best practice in mind in terms of sustainability and design. Good design should relate to both the built form, landscape design and biodiversity.

	<p>should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot</p>	
153 and 154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 relates to climate change. • Paragraph 153. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes.... • Paragraph 154. New development should be planned for in ways that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability will be at the heart of the design to recognise the positive impact this will have on the health and well-being of the tenants as well as minimising the long term operating costs and future proofing the scheme on climate change. • The development will be designed to incorporate the existing green infrastructure and will be supplemented with new biodiverse planting.
174	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 15 relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment with paragraph 174 stating, planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) 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); • b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intrinsic character in terms of the site level landscape will change, but will retain the underlying key characteristics of openness of the airfield. • The development will be designed to incorporate the existing green infrastructure and will be supplemented with new biodiverse planting that will contribute towards achieving a biodiversity net gain on site. Ref to Ecology Report

	<p>benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity... 	
180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 180 relates to habitats and biodiversity and states, 'when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles... 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'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development will be designed to incorporate the existing green infrastructure and will be supplemented with new biodiverse planting that will contribute towards achieving a biodiversity net gain on site.

4.1 Summary of Local Planning Policy Relevant to Landscape

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031	How the proposal complies with policy
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An appropriate SuDS drainage system will be incorporated into the proposed development taking account of the site constraints including ecology.

<p>Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • The reuse of soils will be sought 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 international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated • Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ecological consultant, Ecology Solutions will prepare a comprehensive Ecology Strategy for the development, detailing the proposed approach, which will involve full consultation with the CDC Ecology Adviser. • The intent will be to retain boundary trees. Any tree losses will be compensated for by planting new trees as part of the proposals. There is a comprehensive Tree Protection Plan and Tree Management Plan in place. • The ecological proposals will be closely tied to the indicative landscape framework and landscape design for the proposal as a whole which will be agreed through planning conditions. • Soils on site would be reused. • Other ecological aspects will be dealt with by Ecology Solutions. • A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan would be prepared to plan the future management of the site.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value • Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution • 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. 	
<p>Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside • Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography 	<p>The Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment (CDLA) and the OWLS SPG has been referred to as part of this study. The CDLA describes the landscape type as being Transitional defined as: <i>This is one of several landscape types that have specific uses (in this case a military airfield) that also therefore have a specific and overwhelming influence on their landscape character.</i></p> <p>The strategy described for the future for the landscape type is for ‘restoration’.</p> <p>The impact on the local countryside to the north and north east of the site is likely to be minimal. Such receptors are remote from the site and the effects are mitigated by distance and most views are partially screened by intervening layers of vegetation. The site is generally well contained to the south with local and mostly glimpsed public views being only possible from the adjacent Skimmingdish Lane.</p> <p>The landscape has no statutory designations but is noted in SPG (Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment 1995 [CDLCA]) as An Area of High Landscape Importance. The Local plan is not retaining this designation but is proposing instead to seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive and highly valued local character of the entire District. A mitigation strategy will also provide long term amenity and biodiversity benefits as well as offsetting any negative impacts identified within the assessment.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p><i>These landscapes would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place'. The report states further that: These landscapes have a high capacity to accommodate change as they have lost their intrinsic character. The local character is suburban in nature and is dominated in local views by the adjacent road (within a generally contained corridor) and by a modern housing estate. The former airfield and its large-scale hangars are also dominant features, with long open views possible to the south. The proposed IQ development will create a strong new edge to the site with a family of contemporary buildings that will provide a new sense of place and purpose to the site in what is currently a degraded and abandoned area of land.</i></p> <p>The IQ site is close to a busy road and as a result the noise and visual intrusion from the traffic is constant and significant. The site is not considered to be tranquil. Aircraft activity is also present which means that the flying field is not inherently tranquil.</p> <p>New development will need to be seen in the context of existing historic buildings and structures and proposed development. The cumulative impacts of existing, consented and proposed development are also assessed.</p> <p>Reference has been made in undertaking this study to SPD [Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary] as referred to opposite. An additional summary response to this policy is provided at the end of this section. A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan will be produced to set out in a 10-year strategy for the management and monitoring of the site.</p>
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<p>Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment</p> <p>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.</p> <p>New development proposals should:</p>	<p>The design development has been informed by a heritage and landscape-led approach to analyse the constraints and opportunities. These have provided the basis for parameters plans that have, in turn, enabled the design team to produce a broad vision masterplan for the wider site. The IQ site forms part of this vision. See Appendix D.</p> <p>The parameters plans seek to ensure that the development would be designed to be appropriate in form, layout, scale and massing, responding to the site's characteristics and delivering a positive contribution.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions • Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity • Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting • Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage’s At-Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged • Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. • Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages 	<p>The detailed design will need to deliver a high-quality design to be appropriate for its use, and to enhance the intrinsic qualities and distinctiveness of the area; to respect public rights of way, to reflect the use of local materials and to have a holistic, landscape-led approach. The aim will also be to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure.</p> <p>The IQ site will make use of existing degraded and abandoned land that has self-colonised with scrub and has eroded the quality of the heritage features and their relationship to the flying field.</p> <p>The IQ development will add a new modern character and sense of place and will enhance the site’s distinctiveness through its use for cutting edge automotive businesses. The distinctive open character of the main flying field area will not be affected, although its setting will change to some degree.</p> <p>The existing settings of the Pillboxes and Seagull Trenches (SAMS) are already compromised, and the new development presents the opportunity for them to be better appreciated by the public (with increased visitors to the site), and their relationship with the flying field enhanced.</p> <p>This has been addressed in the Heritage Report (Worlledge Associates).</p> <p>The development sits within a parcel of land that is in context with other commercial development and the suburban edge of Bicester. The scale of the buildings is much less than the existing very large scale of ‘sheds’/factories that are adjacent to the south. The scale of the IQ buildings reduces with distance away from this larger scale development which acts as a transition in terms of the massing and height of building form. The former historic rail line will be repurposed and used as a pedestrian access / cycleway.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette• Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features• Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed• Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space• Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation• Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation• Consider sustainable design and layout at the master planning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout• Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)• Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality• Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.	<p>The IQ buildings will be purposely contemporary to reflect the technological history of the site and the proposed business uses contained within them, providing a modern character and sense of place to the building grouping.</p> <p>The IQ buildings will have a clear identity and will provide a sensitively designed development along this length of Skimmingdish Lane.</p> <p>The design will be developed as a distinct building grouping to reflect their combined uses within the context of the Bicester Motion vision.</p> <p>The development will incorporate open space within the building cluster and will link via internal and external access link roads and paths to the rest of the site and to Skimmingdish Lane.</p> <p>Lighting will be subject to detailed design, but will be managed to take account of local residential amenity and ecological considerations.</p> <p>Both these aspects will be taken into account as part of the design development and detailed design.</p> <p>The detailed proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects. A comprehensive strategy for landscape and ecology will be proposed as part of the detailed planning application to support the long-term management of the site for amenity, landscape structure and for biodiversity. This will be done where practical. Plants and trees will be UK sourced.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2. • The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website. 	<p>This has been done within the array of expertise that has been employed to collaborate on this project. This is illustrated in the Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement.</p>
<p>Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation • 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 	<p>The proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects.</p> <p>A comprehensive strategy for landscape and ecology will be proposed as part of the detailed planning application to support the long-term management of the site for amenity, landscape structure and for biodiversity.</p> <p>A SuDs strategy will be integral to the development proposals.</p> <p>The proposals will support the policy to enhance green infrastructure as part of the landscape proposals for the site by the retention and management of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of new native and structural amenity trees and native hedgerows within the site and other planting that add beneficial habitats for birds and insects. New pedestrian and cycle access will be promoted within the wider site.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	
<p>Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 161 Section C - Policies for Cherwell's Places <u>Policy Bicester 8: Former RAF Bicester</u></p> <p>The Council will encourage conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester technical site and flying field.</p> <p>It will support heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses. The development of hotel and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses. All proposals will be required to accord with the approved Planning Brief for the site and take into account the Bicester Masterplan. They must maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield. The biodiversity of the site should be protected and enhanced and habitats and species surveys (including a Great Crested Newt survey) should be undertaken. The continuation of gliding use will be supported. Opportunities for improving access to the countryside will be encouraged. The Council's SFRA should be considered. Proposals should be considered against Policy ESD 15.</p>	<p>The Pillboxes and Seagull Trenches (SAMS) will have their settings changed but in a way that enables them to be appreciated by the public and for their relationship with the flying field to be re-established.</p> <p>The detailed design will need to deliver a high-quality design to be appropriate for its use, and to enhance the intrinsic qualities and distinctiveness of the area; to respect public rights of way, to reflect the use of local materials and to have a holistic, landscape-led approach. The aim will also be to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure. The IQ site will make use of existing degraded and abandoned land that has self-colonised with scrub and has eroded the quality of the heritage features and their relationship to the flying field. The IQ development will add a new modern character and sense of place and will enhance the site's distinctiveness through its use for cutting edge automotive businesses. The distinctive open character of the main flying field area will not be significantly affected.</p> <p>The use of the flying field will be continued.</p>

Summary

4.2 In terms of landscape, heritage and biodiversity related planning policy the aims and objectives of the NPPF are reflected closely within the local plan policies set out above. Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement sets out the main points of policy as determined by Cherwell District Council and the following addresses in more detail the compliance of the new development against Policy ESD13.

4.3 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’.

4.4 The proposals are part of a broad vision to secure a sustainable future for the former RAF Bicester, and include specific and appropriate new uses for the site. The site is of a scale and location that will not compete with the scale of the Main Technical Site and hangars. The openness of the airfield will not be harmed by this development that is located within its own discrete peripheral area, well outside the perimeter track. Neither will the IQ buildings compete in mass or scale with the distinctive large and imposing hanger buildings of the Technical Site or the smaller bomb stores or heritage features that add to the special character and interest of this important historic site.

4.5 The long-term vision includes increasing access for the public to the site and allowing the heritage aspects to be understood and interpreted for future generations within an appropriate context of new business and leisure uses related to engineering, technology and historic motoring and aviation. This aspect addresses the point made in the explanatory text to CDC Policy ESD 13 relating to sites with a ‘time-depth’ value. In addition, there will be extensive opportunities for new technologies to be developed and showcased. The landscape of the site has been in a fairly static and neglected state for many years and will continue to decline without a meaningful business case and management strategy for these areas, without this a lasting future for the site is not secured. The Bicester Motion development team have already proven their abilities to deliver high-quality award winning schemes such as the Bicester Heritage Technical Site, the future can be planned with confidence that the heritage and its landscape

context can be protected, managed and can provide significant opportunities, amenity and biodiversity value in conjunction with the new development that is proposed.

4.6 There will be no significant impact on existing landscape features including the skyline.

‘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*

The proposals will not cause significant harm to open countryside as inwards views are limited in location to higher areas of land as represented by Remote View Points (RVPs) 1-5 in Appendix A and these range approximately from 3.25km away and extend to 4.1km away (distances are taken from the Watchtower), meaning that the perception of the site is diminished in the view, taking up a small proportion of the overall panorama. The effect of any development on the southern edge of the airfield will be difficult to perceive due to distance and intervening features and would in any case be seen against the backdrop of the existing housing/edge of Bicester or screening vegetation of the site itself. There would be some local views (VP27, 35 and 36) from local receptors such as the highway corridor of Skimmingdish Lane (a receptor of low sensitivity), and some residential views (of higher sensitivity) (VP16, 17, 18, 33 and 34) but which only experience oblique, glimpsed or partial views, and limited to upper storeys, filtered by existing road side or intervening vegetation, and/or which will be mitigated by the addition of further boundary planting. Opposite the IQ site a new transformer station has recently been constructed which is an unattractive and urban influence (VP16), located within an area of wooded fringe landscape that serves to separate the new residential area from Skimmingdish Lane. View from new housing is dominated in places by this new element (See Wire Frame View Point WFVP16).

- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography*

The same comments to the point above would apply. Views from elevated topography as informed by Remote View Points (RVPs) 1-5 in Appendix A show that these are more remote and as a result the effect of distance and/or intervening vegetation means that the proportion of any developments around the periphery of the airfield will take up a relatively small horizontal angle of view compared to the wider panorama and also a narrow vertical angle of view due to the distance. The proposals would not harm any

natural landscape features or topography. Development would largely be kept below the skyline and designed to have a backdrop of trees. The views towards the wider rural landscape would be unimpeded.

- *Inconsistent with local character*

The proposals would be consistent with the likely and appropriate uses for a re-purposed site of this kind, which is illustrated by the many similar precedents cited of other airfields being re-purposed for motoring-related uses. Precedents in the UK include Goodwood, Thruxton, Silverstone, Croft, Snetterton, Darley Moor, Lowood, Brooklands, Boreham, Donnington and historically many more. Source: <https://www.watsonlv.net/tracks.shtml>

Former RAF Bicester is within a conservation area and has many heritage features of interest but these are all part of the story and 'time-depth' value that can be brought to life as an integral part of the development vision.

The open character of the airfield will be retained and built development on the southern boundary of the airfield will lie within the peripheral zone outside the area of the main flying field. From a cumulative impact perspective, there will be local adverse or beneficial impacts on landscape character and significant changes to the relevant peripheral land parcels, however these are part of a wider vision for the site that must be taken in the balance of achieving a long term and sustainable future for the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that no one development will dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the Main Technical Site and hangars. The cumulative effects of the developments, though significant within their respective peripheral zones, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall.

- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity*

The site remains an operational airfield and as such the level of tranquillity will be partly dependent on the level and type of flying activity. Also, the fact that the IQ site is bordered by a busy road means that the level of tranquillity is limited by virtue of persistent traffic noise and it is only areas away from these influences that have

tranquil characteristics.

- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

These aspects are commented on within the specialist heritage report. Extracts from the conclusions of the Heritage Impact Assessment (Worlledge Associates) comment as follows: *The proposed development will not have any direct adverse impact on any listed building (...) but has the potential to affect the character and appearance of a conservation area and the setting of listed buildings.*

Whilst the proposals involve change, the nature of the heritage impacts is not significant, nor substantial. Where there has been harm identified it is clear that the heritage benefits and other public benefits that will be delivered will significantly outweigh that harm. Throughout the design process the importance that the designated heritage assets in their own rights and the contribution they make to the sense of place has informed the evolution of the proposals, which are genuinely heritage led. The masterplan and delivery of the long-term strategy for the site will etch a new chapter into the history of the site, driving a new identity, but without erasing the site's history and the meanings that it holds for the local and wider community. Delivery of the masterplan will create opportunities for the wider public to experience the site and its historical context which they are unable to do at this stage as the site is restricted to the public.

- *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.*

This LVIA Report addresses this point, having made reference to the published CDC Landscape Character Assessment and the OWLS Study. The Council's Countryside Design Summary published in 1998 remains as SPD. The aims of this document include:

- *The purpose of the Countryside Design Summary is to guide development in the rural areas so that the distinctive character of the district's countryside and the*

settlements and buildings within it are maintained and enhanced.

- *The guidance is not meant to be prescriptive. **The intention is that this document will encourage creative and imaginative approaches to new development**, which reflects the existing distinctive character of the villages and countryside of Cherwell District. [my bolding]*

4.7 The proposals will broadly support these aims and will include recreational proposals such as new paths and cycleways, the nearby reinterpretation of nationally important heritage assets (SAMs) that will be accessible to the public. The proposals will enable the landscape to be actively managed over the long term to achieve landscape, amenity and biodiversity goals. The previously unmanaged landscape reverted to scrub and woodland.

The landscape of the proposed IQ site has been overgrown with self-sown scrub, and needs to be actively managed for a contemporary use/management regime. Specifically, the proposals will bring this area into beneficial use for the public, will restore the relationship of the Seagull Trenches and Pill Boxes with the Technical Site and will thus support the aims of Policy ESD 13 to *'restore, manage and enhance existing landscape features and habitats'*.

4.8 The document records the relevant landscape character areas as the Clay Vale of Otmoor to the east and south east of the site and the Ploughley Limestone Plateau to the north. Mention is made of RAF Upper Heyford as being a prominent feature but RAF Bicester is not mentioned. The landscape of the former RAF Bicester has been so transformed by its military use and its scale is so large that it has a character of its own, and while it sits within the Clay Vale, the relationship to the wider landscape is mainly perceived by remote views from the site towards the localised areas of higher ground.

5 Proposed Development

Description of Development

- 5.1 The IQ concept was created to facilitate an increasing demand from automotive technology businesses seeking premises that provide locality to Oxfordshire's iconic 'Motorsport Valley' which sits at the heart of a global cluster of high-performance technology, motorsport and advanced engineering companies.
- 5.2 Bicester Motion has attracted these leading technology companies by providing a unique and compelling alternative to the out-of-town science parks often associated with these types of businesses. Bicester Motion provides an attractive offering where technology businesses have the ability to showcase their research, technology and products to the public taking advantage of the demonstration tracks with close proximity to town of Bicester and City of Oxford.
- 5.3 It will also provide Bicester with international exposure as a leading innovation and technology centre.
- 5.4 To the north of the main Technical Site planning consent has been granted for a new hotel/aparthotel to complement Bicester Motion's vision of making the former RAF site into a long term and sustainable business and focussing on the enjoyment of historic vehicles. Further north west also Skimmingdish Lane, the New Technical Site incorporating 8 new buildings has now been completed and provides accommodation for showrooms, workshops and offices.
- 5.5 Bicester Motion will, overall, comprise a series of discrete but connected parts of the site that will offer a range of experiences and opportunities to explore, enjoy and connect to the site, its history, its present and to become part of its future. This will build on the current success of the site's already established centre of excellence for heritage cars, including increasing access to the public via large events (The Sunday Scramble and Flywheel Festival) that open the site to the community and public.
- 5.6 The general layout and site arrangements can be seen on drawing 220127-3DR-XX-00-DR-A-08003 – Indicative Layout Plan (S73) by 3DReid.

The key differences between the consented scheme and the proposed scheme are:

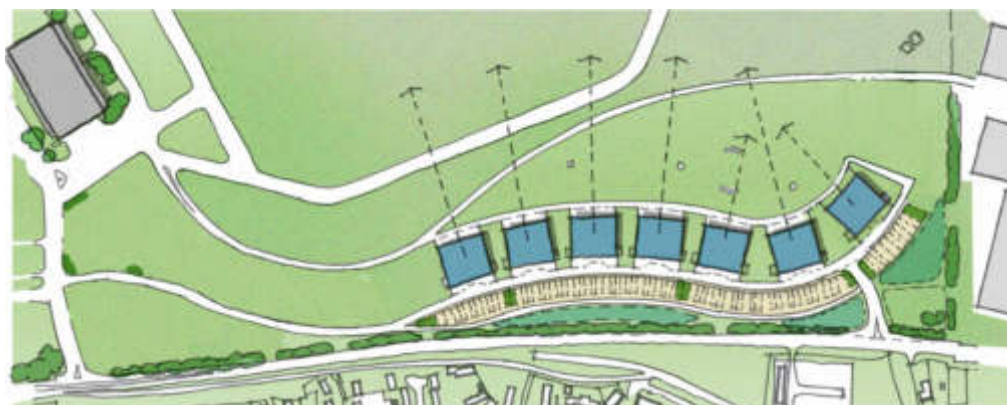
- Re-orientation of the developable areas to substantially improve the

connection and relationship with

- the historical context and open airfield,
- Re-positioning of the developable area respects the historical layout to avoid straight line layout,
- Rebalancing of the developable area's proportion to reduce the depth to widths ratio to meet the modern requirements of future tenants,
- Relocation of the car parking area adjacent to the buildings and integration with the landscape,
- Relocation of the servicing access to the Skimmingdish Lane elevation enabling space for soft landscaping and improved visual connectivity through the buildings,
- Reduction of heritage impact from the development on the special ancient monuments by increasing the distance of hardstanding away from the pill boxes and seagull trenches



Existing consented scheme.

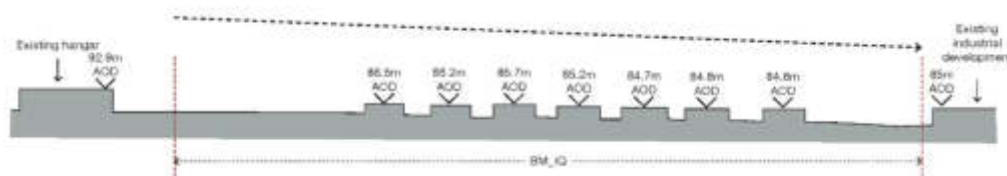


The Design and Access Statement illustrates and explains how the consented scheme

has been evolved into the proposed layout.

- 5.7 Following an in-depth analysis and evolution of the consented scheme, the developable area has been revised. The updated proposal follows a more organic masterplan of seven, evenly proportioned buildings arrayed in a soft arc which better harmonises with the landscape, provides a less regimented feel and sets the buildings back from the edge of the site on Skimmingdish Lane.
- 5.8 The proposal is for 7 modular buildings represented in two groups; classes B1-B5, consisting of office and industrial units and B6-B7 consisting of office, industrial, storage and distribution units. The proposed masterplan allows for a total of 401 car park spaces and 88 bicycle spaces with 36 car park spaces for each unit.
- 5.9 The masterplan's ecology area to the north has been enlarged from 2.85ha to 2.87ha. A zone of strategic dense vegetation and a series of swales are also proposed with the intent to benefit the biological habitat and favour the ecological diversity of the area.
- 5.10 The buildings has been carefully arranged and shaped to provide suitable surface opportunities for visibility and branding. The resulting seven buildings have a clear height of 10.5m. Appropriate building height parameters have been established, considering the challenges and opportunities that were explored at the time of the consented scheme.
- 5.11 The proposed buildings within the Innovation Quarter are designed to read as a coordinated building group and to respond positively to the flying field, maintaining an open aspect to the north with the servicing and car parking to the south.
- 5.12 The proposed buildings follow the site levels and therefore rise in height from east to west. All buildings heights are below the existing hangar to the west and the three most eastern buildings on the site (B5, B6 and B7) are lower than the existing industrial warehouses to the east. The diagram below highlights the building heights AOD and shows the level change across the site from east to west. The buildings are set apart from one another allowing for vistas between them towards the flying field and

improved permeability and connectivity



5.13 A two-way road is proposed to the rear of the buildings connecting access and egress locations to the west and east of the site onto Skimmingdish Lane. The roadway provides access to the car parking to the rear of the buildings. A one-way road is proposed to the north/front of the buildings adjacent to the SAM. This road will allow access to accessible car parking spaces and also any servicing the front of the buildings.

5.14 Pedestrian connectivity to and around the site is encouraged. Dedicated walkways are proposed to, and around, the perimeter of all the buildings. The gaps between the buildings allow physical and visual connectivity from Skimmingdish Lane to the expanse of the flying field.

5.15 An indicative open space/landscape framework has been established (220127-3DR-XX-00-DR-A-08005 – Proposed Open Space/Landscape). Green buffers are provided between the building masses, Skimmingdish Lane and the neighbouring development. Non-build landscape zones have been identified between the principal buildings to reduce the perception of the masses and provide flying field views. The green areas are intended not only to allow views and recreational to the historic sites located in the ecology area to the north. Small plant and bin enclosures are located to the rear sides of each building.

Mitigation - See Indicative Landscape Strategy/Framework Plan (220127-3DR-XX-00-DR-A-08005 – Proposed Open Space/Landscape)

5.16 As stated above, an indicative open space/landscape framework has been prepared. A comprehensive scheme for landscape mitigation will form part of any full planning application for this site and this will be supported by a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan that will set out the future strategy for management over the next 10 years.

5.17 The proposed mitigation will respect the intrinsic qualities of the site and its unique

sense of place. New planting will be used carefully to integrate new development within the site and often this will be done in conjunction with the architectural design, tying the landscape and built forms.

5.18 The removal of the self-sown vegetation in the IQ Zone will assist in restoring the flying field perimeter to allow the functionality of historic defence structures to be appreciated and understood.

5.19 The mitigation proposals will support the aims of the OWLS Landscape Assessment in that they will minimise the visual impact of the new development 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 surroundings, but at the same time being sympathetic to the unique landscape of the airfield.

IQ Buildings. These are set back from the boundary in a sinuous layout allowing car parking to be set out between the buildings and the boundary. In this way the buildings are less visible on Skimmingdish Lane and there is more room for a landscape buffer.



The boundary planting along the Skimmingdish Lane frontage will be strengthened to provide a more robust edge to the site. Other landscaping, including trees, will be provided near to and between the car parking and buildings to act a green foil to the built form in the same way that exists around the existing hangars. Self-sown scrub will be removed from this area to open up views from this area towards (and back from) the airfield. This re-establishes the functional views from the Seagull Trenches

and Mushroom Pillboxes.

- 5.20 It is worth noting that these landscape and ecological measures will be a positive outcome of the IQ development. Bicester Motion have the incentive to promote a healthy and sustainable biodiverse landscape in conjunction with the appropriate development.

6 Landscape Assessment

Site Baseline (See Landscape Significance Diagrams ASA Figure numbers 4a and 4b)

- 6.1 This IQ Zone comprises the area between the perimeter track and the south western/southern boundary of the airfield. The former RAF buildings lie in a cluster to the west of the site (The Main Technical Site). Immediately to the north west of the site is an area of RAF housing and other buildings, and to the north east of this lies an area of residential development. To the south of the site (outside the site boundary) there is a significant cluster of very large commercial/industrial buildings that dominate the local landscape and views from Skimmingdish Lane.
- 6.2 The main town of Bicester lies to the south and west of the airfield. To the north east of the airfield the land is an undeveloped area (former unrestored quarry) of scrub and ponds which is a site of local wildlife value. Beyond this the ground increases in elevation and is in arable use. Land outside of the airfield to the east and south east is also in arable use. Adjacent to the southern edge of the airfield is a newly built cluster of large-scale commercial buildings which dominate the landscape from the surrounding views including from nearby residential areas.
- 6.3 There are some long views from within the airfield to the landscape beyond, notably to rising land to the north east and east, but also to localised high spots further away noted in the Topography Section 3 above. These views are over the top of any boundary screening around the site and assist in maintaining the open character of the flying field and its relationship to the rural landscape which is lies adjacent. Where boundary vegetation is lower and more permeable, this effect is more emphasised.
- 6.4 The open character of the airfield is dominated by the central area of the flying field within the perimeter track. This point is made within the Conservation Area Appraisal Para 9.7.1 for the site that *'The perimeter track effectively defines the extent of the flying field on the ground'*: The vast scale of the site means that the existing development confined to the periphery of the site (the Main Technical Site) does not erode this key element. Even the existing hangars which are 20m tall and large-scale buildings in their own right do not appear to be out of scale. Indeed, they appear to be in-scale with this large-scale landscape and they have an appropriate relationship to the flying field providing the strong 'waterfront' to the Technical Site form and

layout.

- 6.5 The description of the wider landscape and its importance is informed by published sources including the National (Joint) Landscape Character description and the 'OWLS' Landscape Study, plus from various field visits and an extensive photographic survey for this report. At a local level, the Cherwell District commissioned the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment in 1995 which remains as Supplementary Planning Guidance. These published sources of data are summarised below.

National (Joint) Character Area (NCA)

- 6.6 The National (Joint) Character Areas were first developed in the mid 1990's by Natural England and divide England into 159 Character Areas.
- 6.7 This study places the site in the Upper Thames Clay Vales (NCA 108). A short distance away to the west the landscape lies within The Cotswolds (NCA 107) and further away to the north the landscape is within the Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. The web link for this JCA is: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk>.
- 6.8 The NCAs provide a broad-brush description of the landscape. At a more local level, which is more focussed on the landscape characteristics of the specific area in question, a regional study and Cherwell-specific study are available as reference documents to assist in the definitions of the baseline landscape. Selected extracts to describe the key wider landscape features are included in Appendix C:

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

- 6.9 'OWLS' is the current landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire. Its main purpose is to investigate the landscape character and biodiversity resource of the county and to use the results of the survey work to help safeguard, maintain and enhance this resource.

The site lies within the Cotswold Regional Character Area as defined by this study:

This landscape type extends from the vale landscapes adjacent to the northern part of the River Cherwell to the Upper Thames area south and east of Bicester and the site. It also occupies a large part of the Vale of White Horse to the north-east of Wantage and borders part of the River Thame and its tributaries. This is a low-lying vale landscape associated with small pasture fields, many watercourses and hedgerow trees and well-

defined nucleated villages

Key Characteristics

- A flat, low-lying landform.
- Mixed land uses, dominated by pastureland, with small to medium-sized hedged fields.
- Many mature oak, ash and willow hedgerow trees.
- Dense, tree-lined streams and ditches dominated by pollarded willows and poplars.
- Small to medium-sized nucleated villages.

The site lies within the **Wooded Estatelands** Landscape Type:

6.10 The airfield is described within this landscape type and the descriptions below relate to the landscape to the north of the site rather than the site itself.

Key Characteristics

- Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.
- Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.
- Large parklands and mansion houses.
- A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.
- Small villages with strong vernacular character.

6.11 The OWLS Study goes on to say:

6.12 *The landscape has a mix of land uses but is largely dominated by arable farming. On the steeper slopes there is some semi-improved grassland, as well as pockets of calcareous grassland, acid grassland and gorse. This is a well-wooded landscape with large, prominent blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland often located on the steeper slopes. In addition, there is a significant number of smaller, mainly mixed plantations that are scattered throughout much of the area and this adds to the overall sense of enclosure.*

6.13 The site is noted to have areas of calcareous grassland and while the surrounding landscape does have areas of woodland, they are not numerous or extensive. Other

linear vegetation features following watercourse or field boundaries are however influential in providing enclosure and layers of visual screening within the landscape.

- 6.14 Two of the guidelines noted within the OWLS document that are relevant to the site:
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, 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 is appropriate to this landscape type.
- 6.15 In terms of landscape mitigation for the wider site, the extent of any new planting will respect the underlying landscape character, but also the special qualities and key characteristics that make the distinctive landscape of the former bomber base unique. (See Indicative Landscape Framework Plan). Specific measures will be developed for the IQ site as part of detailed design.
- Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment 1995**
- 6.16 At a local (District) level, the Cherwell Council commissioned a district landscape assessment in 1995. This study (the CDLA) is now over 20 years old but remains on the Council's web site as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). Some reference is made to this study below but this report also refers above to the OWLS Study which is also cited as SPG.
- 6.17 The CDLA Study records the site as being within the Otmoor Lowlands (Landscape Character Area) (This equates to the OWLS Clay Vale Landscape).
- 6.18 Extract from the CDLA: At the south of the district is the distinctive, low lying area associated with the River Ray flood plain which forms the large character area of the Otmoor Lowlands. This flat, open farmland has a distinctive atmosphere, particularly where the traditional wet meadows and pastures and their important flora and fauna exist.....A number of isolated low hills dominate the skyline, and the south of the area is contained by the low ridges of the Oxford Heights. **Military development has had**

considerable influence upon settlement and land use within the area.

- 6.19 The CDLA also records the Landscape Type as 'Transitional' (within the Otmoor Lowlands Landscape Character Area)
- 6.20 The CDLA definition of Transitional landscape is: *This is one of several landscape types that have specific uses (in this case a military airfield) that also therefore have a specific and overwhelming influence on their landscape character.*
- 6.21 The CDLA Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands (to the north of the airfield on rising ground) equates to the OWLS Wooded Estatelands. These are defined as:
- 6.22 *'.....a rolling arable landscape with a strong field pattern of copses and trees, with a patchwork of arable and pasture, defined by well-maintained hedges and is an 'Area of High Landscape Value'. [Note: these areas have now been omitted from the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 in favour of a policy to enhance the distinctiveness and quality of the highly valued landscape of the entire District].*

Sub-Landscape Types here are defined within the CDLA Study as being:

- R1a (land to the north east of the airfield): Elevated or low-lying arable farmland with weak structure
 - R2a (to the north of the airfield): arable landscape with weak field pattern and isolated trees
 - R2b (to the north east of the airfield beyond Landscape Type R1a): Rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees.
- 6.23 The CDLA sets out a strategy for landscape intervention. This includes the following categories:
- Conservation
 - Repair
 - Restoration
 - Reconstruction
- 6.24 The site lies within an area identified as being within the 'Reconstruction' category defined as:

'These landscapes are those where the landscape has been so modified by human

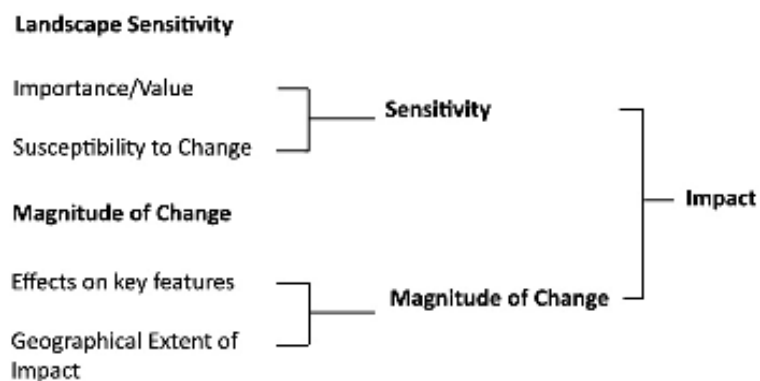
activity that they no longer bear any resemblance to their former character. They included quarries and airfields which occur in significant numbers throughout the study area'.

- 6.25 This was the conclusion in 1995, and from the point of view of the underlying landscape remains true today in terms of the continued dominance of the airfield and its associated former military buildings, plus the influence of the unrestored quarry.
- 6.26 As the CDLA states: *'These landscapes would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place'*. The report states further that: *These landscapes have a high capacity to accommodate change as they have lost their intrinsic character.* At Bicester the character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures are appreciated for what they were, and are, and are being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character. However, this report concludes that there remains a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site which has already been heavily influenced by urbanising elements and other development nearby. The IQ development will drive forward part of the Bicester Motion vision that will deliver a new sense of place and will give the site a new purpose and modified character.

Landscape Effects: Sensitivity (derived from considering the landscape value and its susceptibility to change)

6.27 The overall Sensitivity is judged by considering the aggregate effects of the importance/value of the landscape and its susceptibility to change.

Diagram to Explain the Landscape Assessment Method

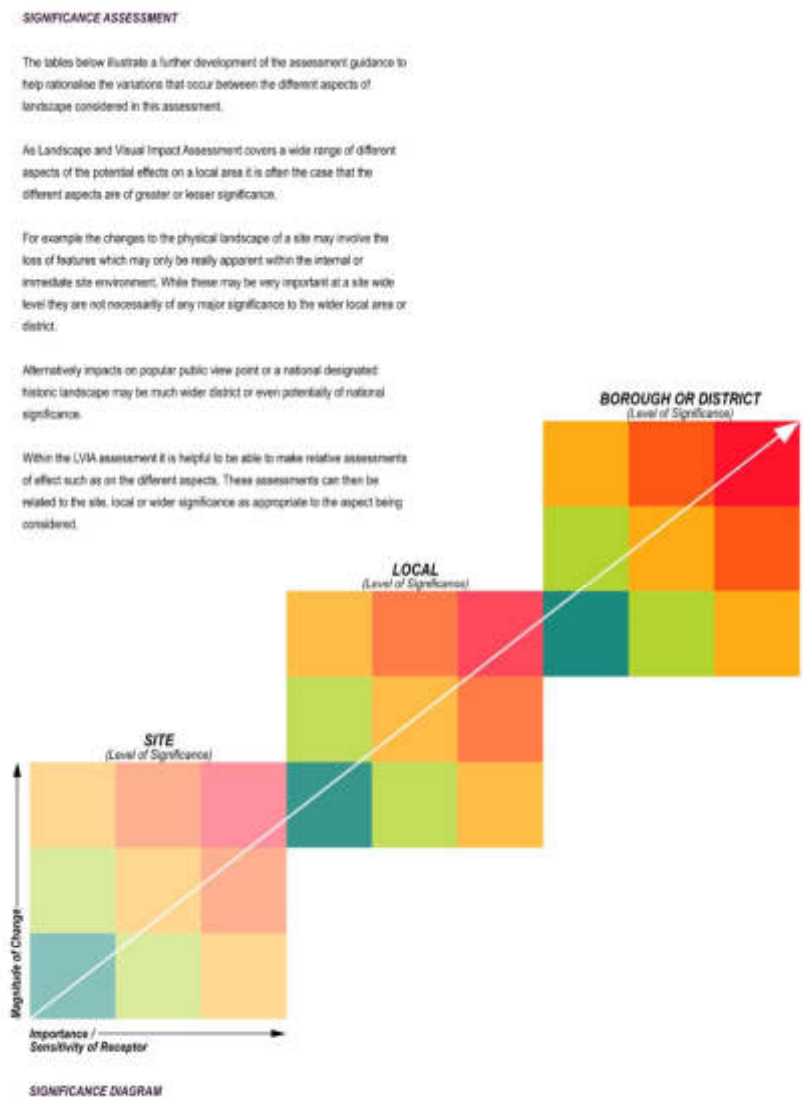


Note re Geographical Extent in relation to the assessment of Magnitude of Change.

The geographical extent as defined in this document is as follows:

- 'Site' extents are confined to impacts within the site boundaries
- 'Local' extents are those outside the site boundary generally within 500-1000m of the site.
- 'Borough or District' extents would be those beyond 1km of the site boundary.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between geographical extent, magnitude of change and significance of impact.



6.28 The landscape sensitivity of the site needs to be considered at two scales. This is because the site is so large and dominant within its local context that it really has to be considered as a landscape character area in its own right. There also needs to be an appreciation of the sensitivity of the landscape beyond the boundaries of the airfield taking account of the baseline factors described above, the land uses, the urban and

rural influences and interrelationship between the airfield and the wider landscape.

- 6.29 This report has also undertaken a more detailed analysis of the site itself in terms of character and sensitivity by looking at discrete parts of the site and how these can be described as more or less sensitive. This had been done as part of a sieve analysis process with all relevant disciplines to inform the design process and to enable the master planning to be based on a consensus of expert opinion, itself backed up with reasoned narrative.
- 6.30 The result is a map showing a series of land parcels within the wider site that breakdown into levels of landscape sensitivity with a corresponding description to provide the reasoning for why they have been described thus. It must be appreciated that this exercise is not a precise way of defining the sensitivity and that the sensitivity is described within a broad spectrum. Where the terms of higher and lower are used, it does not imply that the areas of higher sensitivity are the highest possible in landscape terms or the areas of lower sensitivity are the lowest.
- 6.31 The site or the surrounding landscape are not covered by any statutory landscape designations. However, overall the value of the landscape of the site is considered to be relatively high due to the national importance of historic features on the site and their settings. Depending on the local view the prominence of the adjacent busy Skimmingdish Lane is a visual detractor and there are large existing hangars (Grade II Listed) on the site. These can be viewed either as a positive attribute to the historic landscape or a negative influence on the urban edge of Bicester. Overall it is considered that the structures are set within an appropriate setting and that they form a local landmark and feature which is valued and helps provide a sense of place and history on this edge of the town.
- 6.32 The susceptibility of the overall site to change is stated in the published landscape assessment (CDLA) to be relatively low. However, the susceptibility to absorb change (and its capacity for development) is determined by gauging how vulnerable (and rare) the landscape is and how it is able to accommodate change taking account of any mitigation measures that are proposed as part of the development. The landscape is rare due its good state of preservation being intact with so many original features and buildings. The judgement of this factor is made using a balance of positive and negative features within the landscape, and takes account of physical characteristics of the land

as well as human perceptions and how irreplaceable the landscape is.

- 6.33 In recognition of the historic value of the site, the site's structures and buildings, it is considered that the ability to absorb change must be caveated by the fact that any change should be appropriate, should not erode the historic value of the site and indeed should provide an overall positive influence on the site for the future.
- 6.34 The wider site is therefore of relatively high sensitivity due primarily to the historic landscape attributes including, as it does, 10 Scheduled Monuments and 21 Grade II listed buildings on the adjacent Bicester Motion land.
- 6.35 In terms of the more detailed appraisal of sensitivity of the different parts of the site the results of this process are summarised within Table 1 – Landscape Baseline, Capacity for Development, Magnitude of Change and Significance of Impacts (Appendix C) and with reference to Figure 5. Figure 5 provides a plan of the site broken down into 'land parcels' of varying sensitivity that are based on reasoned explanation that is explained within the table. This then informs the master planning process of the potential capacity for development within each parcel.
- 6.36 The IQ site is located within land parcel 3f and the assessment of impacts is provided below.

Land Parcel Sensitivity

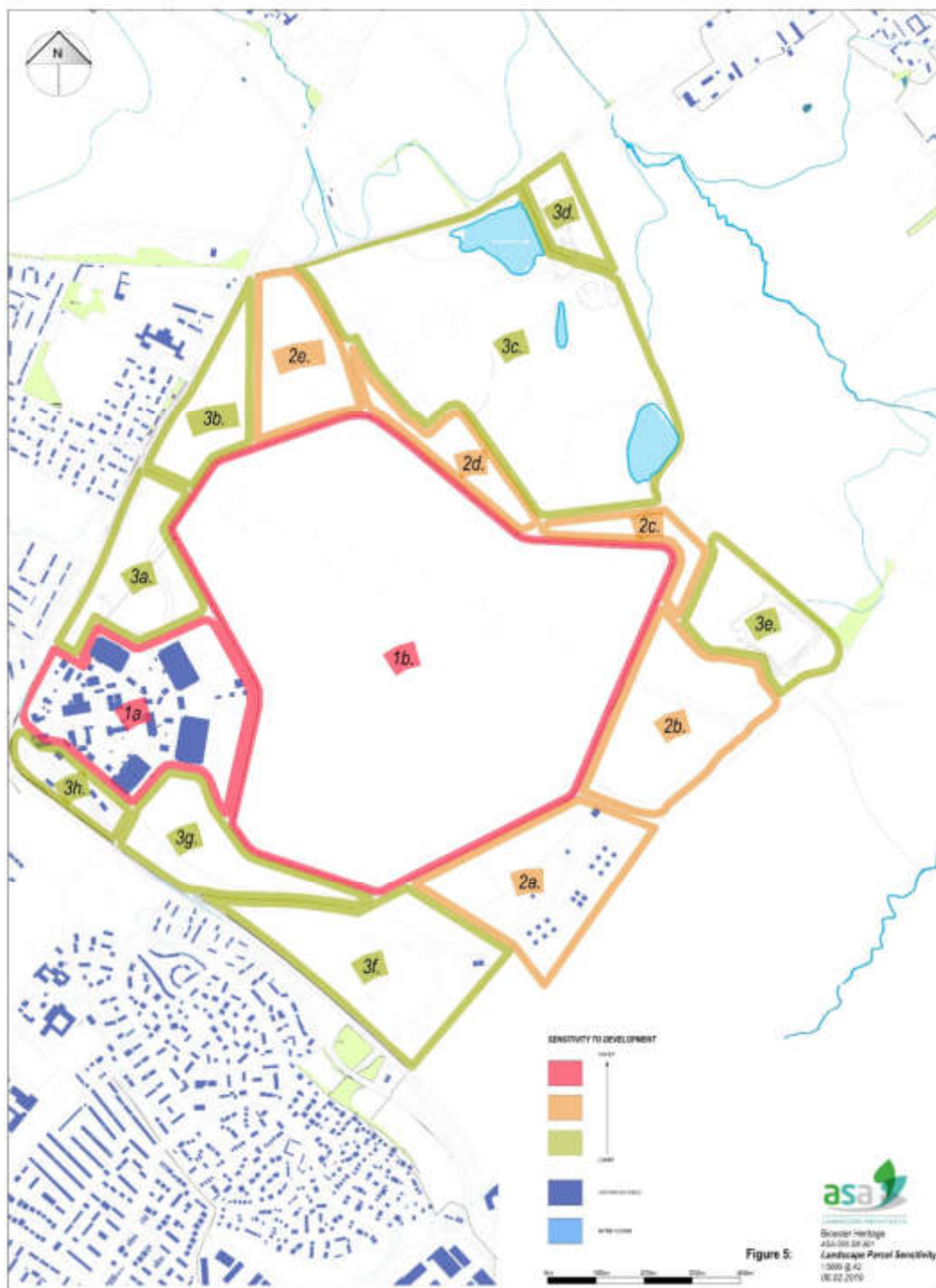


Figure 5:

6.37 Overall the **Sensitivity** of the landscape parcels within the site ranges from **Medium to Medium/High**. The capacity for development ranges from **Low to Medium**.

Table 6.1 Summary of Landscape Parcel Sensitivity and Capacity for Development.

The IQ Land Parcel is highlighted in the table.

	Landscape Sensitivity	Capacity for Development
1a	Medium-High	Low
1b	Medium-High	Low
2a	Medium-High	Low
2b	Medium-High	Low
2c	Medium-High	Low
2d	Medium-High	Low
2e	Medium-High	Low
3a	Medium	Medium
3b	Medium	Medium
3c	Medium to Medium-Low	Medium-Low
3d	Medium	Medium
3e	Medium	Medium
3f	Medium	Medium
3g	Medium	Medium
3h	Medium	Medium

6.38 The assessment of the wider landscape describes the landscape character within the influence of the site in terms of the presence or absent of various landscape elements and the judgement takes account of the overall contribution these elements make in defining the key characteristics of the landscape.

6.39 For receptors within the highway landscape adjoining the site sensitivity is considered to be less than for the site itself. The landscape of the highway corridor is less valuable and is dominated by moving traffic. For the nearby residential landscape (of higher

sensitivity) the road is also a dominant factor and a detractor in landscape terms and it lies between the housing and the site. Visual impact is examined in the Visual Impact section of this report.

6.40 For the landscape receptors to the north and east of the site (Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands), the rural landscape does not benefit from any statutory landscape designation or protection, though it is recognised within the CDLA landscape report as being an Area of High Landscape Importance (this designation has now been removed from the Cherwell Local Plan). The landscape is nevertheless locally valued and is relatively susceptible to change.

6.41 For landscape receptors within the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands, the Sensitivity would also be **Medium/High** (this combines the factors of Importance/Value [Medium] and susceptibility to change [also Medium/High]).

6.42 The methodology detailing the criteria for the assessment is contained in Appendix B.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity (Also refer to Landscape Parcels [LPs] on Figure 5)

6.43 The wider Bicester Motion site is large and has a distinctive ex-military airfield landscape character of its own. The character and appearance relate closely to its functional uses as an operational airfield. The existing built form also relates strongly to the former military functions. Some of these have undergone restoration as part of the emerging vision and business plan for the site. The landscape of the airfield has been subject to the invasion of scrub resulting in some areas (including heritage assets) being hidden from view. This loss of 'sense of place' will be redressed in order to rediscover parts of the site and to restore the integrity and historic links which can be brought into the new vision for the site. There are storage areas for aircraft and other temporary structures, vehicles and caravans that lead to a cluttered appearance.

6.44 There is now a vibrancy to the re-purposed Main Technical Site that has a strong influence on the character of this area with new businesses and many classic cars in evidence. There is a strong feeling of renewal and purpose to the site. This area has already started to create a renewed sense of place.

6.45 The continued flying activity provides a dynamic aspect to the site as do other activities such as old military vehicles regularly using the tracks around the field.

6.46 New development around the site is evident in some views, especially to the south

where a cluster of large new commercial buildings have appeared on the skyline. A large new substation has also been built opposite the site on Skimmingdish Lane (VP16). Two major new developments also have consent on the site. Planning permission granted for a new hotel, pre commencement conditions have been discharged and a material start has been made; 8 new buildings comprising The Command Works are now complete.

- 6.47 The Main Technical Site (LP1a) and central area of the flying field (LP1b) are particularly sensitive areas and have a low capacity to absorb new built development. The Main Technical Site is especially sensitive due to the well-preserved layout and fabric of existing buildings and features. The central part of the flying field within the perimeter track plays an important part in providing the open setting to the overall site and its heritage.
- 6.48 The parcels bordering the southern boundary of the wider site are physically close to the rural landscape to the south east, but Parcel 3f (the IQ site) and LP2a are close to the large-scale commercial development to the south. Parcel LP2a has a SAM within it (former bomb stores) which is a nationally important heritage asset. The capacity for change here is relatively low.
- 6.49 The capacity for change within Parcel 3f is also limited by the influence of a SAM (2 Seagull Trenches and 2 Pillboxes) whose fabric and setting cannot be harmed. However, the current state and setting of these heritage assets have already been harmed by neglect. Development within the IQ land parcel will need to take account of this key requirement to respect the setting to these assets. There are also 2 old panhandling areas. There are strong urban influences of the highway and other large-scale commercial/industrial development on the adjacent site. These are landscape detractors and act as negative influences on the site and its surrounds. Self-sown scrub will be removed to restore the underlying open character of the site. There is an opportunity to restore this landscape parcel into a condition that would re-connect it visually with the main site. Opening up the site and introducing an appropriate scale of new development would not be inappropriate development on this part of the perimeter.
- 6.50 The parcels of land to the west of the site are located alongside the busy Skimmingdish Lane. As noted above Parcel 3f's character has been significantly altered already by

the adjoining land uses. These are noted as the large-scale warehouse developments to the south east, the busy Skimmingdish Lane, and the housing opposite the site (though this is set back behind a noise fence and/or a belt of vegetation), and a new substation – located between the housing and the site. As a consequence, the sensitivity of this land parcel is reduced and the capacity for accommodating some change increased.

- 6.51 Parcel 3g lies to the north west of Parcel 3f and is similar to Parcel 3a in context, being closely connected to the Main Technical Site. It is also similar in that it is adjacent to a busy road and has had its character altered by sub-urbanising influences. These are noted as the busy Skimmingdish Lane, and the housing opposite the site which is close to the road at this point. There is also a new care home development in construction opposite the site (Parcel 3h). The vegetation screening the site is relatively thin and low in places and partial views into the site are possible from the road (VP36).
- 6.52 Due to the sub-urbanising influences, the sensitivity of this land parcel is less and the capacity for accommodating some change increased. However, the limited views from the residential area are sensitive and proposals for this area will take account of this factor in terms of landscape mitigation and screening. There are 2 Scheduled Monuments near to the hanger to the west. Parcel 3g is divided by an internal access road and is divided from Parcel 3f by a screen of maturing hedging. This hedging continues along the main road and forms a partial/immature screen.
- 6.53 The site lies outside the main perimeter track but maintains a close visual and physical link to the main airfield and does also contribute to its openness. There is scope for some change within this landscape parcel, particularly along the boundary, but also potentially closely allied with the built form of the Main Technical Site (similar context to Parcel 3a). The area nearest the airfield maintains a strong open character, but is also dominated in views by the existing large hangars of the Main Technical Site. Views from the Watchtower are to the eastern, more open, end of the Parcel. These views also have a backdrop of housing development, the commercial development south of the site and the new substation recently completed. The west end is hidden from view by the existing hangars.
- 6.54 As previously referred to, Parcel 3h comprises recently completed The Command Works with 8 new buildings. The site is located between Skimmingdish Lane and the

existing Main Technical Site. There are impacts from Skimmingdish Lane but these are local in effect due to the existing screening that exists and that will be managed and retained along the boundary.

Landscape Effects: Magnitude of Change

6.55 The magnitude of change is a combination of the impact of the development on the key features of the landscape and also the area over which these changes are evident.

6.56 The IQ buildings are a key part of the Bicester Motion Vision and masterplan for a sustainable commercial future for the site, providing a means of re-purposing the airfield and providing a home for new innovative automotive businesses. The process of developing the current proposal has incorporated the findings of the baseline studies above to enable a realistic approach to the quantum of development, the scale, form and massing, and the potential mitigation, to be formulated. The result is a plan with indicative layouts, footprints and building heights, supported by illustrative material showing the form and style of likely part of the site. This is backed up further with 3 illustrative views using wire-line visualisations to indicate how the proposed building groupings would be perceived from key locations.

6.57 The magnitude of change based on the parameters (Appendix D) within the current proposal has then been assessed for each of the relevant adjacent land parcels and has been amalgamated with the sensitivity analysis to enable an indication of the broad impacts (and informing the cumulative impacts) to be appreciated.

Summary of the Effects (Magnitude of Change) of the proposed developments

6.58 Summary of Predicted Magnitude of Change combined with Sensitivity of Receptors. (Impacts are adverse unless stated, and are up to 'local' in extent, generally affecting the site itself and the adjoining peripheral land parcels or landscape receptors immediately outside the site). The IQ site (3f) is highlighted in the table.

Table 6.2

Site/Land Parcel	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Impact	Extent of Impact
3f	Medium	High	Moderate Major	Site
1a	Medium High	Medium-High	Moderate Major	Site
2a	Medium High	Medium High	Moderate Major	Site
3g	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Site
Residential Landscape	Medium High	Medium-Low	Moderate	Local

including walkway				
Highway Landscape	Medium Low	Medium	Moderate -Minor	Local

- 6.59 The magnitude of change is considered taking account of the mitigation proposals that have been described above for the IQ site. All the effects are Low to Medium in terms of their geographical extent depending on if the landscape significance is confined to the site (Low) or to the immediate locality outside the site (Medium). Most effects are perceived from within the airfield itself, while some are also perceived from just beyond the site boundary in the adjoining highway corridor (generally fewer sensitive receptors), and beyond the highway, residential areas (of higher sensitivity). The impacts overall are therefore only local significance at worst. Developments would not be affecting the wider landscape in any significant way.
- 6.60 The Parcel (LP3f) has seven new IQ buildings at 10.5m high. They would be laid out in a sinous line, set back from Skimmingdish Lane. All the buildings are the same in size and form a cohesive linear grouping. There is space allowed for between the buildings for open spaces to link the front and back of the buildings. In layout terms, the proposed sinous layout responds better to this corner of the site than the previous layout which was all laid out parallel to the boundary and Skimmingdish Lane. This layout appeared static and did not respond to the site in the same way. It also would have presented a linear line of development that would have been visible from Skimmingdish Lane and the residential landscape beyond and continuous with the factory buildings to the east. By contrast, the new buildings, being set back from the boundary to varying degrees creates a more dynamic layout that removes the perception from Skimmingdish Lane of a continuous development .
- 6.61 There would be a close visual relationship with the cluster of large factory buildings to the south east . Views from the Watchtower towards the wider, rural landscape to the north east and east exclude this development cluster and the new development. The views towards the cluster to the south/south east will include the new development, thus grouping them all within one sector of the site which help to minimise the impact. To the south west the view would include Graven Hill. Graven Hill (3.5 to 4km away) is seen over the eastern built up area of Bicester and, though it has no landscape designation it is nevertheless recognised as a local landmark as is the more distant

Muswell Hill (9.6km).

- 6.62 Due to the scale of this development the overall effects on the site are considered to be up to Moderate-Major but limited to a site level and local significance. These new buildings will be set back from the road corridor and this will help to reduce the impact from the adjacent highway corridor. Glimpsed views through screening trees will be possible from the housing areas across the adjacent highway corridor (WFVP7). Other visual impacts on residential and road receptors are considered separately.
- 6.63 In terms of the effects on adjacent receptors, the adjacent highway corridor as a landscape receptor is less sensitive and the impacts would be of Medium-Low significance. For the residential area, the sensitivity is higher, but as for the visual impacts (in later section) the houses are well screened for the most part by existing swathes of trees and a noise attenuation fence south of Skimmingdish Lane and are not therefore significantly affected by the development (VPs 17, 18, 19, 33 and 34). The perception of the change would therefore be reduced to Low and the significance of impact would be up to Moderate and restricted to a local level of significance.
- 6.64 Additional viewpoints VP24 to 33 have been taken to demonstrate the impact from Skimmingdish Lane (highway receptor) and from the combined Cycleway /Footpath. Views from the highway are only perceived at speed (it is a IQ, busy road) and the level of existing and predicted screening to the IQ site will be substantial. The buildings are set back from the road by between about 34-60m. Views from the cycleway (VP16, 28, 29, 31, 32) are very limited in scope. One view is possible from where the substation is (Predicted View WFVP16). Another glimpsed view (VP29) is possible near to an older building further south east. Existing vegetation along the cycleway/footway is effective in screening any other significant views. Further north the vegetation is absent and is replaced with a 2m high noise mitigation fence which coincides with the two north easterly most buildings of the IQ development (VP33). There will be some visibility of the upper parts of these buildings from the cycleway from the point where the cycleway diverges from the old alignment of Skimmingdish Lane at VP32.
- 6.65 Lighting associated with the new site will be a factor in assessing the magnitude and impact on the surrounding landscape and on visual receptors. For the new IQ Zone details of the lighting are not known at this stage but it is anticipated that there will be a general level of external lighting that will be evident in terms of operational and

security lighting as well as other car parking lighting and a general level of light coming from the windows of the buildings themselves. There will be some impacts from the use of the facilities in the hours of darkness. Most of these local effects are predicted to be largely mitigated by good design (directional LED lights) and the existing and proposed screening to the northern boundary.

- 6.66 At completion, the proposed planting will be limited in its effect, but as the planting becomes established new trees and hedgerows will become progressively more successful in achieving the end vision as set out in the Indicative Proposed Open Space/Landscape Plan (220127-3DR-XX-00-DR-A-08005). Lighting will need to be assessed in more detail as detailed planning applications come forward.
- 6.67 Any potential negative impact must be balanced against the positive response that the new development will have as part of the evolving use of the site. The new developments are planned as part of an overall sustainable vision for the site to be set within an appropriate context.

Cumulative Effects (See Appendix B for Methodology)

- 6.68 The assessment of the cumulative effects in this case is complex and is based on the subjective opinion of a landscape expert, based on modelling studies of the wider Bicester Motion vision masterplan, the photographic studies and an appreciation of the factors highlighted above.
- 6.69 Developments proposed around and beyond the perimeter track (in addition to the existing Technical Site, the Command Works Site and the proposed Hotel) will add to the amount of built development visible from within the site. These developments include the Automotive Demonstration Experience buildings, the IQ buildings and the Motor Vaults.
- 6.70 There will be a perception of increased development on the periphery of the airfield. The level of perception will be directly related to the massing, scale, building heights and relationship/proximity to other developments. Wire-line visualisations Massing Model Views WFVPs 7, 12 and 16 for the IQ application have been prepared to illustrate the predicted massing and scale in relation to other building clusters. This will also be influenced by the introduction of associated features such as lighting, car parking and noise. There are also other factors such as the loss of physical open space, the closing off of views and the potential perception of a disconnect with the wider rural landscape

where currently boundaries have no development and the natural 'green' elements (trees, hedges) that form part of the rural edge or transition between the airfield and the countryside beyond.

- 6.71 The impacts vary with the distance of the receptor (or viewer). The scale of the airfield is large and this factor will tend to reduce the significance of cumulative development. This is a key factor and the wire frame views show that even large buildings appear quite small when seen from the other side of the site. The vertical angle of view becomes very small and the field of view horizontally similarly diminishes, meaning that the individual elements take up a relatively small proportion of the panorama taken in by the human eye. Other factors will also influence the human perception including roof form, mitigation, materials, colour and even atmospheric conditions i.e. a clear sunny day will often make development more obvious than a dull rainy day.
- 6.72 As the site is so large it is difficult to see all of it in one view. As demonstrated by the wire frame views, the camera or the human eye can only look in one direction at a time. For this site cumulative impacts are mostly seeing in 'combination' or 'frequently sequential' where moving around the site reveals views or the experience of other developments.
- 6.73 The broad conclusions are that developments have considerably more impact in close views, and also when agglomerated together in the same views. However, impacts are understandably significantly less in static views from the other side of the airfield, or when developments are seen in isolation, but impacts can be increased when viewed sequentially moving around the perimeter of the airfield when the perception of multiple development will become more apparent. Where there are significant gaps between types of developments or different building forms, this tends to reduce the cumulative impact. The design process and landscape and heritage-led approach has achieved significant modifications in the evolving design that have been successful in reducing impacts, by for example, omitting buildings, reducing or varying building heights, increasing spacings to preserve gaps between building clusters.
- 6.74 Along the northern boundary there will be combined views of the Hotel and buildings comprising the Demonstration Experience. A significant gap between the Technical Site (including the hotel) and the Demonstration Experience is retained. This is a positive factor in mitigating the cumulative impact. The IQ development is at the

opposite side of the site and is not generally seen in the same views as the northern boundary.

- 6.75 The IQ development comprises 7 new buildings all of the same footprint and height. This grouping or 'family' of identical buildings will be seen as a discrete development outwith the flying field and contained within a specific part of the larger site. The wider context, beyond the site, includes the existing large-scale development to the south east. They will appear relatively isolated and distant from other developments or 'Quarters' on the site.
- 6.76 From a visual aspect, views for vehicle users from the Skimmingdish Lane would be moderated by the fact that the building grouping is set back into the site by varying distances, reducing the views and avoiding the perception of a wall of development parallel to the road. The receptors here (motorists) are of generally lower sensitivity. There is a lengthy gap in development of 370m up to the new Command Works which will read from the road as part of the main Technical Site. Views towards the Command Works buildings will however be confined to glimpses through the existing mature boundary 8-14m high. (VPs 24 and 25). The association of the new IQ buildings with the existing Bakels Factory is not inappropriate in terms of its context, extending existing commercial development along a busy highway corridor. There will be some loss of openness that will be less easy to perceive from fast moving vehicles on Skimmingdish Lane.
- 6.77 From the housing views towards the IQ development are also limited by existing screen planting or noise fence to a large extent, restricting the extent of the visual impact. This vegetation varies in height between 5 and 14m. (VPs 32, 33 and 34). Views towards the The Bakels Factory from the footpath/cycleway are very limited, so in terms of cumulative impacts these are low.
- 6.78 The Main Technical Site is a distinct and separate entity to the IQ development. It retains a distinctive form and focal point within the site and will be perceived separately to the IQ development which will itself be distinct and will also have its own contemporary identity. For these reasons significant cumulative impacts will not accrue for those receptors within or outside the site.
- 6.79 The Motor Vaults are spread out along the southern boundary and are likely to be significant in local combined views, but also sequentially, moving along the access

roads, or perimeter track. From longer views they will have a much-reduced significance as, even in the same view as other developments, they would be seen as low on the horizon and would occupy only a narrow vertical angle of vision. The grass bunds in front of the buildings and the architectural design aspects would assist in mitigating the adverse effects. The Motor Vaults are considerably smaller in terms of height and totally different in form and style to the IQ development. They will appear as a discrete development within the remote eastern periphery of the site and in terms of cumulative impact will not add to the same scale of development as IQ .

7 Visual Assessment

Introduction

- 7.1 The visual impact assessment is a separate exercise to the landscape impact assessment. It consists of assessing the impact on views into and out of the site of the proposed development. The impact takes into account the location of the viewpoint, its sensitivity, the importance of the view and the magnitude of change to the view that the development represents.
- 7.2 The importance of the view is a balance of how visible the site is and by whom it is viewed. Also important is whether the views are short or long term and if any negative changes can be mitigated.

Methodology

- 7.3 Potential viewpoints have been determined from several site visits, including for previous studies for the Hotel and Command Works. In practical terms the wider Bicester Motion site is generally well screened from most views from the south due to existing buildings, limited local views from the west and north, with only more remote views being possible from receptors to the north east and east. Some local views into the site from the Skimmingdish Lane (towards the IQ site) and from local housing are possible.
- 7.4 Private viewpoints have not been accessible and all viewpoints (apart from within the site itself) have been taken from public points of access. From a desk-top study of published maps the likely visual receptors have been determined and these were then verified on site as being appropriate. No photographs have been taken from private property and the impacts from private property (i.e. from upper storeys) can only be estimated from the knowledge of the site and distance from it.
- 7.5 A selection of specific and representative viewpoints is presented in this report with the locations chosen where there is likely to be an impact with respect to the sensitivity of the users and the magnitude of the change experienced. Other views are included for context and to sometimes demonstrate the lack of view available towards the development. A comprehensive photographic survey has been taken from within the airfield and site perimeter to illustrate the possible visual effects from various viewpoints. There are three documents in Appendix A showing VPs 1-36, and one showing remote views RVPs 1-5. A further document contains 3 computer generated

‘Wire-Frame’ modelling studies to compare how the view may be altered compared to the baseline (WFVPs 7, 12 and 16). These indicate the predicted building massing compared to the existing baseline views shown in VPs 7, 12 and 16.

- 7.6 Refer to Figures 2 and 3 for the viewpoint (VP) locations. All photos are taken with a 50mm equivalent focal length lens approximating to the human eye.
- 7.7 Mitigation is assumed to be in place on completion of the development for the purpose of assessment of impacts.

Sensitivity of Receptors

- 7.8 In this analysis and in common with best practice public viewpoints and public routes and paths are considered the most sensitive locations as the users are moving slowly and most likely using and valuing the view as recreation. Residences with permanent views can also be in this category. Less sensitive receptors include outdoor sports facilities and outdoor spaces associated with places of work as users are not generally enjoying views as their prime activity. Road and transport corridors are considered lower sensitivity as the landscape experience is transitory and the user’s focus is mainly on the activity of driving.

Survey Dates

- 7.9 The site visits were originally made in the winter month of January 2018, the summer of 2018 on several visits and in February 2019. The Photosurvey has not been updated for the purposes of this LVA update. It was felt that this was not likely to change the conclusions significantly and, if anything, to retain the existing views would provide a ‘worst-case’ scenario compared to the current time, as further tree and hedge growth will be likely to have taken place in the intervening 4-5 years. The winter views also represent the worst-case scenario in terms of the effectiveness of screening vegetation. The summer views represent the best case with maximum screening effect and so in the case where screen planting is thin, there may need to be an allowance for the winter season to accept that some glimpsed views may be possible.

Overall Visibility

- 7.10 The study area for this assessment has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. (see Figure 3 Remote View Points RVPs 1-5). In practical terms, views beyond this are unlikely to have a significant visual impact due to the distance away from the receptor, the intervening features and the small proportion or angle of view that individual new developments would take up in the overall panorama. Several views have been

included in this assessment that are greater than 3km, from rising ground where distant views are possible. These views are included to demonstrate that the views from these points are not significant for the reasons described. In general, the zone of visual influence for significant views is quite close to the site. The furthest receptor from the site identified in this report is RVP3 at Goddington. As mentioned previously local landmark, Graven Hill is within some views from within the Bicester Heritage site. In terms of impacts of the IQ buildings would be perceived as below the skyline and would not impinge on or impede the views to Graven Hill in any significant way.

- 7.11 Local to the site, visual impacts on nearby residences east of Sunderland Drive have been identified. Most views are not dominant due to the aspect of individual houses and windows facing away from or being at an oblique angle to the site. In addition, houses are generally set back from Skimmingdish Lane and are screening by a noise attenuation/screen fence and /or a swathe of mature tree screening on the south side of Skimmingdish Lane. The land between the old Skimmingdish Lane alignment and the modern alignment contains a significant amount of vegetation that serves to screen out most views. Further to the north west, the fence and other trees are also effective in screening most views. The views that remain are limited to those from upper floor windows. These tend not to be primary living rooms, but are from bedroom and bathrooms. These are illustrated in the VPs16, 17, 18, 33 and 34.
- 7.12 Proposed new tree planting within the site will also be effective in the medium to long term in helping to mitigate the visual impact and restricting the significance of impact to Moderate, reducing to Moderate-Minor in the longer term.
- 7.13 Pedestrians would have very limited views into the Parcel 3f from the footpath to the south side of Skimmingdish Lane due to the existing vegetation and the noise fence.
- 7.14 A number of representative viewpoints within the site have been described below in order to illustrate the broad visual impacts predicted as a result of the proposed developments.

Predicted Viewpoints

- 7.15 The views that have been chosen represent those from the Main Technical Site and the 'waterfront' of the main cluster of heritage buildings on the site (from the Watchtower) and also a view showing the extensive views across the flying field. A third view is taken from near to residential development to the south west of the site. These computer-

generated views (WFVPs 7, 12 and 16) illustrate the scale and distance towards where new development would appear.

- 7.16 WFVP 16 shows the predicted view from the footpath (former Skimmingdish Lane). In the foreground is a new transformer station with, in the background, the new IQ buildings just visible. Just to the south of this location new housing has now been in place for 3-4 years. Houses here would have a similar view to that shown in WFVP 16 but from upper floors. Due to the intervening development and the proposed landscape screening within the IQ site, the residual impact for the housing residents and footpaths users is not predicted to be more than Moderate reducing to Moderate Minor over time.
- 7.17 WFVP 7 shows the predicted views from the east of the flying field looking south west. The Main Technical site remains dominant in the view having the tallest buildings and greatest mass. The IQ site lies to the left of centre in the image and is below the tree line in the background. This view is, in effect, a private view from within the Bicester Motion site. At this viewing distance away (approximately 500m) the building mass is not dominant in the view.
- 7.18 WFVP12 shows the predicted view from the Watchtower. The IQ buildings are seen against a vegetated back drop and the roofs of the large-scale warehouse/factory development to the south is also clearly in the same view. The residential edge to Bicester is also within this view. The buildings are relatively prominent in this internal site view, but are confined to a land parcel outside the flying field, defined by the former taxi-way, are below the skyline and below the roof levels of the Bakels Factory buildings. Combined with the large scale of the flying field this building group will form a discrete zone in this corner of the site. The view towards Graven Hill has been described above and is not significantly affected.

Remote Viewpoints RVPs 1-5

- 7.19 RVP1 is taken from a public right of way 3km from the site. The view is from elevated ground and views are mostly obscured by intervening vegetation, although some glimpses are possible of the tops of the existing hangars. The new IQ buildings are not predicted to be visible to a degree that would have a significant visual impact.
- 7.20 RPVP2 is 3.2km away taken from minor road east of the A4421. The topography is raised in the foreground and the site is viewed through a veil of tree canopies making

it difficult to pick out although the white wall of a hanger is visible and other hangars can also just be made out. The IQ buildings are potentially visible from this view, however there is intervening vegetation and any view is not predicted to be visible to a degree that would have a significant visual impact.

7.21 RPVP3 4.2km from the site is taken from a PRoW to the north east of the site. It is just possible to pick out with white wall of a hanger visible and other hangars can also just be made out. The IQ buildings are potentially visible from this view, however there is intervening vegetation and any view is not predicted to be visible to a degree that would have a significant visual impact.

7.22 RPVP4 is 4.2km from the site to the east on a minor road and from elevated ground. The view is remote however the extent of the airfield can clearly be made out in this view together with the large buildings. The Technical Site is in this view with little intervening screening. The buildings of the IQ site are lower but it is possible there may be glimpses of the upper parts of them in this view. There is however intervening vegetation in the view and the perception of any development in this location would be a minor element in the overall view at worst and would not represent a significant impact. The viewing receptor in this instance is a road user (less sensitive) and not on a PRoW.

7.23 RVP 5 is 3.8m away on a minor road and is on the route of long distance right of way. The receptor is at a lower level compared to VP4 and the view is largely obscured by vegetation with only the barest glimpses of the hanger roofs possible.

Summary

7.24 The existing and predicted views from the Watchtower (VP12 and WFVP12 respectively) are useful views in that they provide a location overlooking the majority of the site from an elevated position. The Watchtower is used in this report as a reference point which is central to the 'waterfront' area of the Main Technical Site. In operational and heritage terms it retains significance in terms of appreciating how the airfield functioned.

7.25 The Watchtower views also illustrate the importance of the connection to the landscape beyond the site boundaries, to elevated land where the landscape is rural,

open countryside.

- 7.26 The impact on the views that will be possible of the IQ buildings from the Watchtower are important in providing an overview for the general degree of acceptability for the quantum of development on the southern boundary.
- 7.27 The viewing receptors from the Watchtower are likely to be visitors to the site with the purpose of their visit to enjoy a day out in this specific location to experience the site and its range of automotive and aviation activities proposed as well as the opportunity to appreciate the site's heritage and historic importance. Such receptors will be likely to be, to a greater or lesser extent, tuned-in and sensitive to this unique environment. They will have expectations of seeing activity from a range of sources connected with cars and motoring, and, probably to a lesser extent, heritage.
- 7.28 The sensitivity of such receptors will therefore not be at the high end of the sensitivity range and the degree of change that is proposed on the periphery of the site in Parcel 3f would not be unexpected or inappropriate especially against the backdrop of existing large scale, commercial development. Indeed, if the Bicester Motion vision for the future is to be realised, to introduce a range of activity and attractions, the level of the change will have to reflect this.
- 7.29 In visual terms the IQ development is restricted to extreme south west periphery of the site leaving the bulk of the main airfield and open aspect largely unaffected. The IQ buildings will not be dominant in the waterfront view or in other general views from within the airfield. Nor will they compete in views with the much larger buildings of the Technical Site.
- 7.30 Neither will the cumulative effects be such that they will be unacceptable in that the scale, massing and nature of the development will not be inappropriate from the site or the location. The impact is moderated by the IQ location being close to similar development and so clustering commercial development within a common view. Significant gaps between other proposed peripheral developments will be maintained and these will retain the discrete characters of proposed areas of the Bicester Motion vision.
- 7.31 Receptors from outside the site would have some perception of a continuation of commercial development along Skimmingdish Lane but the buildings are well set back from the road and views are confined primarily to a highway corridor of lower

sensitivity. Residential receptors and footpath/cycleway users have restricted views towards Skimmingdish Lane and beyond to the site.

8 Construction and Residual Effects

- 8.1 Construction Effects will be updated as more information becomes available in terms of construction phasing and a construction time-line.
- 8.2 The nature of the development will require a period to construct the new access on Skimmingdish Lane and to erect the new buildings, roads and infrastructure and this will cause a period of temporary disruption and disturbance to the local roads and residents.
- 8.3 It is anticipated that working hours will be limited in accordance with good practice and control of other factors such as noise and dust will also be controlled. The development programme is as yet unknown.
- 8.4 Temporary landscape and visual impacts would be relevant to those receptors local to the site.
- 8.5 The existing road receives heavy use and traffic is extremely busy on the local junctions and roads. Any increase in site traffic will be assessed as part of a Road Safety Audit and Traffic Management Plan.

Residual Effects

- 8.6 Residual effects are those that are apparent once the development is complete and in use. These will include the visual and landscape effects described above in terms of how the development is perceived long term by the various receptors. This relates closely to the quality of the design, the mitigation, the detailing and colour of the buildings and the appearance of the site.
- 8.7 The site has an incomplete screen of existing boundary vegetation and where this is weak or absent, new planting is proposed to further screen views where they are predicted to have an adverse impact. The new planting will take 5-10 years to establish and to become effective.
- 8.8 This report has assumed that the buildings will be finished externally with a range of contemporary cladding solutions that will be sympathetic to the materials found on the existing buildings. Building articulation will provide interest and relief to the facade and elevations.
- 8.9 The strategy for mitigation and for providing a landscape framework of robust planting on the site boundary as is portrayed on the Proposed Open Space/Landscape. This

planting will be specified with a range of plant sizes to provide some instant screening effects but also to ensure that the planting establishes quickly. A comprehensive Tree Protection Plan will ensure that existing trees and hedges are protected during development. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan will also set out a strategy for the future management of the landscape to maximise biodiversity and amenity values.

- 8.10 The completion of the site will occur over a number of years with discrete parts of the site maturing and becoming assimilated into the wider site landscape over time.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The key characteristics of the local landscape have been significantly eroded through, over time, the established development of the airfield and bomber base, the local roads and urban edge of Bicester, but positive characteristics remain in terms of the historic attributes of the site and the evolution of the site into a sustainable business. The granting of permission for a new contemporary hotel recognises the positive influence that appropriate new development will have on this landscape, providing, as it will be, a stimulus for the continuing use of the site as a commercial going concern while at the same time preserving its place in history and the community. The completion of the Command Works further underlines the recognition that this site has opportunities for development of an appropriate form, scale and massing in close proximity to the historic Technical Site and its listed buildings and scheduled monuments.
- 9.2 The landscape would benefit significantly from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place. There is a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site. The character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures can still be appreciated for what they were and still are, while being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character.
- 9.3 In term of planning policy and in particular Cherwell Local Plan Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a short-term local impact on nearby landscape receptors including residential, road and roadside footpath users, but these impacts will be mitigated over time with proposed new structural tree planting.
- 9.4 The Cherwell District Landscape Character Assessment describes this landscape as being in need of restoration and that it *'would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place'*. The landscape has no statutory designations but there is a need to recognise the Conservation Area and heritage setting of this well-preserved site. The long-term vision for the site includes increasing access for the public to the site and allowing the heritage aspects to be understood and interpreted for future generations within an appropriate context of new uses associated heritage with engineering and technology. These aspects address the point made in the explanatory text to CDC Policy ESD 13 relating to sites with a 'time-depth' value and

similar aims set out in the CDC RAF Planning Brief.

- 9.5 The design team have identified a number of challenges and opportunities led by landscape and heritage specialists. These are captured on Figures 4a, and b. The aspects that related specifically to the IQ site include the relationship to the boundary and residential and commercial receptors nearby. This report has concluded that the impacts on residential receptors, on cyclists, pedestrians and vehicle users are not significant. The commercial area to the south of the site means that the context within which the IQ development sits is not inappropriate. This provides the opportunity for accommodating appropriate development in this zone of suitable massing, scale and form.
- 9.6 There are important views identified to the wider horizons featuring elevated land remote from the airfield and these connections are not affected by the IQ proposals.
- 9.7 The design team have also recognised that the erosion of the openness of the flying field should be avoided. This has been done by locating the IQ development within a land parcel that is at the edge of the periphery of the site lying beyond the perimeter track which defines the flying field. The overall impact is therefore not considered to be so great as to overwhelm or to significantly harm the existing open character of the airfield. There are also important heritage assets that will need to be integral to the design and layout and the development provides an opportunity for the re connection of these defensive structures with the main site.
- 9.8 The proposals will not be out of character or inappropriate for the re-purposed site (The CDC planning brief mentions the possibility of other uses including sports pitches. It considered that this use would not be in character with the site). The current proposals will have localised impacts within one peripheral area of the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that the IQ buildings will not dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the technical site. The cumulative effects of the IQ development, though significant within the its own peripheral zone, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall.
- 9.9 The proposals will not cause significant impact to the open countryside. The proposals will not cause any significant harm to existing landscape features or topography. There will be no impact on areas of high tranquillity. The site is not an area of high tranquillity

being subject to aircraft noise, road noise on two sides and existing motoring uses. In addition, Parcels 3f and 2a experience noise from the adjoining commercial buildings from vehicle movements. Some areas are more tranquil such as those areas beyond the former bomb stores (Parcel 2b). The screening effect of the IQ buildings may be beneficial in reducing traffic noise to this land parcel.

- 9.10 The Worlledge conclusions for Heritage are that the proposed development will help to ensure that the site and its constituent buildings have a sustainable future, thus preserving those collective memories. The proposals do not involve the demolition of any of the existing buildings. The proposals will make the heritage assets (SAM) more publicly available. The new uses associated with Bicester Motion will help to create new memories that will add to the site's communal value.
- 9.11 In terms of the natural environment, there are ample opportunities for ecological improvements which will offset the loss of the poorer self-sown scrub which has colonised the majority of the site. In this way the proposed development will be able to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the LWS, as per Policy Bicester 8.

Landscape Impacts

- 9.12 In terms of the impacts on the landscape the effect is considered to be a Moderate/Major adverse impact but in the context of the significance being limited to the individual land parcels, the site itself and to lesser impacts on local receptors opposite to the site. Also, this conclusion must be balanced by the larger picture considering the site's future and the continuing use of the airfield within an appropriate use and context. The challenges and opportunities as described above have been considered in detail to the current proposals to be developed that have been agreed within the design team to be appropriate and that will cause less than significant harm to the landscape or heritage features in the overall balance of factors.
- 9.13 Key to the overall assessment of harm to the site's character and setting is the impact on the historic landscape which has been analysed in detail within the Heritage Impact Statement and has found there to be no significant harm resulting from this proposal. The proposal will help secure the preservation of the valued features of the former airbase and will benefit their restoration.
- 9.14 The communal 'place memory' of the site will be preserved through the continued use of the site and its buildings and the new development will make the site more

accessible to the public which will add to this 'place memory' with new memories being facilitated. There is now a vibrancy to the re-purposed Main Technical Site that has a strong influence on the character of this area with new businesses and many classic cars in evidence. There is a strong feeling of renewal and purpose to the site. This area has already started to create a renewed sense of place. The IQ Zone will build on this momentum as part of the broader business plan to provide a sustainable long-term future for the site.

Visual Impacts

- 9.15 The impacts on the wider landscape reduce as the distance increases. Visual impact from remote views are not significant. In visual terms receptors considered to have any significant impact are generally those within a 1km radius of the site. The more remote views that were identified from the site visit were in excess of this and in fact beyond the radius of the defined study area.
- 9.16 Local views and receptors from the Skimmingdish Lane and some residential properties, and including cyclists and pedestrians to the south will experience some localised adverse impacts in the view, however these are predicted to be up to Moderate and would be mitigated in the medium to longer term by the establishment of tree planting within the site boundary that would break up the mass of the buildings and help to screen the views. Compared to the previous scheme the impacts are less as the buildings are set back from the road and avoid the perception of continuous development parallel with the road.
- 9.17 Within the site itself views are sensitive, being within the setting to the Conservation Area and including numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There will be a change to some views, for example from the former Watchtower. Some of the buildings will appear closer than the previous scheme in this view however, the development is not out of scale with or inappropriate for the site and the change to the view will result in less than significant harm.
- 9.18 The new buildings will not compete visually with the historic structures and the form and materials used for the new buildings will be sensitive to those already used within the site. The predicted views WFVPs 7, 12 and 16 illustrate the massing and form. In the round, taking account of the existing and future uses and context of the site, the

visual impact is considered to be acceptable.

Recommendations

- 9.19 The quantum of development on this land parcel has already been agreed for the previous planning consent. This report is based on a new concept level of design with indicative footprints and building heights. The LVIA will need to be reviewed as part of the detailed planning application (or applications) to ensure that the detailed design of any or all of the development does not undermine any of the findings and conclusions of this report. There will need to be a strong emphasis on the evolving design on the continued collaboration of landscape, heritage and biodiversity expertise to ensure that the amenity, heritage and ecological values are maximised.
- 9.20 The challenges and opportunities have led to the development of the concept form, massing and scale of the IQ development in the location within land parcel 3f. The landscape and heritage specialists have explored, with the architects, options in terms of orientation, massing and layout, numbers of buildings and building heights.
- 9.21 The buildings form a cohesive grouping, with consistent heights, footprints and design. The building is 10.5m high, below the height of buildings on the Technical Site and also below those of the nearby Bakel Factory. The sinuous layout sets the buildings back from the road and is sympathetic to the form of this part of the site.
- 9.22 The importance in landscape and visual terms of the detailed building design cannot be understated. The nature of the buildings, form, massing and detailing can drastically alter the appearance and impact on character and views.
- 9.23 It is recommended that separate LVIAs be carried out for all detailed planning applications to take account of the influence of detailed details considerations.
- 9.24 It is also recommended that a lighting study be part of any future planning applications so that the implications on the site, local and the wider landscape be properly assessed. This would in any case be required to satisfy ecological conditions.

Bibliography

- Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013.
- Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland Swanwick C and LUC 2002.
- Natural England National (Joint) Character Areas: The Cotswolds (NCA 107)
- The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
- Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment 1995
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031
- Cherwell District Council Countryside Design Summary 1998
- RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal 6 October 2008
- RAF Bicester Planning Brief September 2009.

Appendix B – Assessment Methodology – derived principally from standard guidance texts on Landscape Character and Landscape and Visual assessment including:

- Scottish National Heritage (SNH)/Countryside Agency
 - Landscape Character Assessment 2002
 - Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity
- Landscape institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition 2002
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013

The following tables are general assessment criteria used to inform judgements about landscape and visual effects. The tables and criteria are used as guide only.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT:

Sensitivity (combining Landscape Value/Importance and the landscape’s Susceptibility to Change)

Landscape Value

VALUE/ IMPORTANCE	TYPICAL CRITERIA	TYPICAL SCALE	TYPICAL EXAMPLES
High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International National	World Heritage Site National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area
Medium/High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National Regional Local	National Park/AONB AGLV/other local landscape designation Landscape value identified in SPD SINC/Conservation Areas Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Medium/Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity	Local	Site has some value (redeeming feature/benefit to the community)
Low	Low quality, generic contemporary, degraded landscape	Local	Area of little value and identified for improvement

Other factors taken into consideration are judgements of perception including tranquillity, cultural associations and aesthetic attributes.

Susceptibility to Change of Landscape Receptors

Field Observations summarised below capture key natural, cultural and aesthetic elements contributing to or detracting from the overall landscape sensitivity.

Topography

Flat	Steep	Rolling Lowland	Hills	Broad Valley
Undulating	Vertical	Plateau	Dry Valley	Narrow Valley
Rolling	Plain	Scarp / cliffs	Deep Gorge	

Other:

Landcover and Landscape Elements

BUILDINGS	HERITAGE	FARMING	LANDCOVER	WOODLAND / TREES	HYDROLOGY	ROADS / COMMS
farm buildings	vernacular buildings	walls	designed parkland	deciduous woodland	river	road
masts / poles	country house	fences	scrub	coniferous plantation	stream	track
turbines	field systems	hedges	marsh	mixed woodland	reservoir	footpath
pylons	prehistoric ritual	fields	peat bog		dry valley	lane
industry	hill top fort / enclosure	arable	moor / heath	shelter belt	winterbourne (winter river)	railway
commercial	ecclesiastic	improved pasture	rough grassland	hedge trees	pond	pylons
settlement	monuments of war	rough grazing	water meadows	orchard	lake	communication masts
urban	hedge banks		grassland	clumps	drainage ditch	
follies	coppice		species rich grassland	isolated trees		
	other monuments					
	listed buildings					

Landscape Assessment Criteria

PATTERNS (2D):	dominant	strong	broken	weak
SCALE:	intimate	small	medium	large
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish
COMPLEXITY:	uniform	simple	diverse	complex
REMOTENESS:	wild	remoteness	vacant	active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM (3D):	straight	angular	curved	sinuous
ENCLOSURE:	expansive	open	enclosed	constrained
VISUAL DYNAMIC:	sweeping	spreading	dispersed	channelled

Perception:

SECURITY:	intimate	comfortable	safe	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	monotonous	bland	interesting	challenging	inspiring
TRANQUILLITY:	inaccessible	remote	vacant	peaceful	busy
PLEASURE:	unpleasant	pleasant	attractive	beautiful	

Summary

- Main features, attractors, detractors
- Key characteristics/distinctive features and why they are important:
- Rarity/replaceability
- Condition
- Perception

Landscape susceptibility to change takes account of the above considerations and is based on a professional judgement as to how vulnerable the landscape is and how able it is to accommodate change and this is described more fully in the report.

Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Susceptibility to change based on the criteria recorded above.

Sensitivity is based upon a combination of landscape susceptibility to change and importance/value

Susceptibility to change	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Importance/value					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Magnitude of Change for Landscape Receptors (Effect on landscape of specific proposal combined with the geographical extent)

Effect on important/key landscape features

High	Total loss or alteration to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. Introduction of elements which are totally uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-high	Significant loss or alteration to the above, but not complete loss or alteration and/or introduction of prominent features which are generally uncharacteristic.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features/ characteristics of the baseline and / or the introduction of prominent features, although not necessarily uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-low	Partial to Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Negligible	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. And/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.

Geographical extent of change experienced by receptors

High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting a number of landscape character areas/types
Medium-high	The change affects an entire landscape character area of type
Medium	The effects apply to a substantial part of a landscape receptor
Medium - Low	The effects are limited to a minor part of a landscape receptor
Low	Highly localised effect to a landscape receptor, likely to be limited to the site itself or its immediate surroundings

Magnitude of change

Effect on important/key landscape features	Negligible/Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Geographical extent of change experienced by receptors					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change

Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the “Aggregate Magnitude” rating can be reduced.

Significance of Landscape Effects

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance

Major adverse: The proposed development would result in material changes to the landscape of the site, to its landform, scale and pattern which cannot be effectively mitigated. The integrity of the site is compromised and the value substantially undermined.

Moderate adverse: The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape and/or result in the partial loss of characteristics of the site.

Minor adverse: The proposed development would have some effect on some characteristics of the site but the overall character is sustained and the value of the landscape is not materially harmed or has been mitigated.

Neutral: The proposed development would not materially alter the character of the site and its setting nor detract from the value of that landscape.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Significance of Visual impact results from combining the Sensitivity of the Receptor and the Magnitude of Change

The Aggregate Sensitivity is derived from the Importance of View and the type/nature (Sensitivity) of the Visual Receptor.

Importance of view is based on professional judgement based on typical criteria set out below.

More valuable / Important	Less Valuable / Important
General Visibility	General Visibility
A combination of landform influences tree and woodland cover contribute to importance of view	A combination of landform influences tree and woodland cover constrains view
Open, clear views	Partial views or glimpses only
Site dominant within view	Site part of wider view, often set within a wider context
Site has clear influence on other sensitive feature or landmark	No features or landmarks of significance
Site visible on skyline	Site not visible on skyline
Population	Population
A public viewpoint	A viewpoint from private property
Many people experience the view e.g. at a recognised tourist view, or multiple residents	Few or single people only affected by the view
People experiencing the view over longer periods of time, for example in their homes	The view is experienced fleetingly on a road
The view relates to a heritage asset or is recognised in planning designations	The view has no associated designations or links with local heritage, or is degraded or blighted in some way
The view is noted in guidebooks, on tourist maps or occurs on nationally important trails	View occurs on a little used footpaths or other rights of way
The view is mentioned in literature, art or has other cultural associations	The view has few cultural associations, is 'generic' (e.g. contemporary commercial/industrial development)
Mitigation	Mitigation
Mitigation potential restricted	Mitigation potentially successful
Key views could be interrupted	No key views affected
Mitigation could harm local character	Mitigation could strengthen local character

More sensitive receptors	Less sensitive receptors
Focus or attention drawing to particular view during outdoor recreation (e.g. walking along footpath)	People engaged in outdoor sport/activities in which the focus is not on the surrounding landscape (football, other organised sport)
Visitors to landscape or heritage assets, where the view is likely to contribute to the visitor experience	Visitors to countryside where landscape is less likely to an important contributor to visitor experience (i.e. the focus is indoors)
Communities where views contribute to the setting enjoyed by residents (e.g. a Cotswold village)	Communities in more urban areas where landscape is not a reason why people may have chosen to live in an area
Occupiers of residential properties affected by the views	Where receptors are predominantly non-resident
Occupiers of work places where views contribute to the quality of working life e.g. landscaped business park, offices with heritage value	People at their place of work where activity is focused on work and not surroundings
Travellers on scenic road or railway routes where travelling through the landscape is part of the experience	Transient receptors in vehicles that are not likely to notice views.

Judgements Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Importance of View					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Aggregate Magnitude of Change for Visual Receptors derives from the degree of perceived change combined with the geographical extent over which it is apparent.

Magnitude of change experienced by receptors

High	The proposals become the dominant feature in the view and they significantly affect / change its character
Medium-high	The proposals form a significant part of the scene and affects the character of the view
Medium	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene readily noticed by observers
Medium-low	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene noticeable by receptors from some views
Low	The proposals only constitute a minor part of the view, possibly missed by a casual observer and not affecting the overall character of the view
Negligible/Low	Very small or no parts of the development are discernible, with very little or no effect on the scene

Extent of the area which receptors are affected

High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting receptors over a wide area of the landscape and/or from a large distance from the site e.g. experienced over the length of a long distance footpath
Medium	The change affects groups of receptors within that are within a discrete area(s), probably identifiable by description or by recognised/defined boundaries.
Low	The change is specific to a single viewpoint / receptor or only experienced within close proximity of the development site.

Medium – High or Medium – Low rating may be given where appropriate

Aggregate Magnitude is based upon a combination of the magnitude and extent of the change experience by receptors

Magnitude	Negligible/Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Extent of Change					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change

Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the “Aggregate Magnitude” rating can be reduced.

Significance of Visual Effects

Aggregate Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Aggregated Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance.

Major adverse: The viewpoint is very sensitive and there will be a substantive change in the view; the proposed development will dominate the view, to the detriment of existing valued views.

Moderate/Major adverse: The viewpoint is sensitive and the proposals would result in a material change in the view both of the site and its setting; the development will be highly visible and detract from existing valued views.

Moderate adverse: The viewpoint may be more or less sensitive and the degree of harm to the view will depend on the scale of change. The proposal would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor.

Minor adverse: The viewpoint is usually less sensitive and the proposals have a more localised effect on the view, effecting only elements of the view.

No significant impact: The viewpoint is usually much less sensitive and the change in view is slight, with the view towards the site remaining little changed.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects

Scale of Impact ie Site-wide, Local, Borough-Wide

As Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment covers a wide range of different aspects of the potential effects on a local area it is often the case that the different aspects are of greater or lesser significance.

For example the changes to the physical landscape of a site may involve the loss of features which may only be really apparent within the internal or immediate site environment. While these may be very important at a site wide level they are not necessarily of any major significance to the wider local area or district.

Alternatively impacts on popular public view point or a national designated historic landscape may be of much wider district or even potentially of national significance.

Within the LVIA assessment it is helpful to be able to make relative assessments of effect such as 'Slight', 'Moderate' or 'Substantial' on the different aspects. These assessments can then be related to the site, local or wider significance as appropriate to the aspect being considered.

Appendix B - Cumulative Effects - Methodology

- 1.1 In terms of the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) the methodology used in this assessment draws on the following guidance:
 - Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013.
 - 'Guidance. Cumulative effect of wind farms', Version 2 Revised 13.04.05, Scottish Natural Heritage; and
 - 'Guidance. Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments. March 2012; Scottish Natural Heritage.
- 1.2 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) guidance has largely evolved from the assessment of onshore wind farms, however, the principle of cumulative effects remains the same regardless of the type of development.
- 1.3 The CLVIA covers the potential cumulative effects on landscape receptors and views. As with the assessment of effects of the proposed development itself, the significance of cumulative effects is determined through a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor or view and the magnitude of change upon it. The sensitivity of landscape receptors and views is the same in the cumulative assessment as for the proposed development in isolation. However, the cumulative magnitude of change is assessed differently.
- 1.4 The assessment of Cumulative magnitude of change has concentrated on the effects within the site assuming all development proposed within the Masterplan with predicted mitigation is in place.
- 1.5 The cumulative magnitude of change is an expression of the degree to which landscape receptors and views will be changed by the addition of the proposed development to other developments that are operational, consented or proposed within the study area. This is dependent on a number of variables as follows:
- 1.6 This report has focussed on the effects of the proposed Experience Centre development in relation to other developments within the site itself. If the proposed development is seen in a part of the view that is not affected by another development, this will generally increase the cumulative magnitude of change as it will extend its influence into an area that is currently unaffected. Conversely, if the proposed development is seen in the context of other developments, the cumulative magnitude of change may be lower as it is not extending development to hitherto undeveloped parts of the outlook. This is particularly true where the scale and layout of the proposed development is similar to that of the other developments, as where there is a high level of integration and cohesion with an existing site, the various developments may appear as a single co-ordinated site;
- 1.7 The extent of the developed skyline. If the proposed development will add notably to the developed skyline in a view, the cumulative magnitude of change will tend to be higher, as the

nature of the skyline has a particular influence on both views and landscape receptors;

- 1.8 The number and scale of the developments seen combined or in sequence. Generally, the greater the number of visible developments, the higher the cumulative magnitude of change will be.

Combined – where the observer is able to see one or more developments from one viewpoint.

- In Combination: Where two or more developments are or would be within the observer's arc of vision at the same time without moving his/her head.
- In Succession: Where the observer has to turn his/her head to see various developments.

Sequential – Occurs when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see the same or different developments i.e. along a road.

- Frequently sequential: Where features appear regularly and within short time lapses between instances depending on speed of travel and distance between viewpoints
- Occasionally sequential: Where longer time lapses between appearances would occur because the observer is moving very slowly and /or there are large distances between the viewpoints.

- 1.9 Furthermore, the addition of the proposed development to a view where a greater number of smaller developments are apparent will usually generate a higher cumulative magnitude of change than a view of one or two large developments as this can lead to the impression of a less co-ordinated approach;

- 1.10 The size and scale comparison between all of the proposed development. If the proposed development is of a similar scale to other visible and relevant developments, particularly those seen in closest proximity to it, the cumulative magnitude of change will generally be lower as it will have more integration with the other sites and will be less apparent as an addition to the cumulative situation;

- 1.11 The distance of the proposed development from the viewpoint or landscape receptor. As in the assessment of the site itself, the greater the distance, the lower the cumulative magnitude of change will tend to be; and

- 1.12 The magnitude of change of the proposed development in isolation as assessed in Table 1. The lower this is assessed to be, the lower the cumulative magnitude of change is likely to be. Where the proposed development itself is assessed to have a negligible magnitude of change on a landscape and visual receptor there will not be a cumulative effect as the contribution of the proposed development will equate to the 'no change' situation.

Significance of cumulative effects

- 1.13 Definitions of cumulative magnitude of change are provided within Table 6.1 to ensure that the

assessment process is transparent.

Table 6.1 – Cumulative magnitude of change	
Cumulative magnitude	Definition
High	The addition of the proposed development will make an immediately apparent contribution to the cumulative situation in a landscape receptor or view.
Medium	The addition of the proposed development makes a notable contribution to the cumulative situation, and its cumulative addition is readily apparent.
Low	The addition of the proposed development will make a minor contribution to the overall cumulative situation, and its cumulative addition is only slightly apparent.
Negligible	The addition of the proposed development will make a negligible contribution to the cumulative situation and its addition equates to a 'no change' situation.

- 1.14 The objective of the cumulative assessment is to determine whether any effects that the proposed development would have on views and landscape receptors when seen or perceived in conjunction with other existing and proposed sites will be significant or not significant.
- 1.15 A significant cumulative effect will occur where the addition of the proposed development to other existing and proposed relevant developments would result in a landscape or view that is defined by the presence of more than one major development and is characterised primarily by large scale development so that other patterns and components are no longer definitive.
- 1.16 If the proposed development itself is assessed to have a significant effect on a landscape or visual receptor, it does not necessarily follow that the cumulative effect will also be significant.
- 1.17 The cumulative effects of any development in landscape and visual terms are important as the impact on the long-term integrity and sustainability of the landscape depends on the retention of its inherent qualities. The gradual erosion of these qualities due to the increasing numbers or frequency of developments, or indeed the expansion of existing developments can influence the quality and character of a landscape.
- 1.18 As to other developments within the wider area we have not undertaken a search of other planning applications and have no knowledge of other possible developments in the area. Should other applications for development come forward within the site or elsewhere, then these would have to be taken on their own merits.