BLENHEIM ESTATE

HOMES

Land East of Park View Woodstock

Environmental Statement Technical Appendix D: Landscape and Visual Effects

June 2025

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Technical appendix D1: Planning policy

National planning policy framework (NPPF)

D1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, came into effect on 24 July 2018 and was last updated in December 2024. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF provides a framework within which councils can produce their own local and neighbourhood plans. The relevant guidance on landscape and visual issues is stated below.

Achieving sustainable development

D1.2 The NPPF in paragraph 8 states:

> *"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*
>
> *a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
>
> *b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
>
> *c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

Promoting healthy and safe communities

D1.3 The NPPF in paragraph 103 states:

> *"Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate."*

Making effective use of land

D1.4 The NPPF in paragraph 124 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land."

D1.5 The NPPF in paragraph 125 lists:

"Planning policies and decisions should:

a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains– such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and

e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions – including mansard roofs – where the development would be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is an exceptional justification."

Achieving appropriate densities

D1.6 The NPPF in paragraph 129 lists:

"Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

b) local market conditions and viability;

c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places."

D1.7 The NPPF in paragraph 130 lists:

"Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

a) plans should contain policies to optimize the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;

b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and

c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)."

Achieving well-designed places

D1.8 The NPPF in paragraph 131 confirms:

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective

engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process."

D1.9 The NPPF in paragraph 134 confirms:

"Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site-specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowners and developers may contribute to these exercises, but may also choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop. Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes."

D1.10 The NPPF in paragraph 135 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
e) optimize the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

D1.11 The NPPF in paragraph 136 states:

"Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees and the existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users."

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

D1.12 The NPPF in paragraph 164 states that:

> *"New development should be planned for in ways that:*
>
> *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 incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and*
>
> *b) help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the government's policy for national technical standards."*

D1.13 The NPPF in paragraph 166 states that:

> *"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:*
>
> *a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*
>
> *b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption."*

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

D1.14 The NPPF in paragraph 187 states:

> *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
>
> *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 benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
> *c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
> *d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
> *e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions*

such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

D1.15 The NPPF in paragraph 188 states that:

"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."

D1.16 The NPPF in paragraph 189 states that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

D1.17 The NPPF in paragraph 202 states:

"Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations."

D1.18 The NPPF in paragraph 203 states that:

"Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place."

D1.19 The NPPF in paragraph 207 states that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

D1.20 The NPPF in paragraph 208 states that:

"Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

D1.21 The NPPF in paragraph 210 states that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

D1.22 The NPPF in paragraph 212 states that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

D1.23 The NPPF in paragraph 213 states that:

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

D1.24 The NPPF in paragraph 214 states that:

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use."

D1.25 The NPPF in paragraph 215 states that:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

D1.26 The NPPF in paragraph 216 states that:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

D1.27 The National Planning Practice Guidance contains government guidance, the following of which is relevant to this assessment.

Biodiversity Net Gain

D1.28 Biodiversity Net Gain in decision making (paragraph: 019, reference ID: 74-019-20240214) states that:

"The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain involves the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition following the grant of planning permission to ensure the objective of at least 10% net gain will be met for a development. The determination of the Biodiversity Gain Plan under this condition is the mechanism to confirm whether the development meets the biodiversity gain objective. Development may not be begun until the Biodiversity Gain Plan is approved.

Given this, it would generally be inappropriate for decision makers, when determining a planning application for a development subject to biodiversity net gain, to refuse an application on the grounds that the biodiversity gain objective will not be met.

However, decision makers may need to consider more broadly whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being successfully discharged. Matters for consideration may include the following (but this is not an exhaustive list):

- *The appropriate balance expected between onsite gains, off-site gains and the use of statutory biodiversity credits for the development, taking account of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy;*
- *Whether the type and location of any significant onsite habitat enhancements proposed for onsite gains are appropriate, taking into account other policies to support biodiversity (including local nature recovery strategies) and other wider objectives (for example policies for design, open space and recreation, and retention of trees); and*
- *Any planning conditions which need to be imposed to secure any significant onsite habitat enhancements, including any conditions requiring the maintenance of the enhancement for at least 30 years after the completion of the development.*

Prior to the determination of the planning application, decision makers will also want to discuss with the application whether any section 106 planning obligations are required to secure either significant onsite habitat enhancements or offsite gains for the development.

For some planning applications (for instance, applications for outline planning permission where landscaping and layout are reserved matters), the implications for existing onsite habitats and the contribution to onsite gains may be uncertain at the time of the determination of the application. In these cases, decision makers may want to consider what subsequent approvals will be necessary to ensure significant onsite habitat enhancements are appropriately secured.

Onsite habitat enhancements to support the biodiversity gain objective may have positive implications for other policy objectives which may need to be taken into account as part of the determination of the planning application. For example, such as delivering wider benefits to landscaping, amenity, and climate change adaptation."

Design: process and tools

D1.29 Planning for well-designed places (paragraph: 001, reference ID: 26-001-20191001), revised 01.10.2019) states that:

"Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. This guidance explains the processes and tools that can be used through the planning system and how to engage local communities effectively.

To be read alongside this guidance, the National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

As set out in paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following 10 characteristics

- *Context*
- *Identity*
- *Built form*
- *Movement*
- *Nature*
- *Public spaces*
- *Uses*
- *Homes and buildings*
- *Resources*
- *Lifespan*

The National Design Guide can be used by all those involved in shaping places including in plan-making and decision making."

Natural environment – Green infrastructure

D1.30 Importance of green infrastructure (paragraph: 005, reference ID: 8-005-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services."

D1.31 Green infrastructure planning goals (paragraph 006, reference ID: 8-006-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"Green infrastructure can help in:

Building a strong, competitive economy

Green infrastructure can drive economic growth and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors.

Achieving well-designed places

The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

Green infrastructure can improve the wellbeing of a neighbourhood with opportunities for recreation, exercise, social interaction, experiencing and caring for nature, community food-growing and gardening, all of which can bring mental and physical health benefits. Outdoor Recreation Value (ORVal) is a useful online tool that can be used to quantify the recreational values provided by greenspace. Green infrastructure can help to reduce health inequalities in areas of socio-economic deprivation and meet the needs of families and an ageing population. It can also help to reduce air pollution and noise.

Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change

Green infrastructure can contribute to carbon storage, cooling and shading, opportunities for species migration to more suitable habitats and the protection of water quality and other natural resources. It can also be an integral part of multifunctional sustainable drainage and natural flood risk management.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

High-quality networks of multifunctional green infrastructure contribute a range of benefits, including ecological connectivity, facilitating biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks and opportunities for communities to undertake conservation work."

D1.32 Consideration of green infrastructure in planning decisions (paragraph 008, Ref ID: 8-008-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.

Depending on individual circumstances, planning conditions, obligations, or the Community Infrastructure Levy may all be potential mechanisms for securing and funding green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure will require sustainable management and maintenance if it is to provide benefits and services in the long term. Arrangements for funding need to be identified as early as possible, and factored into the design and implementation, balancing the costs with the benefits. Local community engagement can assist with management and tailoring provision to local needs.

Natural environment – Trees and woodland

D1.33 Consideration of trees within settlements (paragraph 029, Ref ID: 8-029-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"Well-placed and well-chosen trees on streets and in urban spaces can provide a range of benefits: encouraging walking and enhanced physical and mental health; contributing to local environmental character and distinctiveness; providing habitats for wildlife; reducing noise and excessive heat; and supporting sustainable drainage. Changing climate, in particular hotter summers and more frequent periods of dry weather, and unknown pests and diseases, will place new pressures on green infrastructure in the long-term, so trees of the right species and age profile are essential.

The interaction of trees and tree roots with built infrastructure, transport networks, buildings and utility services is complex and requires detailed inter-disciplinary co-operation, with expert arboricultural or forestry advice. The selection of street trees needs to consider which species will best suit the highway environment in the long term, including associated infrastructure and utilities."

Natural environment – Landscape

D1.34 Planning policies to conserve and enhance landscapes (paragraph 036, Ref ID: 8-036-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully."

D1.35 Assessing landscape character (paragraph: 037 Ref ID: 8-037-20190721, revised 21.07.2019) states that:

"For a designated landscape, the relevant management plan will contain further information on the area's particular character and beauty.

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed.

To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used."

Historic environment

D1.36 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 002, Ref ID: 18a-002-20190723 revised 23.07.2019) states that:

"Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- *capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost*
- *interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past;*
- *and make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 199)"*

D1.37 Protecting the setting of a World Heritage Site (paragraph 033, Ref ID: 18a-033-20190723 revised 23.07.2019) states that:

"The UNESCO Operational Guidelines seek protection of "the immediate setting" of each World Heritage Site, of "important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the Property" and suggest designation of a buffer zone wherever this may be necessary. A buffer zone is defined as an area surrounding the World Heritage Site which has complementary legal restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the World Heritage Site. The buffer zone forms part of the setting of the World Heritage Site.

It may be appropriate to protect the setting of World Heritage Sites in other ways, for example by the protection of specific views and viewpoints, both

from and to the site. Other landscape designations may also prove effective in protecting the setting of a World Heritage Site. However it is intended to protect the setting, it will be essential to explain how this is to be done in the relevant development plan policies.

Decisions on buffer zones are made on a case by case basis at the time of nomination and reviewed subsequently through the World Heritage Site Management Plan review process. Proposals to add or amend buffer zones following inscription are submitted by government for approval by the World Heritage Committee who will consider and adopt the proposals as appropriate."

D1.38 Approach to be taken to assessing the impact of development on World Heritage Sites (paragraph 035, Ref ID: 8-035-20190723, revised 23.07.2019) states that:

"Applicants proposing change that might affect the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and, where applicable, authenticity of a World Heritage Site through development within the Site or affecting its setting (including any buffer zone or equivalent) need to submit sufficient information with their applications to enable assessment of the potential impact on Outstanding Universal Value. This may include visual impact assessments, archaeological data and/or historical information. In many cases this will form part of an Environment Statement. Applicants may find it helpful to use the approach set out in the International Council on Monuments and Sites' Heritage Impact Assessment guidelines and Historic England's guidance on setting and views.

World Heritage Sites are 'sensitive areas' for the purposes of determining if an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for a particular development proposal. Lower development size thresholds apply to the requirement for Design and Access Statements within World Heritage Sites as compared with the norm."

Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space

D1.39 Public rights of way and National Trails (paragraph: 004, reference ID: 37-004-20140306, revised 06.03.2014) states that:

"Local highway authorities hold information about the location of public rights of way in the areas they cover. They are required to record the existence and location of rights of way on a definitive map. Natural England also has information about public rights of way and National Trails.

Public rights of way form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced. The Defra Rights of Way circular (1/09) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way. It also contains guidance on the consideration of rights of way in association with development. The Circular also covers the statutory procedures for diversion or extinguishment of a public right of way."

Local planning policies

Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) December 2024

D1.40 Policies contained within the proposed submission plan that are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment are set out below.

D1.41 Policy CSD 11: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity states:

"All new development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to Cherwell's nature recovery through the protection, restoration and expansion of protected sites, habitats and species. Their adaptation to climate change and improving connections between wildlife corridors and protected sites at a landscape scale should be facilitated in line with the hierarchy of designations set out in legislation and the draft NRN zones:

i. Development which is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and/or Ramsar site will not be permitted;*

ii. Development which would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless there are exceptional reasons where public benefit clearly outweighs the loss or deterioration and a suitable compensation strategy is agreed;

iii. Development which is likely to have a significant adverse impact on nationally important sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), 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 NNRs and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity, and

iv. Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance, or impacts Priority/Section 41 habitats and species will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and can be fully mitigated to achieve a biodiversity gain for both species and habitats.

Any development with the potential to impact on a SAC, SPA and/or Ramsar site will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the international site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, or that effects can be mitigated to avoid any effect on integrity.

All development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to enhance biodiversity such as biodiverse green and brown roofs, green walls, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) open water features and, soft landscaping, in addition to retaining and enhancing existing features of nature conservation value within the site.

New dwellings will be expected to provide integrated bird or bat provision at a minimum equivalent ratio of one per new dwelling.

Development proposals are expected to be designed to create areas of new habitat and provide appropriate links and corridors between new and existing ecological networks, including those identified in the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, avoiding and reversing fragmentation and species isolation.

Relevant habitat and species surveys proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed will be required to accompany planning applications that may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value.

Where, having followed the mitigation hierarchy, there is an unavoidable requirement for offsite biodiversity compensation to offset any harm as a result of the development, this should be proportionate in scale to the proposed development.

Planning conditions/obligations will be used to help deliver the Conservation Target Areas habitat and species targets and those within the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy where appropriate.

Any new development will be required to secure the management and monitoring of biodiversity features created on-site and those created off-site for at least 30 years, to compensate for development impacts, through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan or Ecological Enhancement Scheme.

Major development proposals are expected, and minor development proposals are encouraged, to deliver measures that promote a sense of community ownership of green spaces and habitats.

**Unless it meets the relevant subsequent legal tests (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and No Alternatives) and provides adequate compensation."*

D1.42 Policy CSD 15: Green and Blue Infrastructure states:

"The Council will require the protection and enhancement of sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network and the improvement of sustainable connections between sites. The inclusion of meaningful and integrated GBI in development proposals will be required.

For major developments (see glossary), priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

All development will be required to demonstrate strategies to both protect and enhance existing GBI and to also incorporate new GBI in the design approach for each site. Where applicable, applicants will be expected to demonstrate:

i. How existing GBI identified on-site will be protected and incorporated into the layout, design and appearance of proposals;

ii. *Where connection(s) proposed between existing and new GBI on-site can be established including identifying opportunities for connectivity with off-site GBI;*

iii. How restored or re-created habitats can be accommodated within the proposed development and how biodiversity net gain can be achieved;

iv. How existing trees and hedgerows will be protected both during and after development and the opportunities for increasing tree cover through new planting;

v. How the existing and proposed built and natural landscape can be improved through the provision of GBI including for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment;

vi. How GBI will be provided along movement corridors for all modes of transport on-site (including motorised and non-motorised means of travel);

vii. Where multi-functioning GBI can be achieved on-site, including to adapt and mitigate against climate change impacts, to protect and enhance biodiversity, manage flood risk, to improve air quality, and to promote health and well-being in the local community;

viii. How the appropriate use and permanence of the Green Belt will be maintained and enhanced by existing and new GBI on-site, and

ix. How existing and new GBI will be maintained and managed post development.

Off-site provision will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where it has been agreed that it will not be possible to provide on-site net biodiversity gains."

D1.43 Policy COM 10: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape states:

"Development proposals will be expected to preserve the character and appearance of the landscape through the restoration, management and enhancement of existing areas, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

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

i. Cause an unacceptable visual intrusion into the open countryside;

ii. Be inconsistent with local character;

iii. Introduce disturbances to areas with a high level of tranquillity;

iv. Cause coalescence between settlements;

v. Harm the setting of natural, built and historic landmark features, or

vi. Reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

Development proposals must have regard to the key landscape qualities of the districts' landscape character areas and the strategy and guidelines in the council's landscape character assessment.

All major developments proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

In determining development proposals within or adjacent to the Cotswolds National Landscape, great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's scenic beauty and landscape qualities, including its wildlife and heritage.

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan will be used as supplementary guidance in decision making relevant to the National Landscape.

Development proposals within the National Landscape will only be permitted if they are small scale, sustainably located and designed, and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of the area."

D1.44 Policy COM 11: Cherwell Local Landscape Designations states:

"Cherwell local landscape designations (as shown in the Policies Map) are:

- *Cherwell Valley*
- *Ironstone Downs*
- *Muswell Hill*
- *North Ploughley*
- *Otmoor*
- *Thames Valley*
- *Upper Cherwell Valley.*

Development proposals within or affecting a designated local landscape will be assessed based on its specific landscape and visual impact on the valued characteristics of the designated landscape.

Development must have regard to the Cherwell Local Landscape Designations Study and avoid loss or harm to the aspects of landscape value and qualities of the designated landscape.

Development will be required to respond appropriately to the recommendations for managing the designated local landscape."

D1.45 Policy COM 14: Achieving Well Designed Places states:

"All new development will be required to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character (Including landscape character) of the area in which it is set through sensitive siting, layout and detailed design.

Development proposals are expected to demonstrate how they will achieve the ten characteristics of well-designed places as set out in the National

Design Guide; and take account of local design guidance and codes including: the residential design guide, conservation area appraisals, landscape character assessments, neighbourhood plans and other relevant supplementary planning documents. Poorly designed developments will not be permitted.

New development proposals shall:

i. Be designed to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and healthy places for living and working;

ii. Be designed to improve the quality, function, and appearance of its locality;

iii. Deliver buildings, places and public spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions, including resilience to the effects of climate change;

iv. Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and densities;

v. Adopt the principles of 20-minute Neighbourhoods where appropriate;

vi. Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness, conserving or enhancing the setting of heritage assets and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views;

vii. 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;

viii. 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;

ix. Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through actively and sustainably, and have recognisable landmark features;

x. 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 and Streets for a Healthy Life should be followed;

xi. Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space;

xii. Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation;

xiii. Be designed from the outset to reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour. All development is expected to have regard to and perform positively against the recommendations set out in, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation.

xiv. Consider sustainable design and layout at the outset, 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 refer to the climate change policies set out within this Plan);

xv. Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features 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;

xvi. Use locally sourced sustainable materials wherever possible, with consideration of the embodied carbon of those materials;

xvii. Demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced;

xviii. Not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and

xix Be designed to consider and not to hinder the potential future delivery of adjoining development sites.

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 will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, masterplans and Design Codes will need to be prepared in collaboration with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.

The Council will expect strategic sites and other large schemes to be subject to assessment by an Independent Design Review Panel".

D1.46 Policy COM 16: Public Rights of Way states:

"Public rights of way will be protected and enhanced to ensure access to public rights of way and the connectivity of these networks.

Any development that will result in the loss of a Public Right of Way or significant reduction in amenity or connectivity will not be permitted. In exceptional cases, development that negatively affects a public right of way may be permitted where it is essential that an alternative route is provided or where an altered public right of way provides better access for users or more connections to wider networks. Any changes to public rights of way requires a separate legal process."

D1.47 Policy COM 24: Open Space, Sport and Recreation states:

"All open spaces, allotments, sport and recreation facilities will be protected and where necessary enhanced to ensure access to a network of high-quality, accessible, sport, play and recreation provision within the district.

The loss of open spaces, sports, play and recreation provision, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

i. An assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the provision and the function it performs is surplus to requirements; or

ii. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable, accessible location within the local catchment area; or

iii. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

New residential development is required to maximise opportunities to incorporate new publicly accessible, high quality and multi-functional open space and/or, where appropriate, enhance existing provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.

In determining the nature of new or improved sports and recreation provision the Council will be guided by the most up to date evidence and Sports England's Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Calculators. The Council will also consult with Town and Parish Councils, together with potential users wherever possible, to ensure the provision meets local needs.

The Council will require children's play, and general green space to meet the minimum standards set out in Table 9. The design, layout and range of equipment should be inclusive and fully accessible to children and young adults with disabilities, including wheelchair users.

Where it can be clearly demonstrated that proposals are not able to incorporate new provision or enhance existing provision to serve the new community, then an appropriate financial contribution may be requested, where such contributions will provide alternative or enhanced and conveniently accessible off-site open space provision.

Development proposals on open space will only be permitted where it:

iv. Improves the quality of the open space and promotes inclusive access to a wide range of users and recreational interests;

v. Is demonstrably ancillary to the use of the open space and its primary function, e.g., play/sports fields;

vi. Contributes to both the character and amenity of the area and are appropriate and proportionate to the function and nature of the open space, and

vii. Does not have a detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space.

Maintenance plans should be submitted at planning application stage for all new facilities to ensure their long-term quality and management.

Non-residential development proposals are encouraged to provide areas of amenity open space of a proportionate size, scale and character within or adjacent to the development."

D1.48 Policy COM 26: Historic Environment states:

"All development proposals should conserve and/or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of Cherwell District's historic environment, including the significance of its designated and non-designated heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation, in accordance with legislation, national policy and guidance for the historic environment.

Designated Heritage Assets

When considering development affecting a designated heritage asset or its setting, great weight will be given to the significance of the asset and its conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Development proposals related to designated heritage assets must conserve or enhance the heritage assets and have special regard to;

i. The special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings and structures and the conservation of their character, fabric and their settings;

ii. The special architectural and historic interest, character and/or appearance of the District's conservation areas and their setting, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historic significance;

iii. The special archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether scheduled or not), both with regard to their fabric and their settings, and

iv. The special cultural and historic interest of registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.

Proposals that would lead to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted, unless there is a clear public benefit to

outweigh that harm. Any such assessment will take into account, in the balance of material considerations;

- *the significance of the asset;*
- *the level of the harm*
- *the nature and level of the public benefit of the proposal.*

Non-designated Heritage Assets

Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset will be permitted where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its fabric, character and setting. Where possible, development should seek to enhance the character of the non-designated heritage asset.

Proposals for demolition or total loss of a non-designated heritage asset will be subject to a balanced assessment taking into account the significance of the asset and the degree of harm or loss.

All Heritage Assets

All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.

Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk-based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.

Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place at a level appropriate to its significance and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with national guidance.

The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances heritage assets which contribute to the historic character of an area through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and masterplanning.

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated or undesignated asset will not be approved, unless there are substantive tangible public benefits that clearly and convincingly outweigh the harm, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance."

D1.49 Policy COM 27: Conservation Areas states:

"Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, appearance and setting. In particular special attention will be paid to:

i. The location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment, detailing and external appearance of the development;

ii. Views within, into or out of the Area;

iii. The pattern of development and the effects to important green spaces, and other gaps or spaces between buildings and the historic street pattern which make a positive contribution to the character in the Conservation Area;

iv. The wider social and environmental effects generated by the development;

v. Loss or harm or enhancement to features that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area;

vi. The impact of advertisements and signage;

vii. The impact of signage and illumination.

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

i. The building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area; or

ii. The building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and

iii. Any proposed replacement building makes and equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area."

D1.50 Policy COM 28: Listed Buildings states:

"Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, should:

i. Conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building;

ii. Respect the building's historic curtilage, context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context, and

iii. Retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design, details and form."

D1.51 Policy COM 29: Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Battlefields states:

"Development should conserve or enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a battlefield, or park or garden on the Historic England Registers of Historic Battlefields or Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

Development that is supported in principle within the setting of a registered park, garden or historic battlefield will, where applicable, be expected to:

i. Reinstate landscape or built features which contribute positively to the historic interest of the park or garden;

ii. Remove landscape or built features that harm the historic interest of the asset, and

iii. Preserve the views into, from, and across the park, garden or battlefield, including any impacts from artificial lighting.

Developments within or affecting a Registered Park, garden or battlefield should preserve the significance of the heritage asset and be informed by appropriate research, guidance and expertise".

D1.52 Policy KID H1: South-East of Woodstock states:

"Site area – 48.7 hectares Developable area – 16 hectares

Land south-east of Woodstock is allocated to accommodate 450 dwellings as a landscape and heritage led extension of the existing built form of Woodstock as shown on the Policies Map.

Planning permission will only be granted for development in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code to be approved by the Council.

A sensitively laid out and designed development of limited scale set back from the southern boundary of the site and the A44/Oxford Road. A positive gateway to Woodstock and Blenheim World Heritage Site and Grade I Park providing a publicly accessible and high-quality edge of town.

All development proposals will be required to meet the following site specific requirements in addition to those set out in the relevant district-wide policies in this Plan.

Proposals must follow a landscape and heritage led approach to design which secures the long-term future of Blenheim Roman Villa on site and a landscape and planting strategy which is commensurate to the WHS/Brownian landscape on the western side of the Oxford Road.

1. The dwellings to be constructed to an approximate average density of 30 dwellings per hectare;

2. Provision of formal sports facilities, play areas and allotments adopted standards within the developable area unless in otherwise agreed with the Council and West Oxfordshire District Council;

3. Green Infrastructure and open space outside the developable area to be kept free from development in perpetuity;

4. Contributions towards creation/protection/enhancement/restoration of important habitat (wetland, hedgerow, woodland and species specific) in the Blenheim and Ditchley Parks Conservation Target Area;

5. Financial contributions towards primary and secondary school provision in a location to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;

6. Financial contributions towards primary care health provision at a location to be agreed with the Council in discussion with BOB ICB;

7. Financial contributions towards community facilities in a location to be agreed with the Council and Oxfordshire County Councils;

8. All other infrastructure requirements and financial contributions towards infrastructure provision to be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Council and West Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Councils.

Key design requirements

9. Design and layout which responds to identified heritage assets both on and adjacent to the site. Developable area to be pulled back from areas of archaeological interest, to ensure no adverse impacts:

i. Exclude development along the length of the western boundary of the to avoid ground disturbance and potential direct physical impact on the scheduled monument and the associated remains;

ii. The villa site and the historic outlook of the villa to the east to be kept open;

iii. Avoid direct impact on the iron age remains in the northeast corner of the site;

iv. Avoid locating development in the southern and western part of the site to protect the Scheduled Monument, avoid and impact on the setting of Blenheim Palace WHS and RPG, and help reduce any potential impact on the sense of separation between Woodstock and surrounding settlements;

v. Road access to be distanced from the scheduled area which should be accessible only on foot or cycle;

vi. Avoid intervisibility by limiting building heights and drawing the development back from the western / southern boundary of the Site with Historic England; and

vii. The access road to the site must be designed and constructed to avoid harm to the significance of buried nationally significant archaeology and to minimise its impact on the setting of the Blenheim Villa Scheduled Monument and the relationship between the Monument and its associated archaeology.

10. Enhance public access through the site and green infrastructural connections between Woodstock and Kidlington and the wider surrounding countryside, providing links with surrounding public rights of way including Footpath 265/36/10 to the east and Footpaths 342/4/10, 342/5/10 and 342/5/20 to the north.

11. Create crossings which link new development to existing and proposed networks including Oxford Road and Campsfield Road;

12. New footway and cycleway along the eastern side of the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road to provide a direct pedestrian link between the site and Bladon Roundabout;

13. Main access from the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road. The site will require a secondary vehicular access. Access to be linked within the site;

14. Spine road suitable for bus operation and provision of two pairs of bus stops;

15. Set back development from Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' along the northern and eastern edges of the site and include a buffer zone to allow for a semi-natural habitat of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity;

16. Enhancements for biodiversity in the form of hedgerow, woodland, scrub and grassland creation, habitat pile creation, as well as the continued monitoring and management of these habitats;

17. Enhance and strengthen the southern, south-eastern and north-western site boundaries including the introduction of hedgerow trees, to help filter views and to strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network.

Planning application requirements

18. Predicted views of the housing from the schedule monument villa;

19. Development parameters to reflect the accepted location, density and appropriate offset from Blenheim Roman Villa in consultation with Historic England;

20. A conservation plan with programme of interpretation and public engagement to be secured through a S106s agreement;

21. A desk-based archaeological investigation and further investigation of archaeological potential through excavation in consultation with County archaeologist;

22. Heritage Impact Assessment to address Blenheim WHS outstanding universal value attributes;

23. Heritage Impact Assessment measures to avoid or minimise conflict with identified heritage assets within and adjacent to the site including legibility and intervisibility evidence between the site and Bladon Hill;

24. A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) assessment to establish from where in the Site proposed development might be visible from. This will help provide greater clarity as to the potential visual effects that may be experienced from the development of the Site and greater certainty as to any development's interaction with any key visual links;

25. Demonstrate that designated environmental assets will not be harmed, including no detrimental impacts through hydrological, hydro chemical or sedimentation impacts;

26. A surface water management framework to maintain run off rates to greenfield rates and volumes, with use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with Policy CSD8;

27. The application should demonstrate that Thames Water has agreed in principle that foul drainage from the site will be accepted into its network."

Cherwell District Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted July 2015

D1.53 The Cherwell District Local Plan sets out proposals for over the next few decades and how the district will grow and change in the period up to 2031. The document contains the long term spatial vision and contains policies to help deliver that vision. The relevant guidance on landscape and visual issues are listed below.

D1.54 Policy PSD 1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development states:

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

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

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

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

D1.55 Policy BSC 10 - Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision states:

"The Council will encourage partnership working to ensure that sufficient quantity and quality of, and convenient access to open space, sport and recreation provision is secured through the following measures:

- *Protecting existing sites*
- *Addressing existing deficiencies in provision through qualitative enhancement of existing provision, improving access to existing facilities or securing new provision, and*
- *Ensuring that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals."*

D1.56 Policy BSC 11 – Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation states:

"Development proposals will be required to contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its management and maintenance. The amount, type and form of open space will be determined having regard to the nature and size of development proposed and the community needs likely to be generated by it. Provision should usually be made on site in accordance with the minimum standards of provision set out in 'Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation'. Where this is not possible or appropriate, a financial contribution towards suitable new provision or enhancement of existing facilities off site will be sought, secured through a legal agreement.

North West Bicester eco-development proposals for open space will be considered against the requirements of 'Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town'.

Should the promoters of development consider that individual proposals would be unviable with the above requirements, open-book financial analysis of proposed developments will be expected so that an in-house economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an external viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter."

D1.57 Policy ESD 10 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment states:

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

- *In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources*
- *The 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*
- *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."*

D1.58 Policy ESD 13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement states:

"Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

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

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside*
- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography*
- *Be inconsistent with local character*
- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquility*
- *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."

D1.59 Policy ESD 15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment states:

"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.

New development proposals should:

- *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*
- *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 masterplanning 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.*

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.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site."

D1.60 Policy ESD 17 – Green Infrastructure states:

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

- *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 SLE4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10:Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16)*
- *Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond.*

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

Cherwell Local Plan, adopted November 1996

D1.61 The Cherwell Local Plan, November 1996, includes policies that have now been 'saved' following adoption of the current local plan. The relevant guidance on landscape and visual issues are listed below.

D1.62 Policy H18 - New dwellings in the countryside states:

"Planning permission will only be granted for the construction of new dwellings beyond the built-up limits of settlements other than those identified under policy H1 when:

- *It is essential for agriculture or other existing undertakings, or*
- *The proposal meets the criteria set out in Policy H6; and*
- *The proposal would not conflict with other policies in this plan."*

D1.63 Policy R12 - Provision of public open space in association with new residential development states:

"The District Council will normally require in connection with all new housing developments the minimum provision of 2.43 hectares (6 acres) of public open space per 1,000 population."

D1.64 Policy C7 - Landscape Conservation states:

"Development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape."

D1.65 Policy C10 - Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and historic battlefields states:

"Development which would have a detrimental effect upon the character and appearance of historic landscapes, parks and gardens and battlefields and their settings will normally be resisted."

D1.66 Policy C17 - Enhancement of the urban fringe through tree and woodland planting states:

"The Council will seek opportunities to secure the enhancement of the urban fringe through tree and woodland planting on land within its ownership and on other land by negotiation or in connecting with new development."

D1.67 Policy C25 - Development affecting the site or setting of a schedule ancient monument states:

"In considering proposals for development which would affect the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument, other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments of special local importance, the council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining its overall historic character, including its protection, enhancement and preservation where appropriate."

D1.68 Policy C28 - Layout states:

"Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as conservation areas, the area of outstanding natural beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required."

D1.69 Policy C30 - Design of new residential development states:

"Design control will be exercised to ensure:

- *That new housing development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity;*
- *That any proposal to extend an existing dwelling (in cases where planning permission is required) is compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene;*
- *That new housing development or any proposal for the extension (in cases where planning permission is required) or conversion of an existing dwelling provides standards of amenity and privacy acceptable to the local planning authority."*

D1.70 Policy C33 - Protection of important gaps of undeveloped land states:

"The Council will seek to retain any undeveloped gap of land which is important in preserving the character of a loose-knit settlement structure or

in maintaining the proper setting for a listed building or in preserving a view or feature of recognised amenity or historical value."

Technical appendix D2: Methodology for the landscape and visual impact assessment

To be read with reference to figures 6.26 and 6.31 appended to the ES chapter 6.

Introduction

D2.1 The following paragraphs set out the methodology that has been followed in the baseline study of the existing landscape and visual amenity and the subsequent assessment of the effects of the proposals.

LVIA guidelines

D2.2 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidelines:

- *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, (GLVIA) 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013)
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, Natural England (October 2014)
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 17 September 2019
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations.
-

Role of the LVIA

D2.3 Paragraph 2.21 of the GLVIA states that there are two distinct components of the LVIA:

> *"Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;*
>
> *Assessment of visual effects: assessing the effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people."*

Definition of landscape

D2.4 In describing landscape, paragraph 2.19 of the GLVIA states that:

> *"Landscape results from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped, analysed and described. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of the landscape that make different places distinctive."*

Definition of visual amenity

D2.5 The GVLIA glossary defines the meaning of visual amenity as:

"The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area."

D2.6 The methodology for assessing both the landscape and visual effects are outlined in paragraphs D2.35 to D2.71.

Assessment process

D2.7 The process of LVIA includes the following stages:

- **Project description** – Describes the proposed development, identifying the main features of the proposals, and establishes parameters such as maximum extents of the development or sizes of the elements.
- **Baseline studies** – Establishes the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area, including any relevant changes likely to occur independently of the development proposal. Includes information on the value attached to the different environmental resources.
- **Identification and description of effects** – Systematically identifies and describes the effects that are likely to occur, including whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- **Assessing the significance of effects** – Systematically and transparently assesses the likely significance of the effects identified.
- **Mitigation** – Makes proposals for measures designed to avoid / prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) any significant negative (adverse) effects.

Professional judgement

D2.8 Professional judgement is an important consideration in the determination of the overall landscape and visual effects and even with qualified and experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made.

D2.9 Paragraph 2.23 of the GLVIA states that:

"While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction of a new mine, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative."

D2.10 Paragraph 2.24 of the GLVIA states that:

"In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others."

Baseline assessment

D2.11 The landscape and visual baseline conditions were established by:

Landscape	Visual
Identify elements and features Identify landscape character and key characteristics Consider value attached to landscape Identify landscape receptors	Identify extent of possible visibility (ZTV) Identify visual receptors (people) who may be affected Identify and select representative, illustrative and specific viewpoints

Site familiarisation

D2.12 The site and surrounding area were visited in November 2021, January 2022 and November 2024 to obtain familiarity with the landscape. The photographic viewpoint figures taken during a site visit in January 2022 have been included in this assessment. A further site visit was undertaken in November 2024 to assess any changes in the baseline conditions. However, due to a lack of significant leaf fall, the photographic viewpoints were not retaken as it would not represent the like for like winter conditions that are represented in the January 2022 photographs (worst case). Field studies and desk studies of photographs, aerial photographs, map information, landscape character assessments and statutory and emerging planning policy documents have enabled the recording of landscape elements such as topography, drainage, land use, development, vegetation and other features.

Defining the study area

D2.13 The study area defines the scope of the assessment. The study area includes the site itself and the wider area around it, within which the proposed development may have a significant influence. The extent of the study area has been established using the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development in combination with observations made on site. During the assessment process the study area may change as a result of fieldwork studies or changes to the proposals.

D2.14 A 2.5 km study area was chosen, as the visibility beyond this distance will become limited and the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant adverse effects. The extent of the study area is a matter of professional judgement as indicated in paragraph 6.11 of the GLVIA.

Identifying landscape character, elements and features

D2.15 Published and adopted landscape character assessments (LCA) prepared by relevant authorities at varying levels, from national through to local assessments, have been referred to in order to identify the baseline landscape character, resources and associated value. These established assessments have been reviewed in terms of their status, scale and level of detail provided and therefore suitability for use within the LVIA. This review also took account of the date in which the assessments were carried out and how relevant the content is in relation to the current landscape characteristics.

D2.16 National and county level LCA generally give a broad scale assessment which often provides an overview of the landscape context and setting but does not necessarily represent the local landscape characteristic of the site and surrounding area. Local LCA often provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They are therefore generally considered appropriate as a basis for describing the key characteristics and are used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by

the proposals. For this assessment, it is considered that the county landscape character assessment will set the basis for determining the landscape character areas as it is more recent and provides a finer grain of assessment than the local LCA. Overall, the two character assessments were used in conjunction with each other to assess the baseline landscape character areas of the site and the surrounding area.

D2.17 Detailed fieldwork carried out within the site and immediate surroundings is used to check the applicability of the LCAs throughout the study area and, where variations in the landscape are identified since the LCA was adopted, modifications are made or supplementary information is provided in the baseline assessment.

D2.18 ZTV analysis and field studies have been carried out to determine which landscape character areas will be physically or perceptually affected by the proposals.

Identifying possible extent of visibility (ZTV)

D2.19 Computer generated mapping has been used in combination with fieldwork to assess the potential visibility of the proposals. The extent of visibility over which the proposed development may theoretically be seen, the ZTV, is provided in figure 6.7.

D2.20 The ZTV has been derived from Digital Surface Modelling (DSM). The DSM used was based on a 1 m grid provided by LiDAR. This uses photogrammetrically derived information during winter that provides a highly detailed three-dimensional model of the landscape and townscape. Topographic features including landform, woodland, settlements, individual buildings, isolated trees, copses, hedgerows, embankments and other minor topographic features, out to a distance of 2.5 km from the application boundary, are all modelled. The accuracy of the DSM falls within acceptable limits; however, there are potential discrepancies between the DSM and the actual landform where there are minor topographic features that are too small to be picked up. The LiDAR data can pick up the majority of the woodland and buildings, although areas can be missed between the 1 m grid.

D2.21 For this project, two future baseline sites have been modelled and added to the DSM. These are the Park View development, west of the site, which is under construction and partially completed, and the Blenheim Lake Restoration within the Blenheim Palace WHS. The ZTV has been generated using the DSM and the following proposed building height parameters:

- 3 storeys (up to 12.5m high for use class E)
- 3 storeys (up to 11.5 m high)
- 2.5 storeys (up to 10 m high)
- 2 storeys (up to 9 m high)

D2.22 The proposed building heights are above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and to the highest roof line. An additional 1 m was added to the proposals to take account of any potential variation associated with earth modelling.

D2.23 The height from which the proposed development would be seen was set at 1.5 m (mid-way between the average heights for men and women given in the GLVIA). A professional judgement has been made for this assessment that

approximately 2.5 km is the distance beyond which proposals of this scale, nature and context would not have a significant effect on either landscape character or views. The resulting ZTV, figure 6.7, illustrates the extent to which any part of the proposals (large or small) is potentially visible from the surrounding area.

D2.24 During fieldwork, any significant discrepancies in the visual envelope and ZTV are recorded and later amended. Fieldwork was confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, transport routes and other publicly accessible areas.

Identifying visual receptors

D2.25 The baseline study will have determined the individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposals. These are referred to as visual receptors.

D2.26 Paragraph 6.13 of the GVLIA states that visual receptors may include:

> *"…people living in the area, people who work there, people passing through the landscape on road, rail or other forms of transport, people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions, and people engaged in recreation of different types".*

Identifying viewpoints

D2.27 Following analysis of the ZTV and fieldwork, a series of viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the individual or groups of visual receptors were identified. To illustrate all potential viewpoints from which the proposals will be seen by the different visual receptors within the study area is not practical and is unnecessary for the purposes of the EIA. Therefore, viewpoints selected for inclusion in the LVIA broadly fall into three groups:

- **Representative** viewpoints (represent the experience of different types of visual receptors). For example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users from a particular public right of way
- **Specific** viewpoints (a particular view from a key or promoted viewpoint). For example, viewpoints with a particular cultural landscape association
- **Illustrative** viewpoints to demonstrate a particular effect/issue. For example, the restricted visibility at a certain location.

D2.28 Generally, viewpoints are selected from publicly accessible land and/or the transport routes. Private views from residential receptors have not been taken; however, representative or specific viewpoints from adjacent areas can take into consideration that similar views may be afforded from receptors of residential properties.

Future baseline

D2.29 In describing potential effects, account must also be taken of ongoing changes to the area surrounding the site and the site itself should no development take place which is described as future baseline. Those schemes that are under construction or have planning consent, which it can

be reasonably assumed will be constructed, are to be included in the assessment's baseline. Understanding and describing how the proposals will be experienced in the immediate context of existing and future developments is important to reaching accurate and realistic conclusions on the overall effects.

D2.30 Chapter 3 of this ES describes the cumulative schemes. Those schemes that have not yet been granted planning permission have not been considered as part of the future baseline. The baseline schemes that have been taken into consideration are described within this assessment in ES chapter 6 under paragraphs 6.90 to 6.97.

Description of proposals

D2.31 The planning application drawings and design and access statement provide a description of the proposals. In this ES the proposals are described in chapter 2, while chapter 6 summarises the elements that are likely to give rise to landscape or visual effects. The effects on landform and on existing landscape features such as vegetation are also described. Proposals for landscape measures such as new planting are also set out.

Mitigation measures

D2.32 The GLVIA describes three forms of mitigation measures. These are:

- "Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;
- Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;
- Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme."

D2.33 The first two forms are referred to as primary mitigation, while the last is referred to as secondary mitigation. At all stages of the iterative design development, the purpose has been to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset or remedy potential adverse effects by including primary mitigation measures and standard construction and operational management practices. The plans illustrated in the proposals chapter 2 figures incorporating these primary measures are used to assess predicted potential effects.

D2.34 Secondary mitigation measures are those that have not been designed into the proposals that form part of this application. Potential secondary mitigation measures are described and considered in the assessment. Where significant adverse effects remain after secondary mitigation, these are referred to as residual effects.

Landscape assessment

D2.35 The landscape assessment judges the potential effects of the proposals on the landscape receptors that have been identified. The significance of a landscape effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effect as a result of the proposals. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential significance of landscape effects

Sensitivity of landscape receptor

D2.36 The sensitivity of the landscape is assessed by combining the considerations of two factors:

- Value
- Susceptibility to specific change.

D2.37 The **value** of the landscape receptor is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.19) as:

> *"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons."*

D2.38 The value of the landscape receptor is established at the baseline stage and considers two key categories as highlighted in paragraph 5.44 of the GLVIA:

- *"The value of the landscape character types or areas based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;*
- *The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of the contributors."*

D2.39 Landscape designations should not be over relied upon to signify the value of the landscape receptors. It is also important to remember that the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value.

D2.40 In attributing value to a landscape, the information provided under Table 1 of the *Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, 02/21*, should be read in conjunction with the GLVIA. The factors provided in the GLVIA, Box 5.1 used to help identify landscape value have been revised in this technical note with the following changes:

- *"Conservation interests' is separated into natural heritage and cultural heritage factors (reflecting the approach in Nature Scot's guidance on local landscape designations and Natural England's Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England);*
- *The term 'landscape condition' is used in place of 'landscape quality (condition)';*
- *'Rarity' and 'representativeness' are combined into a newly-named factor 'distinctiveness'; and*
- *A new factor, 'function' is included which addresses the value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable functional."*

D2.41 The factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes provided in GLVIA, Box 5.1, and Table 1 of the *Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, 02/21* include:

- Natural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape
- Cultural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape
- Landscape condition – Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure
- Associations – Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts
- Distinctiveness – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity
- Recreational – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important
- Perceptual (Scenic) – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) - Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies
- Functional – Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

D2.42 In the absence of a formal landscape designation or landscape character area, judgement on the value of a landscape is based on the criteria set out in paragraph D2.41.

D2.43 The landscape receptors' **susceptibility** to specific change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 5.40) as follows:

> *"The ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and /or achievement of landscape planning policy and strategies."*

D2.44 Paragraph 5.42 of the GLVIA also states that:

> *"Since landscape effects in LVIA are particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of the proposed development, the assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the project."*

D2.45 Factors for judging susceptibility to change include:

- Vulnerability or robustness of elements of the landscape
- The tolerance, i.e. the extent to which elements of the landscape can be replaced, restored or may be altered

- The level or role elements of the landscape have in defining the character of the landscape
- The landscape sensitivity to the specific type of development proposed.

D2.46 The guidance set out in figure 6.26 has been used in this assessment to arrive at an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as high, medium, low or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Magnitude of landscape effect

D2.47 The magnitude of effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility

D2.48 The **size or scale** of an effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of both loss and addition of new features is considered as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 6.27 and is judged as large, medium, small or negligible. The judgements may take into account:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost (this may be quantified)
- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered through the loss of or addition of landscape resources / elements. For example removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a large scale, open one.
- Whether the effect changes any of the key characteristics which are distinctive to the landscape character.

D2.49 The **geographical extent** of effects is assessed by determining the area over which the landscape effects will be felt. The effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 6.27 and is judged as large, medium, small or negligible. In general, the effects will vary according to the nature of the project and may not be relevant on every occasion.

D2.50 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the landscape would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 6.27.

D2.51 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects or practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible or permanent as set out in figure 6.27.

D2.52 Duration and reversibility can be considered together so that a temporary or partially reversible effect is linked to definition of how long that effect may last.

D2.53 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 6.27 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of landscape effect for this assessment. The magnitude of landscape effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of landscape effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as large, medium, small or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Judging the overall significance of landscape effect

D2.54 The degree of the effects on the landscape resources is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure 6.28 has been used to guide this judgement and the degrees of effect are judged as very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight or negligible. The definitions of these judgements are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects, and to residual effects. If the degree of effect is moderate or above then the effect is considered to be significant.

D2.55 The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely significant landscape effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). The GLVIA (paragraph 5.37) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include, but not be restricted to, the following:

- *"The degree to which the proposal fits within the existing landscape character*
- *The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character."*

Visual assessment

D2.56 The visual assessment judges the potential effects of the proposals on the visual receptors that have been identified. The significance of a visual effect is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effect on visual amenity. These are defined in the following paragraphs.

Criteria for assessing potential significance of visual effects

Sensitivity of visual receptors

D2.57 A visual receptor is a particular person or group of people who would be experiencing the view or are likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint.

D2.58 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed by combining the judgements of two factors:

- Value attached to views

- Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

D2.59 The GLVIA (paragraph 6.37) suggests that when judging the **value** attached to the views experienced, account should be taken of:

- *"recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations;*
- *indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art."*

D2.60 The value attached to the views experienced is established at the baseline stage and considers these two key categories:

- The quality of the view/visual experience i.e. attractive unspoilt landscape
- The associations which contribute to the visual experience i.e. cultural/historical/ecological interests and planning designations

D2.61 The visual receptors' **susceptibility** to change is defined in the GLVIA (paragraph 6.32) as follows:

- *"the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations."*

D2.62 The guidance set out in figure 6.29 has been used in this assessment to arrive at an overall evaluation of the sensitivity of the visual receptors. Both susceptibility to change and value are judged as high, medium, low or negligible based on the criteria shown. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of susceptibility and value produces an overall evaluation of visual receptor sensitivity, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as high, medium, low or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Magnitude of visual effect

D2.63 The magnitude of visual effect is assessed in terms of:

- Size/scale
- Geographical extent
- Duration
- Reversibility

D2.64 The **size or scale** of a visual effect is assessed by determining the degree of change that would arise from the proposals. The effect of loss, addition or change to the composition of the view through the introduction of development is considered as major, partial, minor or very minor based on the criteria set out in figure 6.30 and is judged as large, medium, small or negligible. The

GLVIA (paragraph 6.39) suggests that when judging the visual effects the following should be taken account of:

- *"the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;*
- *the nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses."*

D2.65 The **geographical extent** of visual effects is assessed by determining the area over which the visual effects will be seen. The visual effect is considered across varying scales of wide, intermediate, localised or limited based on the criteria set out in figure 6.30 and is judged as large, medium, small or negligible. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.40) suggests that extent is likely to reflect:

- *"the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*
- *the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;*
- *the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible."*

D2.66 The **duration** of effects is assessed by the period of time over which the degree of change to the visual receptor would arise from the development. Duration is judged as long term, medium term or short term based on the criteria set out in figure 6.30.

D2.67 The **reversibility** of an effect assesses the prospects and the practicality of the effect being reversed. The effect is judged as reversible, partially reversible, or permanent as set out in figure 6.30.

D2.68 The guidance notes and criteria set out in figure 6.30 have been used to make a judgement on the magnitude of visual effect for this assessment. The magnitude of visual effect is determined by combining the judgements of the four individual factors of size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. There may be circumstances where the weighting given to some criteria may be greater than others. The combination of all four factors produces an overall evaluation of magnitude of visual effect, which is ultimately a matter of professional judgement, and is defined in this chapter as large, medium, small or negligible or any combined intermediate judgements.

Judging the overall significance of visual effects

D2.69 The degree of the effects on the visual receptor is considered from a sequentially combined evaluation of the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The matrix in figure 6.31 has been used to guide this judgement and the degrees of effect are judged as very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight or negligible. The definitions of these judgements are included in that figure. They are applied to both potential effects with primary mitigation and to residual effects. If the degree of effect is moderate or above then the effect is considered to be significant.

D2.70 The GLVIA guidance also states that thought must be given to whether the likely significant visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). This is based on professional judgement as to whether the effects will affect the quality of the visual experience for those people who will see the proposed development, given the nature of the existing views. The GLVIA (paragraph 6.44) suggests that when judging the effects to be adverse or beneficial the factors to be considered should include but not be restricted to the following:

- *"Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view."*

Taking account of effects throughout the life of the project

D2.71 The degree of landscape and visual effects can vary considerably during the life cycle of the project. Within the assessment a description of the development is provided at each stage in the life cycle of the project to assist in understanding the scheme and the predicted landscape and visual effects of the development. The description of effects considers the following project stages:

- During construction
- At completion (post-construction - year 0) including seasonal variation and night time
- Year 15 post-construction

Technical appendix D3: Photographic images methodology

Photographic survey

D3.1 The following methodology is in accordance with the *Visual Representation of Development Proposals Landscape Institute Technical guidance Note 06/19*, 17 September 2019.

D3.2 The photographic equipment used to survey the viewpoints includes:

- DSLR camera (EOS 6d) with fixed lens (50 mm, images captured in landscape format)
- Mount/tripod (Manforoto MT055 CX Pro 3 with levelling base) to photograph panoramic views

D3.3 The photographs are taken at approximately 1.5 m above ground level using a tripod with a Pano head, which provides a 15-degree angle between adjacent shots.

D3.4 The viewpoints have been surveyed using GPS (in built in the camera) to provide a six-figure National Grid reference for the viewpoints. The accuracy of this device can vary (depending on factors such as satellite coverage, proximity of buildings, tree coverage etc.) so these figures are then checked on detailed OS survey plans to give a more accurate reference. Where relevant to generate visualisations, the viewpoints have been surveyed in accordance with paragraph D3.10.

Baseline photographs

D3.5 The baseline panorama shows the existing view and captures the overall landscape and visual context. Images are captured in landscape format shooting from left to right covering at least 180 degrees where applicable. For panoramic photographs, individual shots are stitched together seamlessly using Photoshop.

D3.6 All photographic representations are to be viewed at a comfortable arm's length. The images are provided in cylindrical projection and should be viewed curved.

Proposed visualisations

D3.7 Photowires have been used to illustrate the likely view of a proposed development based on outline proposals (parameter plans), as it would be seen in a photograph. A single photomontage showing the proposed mitigation planting in winter in year 15 from viewpoint 14 has also been produced following consultation with Cherwell District Council. It is important to note, as stated in the *Landscape Institute technical guidance note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals* that *"Two-dimensional visualisations, however detailed and sophisticated, can never fully substitute what people would see in reality. They should, therefore, be considered an approximation of the three-dimensional visual experiences that an observer might receive in the field."*

D3.8 Paragraph 8.24 of the GLVIA states:

> *"Wireframes are computer-generated line drawings, based on a digital terrain model combined with information about the location and scale of components of the development, to give a relatively simple indication of how the proposals will appear from different viewpoints."*

D3.9 The photowires and photomontage contained in this study comply with the latest best practice guidelines and represent a Type 4 photowire (survey/scale verifiable) at completion, year 0 of operation of the proposals in the context of a site photograph and a Type 4 photomontage (survey/scale verifiable) at year 15. This type of visualisation has been used based on a category A user i.e. *"most planning applications accompanied by LVIA (as part of formal EIA)..."*

D3.10 For visualisations, the baseline viewpoints have been surveyed using RTK differential GPS, which records the viewpoint's 3D position with sub-metre accuracy, and aligned using in-the-field surveyed control points taken within the surrounding area. These surveyed control points may include existing buildings, street furniture, trees and placed markers. The viewpoint's horizontal and vertical alignment is checked against a Lidar digital surface model (DSM), which includes site features in the area surrounding around the viewpoint location.

D3.11 A 3D site model is produced based on the Lidar 1 m DSM in combination with the proposed development. The proposed development is based on the parameter plans prepared by the urban designers and set to site AOD ground levels. The site model has been used to generate a geometrically accurate wireframe illustrating the scale, mass and arrangement of the proposals. The photowire of the proposals has then been aligned and superimposed on to the selected viewpoint photographs to generate a photowire image. For the viewpoint 14 photomontage, the extent of proposed tree planting has also been modelled to illustrate the detailed planting proposals. The size and spread of all new planting is shown in winter at year 15 and has been added to the photowire image using photoshop. This has been based on average anticipated growth rates for native stock in England (source: CBA Ltd Approximate Tree Growth Rates). The extension growth pattern is based on growth rates of 0 mm at year 0 to 1, and 300 mm from years 2 to 15. The initial planting sizes are based on the planting specification as indicated on the landscape parameter plan.

D3.12 All the photowires are to be viewed at a comfortable arm's length. The images are provided in cylindrical projection at 100% and should be viewed curved.