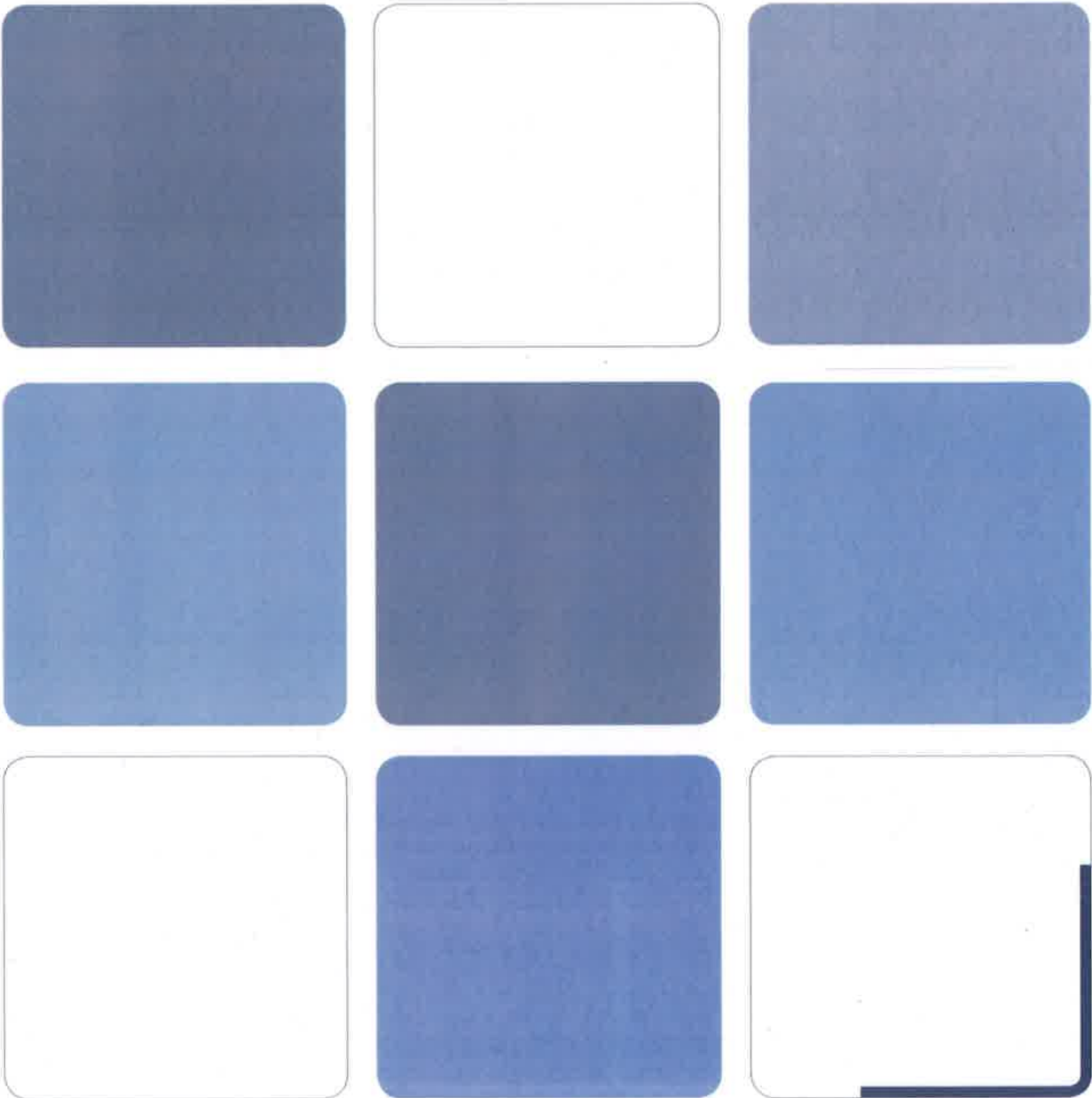




Land at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote
VISUAL IMPACT STATEMENT





**LAND AT COTEFIELD FARM,
BODICOTE**

VISUAL IMPACT STATEMENT

April 2017

Our Ref: JSL2812_170

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QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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Date:	April 2017
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Revision:	

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1 INTRODUCTION

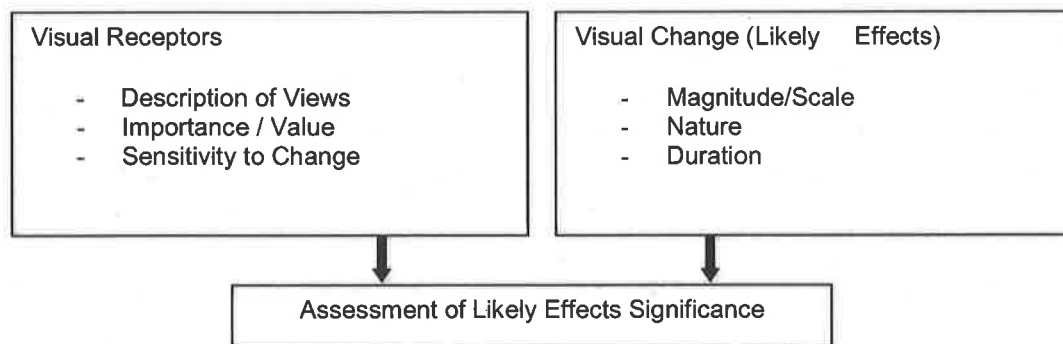
General

- 1.1 RPS has been commissioned by Cala Homes (Chiltern) Ltd to prepare an assessment of the potential visual effects that would result from the proposed SUDs swale and attenuation feature associated with two residential development sites, consented by Cherwell District Council, south of Bodicote, Banbury Oxfordshire. One site is currently under construction and development has yet to commence on the other site, directly adjoining and to the south east. The swale and attenuation feature are proposed within neighbouring farmlands hereinafter referred to as the 'Site'. This assessment forms part of a proposal to address Variation of Condition 5 (Drainage) ref 11/00617/OUT to Cherwell District Council.
- 1.2 There is an existing planning approval (ref:12/00316/F) for the development of 82 dwellings which was granted on 10th January 2013. For the purposes of this exercise the following drawings / documents form the basis of this assessment CFB_FUL_PLN_210, 15031-100S104(I)H and 15031-100S104(II)G. Planning permission was also granted for 95 dwellings immediately to the south (ref: 14/02156/OUT) on 3rd October 2016. Hereinafter these are referred to as the 'consented schemes'.
- 1.3 The Site lies immediately to the south of the consented schemes beyond the tree belt boundary to the existing field. The Site makes use of a natural existing depression in the neighbouring field of permanent pasture, owned by the same landowner as Cala Homes (Chiltern) Ltd. bought the consented scheme site from. In addition to the visual impact assessment, the proposed changes affect the local land form and consequently this aspect is also assessed.

2 METHODOLOGY

Relevant Guidance

- 2.1 The methodology for the assessment of visual effects has followed the guidance within the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) – published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (3rd Edition 2013).
- 2.2 The GLVIA, (2013) gives the following definition (para, 2.21-2.22, p.21):
- "Assessment of visual effects: assessing the effects on specific views and on general visual amenity experienced by people". Here 'general visual amenity' is taken to mean, "the overall pleasantness of the views enjoyed by people."
- 2.3 The likely effects on visual receptors are assessed by considering the proposed change against the baseline view as outlined in the diagram below:



- 2.4 These factors are determined by a combination of quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) assessment using professional judgement. Magnitude of change and receptor sensitivity is expressed on the scales described in the paragraphs below. Visual effects can be beneficial (positive) or neutral as well as adverse (negative).
- 2.5 The assessment has been carried out for the operational phase of the proposed development and takes into account potential day-time effects during this phase. Fieldwork was undertaken in April 2017. The assessment of potential landscape and visual effects is based upon that of the opening year during winter Year 1 (when all the construction works are complete) and during summer Year 10. Fieldwork was undertaken during the early Spring, when broadleaved vegetation had not leafed out. In terms of potential effects upon views, it is thus based on a 'worst-case' scenario.

Landscape Policy

- 2.6 In order to further inform the assessment, landscape designations which are considered to be of relevance to the study are shown on Figure 1. These include listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

2.7 The area falls within an area of Grade 2 agricultural land. There are 5 classes of agricultural land from Grade 1 (the best quality) to Grade 5 (the poorest quality).

Visual Assessment

2.8 A 3km radius has been selected (equivalent to a 6km diameter) for the study area used in this assessment. It is considered that the main effects upon views as a result of creating the attenuation features would be very local and well within 3km of the Site.

2.9 Visual receptors include the public or community at large, residents and visitors to the area. A number of key viewpoints looking towards the proposed development have been selected. These include views from local tracks and publicly accessible areas at different distances and orientations to the Site. The key viewpoints have been used to assess the potential visual effects of the proposed development. The key viewpoints are shown on Figure 1 and the views themselves are shown on Figures 4a-4c. The key viewpoints are as listed in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Key Viewpoints

Key Viewpoint No.	British National Grid co-ordinates	Notes
VP1: Footpath junction	446686.9E, 236799.3N	View from the junction of 2 PRow footpaths the south east of the Site, 0.5km away
VP2: Bridleway - on Adderbury circular route	446461.5E, 236978.7N	View from the bridleway running east west, south of the Site, 0.27km away
VP3: Footpath	446429.8E, 237218.4N	View from footpath immediately to the south of the Site, 0.04km away

2.10 Baseline photographs were taken at eye level from each of the key viewpoints, using a digital SLR camera with a lens equivalent to a 50mm focal length in 36mm film format. These photographs have been reproduced in the assessment and a description of the views is included.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

2.11 An assessment of the sensitivity of visual receptors at each of the key viewpoints has been undertaken and is dependent upon:

- the location and context of views;
- whether views are continuous, fragmented or intermittent (i.e. the transient nature of a view gained while travelling through an area); and
- the importance of views and the activity or expectations of receptors.

2.12 The 'importance' of views has been determined by influences such as; the numbers of receptors affected, popularity of views and the significance of views in relation to valued townscapes/ seascapes or features. Sensitivity levels have been identified for each visual receptor represented by the key viewpoints, in accordance with the criteria indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Rationale	Sensitivity
Residents within residential properties with garden and/or ground floor views, recreational users of public rights of way and concessionary paths.	Observers experiencing the view from the windows or gardens of their homes or pursuing quiet outdoor recreation where views of surroundings are an important contributor to the experience of landscape are more sensitive to visual change.	High
Users of local roads and outdoor workers or people engaged in active sports outdoors. Occupiers of residential properties with upper floor views.	Observers in open areas on quiet routes or engaged in outdoor activities which are not dependent upon appreciation of the landscape are moderately sensitive to visual change.	Medium
Users of main roads and workers or people engaged in activities indoors.	Observers travelling at speed in vehicles or people focused on indoor activities where outdoor setting is not important to experience are less sensitive to visual change.	Low

Magnitude of Change (Visual Effects)

2.13

The nature of effect or magnitude of change to an existing view has been determined by a number of interrelated factors. These are the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes to its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development. Consideration has also been given to whether the views would be full, partial or glimpsed and (for transitory views) the relative amount of time over which the proposed development would be visible. In addition, consideration has also been given to the height of visible parts of the proposed development relative to the visual receptor and the scale and degree of contrast or integration with the existing landscape. It is assumed that change would be seen in clear visibility and appropriate lighting conditions and the assessment has been carried out on this basis. Magnitude of change has been assessed using the criteria in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change: Visual Receptors

Magnitude of Change	Example
Major	Complete or very substantial change in view; change very prominent involving complete or very substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of baseline, i.e. pre-development view through removal of key elements or addition of uncharacteristic elements.
Moderate	Moderate change in view: may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of baseline, i.e. pre-development view, through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Change may be prominent but would not substantially alter scale and character of the surroundings and the wider setting. Composition of the views would alter. View character may be partially changed through the introduction of features which, though uncharacteristic, may not necessarily be visually discordant.
Minor	Minor change in baseline, i.e. pre-development view; change would be distinguishable from the surroundings whilst composition and character would be similar to the pre-change circumstances.
Negligible	Very slight change in baseline, i.e. pre-development view; change barely distinguishable from the surroundings. Composition and character of view substantially unaltered approaching a 'no change' situation.
No Change	No part of the proposed development, or work activity associated with it, is discernible.

Significance of Visual Effects

- 2.14 In order to assess the relative significance of the visual effect identified, due regard has been given to the combination of the magnitude of change in question and the sensitivity of the visual receptor. The significance of effect on views has been evaluated according to a seven-point scale as provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Typical Descriptors of the Visual Significance of Effect Categories

Significance of Effects	
Major Beneficial	Typically, the proposed changes would lead to a substantial improvement to a view from a highly sensitive receptor.
Moderate Beneficial	Typically, the proposed changes would lead to an obvious improvement to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity or perceptible improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Minor Beneficial	Typically, the proposed changes would cause limited improvement to a view from a receptor of high or medium sensitivity or would cause greater improvement to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Neutral	Typically, the proposed changes would be in keeping with, and would maintain, the existing view or where (on balance) the proposed changes would maintain the quality of the view (which may include adverse effects which are offset by beneficial effects for the same receptor) or due to distance from the receptor, the proposed change would be barely perceptible to the naked eye.
Minor Adverse	Typically, the proposed changes would cause limited deterioration to a view from a receptor of high or medium sensitivity, or would cause greater deterioration to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Moderate Adverse	Typically, the proposed changes would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or perceptible deterioration to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Major Adverse	Typically, the proposed changes would lead to a substantial deterioration to a view from a highly sensitive receptor.

- 2.15 In addition to the above criteria, if the proposed development would not be visible within a view; the equivalent of a magnitude of change of 'No Change', then the significance of effect has been recorded in the assessment as 'No effects'.
- 2.16 The assessment of significance requires considerable judgement in balancing the relationships between the different components of the view and the sensitivity of the visual receptor in question. As such, the definitions in Table 4 above are to an extent subjective and cannot be considered prescriptive.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 2.17 The visual assessment is based on analysis of OS mapping of the Site and surrounding area and on field survey of views towards the Site from publicly accessible viewpoints in the surrounding landscape. Although every effort has been made to include viewpoints in sensitive locations and areas from which the proposed development would be likely to be most visible, not all public viewpoints from which the proposed development would be seen have been included in the assessment.

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 3.1 This section describes the visual baseline against which change arising from the proposed development has been assessed. It includes a description of the key viewpoints that have been selected to assess the effects of the proposed development on the visual receptors within the local area adjacent to the Site.

Site and Local Surrounds

- 3.2 The Site is set within a field setting of permanent pasture, part of West Cotefield Farm south of Bodicote and just west of the B4100. It is situated to the south of the consented schemes, beyond a mature tree belt which separates the fields from the development. The Site makes use of a natural depression running from north east to south west direction, eventually draining to Sor Brook approximately 500m to the south west of the Site.

- 3.3 The surrounding farmland is a mix of permanent pasture and arable fields on gently undulating valley sides with seasonally wet meadows on the valley floor. The distinction between the valley floor, valley sides and valley tops is clearly distinguishable in the Landscape Character map Figure 2. Fields are medium to small scale and generally bounded by hedges and ditches but some boundaries are open. The existing housing estate development of Bodicote is on higher land to the north west of the Site. The undulations along the valley sides and existing hedges obscure views of the Site.

Designations

- 3.4 Landscape designations are shown on Figure 1. The farmland is predominantly grade 2 agricultural land. There are no landscape, wildlife or cultural heritage features on the site. There are no national wildlife or landscape designations within the 3km study area. The closest listed buildings are on the western side of Bodicote, the nearest of these are approximately 580m away and separated from the Site by modern housing estate development. The closest listed buildings at Adderbury to the south east of the Site are more than 1.5km away.

Views

- 3.5 Due to the containment provided by the undulating valley side landscape potential views of the site are restricted to very localised ones. Even in close proximity these views are restricted due to the localised undulations especially from the east and west. More open views of the Site are experienced directly south where the landform funnels down to the valley floor.
- 3.6 Views from the north west to the east are completely obscured by the mature tree belt which runs for approximately 400m running north west to south east between the Site and the current housing development sites.
- 3.7 Views of the site from the listed buildings at Bodicote are completely obscured by more modern housing estate development, the undulating valley side landform and field hedgerows. Views from listed buildings at Adderbury are completely obscured by the valley side spur associated with Windmill Hill and Green Hill Farms.

3.8

Table 5 below lists each of the key viewpoints included in the study and describes the existing view during daytime from each. The key viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 1 and the views on Figures 4a-4c.

Table 5: Key Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Distance from Site	Sensitivity	Daytime Description
VP1: Footpath junction	360m	High (Users of PRow footpaths)	View from junction of two PRow footpaths, south east of the Site across the valley side approximately 5m above the height of the proposed attenuation features.
VP2: Bridleway on Adderbury circular route	160m	High (Users of PRow bridleway)	View from bridleway south of the Site, looking up the depression in the valley side, across a break in the field boundary hedge, with the mature tree belt backdrop.
VP3: Footpath	30m	High (Users of PRow footpath)	View from footpath immediately south of the Site, running north west to south east across the field with no vegetation boundary along its length. Mature tree belt backdrop.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The following documents/drawings form the basis of this assessment; CFB_FUL_PLN_210, 15031-100S104(I)H and 15031-100S104(II)G. The proposed SUDs features comprise a swale and attenuation feature, located between two valley side spurs. The swale will be formed at the location of the existing ditch, exiting the line of the mature tree belt. This will necessitate the removal of some trees to allow easement for the swale. The easement distance is approximately 8 metres wide and also includes the foul water pipe route which runs adjacent to the swale. The attenuation depression is separated from the lower part of the field by bunding. Any water that surcharges will pass through a hydro slide and then be piped away to the bottom of the field and then to Sor Brook.
- 4.2 There is currently no landscape / planting scheme proposed as part of the current application.

5 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 5.1 The potential effects of the proposed development upon views during the operational phase have been assessed using the methodology described in Section 2.

Visual Effects

- 5.2 The potential effects upon views from each of the key viewpoints are assessed in Table 6 overleaf. Key viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 1; viewpoint photography is shown on Figures 4a to 4c.

Table 6: Visual Effects Operational Phase

Key Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Description of Change to Existing Daytime View	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
VP1: Footpath junction	<p>High (Users of PRoW footpaths)</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): There would be oblique views of the break in the tree belt which separates the fields from the new development. The new development would be seen through this small gap. The bunds between the two natural attenuation depressions and separating the lower attenuation feature from the lower slopes of the field would be seen. The extent of the lower bund would be approximately in line with the solitary mature field tree in the view. The low intervening hedges would not screen the SUDs features from this viewpoint. In winter the 'attenuation pond' may have some standing water which would be visible from this viewpoint. As the Site would occupy a relatively small proportion of the field in which it is situated and the views of the bunds would be oblique and foreshortened by the direction and distance of this view, the change would be relatively minor.</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): At Year 10, with no further landscaping proposed views from this location would remain largely the same as Year 1. As such there would be a minor adverse change to receptors from this viewpoint</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Minor</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Minor Adverse</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor Adverse</p>
VP2: Bridleway on Adderbury circular route	<p>High (Users of PRoW bridleway)</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): The bund to the attenuation basin would be fully visible. It would bridge across the depression which falls towards this viewpoint. The view is through a gap in a hedgerow lined bridleway running at the bottom of the field. The views on other parts of the bridleway will be partially obscured by the hedgerow. There would be views of the housing development beyond the mature belt on the sky line where these trees would be removed to allow for 8m easement of the swale and foul water pipe construction. The layout for the phase 2 housing indicates that the break in the existing tree belt would be in line with an internal feeder road to the housing and the LEAP open green space approximately. The change to the landform would be seen full face on with the batter slope of the bund obscuring the hedge and part of the tree belt elevation behind. This would limit views into the development beyond. The change would be to the landform rather than the land use or land management as permanent pasture grazing would continue. It is considered that the resultant significance of effect would be Moderate / Minor Adverse.</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): At Year 10 with no additional landscaping proposed, views from this location would remain largely the same. The tree belt planting would be in leaf and the gap may have closed a little Therefore it is considered that impacts would be reduced slightly at this location.</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Minor</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Moderate / Minor Adverse</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor Adverse</p>

Key Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Description of Change to Existing Daytime View	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
VP3: Footpath	<p>High (Users of PRoW footpath)</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): There will continue to be open views across the field towards the Site. As there is no additional landscaping proposed, there will be direct views of the change to the landform to accommodate the 'attenuation pond'. Due to the low lying nature of the this feature, views of the hedge and mature tree belt will not be affected apart from where the gap is formed to allow easement for the swale and underground foul water pipe. The pegs shown in the view mark the approximate limit of the lower bund. Maintenance access to the SUDs features would be visible from this location but will be infrequent and limited to clearance of the depressions to allow water run off attenuation function to continue.</p> <p>The composition and character of this view will alter slightly in terms of the landform but the land management as permanent pasture grazing would continue. It is considered that the resultant significance of effect would be Minor Adverse.</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): With no additional landscaping proposed on site, resultant views from this location would remain largely unchanged compared to that of Year 1 which would result in a Minor Adverse significance of effect</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Minor</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor</p>	<p>Year 1 (Winter): Minor Adverse</p> <p>Year 10 (Summer): Minor Adverse</p>

Summary of Potential Visual Effects upon Key Viewpoints

- 5.3 The following section summarises the potential effects of the proposed development upon daytime views from the key viewpoints at winter Year 1 and summer Year 10.
- 5.4 Due to the undulating nature of the valley side landscape the site is partially obscured from viewpoints 1 and 3. The significance of effect is greatest from viewpoint 2, directly below the bunding which retains the 'attenuation pond' as it is viewed full face on.
- 5.5 The gap formed in the hedge and tree belt between the Site and the new housing is most prominent from viewpoint 2. The other viewpoints have more oblique views. The Arboricultural report prepared by Jonathan Hazel dated 27.3.2017, deems these trees to be of unremarkable quality and categorised as C1 in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.
- 5.6 The scale of the proposed SUDs features is of a limited visual extent. It alters the landform slightly and is obscured and hidden from view by valley side spurs. The affects are on localised, near to views, and summarised below.

Localised Views: Key Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3

- 5.7 There would be a **Minor Adverse** significance of effect upon localised views at Year 1 overall. Although there would be a slight change to the landform in the context of the whole field, the land use is anticipated to remain the same. The attenuation pond would support wet meadow vegetation and may become more naturalistic and occasionally hold water which would be visible from viewpoint 1 and PRow footpaths to the east that are on higher ground than the Site. There appears to be several 'de facto' tracks which the public use in and around this field. These are not considered as part of this assessment as they have no statutory status.

6 RESIDUAL VISUAL EFFECTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The residual visual effects of the proposed development are defined as those that would remain at summer Year 10.
- 6.2 The proposed development would bring about a residual Minor Adverse significance of effect from the key viewpoints, due to the perceived high sensitivity from Public Rights of Way receptors at these locations. However, overall, it is considered that a development of this nature and scale would be seen as a continuation of the valley side agricultural landscape and would not significantly alter the character of views within the study area or overall experience within the wider landscape.
- 6.3 Furthermore it is considered that the local landscape has the capacity to accommodate a change of this nature maintaining the overall experience for people at the local level and within the wider landscape.
- 6.4 The proposed SUDs features would have no impact on the setting of Listed Buildings or other landscape designations as identified on Figure 1.
- 6.5 Access to the SUDs features would use an existing track from Coteford farm. Maintenance tasks envisaged would consist of clearing woody vegetation in the swale and attenuation feature on an occasional basis.
- 6.6 In order to mitigate the loss of an 8m wide strip from the existing tree belt it is recommended that some native planting be carried out around the sides of the attenuation pond and on the lower south west facing bank of the retaining bund. This could take the form of a native mix of tree and shrub species and where appropriate marginal planting.
- 6.7 Additionally gapping up the bounding field hedgerows and planting occasional specimen native trees within the existing hedge line would help mitigate the change to the landscape. Especially from viewpoints 1 and 2.
- 6.8 In conclusion, it is considered that the Site is an appropriate location for a change of this nature and the local landscape has the capacity to accommodate it with minimal effect on the existing composition of views within the local landscape. Introducing some native mix planting blocks would help integrate the SUDs feature into the landscape and improve ecological diversity. Some specimen tree planting in boundary hedgerows would be of amenity and wildlife value and benefit to the local landscape character by helping to screen views.

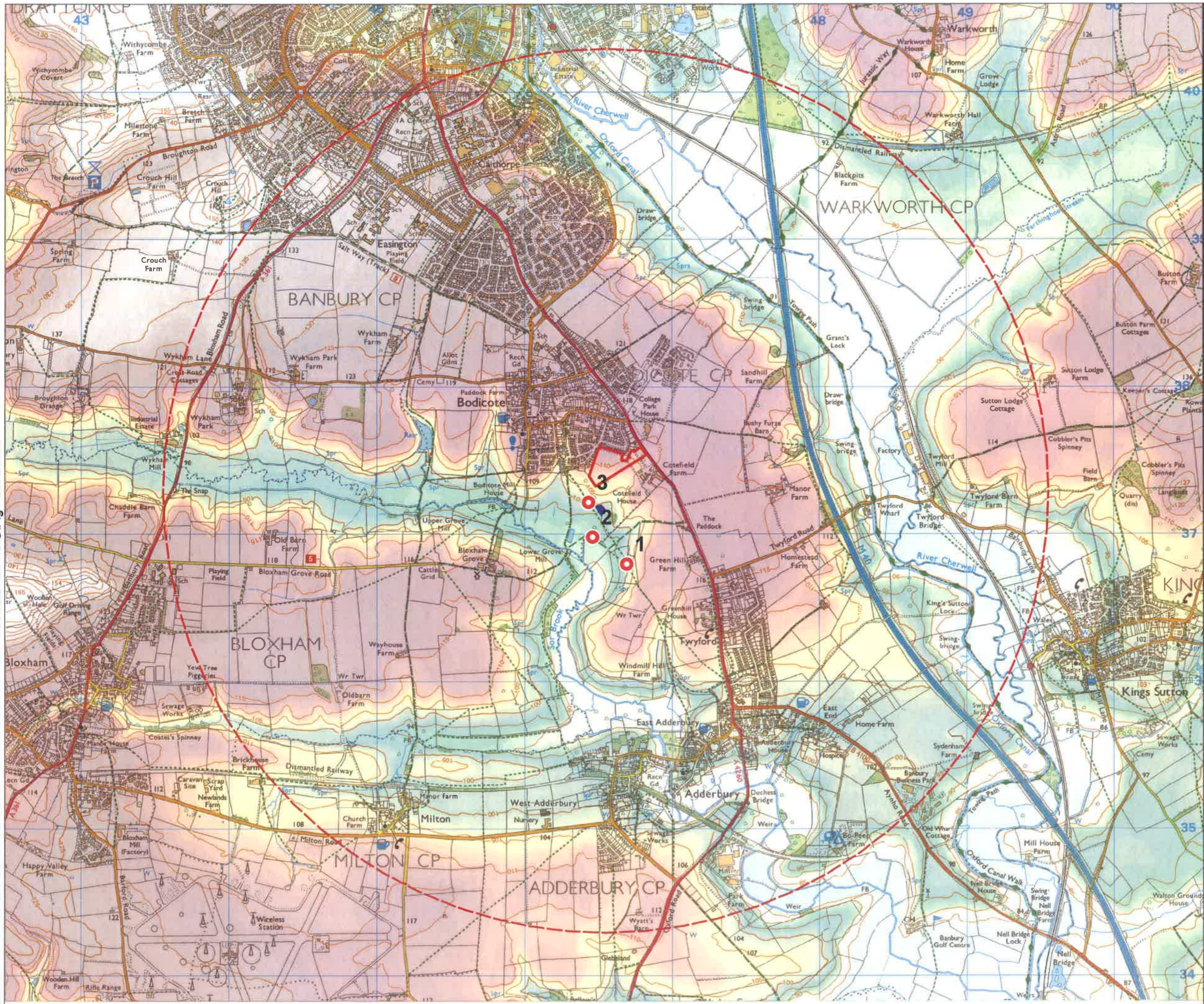
FIGURES

Figure 1: Landscape Planning Designations

Figure 2: Landscape Character

Figure 3: Landform

Figure 4a-c: Key Viewpoint Photographs



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Legend

- Panorama_viewpts
- SUDs Site
- Housing Development Site
- 3km_StudyArea

Rev	Description	Date	Initial	Checked

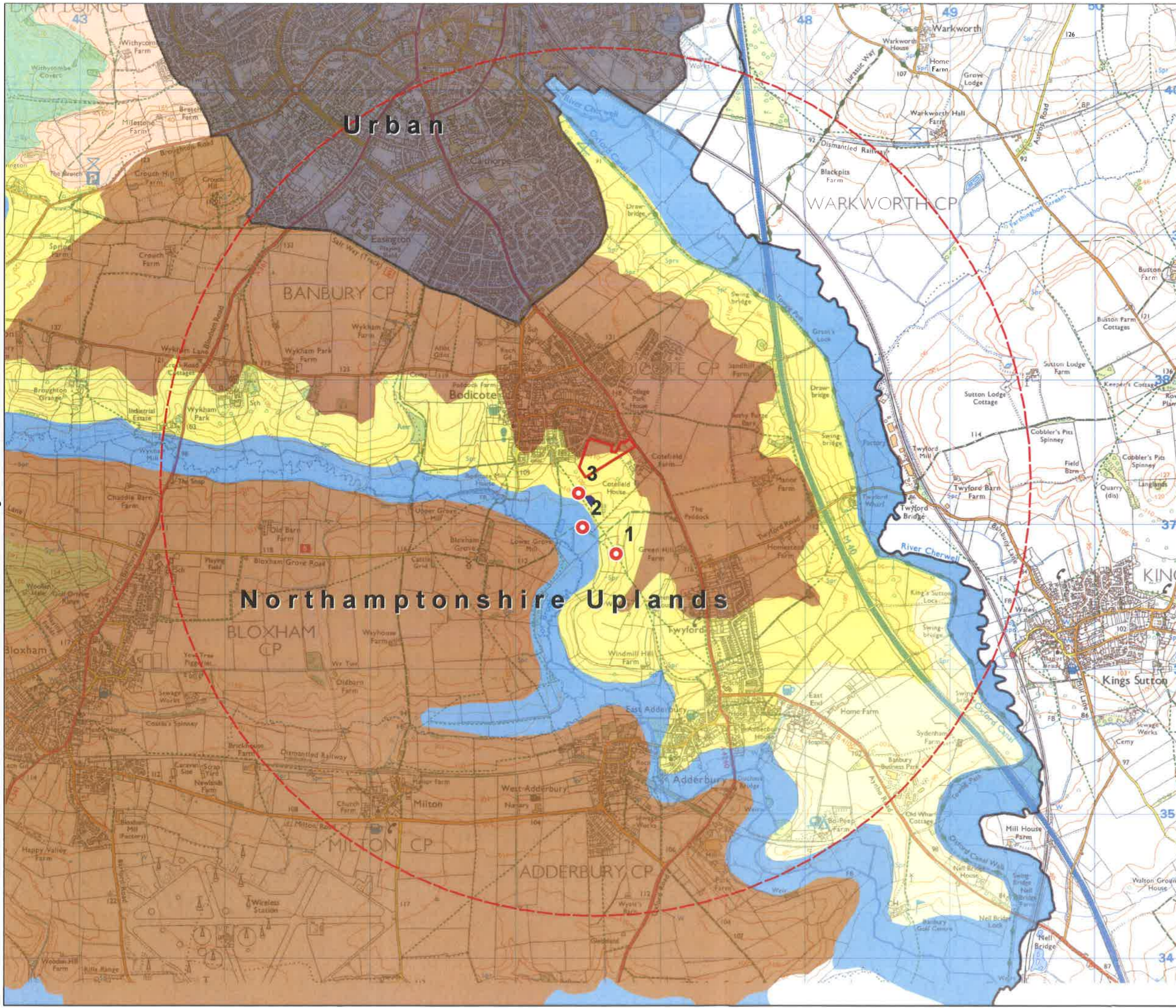


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Client Cala Homes (Chiltern) Ltd
Project Land at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote
Title Landform

Status Information Drawn By **MW** PM/Checked By **NJ**
 Job Ref **JSL2812** Scale @ A3 **1 : 25 000** Date Created **11/04/2017**

Figure Number **03** Rev **-**



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- Legend**
- Panorama_viewpts
 - SUDs Site
 - Housing Development Site
 - 3km_StudyArea

- OWLS (Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study)**
- LCT_name
- Clay Vale
 - Farmland Plateau
 - Farmland Slopes_and_Valley_Sides
 - Pasture Hills
 - River Meadowlands
 - Upstanding Village_Farmlands
 - Urban Areas
 - Vale Farmland
 - Wooded Pasture_Valleys_and_Slopes

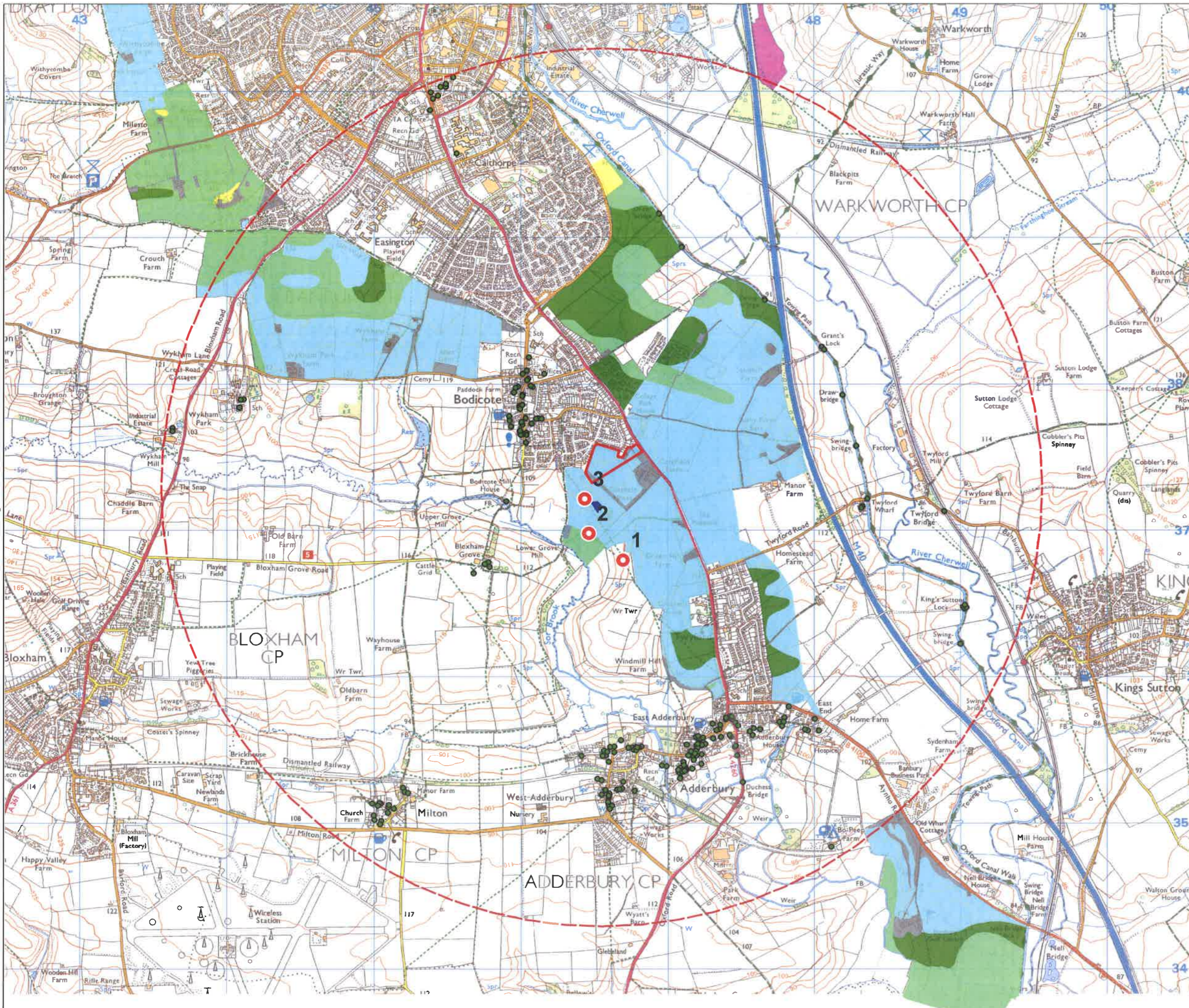
Rev	Description	Date	Initial	Checked



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Project Land at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote
Title Landscape Description Units (OWLS)
 Regional Character Areas (OWLS)

Status Information	Drawn By MW	PM/Checked By NJ
Job Ref JSL2812	Scale @ A3 1 : 25 000	Date Created 11/04/2017
Figure Number 02		Rev -



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Legend

- Panorama_viewpts
- SUDs Site
- Housing Development Site
- 3km_StudyArea
- Grade 2
- Grade 3a
- Grade 3b
- Grade 4
- Not Surveyed
- Other
- Listed bldgs
- Scheduled Monument

Rev	Description	Date	Initial	Checked

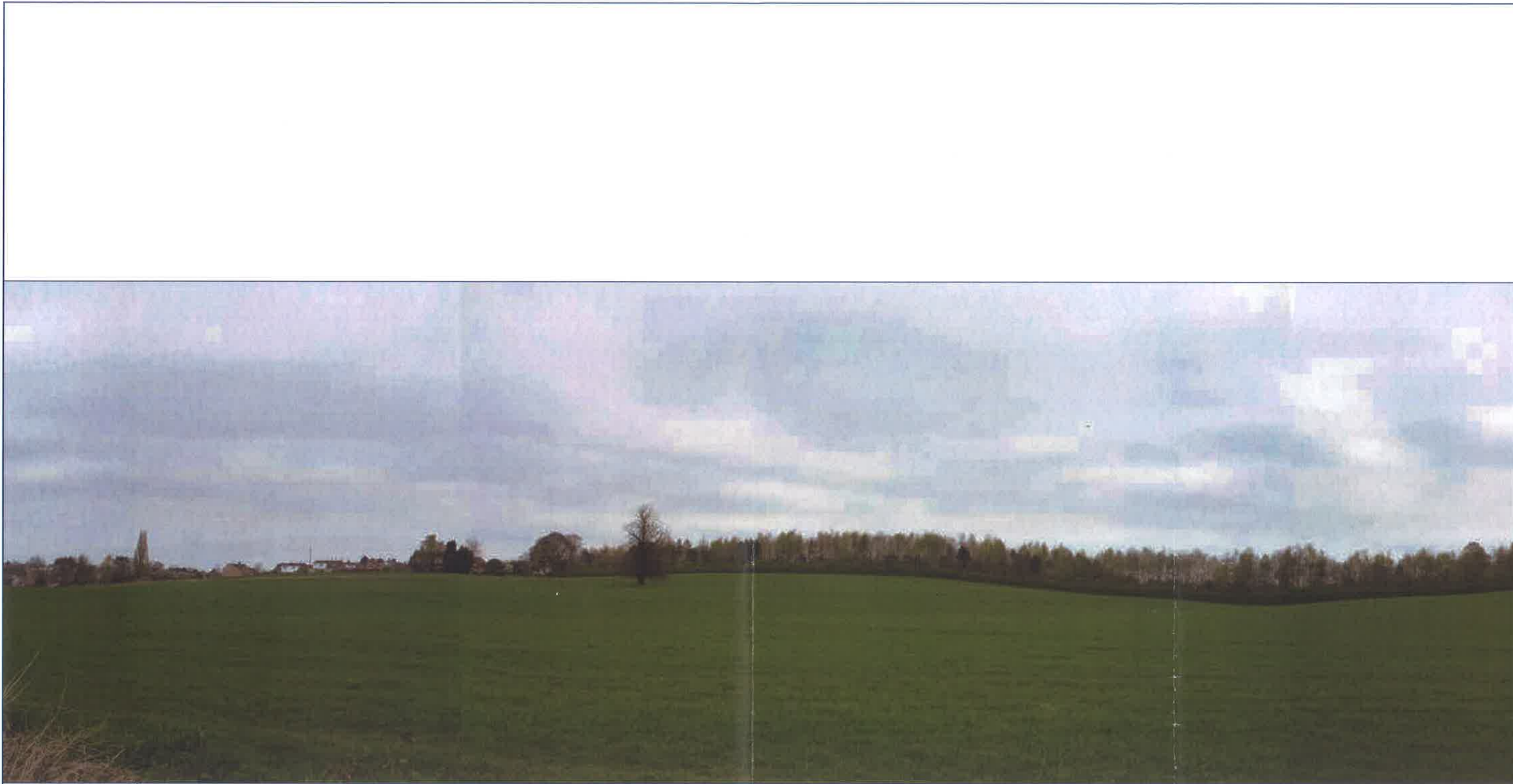



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Client Cala Homes (Chiltern) Ltd
Project Land at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote
Title Landscape Designations

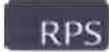
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Job Ref JSL2812	Scale @ A3 1 : 25 000	Date Created 11/04/2017
Figure Number 01		Rev -





	Land at Cotefield Farm Bodicote JSL2812	Date of photograph: 07/04/2017 Lens type: 50mm	Distance to site: 160 m OS reference: 446461, 236978	Direction to site: North Viewpoint height: 1.5m AGL	Horizontal field of view: 53.5° Viewing distance: 408mm @ A3	Key Viewpoint: 2 Figure: 4b
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	Land at Cotefield Farm Bodicote JSL2812	Date of photograph: 07/04/2017 Lens type: 50mm	Distance to site: 30 m OS reference: 446429, 237218	Direction to site: North Viewpoint height: 1.5m AGL	Horizontal field of view: 53.5° Viewing distance: 408mm @ A3	Key Viewpoint: 3 Figure: 4c
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