

4.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 This ES Chapter forms a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The LVIA has been prepared by FPCR Environment & Design Ltd, as part of an Outline Planning Application for residential development and associated uses at land at Oxford Road, Banbury.

4.1.2 The site location and its context are shown in Figure 4.01.

4.1.3 The purpose of the LVIA is to assess the likely significant effects landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development on the receiving landscape and visual resource.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 The LVIA has been prepared using the guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)¹. In summary, the GVLIA3 states: -

"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of, and the effects of, change resulting from development on both landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity."

4.2.2 There are two components of LVIA that are described separately within this chapter of the ES:-

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

¹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, April 2013

4.2.3 The GLVIA3 recognises that professional judgement is a very important part of LVIAs, and states that whilst there is some scope for quantitative measurements of some relatively objective matters, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements (2.23). It also states that in identifying significant effects:

"the need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of the investigation that is appropriate and proportional" (1.17).

4.2.4 In terms of baseline studies, the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape in the area to be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline this includes an understanding of the area in which the Proposed Development may be visible, the people who may experience views of it, and the nature of these views.

4.2.5 The overall significance of effects are determined by making judgement about two components: -

- The nature of the receptor likely to be affected (known by the shorthand 'sensitivity') and;
- The nature of the effect likely to occur (known by the shorthand 'magnitude').

4.2.6 Judgements on sensitivity are made by considering: -

- The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposal;
- and
- The value attached to the receptor.

4.2.7 Judgements on magnitude are made by considering: -

- The size and scale of the effect, for example whether there is a complete loss of a particular element of the landscape or a minor change;
- The geographical extent of the area that will be affected; and
- The duration of the effect and its reversibility.

4.2.8 Consideration of all of the above feeds into a comprehensive assessment of significance.

4.2.9 In terms of mitigation, primary measures to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset or remedy any significant adverse effects are developed through the iterative design and masterplanning process. This is described by the LVIA and is included within the overall assessment of effects.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

4.2.10 GLVIA3 states that:

"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource".

4.2.11 The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing landscape character assessments, and by a description of the site and its immediate context.

4.2.12 A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:-

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape; and
- Combined effects of these changes.

4.2.13 These are discussed within the assessment.

Susceptibility to Change and Value of the Landscape Receptor

4.2.14 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from the development.

4.2.15 The value of the existing landscape is also considered. The GLVIA3 indicates information that contributes to understanding landscape value. This information is set out in paragraph 5.20 of the GLVIA3 and includes:

- Information about areas recognised by statute such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Information about Heritage Coasts, where relevant;
- Local planning documents, for local landscape designations;
- Information on individual or groups of features such as conservation areas, listed buildings, special historic or cultural sites;
- Art and literature, identifying value attached to particular areas or views; and
- Material on landscape of local or community interest.

4.2.16 Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the following factors, as outlined within the GLVIA3:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation interest;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 4.2.17 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility.
- 4.2.18 In terms of size or scale the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements. This assessment describes scale and size by reference to the terms of 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low'.
- 4.2.19 The geographical extent of the effect is described by reference to the site, its immediate context and wider landscape character areas. The duration and reversibility of effects are also described.

Significance of Landscape Effects

- 4.2.20 The overall significance of landscape effects is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape.
- 4.2.21 The landscape sensitivity is determined by considering the susceptibility to change and the value of the landscape receptor. Judgements about the susceptibility to change are recorded on a scale of 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low'. The magnitude of landscape change is defined in terms of 'High', 'Medium', 'Low' or 'Negligible'.
- 4.2.22 The GLVIA3 notes, at paragraph 5.46, that there can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors, and their susceptibility to change. As an example, a nationally valued landscape does not automatically have a high susceptibility to all types of change.
- 4.2.23 Final conclusions regarding the overall significance of landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components. The GLVIA3 notes, at paragraph 5.56-5.57:

“There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and landscape context and with the type of proposal. At the opposite ends of a spectrum it is reasonable to say that:

- *Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;*
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant; and*
- *Where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgements must be made about whether or not they are significant, with full explanations of why these conclusions have been reached.*

Where landscape effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for them (referred to as mitigation) should be described. The significant landscape effects remaining after mitigation should be summarised as the final step in the process”

Assessment of Visual Effects

4.2.24 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change on the views available to people and their visual amenity.

4.2.25 Field evaluation has been used to establish a series of representative viewpoints. These have been used to represent a range of potential viewpoints.

4.2.26 The viewpoints include:

- Views to aid description of the site itself (where considered appropriate);
- Public viewpoints, including rights of way and open access land;
- Public locations representing residential areas (where possible);
- Transport routes; and
- Places where people work.

4.2.27 The views also represent what can be seen from a variety of distances towards the Proposed Development, and thus provide different viewing experiences.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

4.2.28 For each affected viewpoint the assessment considers both susceptibilities to change in views and the value attached to views.

4.2.29 The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include: -

- Residents at home;
- People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views;
- Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of surroundings are an important contributor to the experience; and
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents within the area.
- Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate or lower category of susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes or recognised important viewing points, awareness of views is likely to be higher.

4.2.30 Visual receptors less likely to be sensitive to change include: -

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and
- People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings.

4.2.31 Judgements about susceptibility to change are recorded in this assessment on a scale of 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low'.

4.2.32 Judgements on the value attached to views experienced takes account of:-

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets or through planning designations; and
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or visitor maps.

4.2.33 Judgements on visual value within this assessment are assessed as 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low'.

Magnitude of the Visual Effects

4.2.34 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.

4.2.35 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes 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 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; and

- 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 glimpsed (minimal).

4.2.36 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint 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; and
- The extent of the area over which the changes will be visible.
- As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply.

Significance of Visual Effects

4.2.37 GLVIA paragraphs 6.44 and 6.45 state:

“There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and landscape context and with the type of proposal. At the opposite ends of a spectrum it is reasonable to say that:

- *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 viewing points 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.*

Where visual effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for them (referred to as mitigation) should be described.

The significant landscape effects remaining after mitigation should be summarised as the final step in the process”

Overall Landscape & Visual Effects

4.2.38 The final conclusions are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects, alongside reasoned professional judgement.

4.2.39 The GLVIA3 states at 3.32 that

“There are no hard and fast rules about what effect is likely to be ‘significant’ but LVIA’s should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be the significant and non-significant effects”.

4.2.40 The GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification ² states

“Concerning ‘significance’, it is for the assessor to define what the assessor considers significant. Depending on the means of judgement and terminology (which should be explicitly set out), effects of varying degrees of change (or levels of change), may be derived. The assessor should then establish (and it is for the assessor to decide and explain) the degree or level of change that is considered to be significant.”

4.2.41 For this LVIA, the following descriptive thresholds have been used: -

- **Major:** an effect considered very important in the decision-making process.
- **Moderate:** an effect that is notable and one that is generally considered to be material in the decision-making process.
- **Minor:** an effect that will be noticed, but is not considered to be a particularly important factor in the decision-making process; and

² GLVIA 3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, 10th June 2013

- **Negligible:** an effect that will be discernible, but of very limited consequences. It is not judged to be important in the decision making process.

4.2.42 This LVIA considers that **Major** effects, whether they are adverse or beneficial, are significant, whilst **Moderate**, **Minor** and **Negligible** effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are not judged to be significant.

Study Area

4.2.43 The Study Area for the LVIA has been defined by the field work undertaken as part of the baseline stage of the LVIA. The Study Area includes the site, the local landscape and the wider landscape, where there may be potential landscape and visual effects (direct, indirect, short term or long term) as a result of the Proposed Development. The Study Area is shown in Figure 4.01.

4.3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.3.1 A detailed Planning Statement accompanies the application. The following provides a summary of planning policy in relation to landscape and visual matters that are considered to be of particular relevance.

National Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

4.3.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

4.3.3 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for the countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives include to protect and enhance valued landscapes and, minimising impacts on and providing net gains in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

4.3.4 Paragraph 170 states at part a) that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise *“the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”*.

4.3.5 Paragraph 171 advises 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”.

4.3.6 The NPPF Paragraph 172 goes on to add:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues”.

4.3.7 The site is within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status. The character of the site and its immediate context is assessed within this report to help inform decisions regarding

“the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”. The potential to enhance green infrastructure networks is also considered.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG 2014)

- 4.3.8 The PPG is an online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.

The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (saved policies)

- 4.3.9 Relevant policies in respect of this chapter include:

Policy C8 Sporadic development in the open countryside

Policy C15 Prevention of coalescence in open countryside

The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (July 2015)

- 4.3.10 Relevant policies in respect of this chapter include:

Policy BSC 10 Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision

Policy BSC 11 Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation

Policy ESD 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

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

Policy ESD 13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Policy ESD 15 The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure

Policy Banbury 4 Bankside Phase 2

4.3.11 Cherwell District Council has prepared a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which help to support the Local Development Framework. The Countryside Design Summary³ is relevant to this chapter and considered further below.

Landscape Context

National Landscape Character

4.3.12 Landscape character is assessed at a national level by Natural England through the use of National Character Areas (NCA). The Natural England assessment provides a broad contextual understanding of extensive landscape areas and establishes the general characteristics of the wider landscape.

4.3.13 The site and the Study Area lies within the *NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands*⁴. This NCA covers a large area of long ranging clay hills extending from the Cotswold and Cherwell valley in the southwest, to the Leicestershire Vales in the north (Figure 4.03).

4.3.14 The Summary of this NCA states:

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) is an area of gently rolling, limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines. Rivers flow out from the NCA in all directions, including several major rivers – the Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise.

³ Countryside Design Summary, Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire (June 1998)

⁴ National Character Area Profile 95: Northamptonshire Uplands Natural England, 2014

Around the fringes and two main towns, the area has seen extensive development and construction of major strategic road and rail infrastructure, with associated reductions in levels of tranquillity and loss of rural character...

4.3.15 Key characteristics are the following:

- *Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.*
- *Dominant Jurassic scarp slope of limestone and Lias clay hills capped locally with ironstone-bearing Marlstone and Northampton Sands. Glacial boulder clay covers the northern and eastern areas, with sands and gravels along river valleys.*
- *The Upper Nene Valley divides the gently undulating Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the hillier Cherwell/Ouse plateau (the 'Ironstone Wolds') to the south and has been exploited for sand and gravel.*
- *Rivers rise and flow outwards in all directions, including the rivers Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise, and the area forms the main watershed of Middle England.*
- *Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.*
- *Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.*
- *Typical 'planned countryside' with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak. Some ironstone and limestone walls in places and some localised areas of early irregular enclosure.*
- *Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands, some ancient and often on hill tops, with mires, areas of lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland in the river valleys. Bluebell woods occur in places.*

- *Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements. Several large historic country estates such as Cottesbrooke Hall and Althorp and many small country estates, with extensive parkland containing a great many mature, veteran and ancient trees.*
- *Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.*
- *A dense network of narrow lanes with wide grassy verges, often following ridges, crossed by many strategic road and rail corridors, including the M1, M40, A14, West Coast Main Line railway, Great Western Railway line and the Oxford and Grand Union canals.*
- *The many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public, the reservoirs, long-distance paths (such as the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way) and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets.*

4.3.16 The NCA includes four “*statements of environmental opportunity*” (SEO) which are set out below:

- *SEO 1: Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people’s enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.*
- *SEO 2: Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.*

- *SEO 3: Conserve, manage and enhance the river catchments and reservoirs, improving water quality and flow management and benefiting biodiversity and recreation through managing soils, diffuse pollution and run-off, reconnecting flood plains and extending natural habitats.*
- *SEO 4: Conserve, maintain and promote local building styles and materials and plan strategic growth, infrastructure development and mineral extraction to ensure they protect remaining areas of high tranquillity, strengthen local sense of place and biodiversity, and increase adaptation for climate change through multifunctional green infrastructure networks, building on existing resources such as canals, rivers and access routes, creating strong ecological and recreation networks.*

Local Landscape Character

Countryside Design Summary (1998)

4.3.17 The Cherwell District Landscape Assessment provided the background context for the Countryside Design Summary (1998), adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

4.3.18 Landscape Character of the Cherwell Valley is described in brief as;

- *A loose patchwork of fields remains with strong field patterns concentrated on steeply undulating land and close to villages. These fields are bounded by mixed thorn hedgerows many of which contain oak trees. Wet pasture on the valley floor gives way to arable farmland on the valley slopes and upland areas.*
- *The Cherwell valley offers extensive views across its rolling slopes from both sides, with those in the north being more distant and remote.*

4.3.19 The following are identified for ‘Implications for New Development’;

- *Trees, hedgerows and other features, which are important for their wildlife or landscape value, should be retained. In most cases new planting would assist the integration of new buildings in their landscape setting.*
- *New development should reflect the landscape setting of villages, by not encroaching beyond any topographical, visual or environmental limits e.g. beyond the valley slope onto the brow of the hill, or undermining important gaps between neighbouring villages.*

4.3.20 The Countryside Design Summary reaffirms that the site, on the upper valley slopes, is defined as a ‘Restoration landscape’ as described within the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment.

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

4.3.21 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) provides a study of landscape character and biodiversity across the county. It was jointly sponsored by: Oxfordshire County Council, Natural England and The Earth Trust.

4.3.22 It identifies twenty-four landscape types within the county, made up of individual landscape description units with a similar pattern of geology, topography, land use and settlements. Their names reflect their characteristic land cover (Figure 4.04).

4.3.23 The site lies within Cherwell Landscape Character Type: *Upstanding Village Farmlands* within the Regional Character Area: *Northamptonshire Uplands*. *Upstanding Village Farmlands* is described as follows:

Location

This landscape type covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and south of Banbury, around Claydon and Kidlington, Great Bourton, Bloxham and Deddington.

Overview

A hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from the local ironstone.

Key characteristics

- *A steep sided, undulating landform.*
- *A well defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows.*
- *A strong settlement pattern of compact, nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in wider countryside*

Land use and vegetation

The land uses are mixed. Arable cropping dominates the areas around Deddington, Hempton, Bodicote and Claydon...

Cultural Pattern

The hedges give structure to the landscape and are dominated by hawthorn, elm and elder. Fields are moderately-sized, except for the larger arable fields around Bodicote. Hedgerow trees, of oak and ash, are generally sparse but become denser where they are associated with grassland. Most of the remaining trees are concentrated along roadsides, footpaths, bridleways and parish boundaries. The elevated nature of the landform, combined with lack of woodland and tree cover, results in a rather open landscape.

Local Character Area: Bodicote (NU/16)

Landscape Character

The area is characterised by large-sized fields dominated by arable farming, with some smaller grass fields used for pony grazing. They are enclosed by low hawthorn hedges...There are a few young ash, field maple and oak trees in the hedges, and some small tree clumps close to farms.

Forces for Change

The hedgerow network is generally intact and in good condition, even in places dominated by intensive arable farming. However, around Bodicote the hedgerow pattern is weaker, with roadside hedges tending to be overgrown and internal field hedges generally low and gappy.

Landscape strategy

Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages.

Guidelines

Strengthen and enhance the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.

Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (September 2013)

4.3.24 WYG was commissioned to carry out a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (LSCA) work to supplement and build upon the Cherwell District Council Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity (CDC LSCA) Assessment prepared in September 2010 by Halcrow Group Limited.

4.3.25 Part of the site proposed for residential development falls within Site F which is described as follows:

The site is located to the south east of Banbury and on the eastern edge of Bodicote and comprises approximately 27ha of primarily agricultural land that is in arable use. To the south is Bodicote Park Rugby Club and a Health Spa/Gymnasium. To the east, the land falls towards the River Cherwell valley before rising again east of the river. To the west is the urban area of Bodicote. At the time of assessment, land to the north comprised a continuation of the arable land located on the south east edge of Banbury however this area is subject to future housing development (Bankside Phase 1) and will therefore alter the context of the area. This has been taken into consideration within this assessment.

Landscape Sensitivity

Although the site is representative of the overall agricultural landscape character area, there are few features that make the area distinguishable with the local landscape context. As set out above, there are few landscape elements within the site boundary apart from two hedgerows running in a north south orientation dividing the area. The landscape quality is therefore medium – low sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity

The site is currently well screened to the west along the A4260 and from the south by Bodicote Park and associated structure planting. To the north the site is not well screened with long ranging views available from Canal Lane. The context of this view will however change in the future with sensitive residential viewers located at the Bankside Phase 1 development abutting the northern site boundary. There are also views towards the site across the River Cherwell valley from isolated properties to the east and from Kings Sutton; although views of the site form

part of a wider panoramic view and do not focus on the site area. The general visibility is considered to be of medium – high sensitivity due to the inclusion of Bankside Phase 1.

Overall Sensitivity

The Landscape Sensitivity has been assessed as medium – low sensitivity and the Visual Sensitivity has been assessed as medium sensitivity. Using the matrix in Table 3, this results in a medium – low Landscape Character Sensitivity for Site F.

Value

There is no identified landscape, cultural heritage or ecological designation within site F although there is the potential for archaeological remains within the area (refer to Heritage Assessment Appendix D). The value of designations within the area is low.

The area does not contain any recognised views or vistas although the views across the River Cherwell valley are diverse panoramic views. Existing views from the north west at Canal Lane and from the edge of Banbury beyond will in the future become screened by the approved Bankside Phase 1 development. Once Bankside Phase 1 is completed there will be little connection with the surrounding area to the north, west and south. The scenic value of the site is medium – low.

Apart from the public footpath access along the southern boundary of the site, the area has little use by the surrounding residents or users of recreational facilities. The perceived value is considered to be low.

Capacity to Accept Change

There is a high capacity for residential development within the site area as long as this is sensitively designed and forms a natural extension to the Bankside Phase 1 development to the north. It is considered that development should not encroach further south than the existing southern site boundary with Bodicote Park as this recreational land use forms a natural transition from urban to open countryside. Development beyond this risks the satellite settlements of Bodicote and Twyford becoming subsumed by the larger town of Banbury.

4.3.26 Within the ‘Capacity for Recreation Development’ section is the following extract:

There is medium potential to extend the existing formal recreational use located immediately south of the site (Bodicote Park) to the north beyond the public footpath that forms the southern site boundary. The existing Rugby Club is well contained to the south by structure planting and it is not recommended to extend this use further towards Twyford as this could compromise the visual separation of Bodicote and Twyford to the south.

Baseline Landscape & Visual Analysis

4.3.27 The baseline appraisal work has been formulated through the use of field visits of the site and the Study Area and through a review of the landscape characterisation work that has been taken at a national and local level.

Context

4.3.28 The Study Area Plan, Topography Plan and the Landscape Character Plans (Figures 4.01-4.04) together with photograph viewpoint location plan (Figure 4.05) and Photographs (Figure 4.06) illustrate the landscape character of the site and the surrounding context. The descriptions below are best read alongside these plans.

- 4.3.29 To the northwest of the site is an area of residential development (Bankside Phase 1). The village of Bodicote lies immediately to the west of the Oxford Road, whilst the village of Twyford (Adderbury) lies over 0.7km away to the south. There are also detached properties and farmsteads situated by Oxford Road and within fields adjacent to the site, including College Farm House (by the western site boundary), Cotefield House and Manor Farm.
- 4.3.30 The site represents an intensively managed agricultural landscape, characterised by a regular, predominantly large scale, rectilinear field pattern, segregated by low-clipped hedgerows. Absent and fragmented hedgerows occur, although one hedgerow includes a row of trees. A few other intermittent hedgerow trees are also present. This intensive agricultural usage has resulted in landscape largely devoid of features of value and has inevitably eroded the local landscape character which once existed.
- 4.3.31 Locally increased vegetation cover occurs around the perimeter of Bodicote Park, along main road corridors and also by detached properties and farmsteads. Established hedgerows and tree belts are situated along field boundaries by Bodicote Park. Linear tree belts occur along Oxford Road and the M40 corridor. Tree belts or small woodland copses are also present by Cotefield Farm, Manor Farm and Sandhill Farm.
- 4.3.32 The site lies on a generally featureless level, plateau, situated above and to the west of the Cherwell Valley. Its immediate character is influenced by Banbury's existing residential edge along the Oxford Road and specifically the residential area of the Bankside Phase 1. The low clipped hedgerow structure provides little screening and allows close range views of recently constructed houses.
- 4.3.33 Beyond the site the topography becomes more pronounced where slopes roll down to the flatter land of the Cherwell Valley floor. Slopes are characterised by an increase in tree and hedgerow

cover, with small pockets of woodland. The Oxford Canal and beyond the River Cherwell form important landscape features situated to the north of the site.

4.3.34 To the east of the site by Sandhill Farm, the M40 passes through cutting. The M40 is locally screened by woodland copse and belts of tree planting alongside the motorway. Within the wider landscape the M40 forms a prominent visual feature. To the northeast of the site the Oxford - Birmingham railway line and embanked M40 motorway dissect the valley. Despite the urbanising influence of the M40 the bulk of the Cherwell Valley to the east of site remains predominantly rural in its character.

4.3.35 A Public Footpath by Bodicote Park passes through the site, providing a route between Oxford Road and Bushy Furze Barn. To the north of the site Canal Lane (Public Bridleway) passes through Bankside Phase 1 providing a link from the Oxford Road to the Oxford Canal. This forms part of the Banbury Fringe Circular Walk, which connects with the Oxford Canal Walk and the Jurassic Way Recreational Path. Bankside Phase 1 includes a Community Park which will provide public open space between Cherwell Heights and the Oxford Canal.

Landform

4.3.36 The landform of the Study Area is illustrated by the Topography Plan (Figure 4.02). In summary, the landscape to the southeast of Banbury is shaped by the River Cherwell. To the east of Bodicote the Cherwell valley broadly runs in a north - south direction. Sor Brook, a tributary of the River Cherwell, forms a localised valley to the south of Bodicote.

4.3.37 The majority of the site lies on a level plateau west of the Cherwell Valley floor, between 117 and 118m AOD. At the eastern edge of the site (114m AOD) the plateau gently falls towards the Cherwell Valley floor.

- 4.3.38 Bodicote and Banbury also lie on the plateau above the Cherwell Valley, with a local high point at Crouch Hill (165m), on the south western edge of the town. Eastward, the plateau gently descends forming the valley slopes, before falling to the Cherwell Valley floor at 80-85m.
- 4.3.39 The River Cherwell creates a relatively broad valley north – south through the landscape. Tributaries form a series of more shallow valleys and rises, establishing a gently rolling landscape to the west of Bodicote. South of Bodicote the landform falls to the narrow valley of Sor Brook at 90-95m, before rising southward to a plateau at Bloxham at 115m.
- 4.3.40 East of the valley the topography slowly rises with settlements at Kings Sutton (95m) to the southwest, and Overthorpe (135m) and Lower Middleton Cheney (130-135m) to the north of the site.

Baseline Landscape Character

- 4.3.41 The Landscape Character Plans identify the National (Figure 4.03) and County (Figure 4.04) Landscape Character Area (LCAs) within the Study Area.
- 4.3.42 The LVIA includes a Landscape Baseline & Effects Table [LBET] (**Appendix 4.01**). This provides analysis and judgement of each LCA in terms of its character, value and sensitivity. The LBET also includes an assessment of the site in term of its character, value and sensitivity.
- 4.3.43 From the baseline analysis, a number of conclusions can be drawn on landscape character and these are set out below.
- 1) The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory landscape quality designation. The Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment confirms that, in landscape terms the site is of low value

- 2) The site and study area fall within NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands. The Statement of Environmental Opportunity for this area encourages the use of multifunctional green infrastructure networks.
- 3) Cherwell District Council's Countryside Design Summary (1998) SPD identifies the site within the upper valley slopes, which is defined as a 'Restoration Landscape'. This landscape typically exhibits a degraded character and structure, often through intensive agriculture, resulting in loss of hedgerow and woodland structure. The SPD encourages a strong landscape framework through the replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees which can assist in the integration of new development.
- 4) Cherwell District Council's Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2013) judged the landscape to be medium-low sensitivity and the visual sensitivity to be medium – high sensitivity . The assessment considers the site to have a high capacity to accept residential development, playing fields, other recreational uses and woodland. Scope for mitigation identifies planting to screen views from Kings Sutton and Twyford. Planting buffer is also suggested along the site boundary nearest to the canal.
- 5) The site comprises intensively farmed agricultural land that is in arable use. The fields are largely devoid of intrinsic features and are judged to be of limited value in landscape terms.
- 6) Within the site vegetation is limited to the field boundaries and this includes low clipped hedgerows which in places are gappy or absent. One hedgerow includes a row of trees. Elsewhere there are few other trees present.
- 7) With landscape surrounding the site locally increased vegetation cover includes hedgerows and tree belts by Bodicote Park, detached properties and farmsteads, along Oxford Road and the M40 corridor.
- 8) The majority of site lies on a level plateau above the Cherwell Valley. At the edge of the plateau the north eastern part of the site gently slopes towards the Cherwell Valley.
- 9) The site lies immediately adjacent to residential development (Bankside Phase 1). The landscape character is influenced to varying degrees by its relationship with the urban edge

of Banbury. Various urbanising influences are present including Oxford Road, Bodicote Park, Bodicote, Bankside Phase 1 and the M40.

- 10) The only public access across the site is a footpath route between Oxford Road and Bushy Furze Barn. Within the wider landscape Canal Lane provides a link to the Oxford Canal Walk and the Jurassic Way Recreational Paths. Other recreational facilities in the local area include a Community Park provided as part of Bankside Phase 1.

Baseline Landscape Character

4.3.44 As stated by GLVIA 3 at paragraph 5.19.

“A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape-such as tree, buildings or hedgerows- may also have a value. All need to be considered where relevant.

4.3.45 In the first instance the site does not lie within a designated landscape at a national or local level.

4.3.46 Some landscape areas will have greater sensitivity and value than others, by virtue of factors such as: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, recreational value and perceptual aspects. Detracting influences and contextual setting all play a part with regard to value and susceptibility to change. The landscape value of the site and the immediate landscape in which it sits is assessed in accordance with the LVIA’s methodology using a word scale of high, medium or low. The assessment has addressed those factors that are generally agreed to influence landscape value as outlined within the GLVIA. A commentary on each is set out below:

Landscape Quality (condition)

4.3.47 The site is not covered by any landscape quality designation. It exhibits a degraded character and structure, through intensive agricultural use.

4.3.48 Overall, there are no significant landscape features within the site being made up of arable land with narrow field margins. Hedgerows and trees are present along some of the field boundaries. However the hedgerow pattern is much weakened as a result of enlarged arable fields. The site does not display any particularly distinguishing landscape features.

4.3.49 The site is judged to be landscape of “poor condition”.

Scenic Quality

4.3.50 The landscape within which the site sits is represented by an agricultural landscape on the fringes of the urban area of Banbury. The landscape character is influenced by its relationship with the urban edge of Banbury. Various urbanising influences are present including Oxford Road, Bodicote Park, Bodicote, Bankside Phase 1 and the M40.

4.3.51 The site is judged to be landscape of ordinary scenic quality.

Rarity

4.3.52 The site does not contain any rare or unusual landscape features. There are a few hedgerows and trees present along internal field boundaries and the Site perimeter. However such features are commonplace elements within the surrounding landscape. The site does not contain any ‘veteran trees’ or trees of high quality with regards to arboriculture.

Representativeness

4.3.53 The site does not display any particularly distinguishing, rare or unusual landscape features. It is not considered to be special or unusual in terms of its landscape character. There are no features within the Site which distinguish it from surrounding locally typical farmland within which it is located.

Conservation Interest

4.3.54 The site is not covered by any conservation designation. Conservation Areas within the wider landscape include the historic cores of Banbury, Bodicote and Adderbury. Each of these Conservation Areas are well separated from the Site by existing residential developments situated within the intervening landscape.

4.3.55 Haddons Lift Bridge (Grade II Listed) is located along the Oxford Canal to the north of the Site. Localised landform within the intervening landscape includes the Cherwell valley sides which prevent intervisibility with the Site.

4.3.56 Consequently the Site does not play a significant role in the setting of any of the Conservation Areas or Haddons Lift Bridge.

Recreation Value

4.3.57 The vast majority of the Site is in agricultural use and is not publically accessible. The only public access across the Site is a footpath route between Oxford Road and Bushy Furze Barn. The existing Site is not used for any other formal recreational purposes and currently has low recreational value.

4.3.58 The southern section of the site forms part of land under Policy Banbury 12. Policy Banbury 12 is identified for the relocation of Banbury United Football Club (BUFC) and for sport recreation use and the remaining land is considered suitable for a new secondary school to serve the town. The application allows for land to be reserved for the BUFC relocation and potential secondary school.

4.3.59 Within the wider landscape to the north of the Site, Canal Lane provides a link to the Oxford Canal Walk and the Jurassic Way Recreational Paths. Canal Lane and the Oxford Canal form part of the ‘Banbury Fringe Walk’ promoted by Cherwell District Council. Other recreational facilities in the local area include a Community Park provided as part of Bankside Phase 1.

Perceptual Aspects

4.3.60 The Site and the immediate landscape is not considered to have any valued perceptual qualities such as any great sense of wildness or tranquillity. Due to the range of existing urban influences the Site lacks tranquillity.

Associations

4.3.61 Insofar as it is reasonable to tell, the Site has not been subject to any specific cultural associations in terms of artists or writers, nor has it been subject to any known notable events in history.

Summary

4.3.62 Having considered the above factors that influence landscape value and the GLVIA definition: “*Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to*

be highly valued", it is considered that the site itself is not a highly valued landscape. It is judged to be of low landscape value.

4.3.63 To summarise, the Site is considered to be of low overall sensitivity and low landscape value. It is not designated and does not contain any significant or distinctive landscape features. It lies within the close context of the existing settlement edge of Banbury and in particular the Bankside Phase 1.

4.3.64 As a receiving landscape, it is considered that the Site could absorb change of the scale and type proposed as presented by the Proposed Development and, through a responsive masterplanning approach and green infrastructure provision. The Proposed Development could provide long term environmental benefits in accordance with the guidelines of the Cherwell District Council's Countryside Design Summary.

Baseline Visual Character

4.3.65 The interaction of landform, settlements and vegetation determines the overall extent of visibility across the landscape. An analysis of the site's visual envelope and the availability of views from receptors have been undertaken in parallel with the baseline landscape appraisal.

Receptors and viewpoints

4.3.66 A comprehensive series of viewpoints (1-28) have been selected (see Figures 4.5 and 4.6) which considers the visibility of the site from a number of potential receptors within the Study Area. Photographs illustrate the varying degrees of site visibility and they include both short- and long-range views from the Study Area and cover a variety of receptors. This process, along with the field work and professional judgment, determines the Proposed Development's Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) i.e. the area in which the Proposed Development may be visible.

- 4.3.67 Receptors fall into a number of categories. These are: residents; users of rights of way; users of open spaces and recreational facilities; highways users; and people at their place of work. In general, the first two categories, residents and rights of way users, are normally of higher sensitivity than the latter two, although the context and value of each receptor can, in some cases, have a bearing on sensitivity e.g. a recognised ‘viewing point’ where motorists may stop on a highway route is likely to be of higher sensitivity.
- 4.3.68 For this LVIA, the following general approach has been adopted: Residents (high sensitivity); rights of way users (high sensitivity) and highway users (low sensitivity). Where there are variations in sensitivity these are explained within the Visual Baseline & Effects Table (VBET) **(Appendix 4.02)**.
- 4.3.69 The viewpoints are either taken from specific vantage points or they illustrate representative views for certain receptors, such as highway users. Direct views from private properties have not been possible, although where practicable, photographs have been taken from nearby public vantage points to provide a representative view for these receptors.
- 4.3.70 The majority of photographs used for the assessment were taken during January 2019 and they represent winter views when vegetation is in not in full leaf. Within the summer months there will be greater degree of screening and containment within the landscape. The photographs include both close range views as well as longer distance views, from locations to the north and east of the site, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley.
- 4.3.71 The VBET includes the location and distance of each viewpoint in relation to the site; a commentary on the current view that can experienced by the receptor; a judgement on the sensitivity of the receptor that affords this view and its particular value for that receptor.

4.3.72 From the analysis of the baseline visual resource, a number of reasoned conclusions.

- 1) The surrounding landscape, which includes overlapping hedgerows, woodland copses and subtle variation in landform all combine to filter and restrict visibility across the landscape. The site is generally well contained within the wider landscape as a result of these existing features. Significant views of the site are generally only available from close range vantage points.
- 2) Views of the site are well screened from the vast majority of properties within Banbury and Bodicote. This is due to the screening effects provided by Bankside Phase 1 development which is situated within the intervening landscape. The site is also well screened from the south eastern edge of Bodicote due to the presence of established tree belts situated by Bodicote Park and Oxford Road (Viewpoints 6, 7 and 8). Consequently views are largely restricted to those properties situated immediately adjacent to the site. These include properties situated at the edge of Bankside Phase 1, and the detached College Farm House (Viewpoint 10) situated by Oxford Road, which have close range views of the site.
- 3) Other potential views of the site occur from Manor Farm situated to the south east of the site (Viewpoint 14). Existing agricultural buildings and woodland copse surrounding the farmhouse restrict the available view. Potential glimpsed views of the site are seen within the context of existing properties situated at the edge of Banbury, including properties at Bankside Phase 1 and Cherwell Heights.
- 4) Views towards the site are available from the northern edge of Adderbury (Twyford) are relatively open across large scale fields (Viewpoint 21). Part of the site situated to the north of Bodicote Park is effectively screened from view by existing tree belt situated along Bodicote Park / Banbury Rugby Club. There are views across an arable field with clipped field hedgerows and occasional trees towards eastern and southern parts of the site.
- 5) Kings Sutton is situated within the wider landscape to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley. There are no significant views of the site from Kings Sutton due

to the combined screening effects provided by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape. Any long-distance glimpsed views of the site would potentially be seen within the close context of the existing development at Bankside Phase 1.

- 6) Oxford Road is the main approach route to Banbury from the south. Close range views of the site are largely screened by hedgerows and tree belts situated along the perimeter of Bodicote Park / Banbury Rugby Club (Viewpoint 18). Localised close-range views occur of part of the site proposed for a road junction onto Banbury Road. Longer distance glimpsed views towards the south eastern part of the site occur from Oxford Road (Viewpoint 20). Such views are available over a clipped roadside hedgerow.
- 7) To the east of the site the M40 passes through cutting. Consequently, views along the M40 corridor are largely contained by embankments and belts of roadside planting. Where occasional breaks in the embankment / vegetation cover occur, the adjacent valley slopes form the near horizon and prevent any views of the site. To the north of the site longer distance views occur from the M40 across the Cherwell Valley (Viewpoint 6). However, landform along the valley slopes form the horizon, and prevent any views of the site.
- 8) The only public access across the site is a footpath route between Oxford Road and Bushy Furze Barn. Existing views (Viewpoints 10, 11, 12 and 15) are open across large scale, flat arable fields. Bankside Phase 1 is prominent within close range views (Viewpoints 10 and 11) although when viewed from greater distance (Viewpoints 12 and 15 Bankside Phase 1 is filtered by a field hedgerow and a belt of trees. Other significant vegetation within the view includes established tree belts situated along the perimeter of Bodicote Park / Banbury Rugby Club.
- 9) Views of the site from the wider public rights of way network are very limited. Views towards the site from the public bridleway along Canal Lane (Viewpoint 1) on the plateau will be prevented by Bankside Phase 1. Views of the site from Canal Lane (Viewpoint 2) on the valley slopes are restricted due to a combination of Bankside Phase 1 and the localised landform.

- 10) Views of the site from the Cherwell Valley are also very limited. This is due to the combined screening effects provided by localised landform / valley slopes as well as existing hedgerows and tree belts situated agricultural field boundaries within the intervening landscape. Views from bridges over the Oxford Canal (Viewpoint 4) and the River Cherwell (Viewpoint 5) are taken from locally elevated vantage points within the Cherwell Valley and represent ‘worst case’ scenarios. To the east of the M40 longer distance views towards the site from the Cherwell Valley are further screened by belts of existing tree planting along the M40 corridor.
- 11) There are no significant views of the site from the public rights of way or highways situated within the wider landscape to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley. Views from the Jurassic Way to the south of Warkworth Road (Viewpoint 24), the public bridleway between Banbury Lane and Upper Astrop Road (Viewpoints 22 and 23), Upper Astrop Road (Viewpoint 28), Overthorpe Road (Viewpoint 26) and Astrop Road (Viewpoint 27) are taken from locally elevated vantage points and represent ‘worst case’ scenarios. The site is largely screened from view by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape. Any long distance glimpsed views of the site would potentially be seen within the close context of the existing development at Bankside Phase 1.
- 12) No significant views of the site occur from the public rights of way situated to the south west of the site, within the Sor Brook valley. This is due to the screening effects provided by undulating landform and vegetation cover.

4.4 POTENTIAL IMPACTS – DURING CONSTRUCTION / POST CONSTRUCTION

4.4.1 The potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development during construction and post construction have been identified as part of the iterative design process. Without a considered and responsive approach to masterplanning which includes a green infrastructure framework of retained and new landscape habitats potential effects could include the following:

- a) Significant landscape harm through a scenario of the complete loss and removal of *all* landscape features on, or near the site, and no compensatory landscape habitats or any landscape enhancement;
- b) Significant landscape and visual harm, through an inappropriate design response, such as a poorly conceived masterplan in terms of the quantum of development, disposition of land uses, and the scale and height of buildings.

4.5 MITIGATION & MONITORING – DURING CONSTRUCTION / POST CONSTRUCTION

4.5.1 Mitigation measures are integral elements that have been adopted as part of the iterative masterplanning process. This has sought to minimise the impact of the development upon the landscape and to provide enhancements through a green infrastructure framework. This has been founded on a ‘landscape led’ masterplanning approach which responds to the site’s landscape character and its setting.

4.5.2 The masterplanning process has included primary mitigation measure to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset any significant adverse effects. Appropriate mechanism can be put in place through the planning process to secure the various provisions together with long term management. The following are the key elements of the green infrastructure framework. The proposed design is consistent with strategies identified within Cherwell District Council’s Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment and Countryside Design Summary.

- 1) The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid residential areas encroaching upon the visually prominent and sensitive valley slopes. The proposed built development would be located on the plateau area, avoiding the break of slope.

- 2) Providing a multi-functional green infrastructure framework that can provide long term environmental benefits. This approach is encouraged within Natural England's NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands Statement of Environmental Opportunity.
- 3) To conserve features of local value within the site and to provide long term enhancement through a variety of new landscape habitats to include new linear belts of broadleaved woodland, tree and hedgerow planting, wetland areas, and grassland meadows
- 4) To retain the majority of existing field hedgerows and trees, and where there are losses (which are minimal in any event) to ensure that appropriate compensatory planting is delivered along with further additional planting.
- 5) To provide a linear belt of woodland planting by part of the eastern site boundary along the edge of the plateau. This will create a soft edge to the built development within westerly views, including from the public footpath to Bushy Furze Barn. It will also ensure that the proposed built development is effectively screened within longer distance westerly views from the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley.
- 6) To provide a linear belt of woodland planting along the northern boundary of the site. This will ensure that the proposed built development is effectively screened within southerly views from the valley slopes and Cherwell Valley.
- 7) To provide 'pocket parks' of accessible green space that can be managed for biodiversity benefit as well as for play and recreation. To include additional native tree and hedgerow cover within these areas.
- 8) Enhancing long term biodiversity across the site through the choice of species, design approaches and management practices.
- 9) To provide recreational provision in the form of active sport and equipped children's play areas. A children's play area would be well located adjacent to an existing public footpath through the site. Another 'pocket park' containing children's play areas is also proposed within a more central location within the site. Sports fields are proposed to the south of Bodicote Park, and in close proximity to land identified for potential secondary school and

football stadium. Other facilities include allotment situated adjacent to the eastern site boundary.

- 11) To retain the existing Public Footpath within the layout and to provide further walking and cycling routes across the Proposed Development as part of a connected street layout, which would be well integrated with Bankside Phase 1. In addition, informal recreational routes are proposed along Greenways through the open space.
- 12) To ensure that all areas of accessible green space are overlooked by new housing and streets so that they are safe and secure and attractive to use.
- 13) Surplus spoil arising from the Proposed Development will be accommodated within the areas proposed for Green Infrastructure. In particular there is opportunity to accommodate soil within areas of formal and informal open space such as greenways, sports fields, allotments and areas proposed for structural planting.

4.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACT

4.6.1 This section assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development when considered in the context of other future projects within close proximity. The following sites have been considered:

- Bankside Phase 1 (Planning Ref. 05/01337/OUT) Land north east of Oxford Road, west of Oxford Canal and east of Bankside Banbury Oxon.
- Banbury 2 (Planning Ref. 13/0158/OUT) Land adjoining Foxhill and west of Southam Road Banbury.
- Banbury 2 (Planning Ref. 13/0159/OUT) Hardwick Farm east of Southam Road Banbury.
- Banbury 5 (Planning Ref. 12/01789/OUT) Land off Warwick Road north of Hanwell Fields Banbury Oxfordshire.
- Planning Ref. 13/01528/OUT OS Parcel 0063 north east of Crouch Hill Farm Adjoining Broughton Road.

- Banbury 3 (Planning Ref. 13/00444/OUT) Land north of Withycombe Farm west of Edinburgh Way Banbury.
- Banbury 6 (Planning Ref. 14/00066/OUT) Land off Dukes Meadow Drive, Hanwell Fields (North) Banbury.
- Planning Ref. 14/01188/OUT OS Parcels 1200 3100 2000 1981 south of Salt Way Bloxham Road Banbury.
- Planning Ref. 14/02156/OUT Land South of Cotefield Business Park Oxford Road Bodicote.
- Planning Ref. 14/01932/OUT OS Parcel 7400 adjoining and South of Salt Way Banbury.
- Planning Ref. 15/013266/OUT OS Parcels 6741 And 5426 west of Cricket Field north of Wykham Lane Bodicote Oxfordshire.
- Planning Ref. 16/00472/OUT S Grundon Services Ltd Merton Street. – BAN19 residential
- Planning Ref. 18/00293/OUT Caravan Park Station Approach, Banbury –BAN1 Canalside regeneration

4.6.2 Consented development at Bankside Phase 1 is situated to the north west of the site. Residential development situated adjacent to the site's north western boundary has been constructed. The likely effects of the Proposed Development have been considered within the context of the completed Bankside Phase 1.

4.6.3 Cumulative effects involving other sites are unlikely to be significant. Localised topography, existing urban fabric and vegetation will limit any significant intervisibility between the proposed built development and urban areas within a wider landscape.

4.6.4 No other future projects allocated within development plans, having planning permission or awaiting consent have been identified during the preparation of this ES that would increase the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development.

4.7 RESIDUAL IMPACT– DURING CONSTRUCTION / POST CONSTRUCTION LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

4.7.1 The Landscape Baseline & Effects Table (LBET) provides an assessment of the landscape effects that would result from the Proposed Development. This provides an assessment of the effects that would be expected during the construction phase (short term effect), as well as the landscape effects post construction in the operation phase based upon two scenarios: Year 1 (i.e. at the outset) and at Year 15 (i.e. in the long term).

4.7.2 A Year 1 scenario is the effectively a ‘worst case’ position and is based upon the Proposed Development being fully completed. Year 15 is at the long-term stage with the development fully in place together with a 15 year old green infrastructure framework, with new planting, habitat creation and green space fully established and maturing⁵.

4.7.3 The assessment of landscape effects takes into account the landscape character of the site and the sensitivity for the landscape to absorb change, together the overall loss of landscape features and the proposed green infrastructure which is imbedded within the Proposed Development.

Overview

4.7.4 The site is not subject to any landscape designation. It forms an intensively farmed agricultural landscape, which is strongly influenced by the adjoining urban edge of Banbury and the M40.

⁵ The report assesses that new woodland/tree planting would be at an approximate height of 10 metres by Year 15, which is based upon examples of woodland/tree growth.

The site contains no distinctive or special landscape elements and is of limited value in landscape terms. It is judged to be of low landscape and visual sensitivity. As a receiving landscape, the site is considered to be one which has high capacity to accommodate change as presented by the Parameters Plan.

4.7.5 For any greenfield site to accommodate development there will be an inevitable landscape disruption and a change in the site's landscape. It is judged that there will be a high magnitude of landscape change on the site as a result of the loss of the agricultural fields, minor breaks in the hedgerow network and the subsequent conversion from agricultural use to built development.

Construction Phase

4.7.6 Some short term and temporary landscape and visual effects will occur from alterations to the landscape during the construction period of the Proposed Development. These effects would be temporary and restricted to localised areas situated within or immediately adjacent to the site.

4.7.7 Key landscape and visual construction effects may include:

- Loss of farm land;
- The stripping and storage of topsoil;
- The removal of sections of hedgerow required for works associated with access construction;
- The construction of new buildings, infrastructure and the planting of public open spaces and structural landscape areas;
- The construction of new road junctions onto Bankside Phase 1 and onto Oxford Road to the south of Bodicote Park;
- Service connections to the site;
- Storage of materials and installation of a contractors compound;
- Temporary traffic and pedestrian management arrangements;
- Traffic movements into and out of the site;

- Views of construction machinery; and
- Lighting associated with construction and security.

4.7.8 The location and design of any temporary site compounds, signage and perimeter screen fencing, combined with effective project management would seek to ensure that the potential landscape and visual effects are mitigated and minimised during the construction phase.

4.7.9 It is anticipated that the construction working methods would seek to adopt best practices wherever practicable and be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and Statutory Bodies prior to commencement. All construction works would be carried out in full accordance with best practice procedures to include BS 5837⁶

4.7.10 Inevitably, the nature of the effects will vary throughout the construction period and would be influenced by the sequencing and phasing of the development. The visual effects in particular, would vary subject to the relative location and intensity of the construction activity within the site.

4.7.11 Construction activities and plant movements within the site would be visible from surrounding receptors. The closest and clearest views towards these activities and plant movements would be experienced by users of the public footpath situated within the site, and also by residential properties and roads around the site periphery.

4.7.12 Given that the construction effects are focussed within the site coupled with the fact that predicted impacts are considered to be of a temporary nature, construction effects should be mitigated sufficiently through careful management and programming, best practice and agreed working methods and through dialogue with surrounding residents that there would not be any unacceptable landscape or visual effects during the construction period.

⁶ BS5837, Trees in Relation to construction, 2012

Landscape Effects – Construction

- 4.7.13 Appropriate methods will be adopted to minimise any adverse impact on landscape character. There will be an initial disruption on the site's landscape during the construction phase, which includes the construction of new highway access together with the various construction activities of new housing as outlined above. The landscape effects arising during the construction phase would be a short term and temporary.
- 4.7.14 The National scale landscape character area NCA 95 Northamptonshire Uplands covers an extensive landscape. Given the scale of the NCA the effect upon the character area during construction of the site would be negligible.
- 4.7.15 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) places the site within the Upstanding Village Farmlands LCT. This LCT covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and south of Banbury, around Claydon and Kidlington, Great Bourton, Bloxham and Deddington. The Proposed Development would occupy a small part of the overall LCT, resulting in a **Minor adverse** effect during construction works.
- 4.7.16 The site falls within the Cherwell Valley Character Area as described within the Countryside Design Summary. The site falls within Landscape Type R2 Large-scale Undulating Farmland, sub type R2a. It is recognised that this landscape character area has already been substantially weakened. Similarly to the above, the Proposed Development would occupy a small part of the overall LCT, resulting in a **Minor adverse** effect during construction works.
- 4.7.17 Within the site itself **Moderate** adverse landscape effects are anticipated as a result of construction. The magnitude of change would be high, resulting from the proposed conversion of

the arable fields into a high quality residential development. The majority of landscape features will be retained and protected during construction.

Landscape Effects – Operation

4.7.18 This section details the landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development post construction of the site. The direct impact on the landscape as a result of the Proposed Development would be restricted to the site and the immediate local landscape around it.

4.7.19 The introduction of a residential development, associated infrastructure, open space and would result in the following permanent changes in the landscape:

- Change of land use from agricultural to residential;
- The creation of new vehicle and pedestrian/cycle accesses onto Bankside Phase 1 and onto Oxford Road to the south of Bodicote Park;
- Introduction of new houses, access roads, lighting and their associated activity; and
- Introduction of new green infrastructure including public open space, sports playing fields, allotments, equipped children’s play areas, combined foot/cycle paths, other recreational routes, structural boundary planting and drainage attenuation areas and potential foul pumping station.

4.7.20 It is considered that the site could accommodate change as presented by the Parameters Plan, and that the Proposed Development, whilst initially adverse, would not result in any unacceptable long term landscape harm. This conclusion is reached by the following:

- 1) The site is not covered by or subject to any landscape quality led designation and is judged to be of limited value in landscape terms.
- 2) The majority of the site comprises large scale arable fields. Landscape features (hedgerows and trees) are focussed along the field boundaries. The majority of these existing features

will be retained and supplemented with additional planting to establish a strong landscape framework.

- 3) A comprehensive Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy is proposed. The GI strategy accords with recommendations identified within Cherwell District Council's Countryside Design Summary and Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.
- 4) The site's landscape character is influenced to varying degrees by its relationship with the urban edge of Banbury. Several urbanising influences are present including Oxford Road, Bodicote Park, Bodicote, Bankside Phase 1 and the M40.
- 5) The site is not considered to unusual or special in terms of landscape character and it contains no distinctive landscape features; and
- 6) The only public access across the site is a footpath route between Oxford Road and Bushy Furze Barn.

4.7.21 At Year 1, (i.e. full development in place) it is judged that the direct impact of the development on the site itself would result in **Minor adverse** landscape effect on account of the loss of the fields and the change on-site from agricultural use to built development. Whilst there would be an initial adverse effect, it is considered these effects would be limited in extent and reduce as the Proposed Development's green infrastructure framework becomes established. By Year 15, the site would benefit from a maturing landscape of habitats and it is considered that the landscape effects would be **Negligible**.

4.7.22 In conclusion, the landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development are not considered to result in any unacceptable harm on landscape character and no significant landscape effects would result.

4.7.23 At the national scale the Natural England Character Assessment locates the site within the *Northamptonshire Uplands* (NCA 95). The Natural England assessments consider only the very broad context of the landscape and covers extensive landscape areas. As such, and given the

urban fringe nature of the site and the existing settlements of Banbury and Bodicote, it is considered that landscape effects upon the National Character Area would be **Negligible** at year 1. The assessment identifies landscape opportunities of relevance to the site including encouraging and developing a high quality green infrastructure. Enhancements are proposed within the site where a well planned green infrastructure would provide some local benefits. However given the scale of the NCA the change across the character area as a whole would remain **Negligible** at year 15.

4.7.24 At a county scale the site falls within the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) Landscape Character Type (LCT) Upstanding Village Farmlands which covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and south of Banbury, around Claydon and Kidlington, Great Bourton, Bloxham and Deddington. The Proposed Development occupies a small part of the LCT. The proposed Green Infrastructure which retains and enhance the pattern of hedgerows, and hedgerow trees in keeping with guidelines and characteristics for the LCT and deliver landscape benefits that offset the loss of agricultural fields. At Year 1 it is judged that the development of the site would result in **Minor adverse** effect. By Year 15, the site would benefit from a maturing landscape of habitats and it is considered that the landscape effects would be **Negligible**.

4.7.25 At a district scale the site falls within the Cherwell Valley Character Area as described within the Countryside Design Summary. The site falls within Landscape Type R2 Large-scale Undulating Farmland, sub type R2a. This landscape has capacity to accommodate positive change because their former character has already been substantially weakened. Enhancements are proposed within the site with a well planned green infrastructure providing some local benefits. The proposed GI would be in keeping with guidelines and characteristics for the LCT and deliver landscape benefits that offset the loss of agricultural fields. **Minor adverse landscape** effect experienced at Year 1 would reduce to **Negligible** by Year 15 as the proposed planting establishes.

4.8 VISUAL EFFECTS

4.8.1 The visual baseline & effects table (VBET) provides an assessment of effects during the construction phase, as well as effects based on year 1 and year 15, using the same scenarios as explained in the above paragraphs. The VBET includes the following:

- 1) The judged sensitivity of the receptor in terms of the susceptibility to change and its judged value;
- 2) The proportion of the Proposed Development that would be expected visible in the view at Year 1 and whether this would be: full, partial, minimal, or none.
- 3) The scale of visual impact, which includes the degrees of contrast/integration within the landscape during the different stages of the project and
- 4) The overall effects during the construction phase, Year 1 and at Year 15.

4.8.2 A representative Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) has been prepared (see Figure 4.5). This has been determined through the fieldwork analysis. The ZVI illustrates the potential area of the landscape in which the Proposed Development, i.e. the built development, is likely to be visible at Year 1 (i.e. the development completed during the winter months). Views of the Proposed Development may be full, partial, minimal or negligible. At Year 15, visibility of the Proposed Development would diminish on account of the maturing green infrastructure framework. Visibility of the Proposed Development from within the ZVI will vary. Elements within it, such as tree groups, landform, hedgelines and buildings, or combinations of these elements, will restrict visibility and filter views. Likewise, distance will also reduce visibility. In addition, opportunities may be further limited depending on the number of public vantage points or accessible locations within the ZVI. Further views may potentially occur outside the ZVI, although it is considered that the significance of these on receptors is likely be limited given that the views of the Proposed Development would generally be difficult to clearly distinguish because of distance and/or by intervening elements within the landscape”

4.8.3 The visual effects have been determined through:

- 1) The sensitivity and value of receptors;
- 2) Whether it is direct view or a transient view;
- 3) The effect of the Proposed Development on the receptors experience;
- 4) The type, scale and nature of the Proposed Development; and
- 5) The magnitude of visual change with regard to the receiving context in which the Proposed Development would be observed.

Visual Effects – Construction

4.8.4 All construction works will be carried out in full accordance with best practice procedures to protect and to minimise, as far as practicable, impacts on visual amenity. The impact of the construction phase would be short term in its nature.

4.8.5 During the construction phase, adverse effects upon the local visual resource will occur and the extent of this will depend on the level of visibility of the site for receptors. The effects will generally be localised to receptors that are within the immediate vicinity of the site.

4.8.6 The visual effect upon receptors situated around the periphery of the site are assessed as **Major adverse** during the construction of the works. Depending on their context these receptors will afford views of construction vehicles and associated machinery, together with views of site compounds, earthworks/ground modelling and the like.

4.8.7 **Major adverse** effects would be limited to the following properties situated immediately adjacent to the site, where construction activities for the proposed residential development would potentially be visible at close range:

- Properties on Bankside Phase 1 situated adjacent to the site's western boundary
- College Farm House situated adjacent to the site's south western boundary

- 4.8.8 There would also be a **Major adverse** effect upon the public footpath situated within the site. Along the path construction activities for the proposed residential development would potentially be visible at close range, set back behind public open space.
- 4.8.9 Views of the construction activities from the detached residential property situated at Manor Farm to the south east of the site are more restricted. Glimpsed partial views of construction activities would be visible across arable field. Localised screening is provided by farm outbuildings and a woodland copse. Construction works would potentially result in a **Minor adverse** visual effect.
- 4.8.10 Views of the construction activities from the Bannatyne Health Club and Banbury Rugby Club would largely be screened by the existing tree belt situated alongside the sites southern boundary. There would be glimpsed views of construction works, filtered by existing trees and hedgerow. Construction works would potentially result in a **Minor adverse** visual effect for users of the Bannatyne Health Club.
- 4.8.11 Construction works would also result in a **Moderate adverse** visual effect for users of a short stretch of Oxford Road, as a result of views of construction activities of proposed vehicular access.
- 4.8.12 There would be relatively few longer distance views affected by construction activities within the site. To the north of the site, views from Canal Lane on the valley slopes are restricted due to a combination of Bankside Phase 1 and the localised landform. Glimpsed partial views of construction activities would be seen within the close context of the Bankside Phase 1 development which would result in a **Minor adverse** visual effect.
- 4.8.13 Long distance views of construction activities at the eastern and southern edge of the Proposed Development would be visible across arable fields, and result in a **Minor adverse** visual effect.

4.8.14 Views along the M40 corridor adjacent to the site are largely contained by embankments and belts of roadside planting. To the north of the site longer distance views occur from the M40 across the Cherwell Valley. Where breaks in the embankment / vegetation cover occur, the adjacent valley slopes form the near horizon and would largely screen views of construction activities. Glimpsed views of construction activities at the eastern edge of the Proposed Development would result in a **Minor adverse to Negligible** visual effect.

4.8.15 Views of the Proposed Development from the public rights of way situated within the wider landscape to the north of the site (Canal Lane, the Oxford Canal or Jurassic Way) or to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley would be limited. The construction activities would be largely screened from view by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape. Any long distance glimpsed views of the works would potentially be seen within the close context of the existing development at Bankside Phase 1 and result in **Minor adverse to Negligible** visual effects.

Night Time Effects

4.8.16 The Proposed Development will extend southwards and westwards from the urban edge of Bankside Phase 1. In addition to the daytime visual assessment undertaken, the site has been visited at night. A range of light sources was observed both from Banbury and elsewhere within areas surrounding the site. Along the south eastern edge of Banbury, road lighting occurs along the main routes, notably on the A4260 Oxford Road. Road lighting is evident along the A4260 Oxford Road to the southwest of the Site along the route between Bodicote and Twyford, Adderbury. Street lighting is also present within the residential streets including along Twyford Road to the south of the Site and also adjacent to the Site within Bankside Phase 1. In addition light emitted from the existing residential properties along the edge of Bankside Phase 1 are also noticeable. Other light sources situated adjacent to the site include floodlighting associated with

Banbury Rugby Club and lighting within the Bannatyne Health Club. There is also a sky glow associated with the wider settlement of Banbury. To the north east of the Site light is also evident from vehicles travelling on the embanked M40. This is not a dark undisturbed environment and is judged to be of medium district brightness.

4.8.17 The Proposed Development has been designed so that the built development will be largely screened from the wider landscape, by a combination of the existing topography, vegetation and additional planting. The GI framework proposes belts of tree planting, along the site's northern and eastern and south eastern edge. An existing tree belt would also be retained along the site's southern boundary by Bannatyne Health Club and Banbury Rugby Club. There would be minimal effects of sky glow and the odd 'spots of light' both of which are already seen at the existing urban edge. Light trespass (into windows) could potentially occur where development is proposed adjacent to the existing residential edge of Banbury, including at Bankside Phase 1 and College Farm House. However, all new lighting will meet the current environmental standards of good practice in order to reduce potential light pollution.

4.8.18 The Project includes a range of measures which follow good lighting practices, as recommended by the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) and will be used to reduce light pollution.

4.8.19 Use of the measures proposed would therefore prevent any significant effects from light pollution

Visual Effects – Operation (Post Construction - Development in Place)

4.8.20 The assessment has identified a range of receptors of varying sensitivities and includes a number of representative photographs.

4.8.21 The visual effects of the operational development have been considered at Year 1 and Year 15. It is considered that the effects would reduce in the longer term (year 15 and beyond) on account the following:

- 1) Receptors becoming accustomed to seeing the Proposed Development within this urban edge context;
- 2) The built form ‘settling’ into the landscape e.g. the natural weathering of materials; and
- 3) The maturing framework of woodland, hedgerows and tree planting which coupled with existing vegetation would provide would filter and ‘soften’ the views of built development.

Summary

Settlement and Properties

4.8.22 Views of the Proposed Development would be well screened from the vast majority of properties within Banbury and Bodicote. This is due to the screening effects provided by Bankside Phase 1 development and established tree belts situated by Bodicote Park and Oxford Road. Consequently visual effects would largely be restricted to those properties situated immediately adjacent to the site. These include properties situated at the edge of Bankside Phase 1, and the detached College Farm House situated by Oxford Road, which would have close range views of the residential development proposed adjacent to the site’s western boundary. At year 1 the effects on these properties have been assessed as **Moderate to Major adverse** with the potential for close range views from windows facing the site. Existing retained hedgerow and trees situated within existing properties gardens and along the site boundary would be supplemented with new tree planting within the gardens of proposed dwellings and also within landscape buffers. At Year 15 as tree planting establishes within the green infrastructure it will soften views of the proposed built development, reducing the assessed effects to **Moderate adverse** due to the loss of the open setting.

4.8.23 Views of the Proposed Development from the detached residential property situated at Manor Farm to the south east of the site would be more restricted. Glimpsed views of the proposed sports fields and upper parts of the proposed residential buildings would be visible across arable field. Localised screening is provided by farm outbuildings and woodland vegetation cover. Such glimpsed views would be seen within the context of existing properties situated at the edge of Banbury, including properties at Bankside Phase 1 and Cherwell Heights. At year 1 the effects on these properties have been assessed as **Minor adverse**. As belts of tree planting proposed along the southern and eastern site boundary establish, views of the proposed built development will be largely screened, reducing the effects to **Negligible**.

4.8.24 Views of the proposed residential development from properties situated at the northern edge of Adderbury (Twyford) would be partially screened by an existing tree belt situated alongside Banbury Rugby Club. Long distance glimpsed views of upper parts of buildings proposed at the eastern edge of the site would be visible across arable fields. Belts of tree planting are proposed along the southern and eastern site boundary which would filter views of the built development. **Minor adverse** visual effects experienced at Year 1 would reduce to **Negligible** at Year 15.

4.8.25 Kings Sutton is situated within the wider landscape to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley. Views of the Proposed Development from Kings Sutton would be very restricted due to the combined screening effects provided by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape. Any long distance glimpsed views of the upper parts of proposed residential buildings would potentially be seen within the close context of the existing development at Bankside Phase 1. Consequently the Proposed Development would have a **Negligible** visual effect upon Kings Sutton.

4.8.26 Warkworth and Overthorpe are situated approximately 2.5km to the north east of the site. The Proposed Development would be largely screened from view by landform and vegetation cover

situated within the intervening landscape. The Proposed Development would not result in any significant visual effects upon Warkworth or Overthorpe.

- 4.8.27 Views of the Proposed Development from the Bannatyne Health Club and Banbury Rugby Club would largely be screened by the existing tree belt situated alongside the sites southern boundary. **Minor adverse** visual effects experienced at Year 1 would reduce to **Negligible** at Year 15.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.8.28 The public footpath through the Site would largely be retained within a greenway corridor. Features along the route such as hedgerows and trees would largely be retained within the GI framework. Proposed residential development within the site would change the nature of the view and result in a loss of open setting. **Moderate/Major adverse** visual effects would be experienced at Year 1. At Year 15 as tree and shrub planting within the open space and greenway corridor establishes, views of the adjacent built development would be softened and the visual effects would reduce to **Minor adverse**.
- 4.8.29 Away from the site boundary and at increasing distance and/or with intervening vegetation cover and landform, the visual effects of the Proposed Development for users of Public Rights of Way reduce. Consequently there would be relatively few longer distance views affected by Proposed Development. To the north of the site, views from Canal Lane, the Oxford Canal and Jurassic Way are restricted due to a combination of Bankside Phase 1 and the localised landform. Glimpsed partial views of upper parts of proposed residential buildings would be seen within the close context of the Bankside Phase 1 development. Belts of tree planting are proposed along the northern site boundary which would ultimately screen the development. **Minor adverse** visual effects experienced at year 1 would reduce to **Negligible** at Year 15.

4.8.30 Views of the Proposed Development from other public rights of way situated within the wider landscape to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley would be restricted. The Proposed Development would largely be screened from view by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape. Any long distance glimpsed views of upper parts of proposed residential buildings would potentially be seen within the close context of the existing development at Bankside Phase 1 and result in **Minor adverse to Negligible** visual effects.

Public Roads

4.8.31 Views of the Proposed Development from Oxford Road would be limited due to the screening provided by existing vegetation cover and urban fabric. Existing tree belt situated alongside Banbury Rugby Club and Bannatyne Health Club would largely screen the proposed residential development within views from Oxford Road (to the south of the site). There would be localised close range views of the vehicular access proposed to the south of Bodicote Park. Long distance views of residential buildings at the eastern edge of the site would be set back behind proposed belts of tree planting. Existing residential properties situated at Bankside Phase 1 would effectively screen the proposed built development within views from Oxford Road (to the north of the College Farm House). At Year 1 there would be a **Minor adverse** visual effect for users of a short stretch of Oxford Road. There would be partial glimpsed views of upper parts of proposed residential buildings. At Year 15 effects would reduce to **Negligible**.

4.8.32 Roads situated at edge of Bankside Phase 1 would have close range views of the residential development proposed adjacent to the site's western boundary. Such views would be seen within the close context of existing residential situated along the urban edge. At year 1 the effects on these road users have been assessed as **Moderate to Minor adverse**. Existing retained hedgerow and trees situated along the site boundary would be supplemented with new tree planting within the gardens of proposed dwellings. At Year 15 as tree planting establishes within the green

infrastructure it will soften views of the proposed built development, reducing the assessed effects to **Negligible**.

4.8.33 Within views from Twyford Road the majority of the proposed built development would be screened by an existing tree belt situated alongside Banbury Rugby Club. Long distance glimpsed views of upper parts of buildings proposed at the eastern edge of the site would be visible across arable fields. Tree planting proposed along the southern and eastern site boundary would further screen the development. **Minor adverse** visual effects experienced at Year 1 would reduce to **Negligible** at Year 15.

4.8.34 Views along the M40 corridor adjacent to the site are largely contained by embankments and belts of roadside planting. Where breaks in the embankment / vegetation cover occur, the adjacent valley slopes form the near horizon and would largely screen views of Proposed Development. Belts of tree planting are proposed along the site boundary would ultimately screen the development from view. At Year 1 glimpsed views of upper parts of proposed residential buildings would result in a **Minor adverse to Negligible** visual effect.

4.8.35 There would be no significant views of the Proposed Development from other public roads situated within the wider landscape to the east of the M40, on the opposite side of the Cherwell Valley, including from Overthorpe Road, Astrop Road or Upper Astrop Road. The Proposed Development would be largely screened from view by landform and vegetation cover situated within the intervening landscape.

4.9 CONCLUSION

- 4.9.1 The Landscape Baseline & Effects Table (LBET) (**Appendix 4.01**) provides an assessment of the landscape effects.
- 4.9.2 The site is not subject to any landscape designation. It forms an intensively farmed agricultural landscape, which is strongly influenced by the adjoining urban edge of Banbury. The M40 also lies nearby to the east of the site. The site contains no distinctive or special landscape elements and is of limited value in landscape terms.
- 4.9.3 The site is judged to be of low landscape sensitivity and is considered to be have high capacity to accommodate change as presented by the Parameters Plan.
- 4.9.4 For any greenfield site to accommodate development there will be an inevitable landscape disruption and a change in the site's landscape. The majority of features (hedgerows and trees) are retained and strengthened as part of the proposed green infrastructure framework which includes a net gain in landscape habitats that will provide, for example, additional tree cover across the site. The Proposed Development is consistent with strategies identified within Cherwell District Council's Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment and Countryside Design Summary. It is considered that the proposed green infrastructure would deliver a range of landscape benefits that offset the loss of agricultural fields.
- 4.9.5 Some short term and temporary landscape and visual effects will occur from alterations to the landscape during the construction period of the Proposed Development. These effects would be temporary and restricted to localised areas situated within or immediately adjacent to the site.

- 4.9.6 Post construction at Year 1, landscape effects for the site are judged to be minor adverse on account of the loss of the fields and the change on-site from agricultural use to built development. These effects would be limited in extent and reduce as the Proposed Development's green infrastructure framework becomes established. By Year 15, the Proposed Development would benefit from a maturing landscape of habitats and it is considered that the landscape effects would be Negligible.
- 4.9.7 In terms of visual resources, clear views of the Proposed Development would be largely restricted to localised viewpoints. The green infrastructure would filter and 'soften' the views of built development and would assist in assimilating the Proposed Development within the landscape.
- 4.9.8 Views of the Proposed Development would be well screened from the vast majority of properties within Banbury and Bodicote. This is due to the screening effects provided by Bankside Phase 1 development and established tree belts situated by Bodicote Park and Oxford Road. Consequently, visual effects would largely be restricted to those properties situated immediately adjacent to the site. In most cases, these receptors already have views of the urban edge of Banbury which includes Bankside Phase 1, and the Proposed Development would be observed within this context.
- 4.9.9 The visual effects as a result of the Proposed Development would be generally limited and localised in extent and, in overall terms, would not result in any significant (major adverse) effects in the long term.
- 4.9.10 In conclusion, it is assessed that the site has the ability in which to absorb development of the scale and type proposed as presented by the Parameters Plan, without causing any substantial landscape and visual harm.