



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT AND NATIONAL FOREST STRATEGY

**EXCELLENCE, LAND AT WIGGS FARM
STATION ROAD, COALVILLE**

**ON BEHALF OF
BARBERRY BARDON LIMITED**

MAY 2025

V1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1. The following Green Infrastructure Statement and National Forest Strategy has been drawn up by BLADE Landscape Architects Ltd on behalf of Barberry Bardon Limited. It sets out the necessary strategy associated with the commercial development at Excellence, Land at Wiggs Farm, Station Road, Coalville.
- 1.2. The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the National Forest and sets out how Green Infrastructure has been considered throughout the design of the scheme.
- 1.3. The statement is informed by existing reports and statements which accompany the planning application for the erection of a B8 distribution hub with ancillary offices, quality control office and canopy, maintenance units, and gatehouse, and associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Site Location and Baseline Description

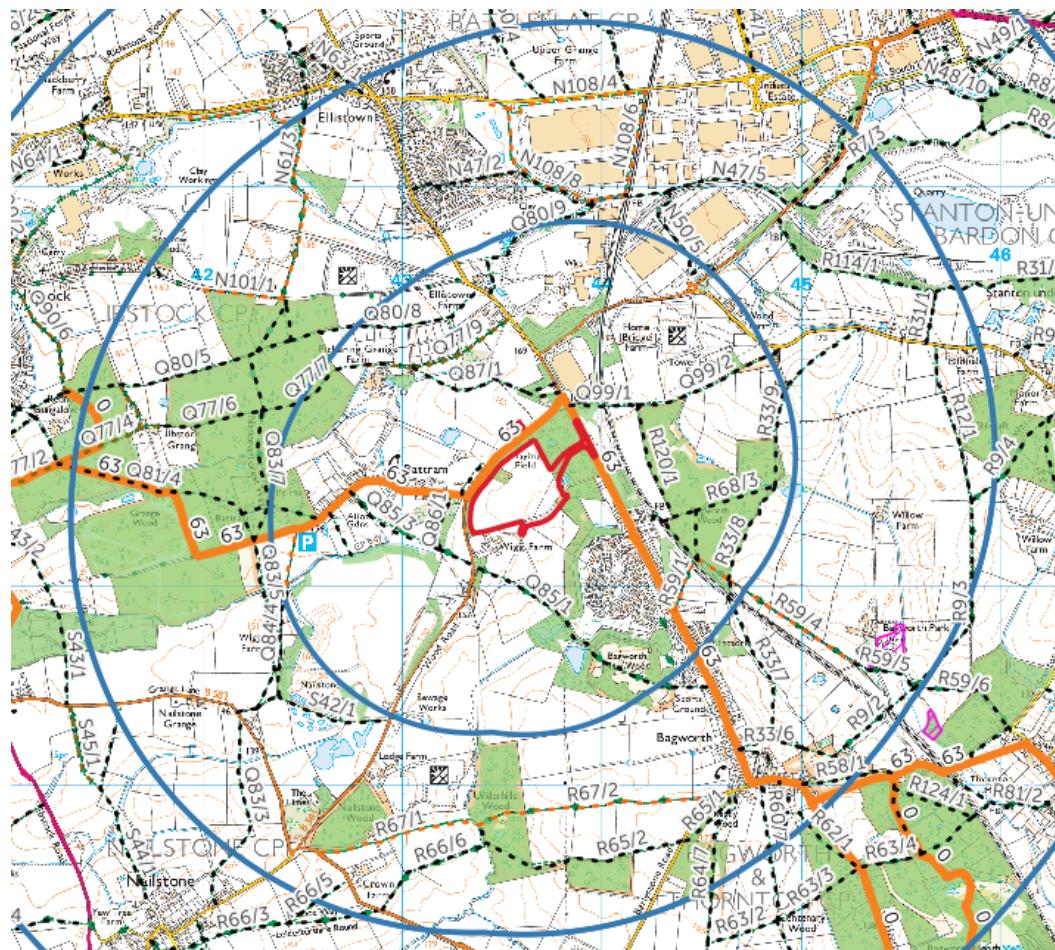
- 1.4. The Site is approximately 14.64 ha in extent. Its predominate character is a large arable field with native hedgerows and narrow field margins. The exceptions to this are an access track that runs along the southern side of the arable field, a small copse of trees that juts into the northern side of the arable field and the route of the proposed access road to the east which loosely follows a clearing in the wooded area to the west.
- 1.5. The Site boundary is drawn tightly to the area needed to facilitate the development and does not include the tree belt along the western and northern edge of the field nor the small woodland to the east (other than the route needed for the access road).
- 1.6. The Site is situated to the south-southwest of an extensively developed employment area Bardon Hill which includes large B8 employment units, brick manufacturing plant, clay mineral extraction, process facilities solar PV farms and a main trailway line running between Leicester and Burton upon Trent (via Coalville). The village of Bagworth is located 1.4 km to the South.
- 1.7. The Site is not situated within, or adjoining, national or local statutory landscape designations, and is not situated within a locally designated special landscape area of high landscape value.
- 1.8. The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a 'low probability' of fluvial/tidal flooding. The majority of the Site has a very low risk of surface water flooding with an annual probability of flooding of less than 1 in 1000 years (0.1 %). However, a small proportion of the Site has a low to high risk of surface water flooding with an annual probability of flooding of 1 in 1000 (0.1 %) to 1 in 30 (3.3 %) years.
- 1.9. The Site is Grade 3b agricultural land and is an actively farmed arable field (cereal crops) surrounded by hedgerows with broadleaved woodland beyond.

- 1.10. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 1.11. The Site is not situated within, or adjoining, national or local statutory landscape designations, and is not situated within a locally designated special landscape area of high landscape value.

Public Rights of Way and Public Access

- 1.12. The woodland surrounding the Site and partially within the Site is access land which is part of the wider National Forest provision. The closest Public Right of Way (PRoW) to the Site is PRoW ref Q86 which is located to the north of Wood Road. PRoW ref Q85 runs to the south of the Site (c.145m away at its closest point) and forms part of the National Forest Way long distance recreational route which is 75 miles long and crosses the length and breadth of The National Forest.
- 1.13. Within the wider study area there is a dense network of PRoW in all directions as well as large areas of access land in the form of woodland blocks associated with the National Forest landscape.
- 1.14. With consideration of the online map for National Cycle Routes (by Sustrans), National Cycle Route (NCR) 63 adjoins the Site to the north and east along Wood Road and Station Road. Woodland separates the Site from the NCR.

Public Rights of Way and National Cycle Network (Blade Landscape Architects)



Existing Trees

- 1.15. A tree survey was carried out by Westside Forestry in September 2024 and March 2025.
- 1.16. A number of individual trees (predominately Oak), 5 hedgerows (predominately Hawthorn) and 18 groups of trees were surveyed (saplings are present but have not been surveyed given their diminutive size). Individual stems within groups G16 and G18 were surveyed to confirm the extents of RPAs, adjacent the site boundary (G16A-E & G18A-E). Tree stock has had limited past management.
- 1.17. The site and immediate surrounds are predominantly densely planted groups of native broadleaf trees, of similar species and compositions and ages structures, planted within the last 20 years. The current tree species includes among others: Ash; Sycamore; Silver Birch; Goat Willow; Oak; Field Maple; Alder; Hazel; Cherry and Dogwood.
- 1.18. A search of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) revealed trees within the site are not currently subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) protection and the site is not within a Conservation Area.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1. The following legislation and policy have informed the assessment of effects within this Chapter and is detailed further in ES Appendix 10.1:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised December 2024).
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy 2006-2026
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted March 2020)
- Other Relevant Policy, Guidance and Evidence Base Documents
- Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2041 Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Plan (July 2024)
- Bagworth, Thornton and Stanton Under Bardon Neighbourhood Plan (Draft Regulation 15 / 16 submission document)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (July 2020)
- The National Forest Guide for Developers and Planners: Summary

National Planning Policy

2.2. The NPPF was updated on the 12th of December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.3. Paragraphs 116 of the NPPF requires that development is of high quality and inclusive design which functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site, respond to local character and history reflecting the local surroundings and materials, create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

2.4. The NPPF Paragraph 131 states that the 'creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

2.5. Paragraph 136 states that 'new streets [should be] tree-lined', and 'that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible'.

2.6. Paragraph 187 notes that the need to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital, with subsection a stating:

2.7. *'.....protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).'*

2.8. Paragraph 187 makes it clear that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that the development plan should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection, stating at subsection b:

2.9. *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*

2.10. Relevant Planning Policy Guidance that accompanies the NPPF includes that relating to Green Infrastructure, Landscape, and Design (including the National Design Guide).

Local Planning Policy

2.11. The Site lies within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council LPA. The following adopted policy documents are of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development:

- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy 2006-2026 (Adopted December 2009)
- The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted March 2020)

2.12. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is currently working on a new Local Plan which will set out land allocations and planning policies for the period 2020 to 2041. The Regulation 18 draft Local Plan was consulted on between July and September 2024

2.13. The Site lies within the Bagworth, Thornton and Stanton Under Bardon Neighbourhood Plan Area which has an actively progressing Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was recently submitted to and accepted by the Council on 14th February 2025 in order to progress to consultation and examination.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy 2006-2026

'Spatial Objective 9: Identity, Distinctiveness and Quality of Design'

2.14. To ensure development contributes to the local distinctiveness of the borough, and enhances both settlement identity and the environment through the quality of sustainable design. Design and other measures will be used to develop strong community identities and neighbourhood pride.

Spatial Objective 10: Natural Environment and Cultural Assets

2.15. To deliver a linked network of green infrastructure, enhancing and protecting the borough's distinctive landscapes, woodlands, geology, archaeological heritage and biodiversity and encourage its understanding, appreciation, maintenance and development.'

Policy 21: National Forest

2.16. Within the National Forest new developments will be required to reflect the Forest context in their accompanying landscape proposals. Developments shall provide on-site or nearby landscaping that meets the National Forest development planting guidelines. Landscaping will generally involve woodland planting but can also include creation and management of other appropriate habitats, open space provision and the provision of new recreational facilities. The appropriate mix of landscaping features will depend upon the setting and the opportunities that the site presents.'

The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

2.17. 'Considering the interface established built hierarchy, between the development and the surrounding context....In rural areas it may necessitate implementing adequate landscaped buffers, including mature planting and treelines to screen or soften development.'

2.18. 'Create an appropriate mix of hard and soft landscaping, incorporating and enhancing any existing green infrastructure and considering boundary treatments, including the creation of bunds where appropriate'

2.19. 'Providing a comfortable interface to its context responding to an....open rural context through mature landscaping. This interface should take into account visual impact in terms of scale and physical prominence, and the impact of its particular function that may create noise, harmful substances or dangerous activity.'

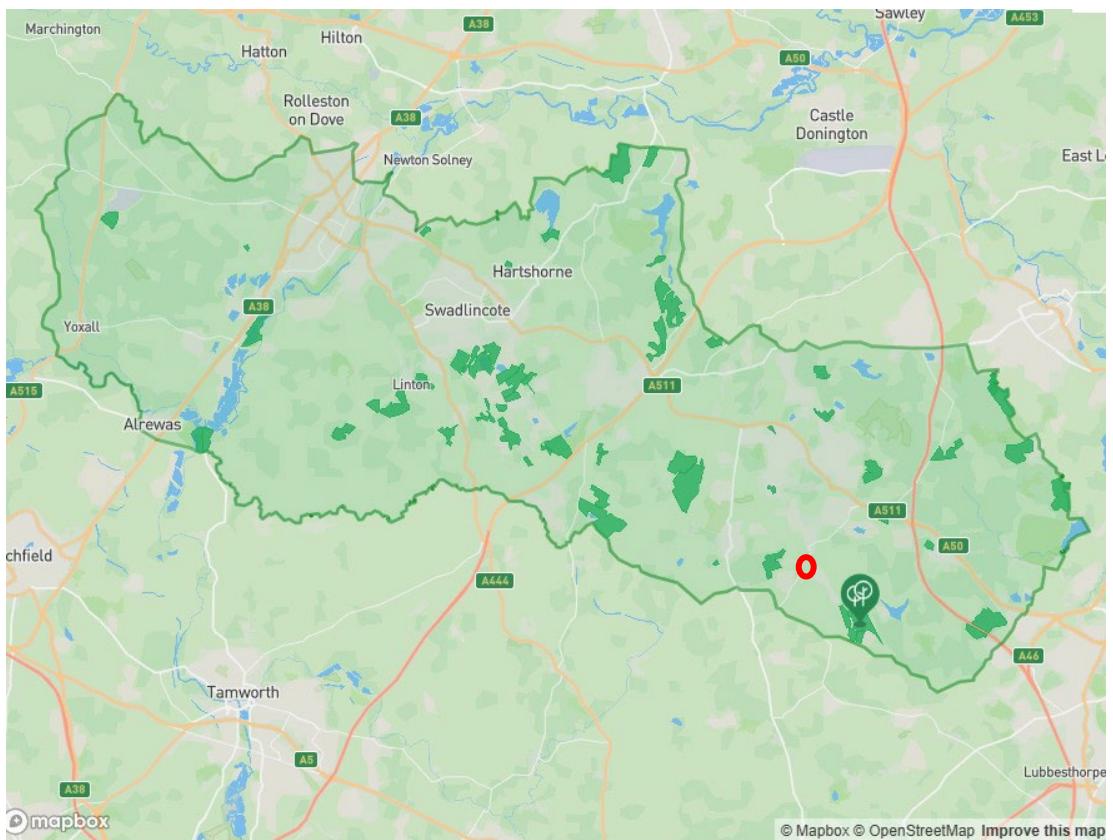
The National Forest Guide for Developers & Planners: Summary

2.20. This document provides a summary the Guide for Developers and Planners which provides 'guidelines for creating attractive, wooded settings for new development'.

2.21. Developers are encouraged to "create sustainable, design-led schemes that reflect local character and the site's location within the National Forest." Forest-related green infrastructure will consist of elements which include the following, depending on the character of the site and its surroundings:

- "New woodland planting (ideally a minimum size of 0.25ha)
- Creation of woodland belts (minimum of 15m wide);
- Planting to form parkland-style landscapes;
- Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems;
- Creation of new habitats (wetlands, reedbeds, meadows, heathlands);
- Incorporation and management of existing woodland and hedgerows;
- Greenways - landscaped footpath and cycle routes;
- Roadside trees; and
- Development landscaping with a strong tree emphasis."

Extract from the National Forest Online Map Indicating Site Location (red circle)



4.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Character Assessment

4.1. The landscape of England has been subject to a nationwide Landscape Character Assessment, 'The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features' (Natural England). The site is located wholly within the National Character Area (NCA) 71: 'Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield'.

4.2. This National Character Area covers a large area, reaching as far north-west as Swadlincote and as far south as Newbold Verdon and Botcherton. Given our field based assessment (October 2024), it is considered, that whilst Natural England's description is broadly representative of the wider landscape, it is too generic to provide specific characterisation of the Site. For the scale of the Site and potential developable area, the description of landscape character undertaken at a more localised level are more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline.

Local Landscape Character Assessment

4.3. The following landscape character assessment is of relevance to the Site:

- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017).

Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment

4.4. A landscape sensitivity assessment was also undertaken for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in 2017. This assessment focuses on areas identified by the Council based on existing and future pressures for development within the Borough. No areas surrounding Bagworth were identified as areas of pressure, therefore the Site does not lie within one of these areas within this document.

4.5. Within this assessment, the Site lies within Landscape Character Area (LCA) B 'Charnwood Fringe Settled Forest Hills' which forms part of the wider 'Settled Forest Hills' Landscape Character Type (LCT). The Bagworth Urban Character Area (UCA) lies to the south of the Site.

LCA B: Charnwood Fringe

4.6. This LCA is located in the north of the borough, to the west of Charnwood Forest and incorporates the settlements of Barlestoke, Bagworth, and Thornton within its boundary. The 'key characteristics' of this LCA include the following (N.B. Those key characteristics which are typical of the area within which the Site is situated are underlined):

- Gently undulating landform with small plateaus on higher ground and rising to the adjacent Charnwood Forest area to the east.
- Contrast between areas which are visually open and enclosed depending on the elevation of the landscape and the presence of woodlands and vegetation.
- Large scale irregular field pattern of mainly arable and some pasture, with smaller fields around settlements. Fields enclosed by hedgerows with scattered trees.

- Industrial heritage of quarrying and mining resulting in areas of restored land.
- Part of the National Forest and Charnwood Forest with areas of new woodland plantations associated with former industrial areas.
- Dispersed pattern of former mining villages following a linear pattern on ridgetops, either located close to a colliery or providing housing for mine workers. Good public access and footpath network throughout, especially within National Forest area.
- Predominantly rural landscape with arable and rough set-aside, influenced by industrial / urban features such as masts, poles and pylons.

Landscape strategies for this LCA

- Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed species woodland– as well as for areas beyond the National Forest boundary, encouraging, connecting and enhancing habitats such as hedgerows, tree planting, farm woodlands and lowland meadows.
- Conserve and enhance the historic core of village settlements and ensure extensions are well integrated within this wooded landscape.
- Restore typical zones of woodland types from alder, crack willow, hazel and grey willow in valleys, to oak/birch woodland on higher slopes; developing and managing transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats.
- The siting and design of new development should complement the existing settlement pattern. New developments, extensions or alterations should be of appropriate materials, scale, massing and location within their plot to the rural context of the area. Removal of traditional building features such as crown chimney pots and boundary walls of brick, stone, metal railings and timber fences should be avoided.
- Conserve the historic features of the landscape including industrial heritage of mining villages, railways.

5.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSALS

Identified Opportunities and Constraints

5.1. Several opportunities and constraints have been considered as part of the sensitive and considered development approach:

Opportunities

- Opportunity to create new native broadleaf woodland and grassland habitats within the Site which will connect with the adjacent woodland indicated in the National Forest Inventory;
- Opportunity to create a SuDs outfall pond to the south in the proposed landscape buffer;
- Opportunity to retain and enhance perimeter hedgerows; and
- Opportunity for the future enhanced management of a sustainable, long term management plan to protect and preserve the new and retained habitats.

Constraints

- Proposals for the site access road from Station Road need to allow an appropriate buffer to preserve the root protection area of the neighbouring trees in the woodland; and
- There is potential for views of the proposal from the immediate public rights of way network, including (Q85/1) and national cycle route NCR 63

Proposed Landscape Scheme

5.2. Landscape mitigation measures have been developed through consideration of the host landscape character for the proposed development. These provide an appropriate solution for a development that offsets and / or reduces landscape and visual effects, and if practicable, enhances the local landscape fabric.

5.3. The proposals include native trees, species rich native hedgerow and native scrub planting. To the southeast, there are new areas of proposed native woodland with species-rich grassland, trees and wildflower grassland suitable for SuDS. Amenity shrubs and tree planting are proposed to ancillary areas of the development.

5.4. These landscape prescriptions aim to offset and reduce the effects on landscape character and visual amenity by the following methods:

- Where practicable to retain existing landscape fabric, including existing hedges, scrub and mature trees which enclose the site for visual mitigation, as well as the ecological amenity and habitat retention.
- Retention of existing woodland, trees and perimeter hedgerows where practicable to retain the basis of a strong landscape framework. Where existing boundary vegetation is lacking to the south-east of the Site, new native woodland planting will be incorporated to form a new woodland belt enclosing this corner of the Site. The new woodland planting would “support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed species woodland” and ensure

new development is “well integrated within this wooded landscape” in line with the published landscape strategies for Landscape Character by creating an extension to the woodland corridor which surrounds the other edges of the Site.

- New individual tree planting, native hedgerow with hedgerow trees and mixed native scrub planting is also proposed to the peripheries of the Site and Site access. Species-rich neutral grassland is also incorporated to the Site edges and surrounding the new SuDs feature within the south-east of the Site. These elements aid in developing transitional habitats at the existing and proposed woodland edges and provided amenity benefit for users of the Proposed Development. Tree and ornamental shrub planting is also incorporated to the car park area and frontage of the warehouse to aid in breaking up the mass of the proposed hard surfacing.
- The unavoidable loss of woodland, hedgerow and trees will be mitigated with new planting provided to enhance and bolster the existing landscaped setting. This new planting will be with native species of local importance, and where local provenance is possible, planting will be provided from suppliers locally within the county.
- Throughout the development period and thereafter a maintenance and management regime will be adopted to endeavor that existing and new landscape elements are appropriately managed to ensure establishment and long-term management for effective mitigation of the proposal. This would be set out within a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) endeavor that existing and new landscape elements are appropriately managed to ensure establishment and long-term management for effective mitigation of the proposal.

5.5. The detailed soft landscape proposals will be developed and are likely to include the following native species:

5.6. Species rich native hedgerows with trees; Wild Cherry (Prunus avium); Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa); Dog rose (Rosa canina); Guelder rose (Viburnum opulus); Field Maple (Acer campestre) Hazel (Corylus avellana); and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna).

5.7. The native woodland would draw upon the existing context with typical tree species to include; Oak (Quercus robur); Silver birch (Betula pendula); Field Maple (Acer campestre); Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus); Hazel; (Corylus avellana); Wild Cherry (Prunus Avium); Alder (Alnus glutinosa); and Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus). Shorter lived trees such as Betula and Prunus provide canopy cover in the interim whilst the larger trees establish and take over in the longer term.

Social Benefits

5.8. The proposed site layout includes an external staff amenity area which has been designed into the northwestern corner and an external amenity seating area alongside the staff car park. Both areas are designed within the soft landscaping which can improve the wellbeing of staff, provide opportunities for recreation and enhance the working environment.

Biodiversity

5.9. The landscape proposals are designed to maximise the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity on site and embedding mitigation in respect to habitats and hedgerows. For example, the existing perimeter hedgerow is to be bolstered with hedgerow trees and new species rich hedgerows to provide broader connectivity with the wider

landscape. In addition, the construction of an amphibian underpass beneath the new access road is proposed.

5.10. In summary, the landscape proposals include the provision of the following:

- Other neutral grassland – A habitat of greater biodiversity than cropland is proposed in areas where it can be achieved and managed in the long term.
- Species rich native hedgerow – To connect existing retained hedgerow and increase the length of hedgerow on site. Existing hedgerows condition improvements with occasional hedgerow trees to improve their diversity and condition.
- Mixed native scrub – To create a broader species diversity on site, whilst providing a visual buffer adjacent to the external staff amenity area.
- Native broadleaved woodland – An area of replacement planting with native species as noted above.
- Individual native trees, modified grassland and introduced shrubs – To create a sense of well being, sense of place to the car park, staff amenity and gatehouse areas. A total of 111 trees have been proposed which will assist in the carbon capture, provide shade and shelter, as well as other cooling effects (evapo-transpiration). Modified grassland is proposed in areas which will be frequently mown and to grass verges.
- SuDs pond – With storage capacity for surface water drainage, planted with wet grassland species mix.

Future Landscape Management

5.11. It is intended that all new and retained soft landscaping will be managed and enhanced to preserve and enhance biodiversity on Site whilst creating an attractive setting. Management plans will be prepared and reviewed annually allowing for minor variations in maintenance or timings of work. This will record the success of the proposed landscaping, condition of existing trees and hedges and ecological habitats and maintenance of the SuDs infrastructure.

The National Forest

5.12. The National Forest Guide for Developers & Planners details what is required for new development and the necessary Green Infrastructure that should be provided, as part of those proposals.

5.13. We are currently proposing circa 0.44ha of native woodland planting within the application site boundary (refer to extract below). This woodland planting is approximately 30m deep which exceeds the minimum requirement of 15m and will connect the development to the wider National Forest landscape.

Extract from the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, Sheet 1 of 2 (Appendix 1)



- 5.14. The remaining requirement to adhere to the 30% will be settled by a financial contribution, agreed through a s.106 agreement.
- 5.15. The remaining landscaping proposed as part of the scheme will also contribute to the forest related green infrastructure requirements set out within the guidance document.

National Forest Inventory

- 5.16. The National Forest Inventory (NFI) covers all forest and woodland area over 0.5 hectare with a minimum of 20% canopy cover, or the potential to achieve it, and a minimum width of 20 metres. The extract below provides an summary of the Site and its relationship with the NFI; areas of felling required in brown and proposed native broadleaf woodland in green.
- 5.17. The area proposed provides a linear extension of the existing woodland to the east and south east of the Site as shown in the extract below.

National Forest Inventory (2023) Alongside the Proposals



6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The development site is Grade 3b agricultural land and is an actively farmed arable field (cereal crops) surrounded by hedgerows with broadleaved woodland beyond.
- 6.2. The Site is not situated within, or adjoining, national or local statutory landscape designations, and is not situated within a locally designated special landscape area of high landscape value. The Site does not represent, in a perceptual or physical sense, a landscape of any great importance or distinct character.
- 6.3. The wider setting of the Site lies within The National Forest, characterised by large areas of woodland planting on former colliery sites. The combination of hedgerows and woodlands combine to create a well-vegetated appearance in the lower lying areas.

Current Green Infrastructure Network

- 6.4. At present, the Site's contribution to the overall green infrastructure of this area is the presence of woodland groups which largely comprise of the area north east of the site in which the proposed access road is located and a woodland block to the north. There are no public footpaths within the Site. There are a series of ponds in the existing woodland to the east neighbouring the Site.

Development Proposals

- 6.5. The proposed development comprises the erection of a B8 distribution hub with ancillary offices, quality control office and canopy, maintenance units, and gatehouse, and associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Woodland and Habitat Enhancement

- 6.6. The proposed landscape design strategy provides the creation of new native woodland planting, grassland habitats and additional native hedgerow alongside individual native trees to the frontage of the warehouse and external amenity areas.
- 6.7. The new woodland planting in the landscape buffer to the south will create a connection with the existing woodland to the east which is identified within the National Forest Inventory.

Biodiversity


- 6.8. The landscape proposals are designed to maximise the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity on site and embedding mitigation in respect to habitats and hedgerows. The green infrastructure proposals seek to compliment and connect with the surrounding habitats creating connections and contributing to the overall woodland area within the National Forest.

Social Benefits

- 6.9. The Site design provides an opportunity for an attractive setting for an external staff amenity area which will be set within the context of the neighbouring woodland and proposed native hedgerows, scrub, individual trees and grassland. This seeks to add value to the working environment for the staff and visitors.

APPENDIX 1

Illustrative Landscape Masterplan Sheet 1 of 2



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CLIENT	Barberry Bardon Limited
PROJECT	Excellence, Land at Wiggs Farm, Station Road, Coalville
DRAWING TITLE	Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Sheet 1 of 2)
DRAWING STATUS	Planning
DRAWING NO.	1718-L-D-PL-202
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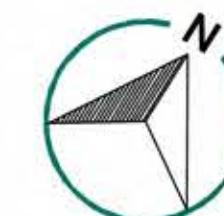
Illustrative Landscape Masterplan Sheet 2 of 2



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CLIENT	Barberry Bardon Limited
PROJECT	Excellence, Land at Wiggs Farm, Station Road, Coalville
DRAWING TITLE	Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Sheet 2 of 2)
DRAWING STATUS	Planning
DRAWING NO	1718-L-D-PL-203
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