



Landscape Statement for Appeal

**Carrs Hill,
Barwell**

**March 2024
INF_N1121_PoE01**



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1 Introduction

Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 My name is Sara Boland. I am a Director of Influence Landscape Planning and Design Limited (Chartered Landscape Architects, Urban Designers and Environmental Planners).
- 1.2 I hold a BA Hons and Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Leeds Metropolitan University and am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. I have worked as a Landscape Architect for over 20 years, Managing Director of Influence Landscape Planning and Design and specialising in landscape planning for the past ten years.
- 1.3 I have significant experience in advising on landscape matters, on a range of projects in all sectors. These include carrying out Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Feasibility Studies, developing Strategic Masterplans and advising on mitigation.
- 1.4 The information which I have prepared and provided for this Statement is true to the best of my knowledge. It has been prepared and is given in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

Outline

- 1.5 The Appeal is against the refusal to grant outline planning permission 23/00535/FUL for the erection of nine accommodation pods, four holiday lodges, management building with associated internal access roads, parking, landscape and surface water balancing.
- 1.6 The relevant Reason for Refusal ("RfR") states that:
 - The proposed development at this location within the open countryside and Green Wedge, would **introduce incongruous and unsustainable form of development which would have a significant adverse impact on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside and visual appearance of the Green Wedge**¹. The proposal is considered contrary to Policies DM4 and DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, and Policies 6 and 23 of the Core Strategy.
- 1.7 The Officer's Report states that:
 - The site falls within Area C (East of The Common and south of Shilton Road) Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge Review. The document states that any significant built development would have an impact on the coalescence of Barwell and Earl Shilton with particular reference to the area close to Carr's Hill (Leicester Road) which this site lies adjacent to. It would also have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the wider green wedge area as there are open views towards Earl Shilton and into the neighbouring District of Blaby.
 - Due to the change in levels, quantum of development, and the openness of the surrounding landscape immediately adjoining the site, the proposed development would

¹ Our emphasis added

create a prominent addition to the area in visual terms, and the combination of 14 new structures and the associated additional access track and parking areas would detract from the rural character of the area. This is particularly the case for the largest five buildings, which will create an urbanising and domestic appearance which is considered to be at odds with the prevailing open and rural character of the countryside and green wedge.

- In summary, it is considered that the proposed development would introduce an incongruous form of development within the open countryside which would have a significantly adverse impact on the open character of the countryside and would harm the role and function of the Green Wedge. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy DM4 and DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD and Policy 6 of the Core Strategy.
- The proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the countryside by introducing an uncharacteristic form of development into an area of largely undisturbed, verdant and open countryside and the visual appearance and openness of the Green Wedge, contrary to Policy DM4 and DM10 of the SADMP, Policy 6 of the Core Strategy and Paragraphs 9, 84, 130 (c) and 174 (b) of the NPPF 2023.

Purpose of this Report

1.8 This report will:

- carry out a landscape and visual appraisal of the site and the surrounding area, including a review of the Green Wedge policy and its associated evidence base;
- review the alleged effects of the development as set out in the Officer's report and the DN;
- draw conclusions on the potential impacts of the proposed development based on a robust appraisal.

2 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 2.1 Aspects of planning policy and guidance of particular relevance to my evidence are summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² is a material consideration and provides guidance for regional and local planning. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which forms the basis of plan-making and decision-taking.
- 2.3 The NPPF sets out three objectives in order to achieve sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective is relevant to this report. Particularly relevant is the requirement to *“to protect and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment”*.
- 2.4 The NPPF provides guidance on how to deliver sustainable development. The planning principles of relevance to this report are summarised as:
- Section 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places, which addresses the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and place. Developments should add to the overall quality of an area, should be visually attractive with regards to architecture, layout and landscaping, should be sympathetic to local and historic character, respond to the surrounding built environment and landscape setting and establish or maintain a sense of place. The importance that trees is also addressed.
 - Section 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment³, which states (inter alia) that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised. Policies should provide net gains for biodiversity. Valued landscapes such as National Parks and AONB should be conserved and enhanced, with the scale of development limited in these areas; and
 - Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment sets out the approach to heritage assets identifying that they are irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) 2021

- 2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and effect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals.

² Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023

³ Section 15, paras 174-188 NPPF, 2023

The National Design Guide (NDC) 2021

- 2.6 This document forms part of the suite of supporting guidance along with the NMDC. The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics – Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan⁴.
- 2.7 Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings. C1 and C2 align with NPPF chapters 12 & 15 and sets out the need for developments to understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context as well as value heritage and local history.
- 2.8 Identity asks developments to respond to the existing local character and identity.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.9 The Application Site is located within the administrative jurisdiction of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy 2009 and the Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2006-2026.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy 2009

Policy 3 – Development in Barwell

- 2.10 To support the regeneration of Barwell the Council will:
- *Support the development of the tourism industry in line with Policy 23.*
- 2.11 To ensure development respects the character of Barwell, builds on its sense of place and helps to deliver the regeneration of the town the Council will:
- Deliver the strategic green infrastructure network detailed In Policy 20. To achieve this, strategic interventions involving the Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension and the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge will be implemented.
 - Require new development to respect the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area by incorporating locally distinctive features of the conservation area into the new development.
 - Expect development to respect Barwell's industrial heritage through sympathetic reuse of existing buildings unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable.
 - Require development to be of the highest environmental standards in line with Policy 24.

Policy 6 – Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge

- 2.12 The policy sets out at 4.28, in the supporting text that the purpose of the GW in this location is:
- The green wedge between Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton protects the separation of the three settlements, helping to protect their individual identities and provides easy access from the urban areas into green spaces, contributing towards the quality of life for residents in these urban areas. Maintaining the Green Wedge is an important part of protecting the green infrastructure of the borough. There are opportunities within the

⁴ Section Part 1 and 2, paras 9 and 41-49 NDC, 2021

green wedge for enhancement to further increase its amenity as well as ecological value. A green wedge management plan will be produced to ensure appropriate future management of this important area. A review of the boundary of the green wedge will take place through the Site Allocations and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

2.13 It goes on within the policy text itself to set out that:

- Within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge uses will be encouraged where they provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy access of urban residents and promotes positive management of land ensuring the Green Wedge remains or is enhanced as an attractive contribution to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

2.14 The following land uses will be deemed acceptable, provided the operational development associated with such uses do not damage the function of the Green Wedge:

- (a) Agriculture including allotments and horticulture not associated with retail development
- (b) Recreation
- (c) Forestry
- (d) Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways
- (e) Burial grounds
- (f) Use for nature conservation

2.15 Any land use or associated development within the Green Wedge should:

- (a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge.
- (b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas.
- (c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, specifically for recreation, and
- (d) The visual appearance of the area should be retained.

Policy 20 – Green Infrastructure

2.16 The implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network is a key priority of the Council and to assist with this plan, the following strategic interventions will be supported:

- Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge – Maintain the Green Wedge between Hinckley and Barwell as it plays an important environmental and landscape protection role. Look to develop it into a large-scale recreational asset to service the SUE and residents living in North Hinckley.

Policy 23 – Tourism Development

2.17 Tourism development for new and extended visitor attractions including major facilities (Twycross Zoo, Bosworth Battlefield, Mallory Park) and holiday accommodation including bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday lodges and tenting fields) will be encouraged in suitable locations where:

- The development can help to support existing local community services and facilities.
- These facilities are of design and at a scale which is appropriate to minimise impact and assimilate well with the character of the surrounding area with acceptable landscaping.

- The development is an addition to Hinckley and Bosworth's local distinctiveness.
- Complements the tourism themes of the borough,
- The development adds to the economic wellbeing of the area.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2006-2016

DM4 Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation

2.18 To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open countryside and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:

- (a) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or
- (b) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; and
- i) it does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and
- iv) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9.

DM6 Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest

2.19 Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including proposals for their long-term future management.

2.20 On site features should be retained or buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity, and functionality in the long-term. The removal of such features will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and whether the integrity of local ecological networks can be secured.

DM10 Development and Design

2.21 Developments will be permitted providing that the following requirements are met:

- (a) It would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting, air quality (including odour), noise, vibration and visual intrusion.
- (b) The amenity of occupiers of the proposed development would not be adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site.
- (c) It complements or enhances the surrounding area's character of the surrounding area regarding scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features.
- (d) The use and application of building materials respects the materials of existing adjoining neighbouring buildings and the local area generally.
- (e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting.

3 Landscape and Visual Baseline

- 3.1 The landscape and visual impact of the Proposals is assessed in accordance with our methodology as set out in Appendix 1. The study area for this Statement is established through desk based and field study data.

Landscape Character

- 3.2 The site is established in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2017. The wider site area also falls into the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment 2020.
- 3.3 The site area lies within the wider Elmeſthorpe Floodplain Landscape Character Area and the site itself in the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA.

Elmeſthorpe Floodplain LCA

- 3.4 Key characteristic relevant to the site are:
- Flat or gently sloping topography, with elevation ranging between 85 metres and 105 metres AOD.
 - Field pattern is mostly irregular shaped, majority used for mixed arable and pastoral farming, but the pattern reduces in size and diversifies associated with smallholdings, stables and rough grassland occur along the fringes of Elmeſthorpe.
 - Mixed native hedgerow boundaries containing trees are common, but variation in management affects their appearance, with species predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn.
 - Part of the Burbage Common County Park is located within the LCA, extending into Hinckley and Bosworth and comprises a series of large fields surrounding by dense woodland vegetation with ponds and ditches as focal features.
 - The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that fields are planned enclosure and re-organised piecemeal enclosure. Localised pockets of ridge and furrow are present across the character area.
 - The B581 is the main road through Elmeſthorpe and adjoins the A47, close to the northern boundary of the LCA.
 - Several footpaths and a bridleway extend into the countryside from Elmeſthorpe and provide access to Burbage Common.
 - Expansive views stretch across the shallow valley from the Bridle Path Road. Wider views generally enclosed by the undulating topography and vegetation.
 - Urban influences within the landscape, especially along the Elmeſthorpe fringes are reduced by mature vegetation along the garden boundaries, low density of housing and relatively few roads through the character area.
 - Traffic noise and movement associated with the M69 and A47 impacts on the tranquillity and rural qualities of the landscape.

Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA

3.1 Key characteristic relevant to the application are:

- Large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland with local variations in topography influences by small streams.
- Medium to large scale rectilinear field pattern bounded by low hedgerows and post and wire fencing with smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements. Field boundaries and hedgerows generally follow contours.
- Urban fringe influences because of exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton situated on higher ground and recreational uses around Burbage Common.
- Sparse settlement within the area comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes.
- Major transport corridors dissect the landscape and introduce noise and movement.
- Open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views to edge of settlement, often situated on the skyline, and punctuated by major infrastructure.
- Green Wedge providing separation between Hinckley and Barwell and green infrastructure to the cluster of settlements of Burbage, Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton.

3.2 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for this area are:

- To encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedge laying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character and restoring hedgerow trees.
- Respect and enhance the rural character of the landscape, ensuring any new and existing development is integrated into the landscape such as ensuring built form is oriented to provide broken rooflines and integrated with woodland copses.
- Maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation.
- Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including Burbage Coon and rights of way.
- Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, I particular deciduous woodland and unimproved acid grassland.
- Consider a strategic scale woodland planting initiative (e.g. linked to the National Forest) to help screen nearby urban development.

Character of the Appeal Site and Local Landscape

Application Site

- 3.3 The description set out in the Design and Access/Planning Statement by Lion Planning and the Officer's Report by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council concisely and accurately describes the Application Site and these are copied below.
- 3.4 The Application Site lies adjacent to Leicester Road/Carrs Hill, to the southeast of Barwell less than a kilometre from the centre of the village in a predominantly rural area characterised by agricultural and leisure uses. The site comprises agricultural land which although located in a rural area, has an unused and somewhat neglected appearance. The site has extensive

hedgerow and vegetation on the roadside boundary which it is intended to retain and improve. This would add to the biodiversity on the site. There is an existing public right of way to the north of the Application Site (off Leicester Road) which connects to two other footpaths which lead to the centre of Barwell⁵.

- 3.5 The site extends to some four acres and is roughly triangular. It is approximately located 250m south of the settlement boundary of Barwell and is defined as being within a countryside location and within the Green Wedge. The site is bound by hedgerows and some mature trees on its northern and eastern boundaries, with Inglenook Farm to the south and west. The land rises gradually from south to north from the A47 towards Barwell in an area locally known as Carrs Hill. Directly to the south is the nearest residential property, Inglenook Farm with The Cottage situated approximately 100m north along Leicester Road. The site is an existing access (currently unused) off Leicester Road in the northern part of the site⁶.
- 3.6 Internally the site has the appearance of being formally grazed, a location to store materials and lacks any management (as shown below).



- 3.7 It is considered that the sensitivity of the Application Site to the proposals is low to medium. The quality of the site and its scenic value are low, there are no features internally which are susceptible to the development proposals and its location adjacent to the road with existing access contribute to the sustainability of the site. Overall, the site is low sensitivity although its location in the Green Wedge adds value to it in terms of maintaining separation between settlements.

⁵ Design and Access/Planning Statement, Inglenook Farm, Barwell, April 2023, pp. 2-3

⁶ Officers Report, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Description of the site and surrounding area

Local Landscape

- 3.8 The site is located 250m south of the settlement boundary of Barwell and approximately the same distance southwest of the settlement edge of Earl Shilton. It borders Leicester Road to the east which joins the A47 to the south of the site. A property 'The Cottage' is situated approximately 100m north along Leicester Road, where there is existing access (currently unused) off Leicester Road in the northern part of the site.
- 3.9 North of the site boundary are allotments 'Poor's Platt Charity Allotments' where the site is separated by hedgerow and some mature trees on this northern edge as well as on the eastern boundary. This also separates the nearest residential property, Inglenook Farm directly to the south of the site.
- 3.10 The site lies between the villages of Barwell and Earl Shilton, where the area consists of a range of land uses. This includes allotments, agriculture, farm buildings, paddocks and grazing land. The allotments, north of the site boundary appear to be well used and are accessed via Dawsons Lane. There is a track that runs a short distance from Dawsons Lane which leads to a small, narrow, enclosed walkway which is well used but of poor-quality surface. This track opens to the PRoW footpaths north of the site in the direction of Earl Shilton, which are well kept with a grassed walkway. However, overall, the surrounding environs have an untidy appearance which degrades the rural qualities. In locations there is evidence of debris on field edges, ad hoc structures within the fields and ongoing development and storage of materials.



View of field boundaries along the edge of the PRoW

- 3.11 The site sits within the northeastern edge of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge. This area is characterised by mature trees and hedgerows with several paddocks and provides multifunctional uses as outlined above which enables the Green Wedge to be well-utilised.
- 3.12 The topography is gently sloping from the settlement edge to the A47 with some areas with gentle undulations, from the north of the site boundary, it slopes upwards towards Barwell and views to Burbage, Elmesthorpe, and the church spire in Stoney Stanton are evident. The A47 and Leicester Road can be seen from the elevation of the north of the site but is buffered by

roadside vegetation. South of the site on the other side of the A47, the landscape is relatively flat with slight undulations and with intact hedgerow field boundaries and isolated trees although due to the fact of the flat topography, there is still a feeling of openness.

- 3.13 These intact field boundaries combined with the generally flat landscape and scattered settlements restrict both mid and long distance views.

The Green Wedge

- 3.14 With reference to the Green Wedge Review April 2020, the site lies within Area C - East of the Common and south of Shilton Road - on the boundary of Area D. Appended to this report is the summary of the appraisal of this area and the detail proforma.

- 3.15 The summary concludes that:

- Any significant built development would have an impact on the coalescence of Barwell and Earl Shilton with particular reference to the area close to Carrs Hill. It would also have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the wider green wedge area as there are open views towards Earl Shilton and into the neighbouring District of Blaby.

- 3.16 Within the Evaluation (section 6) the appeal site is not cited as an area which is particularly sensitive (6.3). Carrs Hill is described as an *'important approach into Earl Shilton from Hinckley and the A47, and this area plays an important role in the separation of Barwell and Earl Shilton and retaining their settlement identity'* it goes on to say that *'A particularly key area is the small triangular area of grassland to the north of Area D as the distance between the two settlements is just 50 metres in length'*. However, this is in Area D and is not relevant to the site.

- 3.17 The review also cites The Common appeal decision⁷ however this was for 110 dwellings on the land to the west of the site and the allotments and is not relevant to this appeal. The review concludes that at a macro scale, the GW does prevent the merging of settlements.

- 3.18 Having reviewed the contribution of the site against the criteria of the GW policy the report determines that the main contributions Area C makes to the GW are:

- The topography enables a unique character to the edge of Barwell; there are long distance views from Shilton Road. From this vantage point it is possible to view Burbage, Elmesthorpe and the spire of the church in Stoney Stanton.
- It provides access via public rights of way, allotments and horse paddocks, performing the role of a green lung and a recreational resource.
- Contributes collaboratively to the prevention of the merging of settlements

Visual Baseline

- 3.19 All representative views are recorded from the northwest and southeast of the site, primarily along the footpaths and bridleways near Carrs Hill and towards Elmesthorpe.

- Viewpoint 01 - recorded from Shilton Road, northwest of the site on the outskirts of Barwell.
- Viewpoint 02 – recorded south of Shilton Road on the edge of Dawson's Lane.

⁷ APP/K2420/W/22/3295558 application Ref 21/01470/OUT

- Viewpoint 03 – recorded north of the site, further along from Dawson’s Lane on Footpath U32/2.
- Viewpoint 04 – recorded on Footpath U100/1 towards Leicester Road.
- Viewpoint 05 – recorded on Footpath U32/1 further along from VP 03.
- Viewpoint 06 – recorded on Elmesthorpe Lane, east of the site looking over Carrs Hill towards the site.
- Viewpoint 07 – recorded on Footpath V23/2 south of the site, off Bridleway U52.
- Viewpoint 08 – recorded on Footpath V50/1 north of Footpath V23/2, off Bridleway U52.
- Viewpoint 09 – recorded on Bridlepath Road which is also Bridleway U52/11 north of Billington Road towards Elmesthorpe, southeast of the site.

Views from Footpath U32

- 3.20 All representative views are recorded from the north, northwest, south and southeast of the site, primarily along the footpaths and bridleways near Carrs Hill and towards Elmesthorpe. Footpath U32 runs from the end of Dawson’s Lane and splits into two running parallels towards Leicester Road on the boundary edge of a single dwelling property. Views are recorded from Dawson’s Lane (VP02) towards Leicester Road (VP05).
- 3.21 From the end of Dawson’s Lane, the viewer is looking south across the allotments on a slight elevation in the topography, with the surrounding boundary vegetation in the surrounding land and the site boundary. As the viewer travelled east along the footpath, at VP03 it splits into two footpaths where some extended views are visible where the intervening vegetation is sparse, with VP05 elevated slightly but the views are restricted directly onto the site by intervening boundary vegetation. By VP04, users of the site are on flat topography approaching Leicester Road. Direct views of the ground plane of the site are not available due to the vegetated boundaries which currently forms the northern edge of the site although views of the surrounding land of the site are visible in the foreground.

View from Elmesthorpe Lane

- 3.22 VP06 is an extended view over Carrs Hill (road) from Elmesthorpe Lane, east of the site boundary. The site itself is not visible due to the boundary vegetation encompassing it. The eastern side is on a slight elevation but levels out towards the roundabout of the A47. Users of the Lane have a clear view of Carrs Hill (road), but extended views are not available and the traffic noise of the A47 dilute any tranquillity.

Views from Bridle Path Road (U52) and Footpath V50/1 & V23/2

- 3.23 Beyond the immediate site boundary views were recorded south of the site on the other side of the A47 towards Elmesthorpe (VP07 and VP08). The footpaths run parallel to each other and join to the bridleway. They both run through agricultural and horse fields where the topography is generally flat. Users of the footpaths can clearly see the immediate surrounding fields and some extended views beyond towards the direction of the site due to the varying levels of boundary vegetation, however the site itself is screened by the intervening vegetation. The viewer is wholly aware of the villages beyond and the A47 approaching from the east to the southwest and this route has more of the countryside qualities due to its separation from the settlement edge.

- 3.24 Viewpoint 09 represents the southeast of the site beyond the A47 within Elvesthorpe. The Bridleway U52 is a road which travels south and terminates at the Footpath V23/2 and carries on as Bridleway south towards the railway. Views along here are restricted by residential properties with some breakthrough views into the wider landscape of agricultural fields and boundary vegetation but they are short distance. The views travelling south were fairly restricted by the immediate boundary hedgerow, despite varying in height and combined with the flat topography restricted the views further.

4 Assessment of the Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts

Potential Landscape Impacts

The Application Site

- 4.1 The proposals are for a change of use of the land for the erection of nine accommodation pods, four holiday lodges, a management building and associated access roads, parking and landscaping together with a new pond in the centre of the site and surface water balancing pond throughout the site. The A47 provides existing access into the site, providing a good framework for the potential uses.
- 4.2 Although the site itself is relatively flat within, there is extensive hedgerow and vegetation on the roadside boundary as well the other site boundaries, restricting views into the site. The proposals seek to retain these robust boundaries and as set out utilise the existing access point.
- 4.3 The site itself has a low to medium landscape sensitivity, elevated beyond low due to being within a Green Wedge. As described, the site itself has a neglected appearance appearing as little more than undermanaged scrubland with a residential property bordering the southern edge of the site boundary.
- 4.4 It does contribute to the physical remnant parliamentary enclosure field pattern, evident on the historic mapping below from 1886 in the form of field boundaries and smaller scale pasture fields being common near settlement edges, however this is mainly understood in a plan version, rather than in the field, due to the condition of the site and its surrounding area. There is little intervisibility due to this maintained field pattern with robust boundaries. These strong vegetation boundaries surrounding the site, especially on the roadside boundary, is the features which clearly defines that separation and connection to the site rather than the surrounding landscape and the village settlement boundaries.



Extract from 1886 map with site broadly marked

- 4.5 The proposal for the additional 13 detached, single storey, holiday pods and lodges have adequate spacing between them and the landscaping measures (additional tree planting, improvements of boundary vegetation and balancing ponds) throughout the site between the lodges will help promote the feeling of privacy. The current condition of the planting on site is that there is unmanaged boundary vegetation and self-seeded scrub. The balancing ponds, additional tree planting and improvements of boundary vegetation will significantly enhance the quality of the site, improving the views into the site and adding to the views of the openness of the surrounding countryside.
- 4.6 It is judged that there is a low adverse magnitude of effect from the implementation of the recreation/tourism-built elements however there are significant benefits overall to the quality of the landscape provision on the site. The site will benefit from new tree planting, new balancing ponds and improved boundary vegetation around the perimeter of the site boundary. Overall, it is judged that there is a loss of openness on the site to uses such as car parking and the erection of holiday lodges, however the opportunity exists to enhance biodiversity through the enhancements of the water bodies and the provision of a quality well designed landscape

scheme. The overall rationalisation of the site improves its appearance and is not at odds with the overall leisure uses in the surrounding area.

The Local Landscape

Landscape character Assessment

- 4.7 Majority of features are identified in the 2017 LCA such as the flat or gently sloping topography, irregular field pattern and the mixed native hedgerow boundaries containing trees. The 2017 LCA details and defines the descriptions with accuracy. The description 'Field pattern... mixed arable and pastoral farming...reduces in size and diversifies associated with smallholdings, stables and rough grassland...fringes of Elvesthorpe' captures the area around the site most accurately. Also, the reference to the 'expansive views stretching across the shallow valley from the Bridle Path Road, wider views generally enclosed by the undulating topography and vegetation' in the case of the site with its flat landscape with surrounding gentle slopes and the boundary vegetation do create an open but enclosed local landscape.
- 4.8 The proposals to some extent, retain these features, especially the 'expansive views enclosed by vegetation' continuing this landscape character. The LCA does highlight those forces for change on the landscape of the area including climate change, knock-on effects for an increased population and that future threats are associated with increased industrial and residential development.
- 4.9 The proposals have the opportunity to improve the existing access and land on the site while following the character of mixed native hedgerow boundaries and the urban influences within the landscape. The defining features of the boundary vegetation enclosing wider views by the undulating topography and vegetation, along with the expansive views from Bridle Path Road into the shallow valley will retain the site's enclosed views but will strengthen the connection of the urban influences between Barwell and Earl Shilton.
- 4.10 Although the proposals will ultimately introduce recreational/tourism uses to the site, this will be into a well-designed plan and encompassing the surrounding character of the site. The existing site has a somewhat neglected appearance, with unmanaged vegetation on the site itself and on the site boundary with an already existing entrance. Leicester Road runs to the east of the site, off the A47 with traffic noise and movement already impacting the tranquillity and rural qualities of the landscape. The proposals offer the opportunity to set the tone of improving the already existing hedgerow boundaries and vegetation along with being a small development of buildings being one storey that does not impact the expansive views across the openness of the landscape but also encompasses the enclosed areas within the Green Wedge.
- 4.11 Referencing the description above the proposals align completely with landscape character of the area. Residential developments are identified as a threat to the landscape character, but this recreational/leisure proposal offers to vastly improve the economy and tourism in this location and improve the existing vegetation by improving the vegetation boundaries, vegetation within the site and the existing ponds as well as adding new ones which would improve the biodiversity of the site. The proposals will have no physical effect beyond the boundaries of the site and do not impact the surrounding villages of Barwell and Earl Shilton. On balance the proposal will have little negative effect of the landscape characteristics – essentially only a reduction in the

openness on a very local level but will introduce and retain defined character features an appropriate location.

Potential Impacts on the Green Wedge

- 4.12 As mentioned previously, the site lies within Area C of the Green Wedge Review 2020 which is the East of the Common and South of Shilton Road. This area is judged to be particularly sensitive to any significant built development on the coalescence of Barwell and Earl Shilton as well as impacts on the visual amenity of the wider green wedge area due to the open views towards Earl Shilton and into the neighbouring district of Blaby. The site is of small scale and a small proportion of Area C and the wider GW, with proposals for improving the already existing boundary vegetation which already obscures views into the site which is indicative of the landscape character included within the Green Wedge. The characteristic views from Shilton Road, north of the site looking over the neighbouring southern villages will not be affected due to the already existing boundary vegetation and trees which are prevalent throughout the landscape with the gentle sloping topography naturally obscuring views from areas of low elevation.
- 4.13 Within Area C of the Green Wedge, there are access points via public rights of way, allotments and horse paddocks which are characteristic of a green lung and a recreational resource. The proposal for the site intends to retain these access areas which allow access into the surrounding countryside. Therefore, the Green Lung and the provision of a recreational resource will not be affected by the development. The other characteristic of a GW is the protection of coalescence which the area is sensitive to. It is emphasised that the undeveloped land ensures the extension of the countryside into the urban area of Barwell. With the proposals of the site including the improved landscape including the existing ponds plus additional, boundary vegetation and the vegetation within the site, these encompass the surrounding countryside with little impact of the coalescence of the Green Lung within the Green Wedge. The proposed site is situated between Barwell and Earl Shilton. Area C within the Green Wedge plays an important role in connecting these two villages through roads and the access points as mentioned above. The site will not affect the existing coalescence between the two villages due to the nature of the accommodation which is low level and is largely not visible, temporary by nature so does not appear as settlement edge and the existing uses of the site and its immediate environs which do not have the character of open scenic landscape. The potential effect on the Green Wedge is judged to only be low level.

Potential Visual Impacts

Views from the PRow along the U32 Footpath

- 4.14 By virtue of maintaining open, expansive views across the surrounding landscape within the Green Wedge in near proximity of a designated public route and of a main road these receptors are the most sensitive to the proposals. The key change in their view will be the improved hedgerow boundaries for the site in the foreground as well as the potential to see the roofs of the accommodation pods and holiday lodges. This may reduce partially the openness of the route however, the site itself is already enclosed by hedgerow boundaries along the north end of the site and in the surrounding area and the topography is majority flat with slight undulations. The views, although not unpleasant, are not particularly attractive or interesting as the openness of the surrounding landscape is heavily enclosed by boundary vegetation. It is judged when

weighing the quality of the view and experience that users of the route will be affected to a low adverse degree at the point. The improved boundary hedgerow will mean that there will be little view of the potential uses within the site, except on a slight elevation (VP05) which is already encompassing the characteristics of the Green Wedge.

- 4.15 Before the footpath splits (VP03) into two, there are some extended views which are visible where the intervening vegetation is sparse and may see some of the possible uses, although their perceptual experiences are currently diluted by the existing Leicester Road east to the site which will be used as the main access point into the site.

Remaining Views

- 4.16 The view recorded to the north of the site, above the U32 Footpath on the road connecting Barwell and Earl Shilton, with residential properties and users of the roads have views looking across the landscape within the Green Wedge. However, due to the intervening vegetation, there be no change to the views from the settlement boundary because of the proposals and therefore no change in the experience of the users of the public routes.
- 4.17 The views recorded south of the site, across the A47 along the footpaths joining Bridle Way Road and tis road itself. There will be no change in the view experienced by the users of this route.

5 Assessment Against Planning Policy

NPPF

- 5.1 In my opinion the Proposals accord with the landscape and design sections of the NPPF, namely Section 12 & 16. The Council have alleged that some of the proposals are at conflict with the NPPF, therefore for robustness, I have reviewed the relevant section against the proposals.
- 5.2 Section 12 sets out the criteria for the design of places. Paragraph 130 bullet point (c) and (f) sets out that developments:
- (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
 - (f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 5.3 The proposals set out a strong provision of 13 detached, single storey, holiday pods and lodges with adequate spacing and landscaping measures to improve the feeling of privacy within the area.
- 5.4 The proposals are sympathetic to the surrounding built environment and landscape setting by being in keeping with the enclosed views within the Green Wedge.
- 5.5 Section 15 sets out the criteria for Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. Paragraph 185 set out that developments:
- Are appropriate for its location considering the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environments, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.
- 5.6 The proposals set out a strong provision of not contributing to noise pollution where the site area is already impacted by the A47 with stays at the accommodation not being permanent.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy

Policy 3 – Development in Barwell

- 5.7 The proposals are compliant with the policy with reference to tourism related development appropriate to the character of Barwell building a sense of place and helps to deliver the regeneration of the town. The landscape and visual narrative of this report demonstrates that this location has the capacity to accommodate these proposals without detriment to the surrounding area of Barwell.

Policy 6 – Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge

- 5.8 The proposal falls within the Green Wedge where appropriate recreational facilities within easy access or urban residents and promotes positive management of land ensuring the Green Wedge remains or is enhanced as an alternative to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

The scheme is for the provision of a change of use for recreation/tourism facilities which would allow for enhancing public access within the Green Wedge for recreation and the boundaries of the site will retain and enhance the visual appearance of the area.

Policy 20 – Green Infrastructure

- 5.9 As set out in this report the proposals not only retain the Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) but also retains the vast, open views of the Green Wedge into the surrounding countryside.

Policy 23 – Tourism Development

- 5.10 The proposal sets out to erect holiday accommodation that will not only add to the economic wellbeing of the area but are of a design and scale which is appropriate within the Green Wedge to minimise and assimilate well with the character of the surrounding area with acceptable landscaping such as the improvement of hedgerow boundaries.

6 Technical Summary and Conclusions

Summary

Impact on Landscape Character

- 6.1 As established, the site lies within the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA where key characteristics include large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland, medium to large scale rectilinear fields bounded by hedgerow boundaries, urban fringe influences, the Green Wedge and major transport corridors. The LCA goes on to confirm that although this is perceived as an open landscape in fact there are parts where field boundaries intercept these views following the contours of the fields providing some obscured views of the landscape.
- 6.2 The proposals bring forward new, improved hedgerow boundaries, new drainage ponds as well as improvements of the existing ponds within the landscape and provide a well-designed, enclosed framework for future recreation/tourism uses. The site, although sitting within the Green Wedge is currently of low quality and the proposals offer the opportunity to enhance the existing features of the site in terms of landscape and biodiversity. There will be little effect on the described characteristics, the existing boundary hedgerow already obscures views into the site and the surrounding area and the proposed holiday pods and lodges of being one storey will not infringe on the surrounding openness of the landscape.
- 6.3 Although the site is within the Green Wedge and the site itself is changed, this is not to the detriment of the overall character. The character of this landscape is open but with enclosed areas due to the boundary vegetation which the site will encompass and therefore it is judged that the balance of the loss of the open but undermanaged and featureless field and the opportunity to implement improvements to the existing framework which introduces features of value into the landscape results in a low adverse impact on the landscape of the site.

Impact on the Green Wedge

- 6.4 Having reviewed the criteria for the designation of the Green Wedge in this location and the potential effects of the development, it is judged that there will be a low level of impact on the purpose of the Green Wedge. The site will not have any effect on the coalescence of Barwell and Earl Shilton, does not impact the recreational resources and will still appear largely as a Green Lung.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 6.5 Changes in views are limited to those receptors using the public route north of the site towards Leicester Road. These users will experience a loss of openness in their view when looking southwest across the site. However, currently they see various heights of vegetation such as isolated trees and hedgerow which does enclose some views in the openness of the landscape. The improved hedgerow boundaries will restrict views into the site as it currently stands within the site, and this is judged as low adverse at worse on these receptors.

Assessment against Planning Policy

- 6.6 It is judged that these proposals comply with the relevant policies as outlined above, with particular attention paid to addressing the sensitivities within the Green Wedge.

Conclusions

- 6.7 This statement has carried out a detailed review of the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposals. A methodology is found in Appendix A.
- 6.8 The detailed landscape and visual narrative, through site visits, desk-based assessment, and cross referencing the applicable documents conclude that despite a change to the site, the proposals accord with the described character of this area despite the erection of holiday pods and lodges and there are limited visual impacts on a limited number of sensitive receptors. There is a limited effect on the attributes of the Green Wedge, namely that there is no perception of coalescence between Barwell and Earl Shilton, the recreational resources are not impacted and the overall sense of a Green Lung is maintained.
- 6.9 In response to the RfR, the development will not appear incongruous and the appraisal judges that there will not be any significant impacts on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside. There are limited potentially sensitive receptors affected by the proposals, however these impacts are no more than low adverse.

Appendix A Methodology

A Methodology

Guidance

- 1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and supporting studies and surveys were conducted in accordance with the principles set out by Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland¹ and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition².
- 1.2 Other guidance with regard to developments in the landscape that has informed the LVIA include Hedgerow Regulations³ and Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice⁴.
- 1.3 Viewpoint photographs have been presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute's (LI) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals⁵.

Scope of the Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 1.4 The LVIA considers the predicted effects of development on landscape resources (both features and character) and on people's visual amenity.
- 1.5 Landscape and visual assessments are two separate but interlinked processes that are undertaken in parallel. The assessments are informed by a combination of desk and site based appraisal techniques and professional judgements.
- 1.6 The landscape assessment considers the effects of the proposed development on the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character, and how this is experienced; separately considering the effects of development on:
 - Landscape character areas (area with recognisable, consistent pattern of landscape elements identified at different scales by Natural England, county and local councils);
 - Designated landscape resources (areas of landscape designated and protected under national and local policy);
- 1.7 The visual assessment considers the potential changes that would occur to available views in a landscape as a result of the development proposals, the resultant effect on visual amenity and people's responses to the changes.
- 1.8 The LVIA comprises, firstly the identification, understanding and description of the existing landscape and visual baseline conditions (landscape receptors and groups of views likely to be impacted by the proposed development within a defined study area) and secondly the

¹ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management 3rd Edition, 2013

³ UK Parliament, 1997

⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government, 1997

⁵ Landscape Institute, 2019

identification and description of the impacts arising from the development on the landscape and the visual receptors.

- 1.9 The assessment examines both construction phase impacts and impacts on completion of the proposed scheme, to include assessing the impacts on Day 1 of completion and 15 years into operation. The impacts are assessed based on professional judgements and an understanding of the construction phases and phasing of completion, which are summarised in the LVIA and include any proposed landscape and visual mitigation works.

Stages in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 1.10 The LVIA process comprises the following stages:
- Baseline assessment: record and analyse the existing nature and value of the landscape character and features, and visual amenity of the study area through desk and field based appraisal;
 - Description of the nature, forms and features of the proposed development including and constraints and opportunities;
 - Assessment of sensitivity of the existing landscape and identified visual receptors to change and assessment;
 - Identification of potential landscape and visual impacts due to the proposed development;
 - Identification of proposed mitigation measures appropriate to the development and its landscape context;
 - Assessment of the magnitude of effect upon the identified receptors, likely to result from implementation of the proposed development;
 - Assessment of the significance of the residual effects on landscape and visual resource, taking into account appropriate mitigation.
- 1.11 The assessment process is iterative; the analysis of the baseline conditions and evaluation of the potential effects resulting from a development informs the evolution of the proposed development. It is, therefore, important to take into consideration the mitigation that is inherent or proposed as part of the development in order to assess the residual effects and their significance.
- 1.12 The assessment process is recorded in two principal stages: a baseline study of the existing landscape and surrounding visual receptor groups, followed by the impact assessment.

Study Area

- 1.13 Published guidance provides recommendations on the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) that should be produced in order to assess the area that would potentially experience significant visual effects.
- 1.14 The purpose of the LVIA is to identify significant landscape and visual effects. It is, therefore, reasonable to limit the study area in various respects in order to meet the requirements of the specific project in its landscape context and to reflect the likelihood of significant effects arising over very long distances. It is also important that the more significant effects occurring over shorter distances are given appropriate emphasis. The report has adopted the following approach:

Computer based Visibility Analysis – Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 1.15 In order to identify landscape resources and visual receptors within the landscape surrounding the application site that may be affected by a development, a ZTV plan is produced to illustrate the worst case extent of the potential visibility of the proposed development. The ZTV identifies the maximum area over which it is theoretically possible to see some part of the proposed development, but does not take account of screening that may result from vegetation, localised variations in topography and built form. The ZTV is created using a terrain model, which is based on Ordnance Survey (OS) data at 1:25000 scale with contours at 5m intervals.
- 1.16 It should be noted that ZTVs are used as a working tool to inform the assessment and do not convey the nature or magnitude of visual effects. The actual visual effects of the proposed development are assessed through a more detailed analysis of specific viewpoints, and based on field survey observations. In combination with a site visit, this information enables the identification of a provisional list of representative viewpoints, and allows the determining authority and consultees to judge how representative these are and whether they include particularly sensitive receptors and vantage points.
- 1.17 A bare ground ZTV has been prepared around the proposed development site, to take account of the worst case scenario based on proposed building heights. This comprehensive ZTV has been examined in order to identify particularly sensitive locations that would potentially experience significant visual effects e.g. particularly important visitor destinations, or those in protected landscapes (if appropriate) or promoted viewpoints and national trails.
- 1.18 An appropriate study area has been selected for the assessment as it is considered to represent the most concentrated and significant potential impacts. This is based on professional experience of residential and mixed use development assessment, that visibility over greater distance does not have as much potential to result in significant changes to landscape and visual receptors in the landscape context.
- 1.19 The LVIA focusses on potentially significant landscape and visual effects likely to occur within the localised study area.

Landscape Assessment

- 1.20 The former Countryside Agency Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland⁶ makes a distinction between the characterisation process and the judgement-making process. The baseline section of the LVIA, therefore, deals predominantly with the characterisation process, in which the attributes of the landscape are described.
- 1.21 In order to be effective, this LVIA needs to consider the landscape resource within the study area at an appropriate level of detail. Initially, a desktop study is undertaken in order to identify any existing landscape character assessments that describe landscape designations and character areas within the LVIA study area. Following this desk based analysis, site visits are carried out to verify the existing landscape characterisation and identify and assess the

⁶ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002

physical components and structure of the landscape within the application site and its surroundings.

- 1.22 The baseline divides the application site and surroundings into a series of landscape character areas, which are then brought forward for the assessment if the potential for impact on the landscape resource is identified.
- 1.23 In addition to landscape character, the proposed development's effect on landscape elements and features is also considered. The relevant groups of landscape elements and features include:
 - Landform;
 - Land cover and vegetation (trees, hedgerows, grassland etc.);
 - Land use (including Public Open Space);
 - Watercourses;
 - Accessibility (public footpaths/cycleways).

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.24 Landscape is a combination of both cultural and physical components that give rise to patterns that are distinctive to particular localities and help to define a 'sense of place'. Landscape character is defined by the interaction of influences and components such as landform, hydrology, vegetation, landcover, land use pattern and cultural features and associations, and their relationship with the surroundings.
- 1.25 Although landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscape receptors have different elements and features that can accommodate a variety of development types. To reliably inform detailed assessment of impacts, landscape sensitivity needs to be determined with reference to the changes arising from a specific type of development. Therefore landscape sensitivity is assessed combining judgments on the value attached to a landscape and the susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed.
- 1.26 Landscape value is the relative value attached to a potentially affected landscape. Landscape value is relative in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape. Factors that have been considered in making judgments on landscape value include designations (both national and local), local planning documents, status of features (eg. TPO's or Conservation Areas) and local community and interests (for example local green spaces, village greens or allotments). Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered.
- 1.27 The value is assessed as high, medium or low and the assessment is made based on the following factors:
 - The quality placed on the landscape, including the scenic quality;
 - The presence of rare elements or features, or rare landscape character types;
 - Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements considered to be particularly important examples;
 - The presence of nature, historical or cultural features of interest;

- Evidence that the landscape is important for recreational users;
 - Perceptual aspects, such as tranquillity or wildness;
 - Associations of the landscape with particular people in history (such as artists or writers), or historical events, that contribute to the perception of natural beauty.
- 1.28 The second component of landscape sensitivity relates to susceptibility. Landscape susceptibility to change is the ability to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. In this context, the term landscape receptors can be expanded to cover overall character areas, condition or a particular landscape character type or an individual landscape element or feature. Landscape susceptibility will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered and to the nature of the type of change that may occur.
- 1.29 To assess landscape susceptibility it is important to appreciate the key characteristics and attributes of the landscape of the application site and surrounding study area, in order to understand local landscape variations and if the landscape of the application site fits with the description of the LCT/LCA that it is within.
- 1.30 The characteristics of the landscape that should be considered with regard to their susceptibility to change include a variety of attributes, such as scale and enclosure, landform, nature of land use, nature of existing elements or nature of existing features. Landscape susceptibility is described on the verbal scale as high, medium or low.
- 1.31 Sensitivity is a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. Receptors can include specific elements of features or may be judged at a wider scale and include landscape character parcels, types or areas.
- 1.32 The consideration of value of the landscape receptor combined with susceptibility to the type of change arising from the proposal, allows for assessment of sensitivity of the landscape receptor. The sensitivity of landscape receptors is categorised as high, medium or low; the criteria for each category is outlined in Table A-1.

Table A-1 Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	A landscape of particularly distinctive character and high or exceptional scenic quality. Strong representation of the typical landscape character type. Intact landscape with excellent condition of elements and features. Presence of rare features in the landscape. May be nationally and/or regionally designated landscape for its scenic quality and character, such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Park. High recreational value with strong cultural and historical associations. High susceptibility to changes arising from the proposal.

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
Medium	A landscape of moderately distinctive character and scenic quality. Typical landscape character type is apparent. Relatively intact landscape with occasional features of interest. May be locally designated for its quality and character. Receptor of higher value but lower susceptibility to the type of change or development, or vice versa.
Low	A landscape of little distinctive character or scenic quality or is damaged, neglected or poor character and lacking scenic quality. Landscape has become eroded with no more than occasional elements and features of interest. Not subject to any form of landscape designation. Receptor of low value and low susceptibility to the type of change arising from the proposal.

Magnitude of Landscape Effect

- 1.33 Once the sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been determined, the effect that the proposed development would have on the landscape resource can be assessed.
- 1.34 The magnitude of effect from the proposed development on landscape character, designations or features is appraised, taking into account each phase (construction and completion) of the proposed development and any inherent / proposed mitigation. The assessment of the magnitude of effect takes into account the following factors:
- The distance of the landscape receptor from the proposed development;
 - The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones, for example removal of hedges may change the small-scale, intimate landscape into a large-scale, open one, of the introduction of new buildings or tall structures may alter open skylines;
 - The extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
 - The scale of the overall predicted change to character;
 - The timescale or phasing of the construction stages;
 - Whether the landscape change would be reversible or not.
- 1.35 The magnitude of effect is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This is a professional judgement based on the criteria for each magnitude as outlined in Table A-2 below. Different combinations of the below variables can apply in reaching an overall judgement on magnitude.

Table A-2 Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Factors
High	The proposed development would cause a large, irreversible change to the existing landscape for a long period of time or permanently. Impact upon landscape features of international and national importance or on fundamental landscape elements such that this would change the key characteristics of that landscape. Long-term or permanent change to the existing landscape conditions.
Medium	The proposed development would cause a noticeable change to the existing landscape; however, few elements and features that contribute to the overall character would be affected. Medium or short-term change to landscape conditions. Moderate alteration to the individual components of the landscape, leading to small change in aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape.
Low	The proposed development would cause a small impact / change and would affect relatively few receptors. Temporary or reversible change in landscape conditions. The key characteristics of the landscape contributing to its character would not be significantly affected.
Negligible	The proposed development is appropriate in its context or barely perceptible. It may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and has very little or no impact on receptors compared to the baseline situation. No key characteristics of the landscape, contributing to its character would be affected.

Visual Assessment

- 1.36 Following desk studies and site visits a range of visual receptors (people) that have a potential to be affected by the proposed development are identified. They would include local residents, users of footpaths and other routes, road users, users of recreational facilities, visitors to popular tourist attractions and noted viewpoints, or people at their place of work.
- 1.37 Potential viewpoints and areas for investigation are then identified following an initial study of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, analysis of Zone of Theoretical Visibility and, most importantly, site visits; based on the following criteria:
 - Distance from the application site to the receptor;
 - The proportion of the application site / proposed development visible, as well as the absolute visibility of the proposed development;
 - The height of the proposed development relative to the receptor with reference also to the scale of other features in the view;
 - The number and character of elements that would be lost from or added to the view;

- High concentrations of viewers, such as settlements, local recreational facilities, public footpaths and attractions etc;
 - Views illustrating the visual character of the surrounding area; and
 - Areas identified as having a high potential for visual impact.
- 1.38 A Site visit was carried out to assess both general landscape character and views experienced by different types of visual receptors during the day.
- 1.39 Following desktop research to understand the surrounding potentially sensitive receptors, a selection of viewpoints was made to represent key relevant visual receptor types likely to be affected by the proposed development, such as residents of nearby properties, users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), pedestrians, cyclists or road users; to enable the assessment of the proposed change in views and the significance of effect on these receptors.
- 1.40 Photographs illustrating views from this series of representative viewpoints were taken either using a Canon EOS 500D Digital SLR with lens set to a 35mm focal length to provide the closest possible approximation of a 50mm lens focal length ('true eye' vision) on a traditional 35mm film SLR camera, or a fixed 50mm FL Lens. The photographs have been reproduced in a series of viewpoint sheets with annotation and details of the image recorded. Where contextual views consist of more than one frame, the relevant frames are merged together using Photoshop Creative Cloud (CC) software. This is consistent with Visualisation Type 1: annotated viewpoint photographs and Visualisation type 3: Photomontage / Photowire.

Visual Receptors

- 1.41 Visual receptors are groups of people, which include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers. Study of OS data, production of a ZTV and consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) assist with identifying viewpoints for assessment that best represent the visual receptors likely to be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.42 Representative viewpoints are validated through site visits; resulting in the repositioning or exclusion of some of the preliminary viewpoints, due to lack of visibility towards the application site.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.43 Sensitivity of visual receptors, whose groups are represented by a selection of viewpoints, depends on their susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to the views that they experience.
- 1.44 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is judged, based on:
- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
 - The extent to which their attention or interest may, therefore, be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.
- 1.45 Judgements about the value of views take account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage / cultural assets, or through planning designations;
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature and art (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

1.46 The sensitivity of the visual receptors is categorised as **high**, **medium** or **low**, as defined in Table A-3 below.

Table A-3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	People with a particular interest in their surroundings or with prolonged viewing opportunities, examples include: • Users of promoted viewpoints (often with interpretation boards); • Users of tourist and visitor destinations including recreational or heritage sites (such as ornamental parks and open spaces); • Visitors to recreational hilltops and peaks; • Residential locations and occupiers of residential properties; • People using important recreational routes, such as National Trails / long distance promoted routes, National Cycle Routes; • Users of paths and Public Rights of Way (PROV) in nationally or locally designated landscapes.
Medium	People with a general interest in their surroundings or with some viewing opportunities, examples include: • Users of public open spaces and outdoor recreational spaces; • Users of other public routes and PROV; • Visitors to local viewpoints and resting places.
Low	People with a more limited or passing interest in their surroundings, examples include: • Users of more transitory routes such as other public routes; • Users of the local road network and major highways; • People at their place of work; • Users of indoor or sporting recreational facilities.

Magnitude of Visual Effect

1.47 For each of the identified groups of receptors, the potential magnitude of visual effect (in comparison to the existing 'baseline' situation) was assessed, taking into account each phase of the proposed development and any inherent / proposed mitigation. The magnitude of visual effect takes into consideration the following factors:

- The scale of change to the view with respect to loss or addition of features within the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics;

- The nature of the view of the proposed development, considering the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views would be full, partial or glimpsed;
- The degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that would occur from the proposed development;
- The angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- The duration and reversibility of the assessed effect.

1.48 The magnitude of effect is categorised as **high, medium, low** or **negligible**. As with landscape, different combinations of the variables in the below table may apply.

Table A-4 Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Factors
High	Severe change to views; Removal of valuable landscape features / elements that highly contribute to the overall quality and nature of the view; Total change to the visual character of the surrounding landscape; Large number of viewers affected over a prolonged period of time; Development is highly prominent in the view.
Medium	Moderate alteration to views; Development affects few visual features / elements on or adjacent to the application site. Reversible effect, affecting only a part of the wider view. Development 'stands out' in the view.
Low	The proposed development would cause a small impact / change and would affect relatively few receptors. Change to views on transitory routes such as infrequently used paths and roads. Small change to more complex views for a small number of viewers with no particular focus on the proposed development.
Negligible	The proposed development is appropriate in its context or barely perceptible. It may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and has very little or no impact on receptors compared to the baseline situation. It would have no or minimal effect on visual features / elements on or adjacent to the Application Site.

Nature of Effects

- 1.49 The nature of effects contributes to the assessment of magnitude of landscape and visual effects.
- 1.50 The LVIA considers whether the landscape and visual changes that would arise as a result of the proposed development would be beneficial or adverse. An adverse effect is one that introduces a new, discordant or intrusive element to the landscape or a view. A beneficial effect would be from an overall improvement to the landscape or a view, through the removal of existing discordant features and / or introduction of features of similar scale to those in the surrounding landscape or view that would contribute to its overall character.
- 1.51 With regard to the duration of landscape and visual effects, short to medium term effects are normally considered to be temporary and associated with the construction of the proposed development, and long-term effects are normally associated with a fully completed and operational scheme. Permanent effects are those which result in an irreversible change to the baseline conditions or will last for the foreseeable future.
- 1.52 The duration of landscape and visual effects is typically categorised as follows:
 - Long-term – 15 years and beyond;
 - Medium-term – 5 to 15 years;
 - Short-term – 0 to 5 years.
- 1.53 Landscape and visual effects can be direct (effects that are caused by activities which are an integral part of the scheme) or indirect (effects that are due to activities that are not part of the scheme, e.g. regeneration benefits attributable to the scheme).

Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 1.54 Assessment of landscape and visual effects refers to the change that is predicted to take place to the existing (baseline) condition of the landscape and views as a result of the proposed development.
- 1.55 The significance of an effect is broadly determined by assessing the sensitivity to change, of the landscape and visual receptors, against the magnitude of change predicted upon them. The assessment of the effects takes into account mitigation measures implemented as part of the proposed development. Table A-5 is used as a guide only and the assessment of the significance of effect takes into account other modifying factors, based on professional judgement. Ultimately the assessment of sensitivity and magnitude will lead to effects that are of **major**, **moderate**, **minor** or **negligible** significance.

Table A-5 Significance of the Effect to the Landscape and Visual Receptors

Magnitude of Effect	Description		
High	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	Low	Medium	High
	Receptor Sensitivity		

- 1.56 The following table A-6 provides a brief definition of the key landscape and visual significance criteria.

Table A-6 Definitions of Significance

Significance	Description
Major	Important or substantial change in landscapes of national, district or local importance, or substantial changes in views experienced by most sensitive visual receptors.
Medium	Noteworthy or medium change to sensitive landscape and visual conditions.
Low	Inconsiderable or small change in landscape and visual conditions.
Negligible	No discernible effect upon landscape or visual conditions. No effect or an effect that is beneath the level of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.

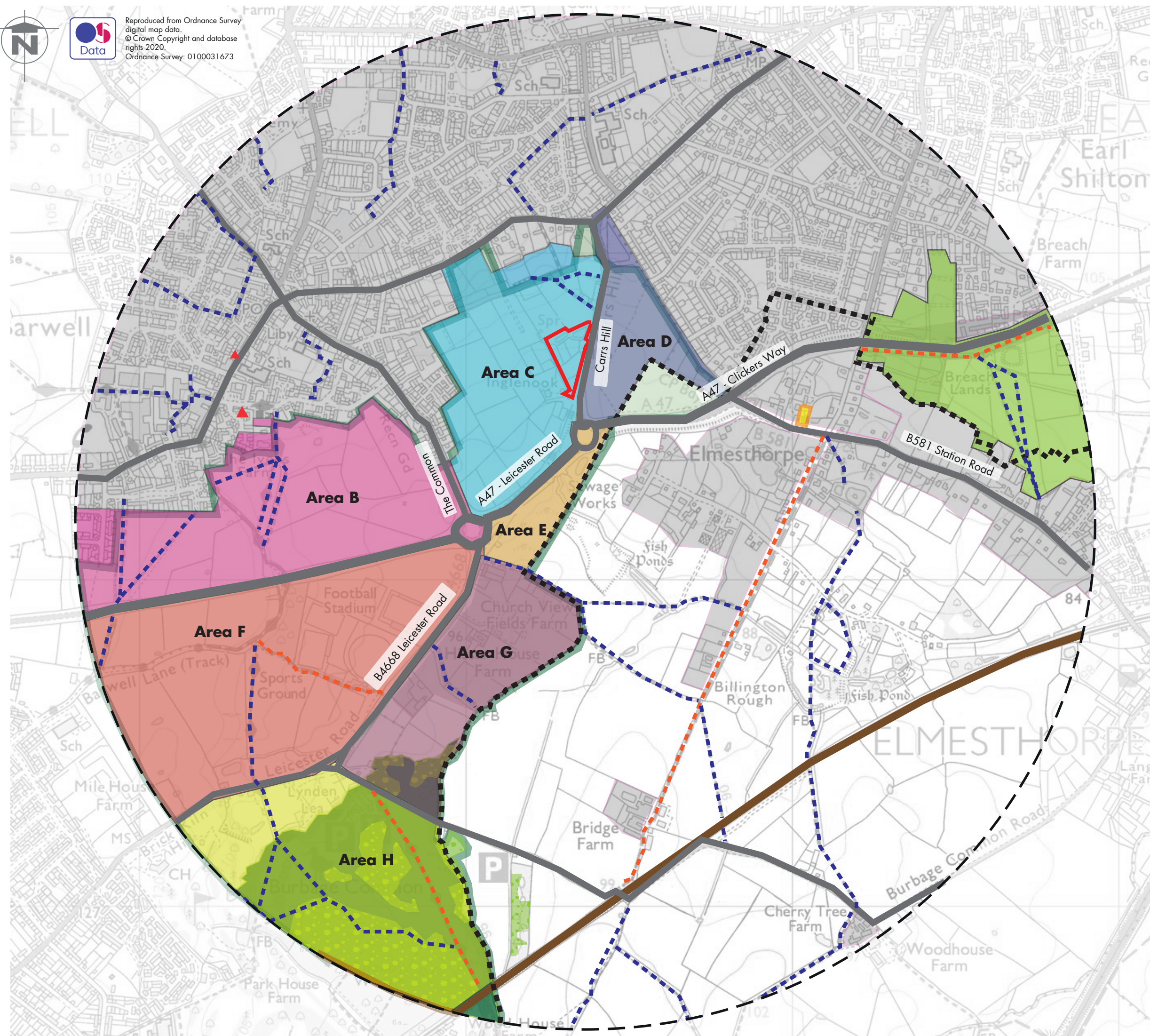
- 1.57 Major effects are usually deemed significant. Similarly, effects of medium magnitude on a highly sensitive receptor or effects of high magnitude on receptors of medium sensitivity may also be judged 'significant'.

Figures

INF1121_(08)001	Context and Designations
INF1121_(08)002	Landscape Character
INF1121_(08)003	Viewpoint Locations
INF1121_(08)001-004	Representative Viewpoints



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- ### Legend
- Application site
 - 1.5km radius
 - Road
 - Rail line
 - PRoW footpath
 - PRoW bridleway
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Grade II Listed Buildings
 - Settlement area
 - Priority habitat - Deciduous Woodland
 - Priority habitat - Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
 - Green wedge
 - Country Side

- Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage
Green Wedge Review 2020 Assessment Areas
- Borough Boundary
 - Area B: South of Barwell and north of Normandy Way
 - Area C: East of the Common and south of Shilton Road
 - Area D: Land between Leicester Road (Carrs Hill) and Elmeshtorpe Lane
 - Area E: Land south and east of A47
 - Area F: Land between Normandy Way and Leicester Road
 - Area G: Land east of Leicester Road and north of Burbage Common Road
 - Area H: Land off Leicester Road including Burbage Common Road & Hinckley Golf Course



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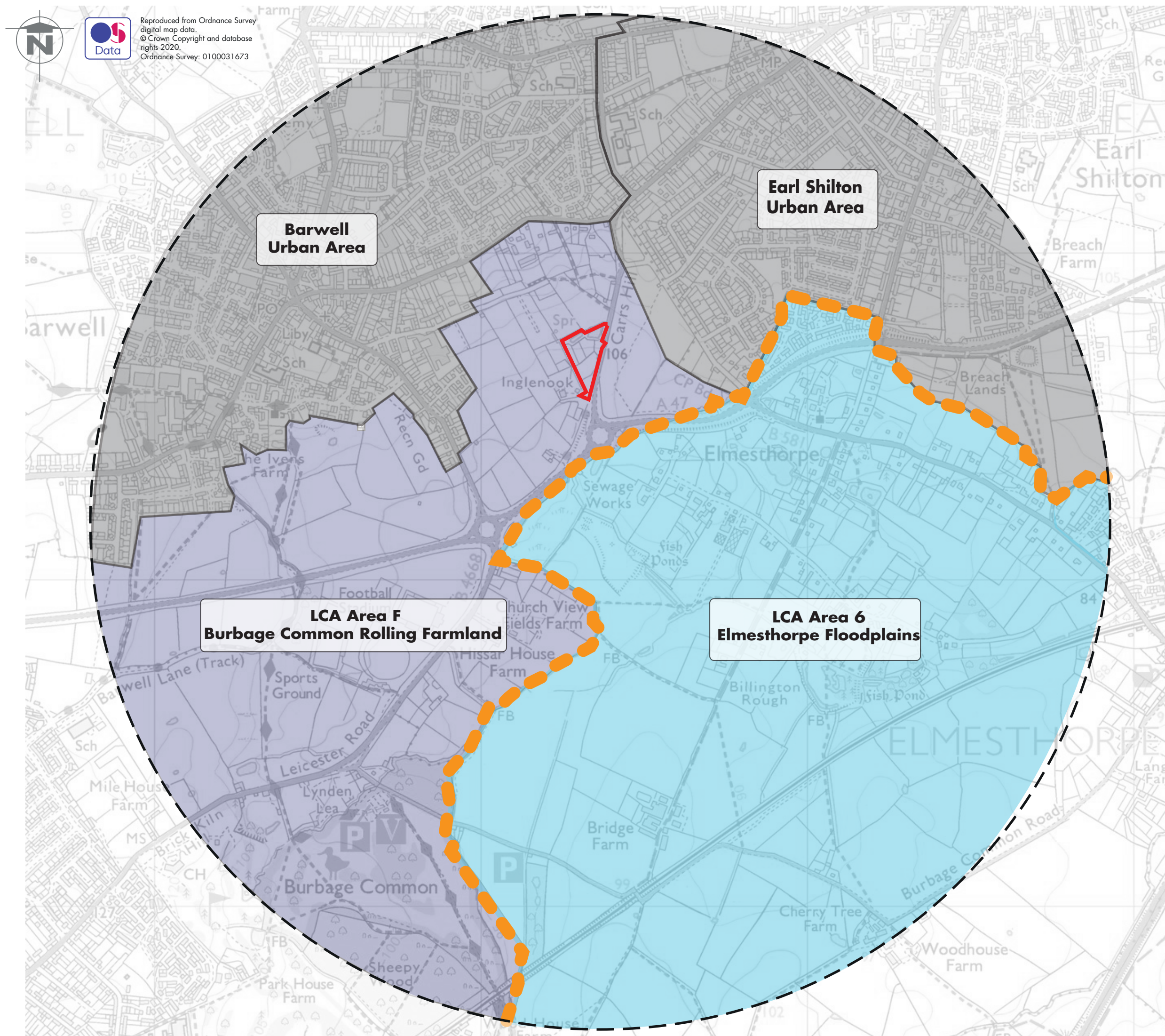
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TITLE
Context and Designations

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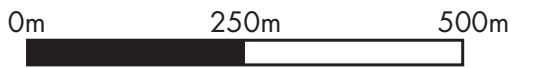
Legend

- Application site
- 1.5km radius
- National Character Areas (NCAs)
- The Study Area is within Hinckley and Bosworth District boundary and the Blaby District.
- NCA Boundary

Hinckley and Bosworth, and Balby District landscape Character Areas

Within the Hinckley and Bosworth District borough, the site area lies within the LCA Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland. The wider study area lies within the LCA Area 6: Elvesthorpe Floodplain.

- Urban Areas
- LCA Area F- Burbage Common Rolling Farmland
- LCA Area 6 - Elvesthorpe Floodplain



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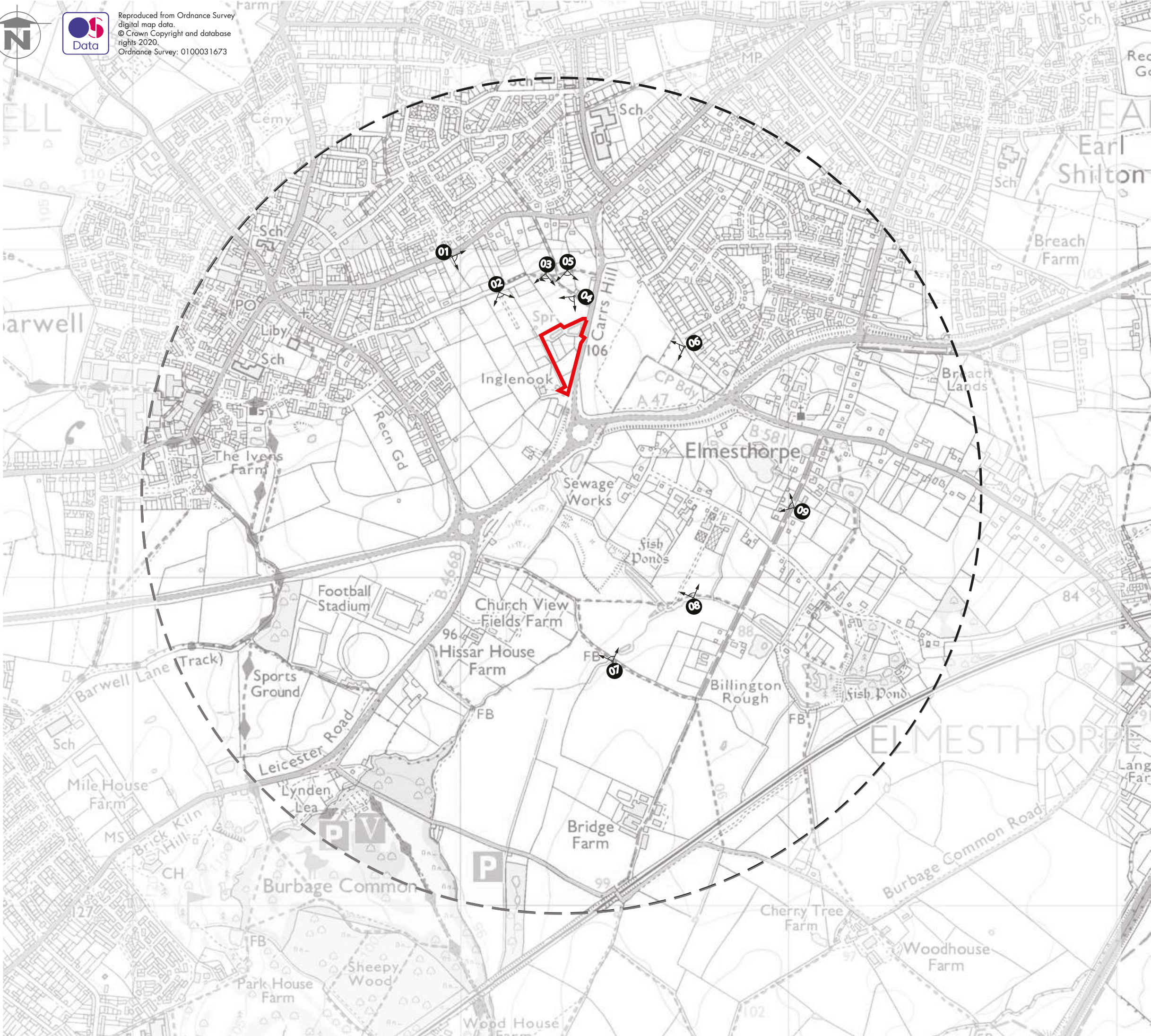
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TITLE
Landscape Character Plan

STATUS FINAL
SCALE NTS
DRAWN H.G

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Legend



Application site



1.5km radius



Viewpoint Locations

0m250m500m

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Viewpoint Location Plan

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Viewpoint 01

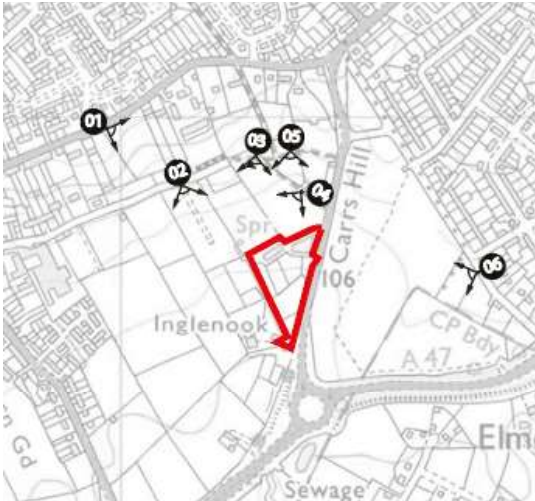


Viewpoint 02

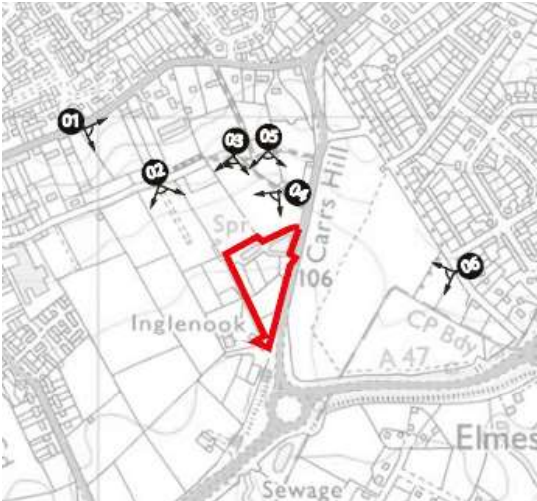
Viewpoint and Camera Details:

Camera:	Canon EOS 6D					
Lens:	50mm f/5.6					
Date:	15.02.24					
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP01	10.15	SP 444961 , 296976		371m	104m
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP02	10.28	SP 445113 , 296877		180m	108m

These views are representative of visual receptors at this location. They are for information purposes only and are not to scale. Scaled images can be provided upon request.



VP 01 Location



VP 02 Location

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Approximate Site Location



Viewpoint 03

Approximate Site Location

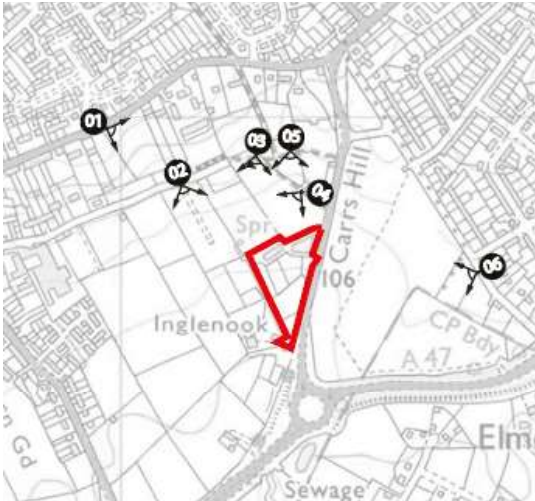


Viewpoint 04

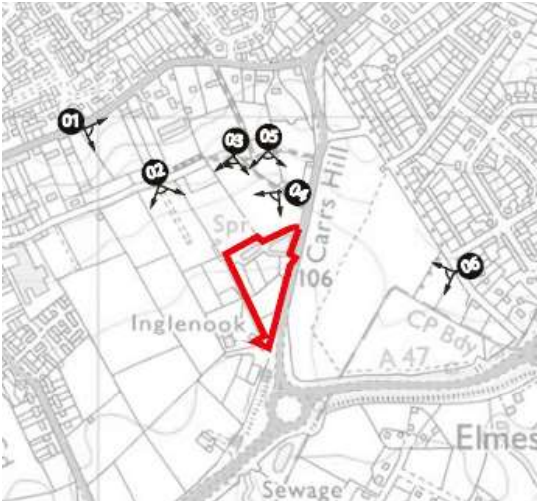
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Camera:	Canon EOS 6D					
Lens:	50mm f/5.6					
Date:	15.02.24					
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP03	10.43	SP 445275 , 296916		125m	108m
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP04	10.46	SP 445340 , 296870		66m	108m

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VP 03 Location



VP 04 Location

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Viewpoint 05

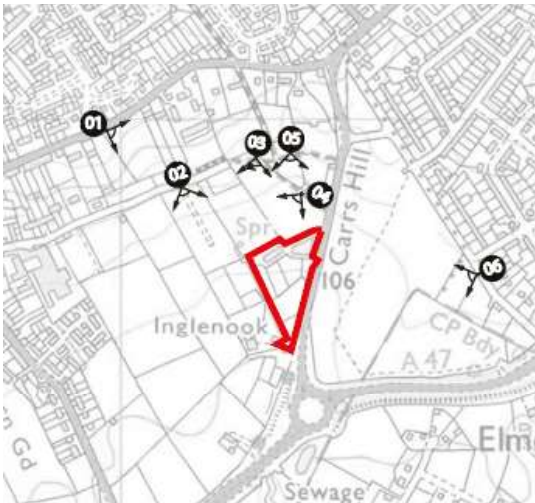


Viewpoint 06

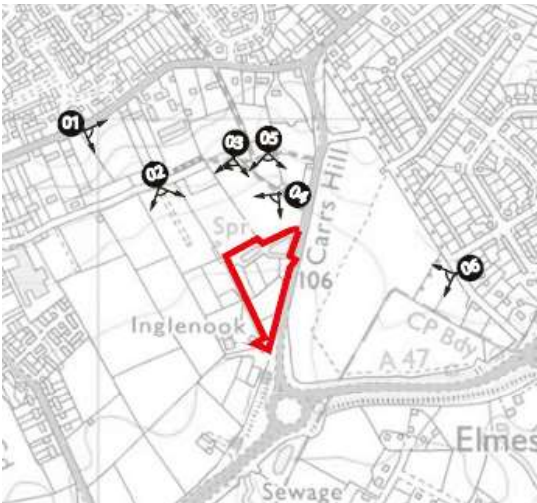
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Lens:	50mm f/5.6					
Date:	15.02.24					
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP05	10.50	SP 445323 , 296930	154m	108m	
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP06	11.17	SP 445695 , 296690	347m	121m	

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VP 05 Location



VP 06 Location

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Viewpoint 07

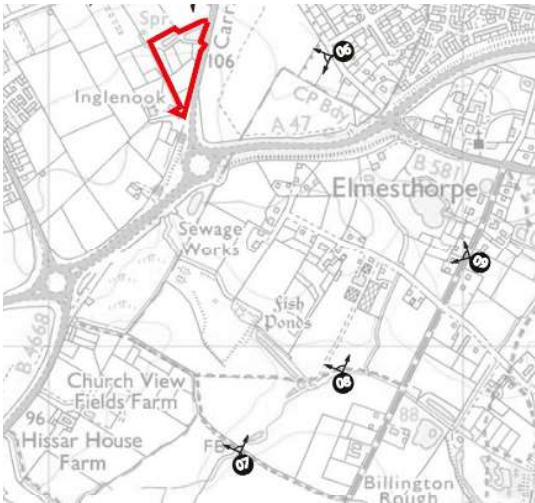


Viewpoint 08

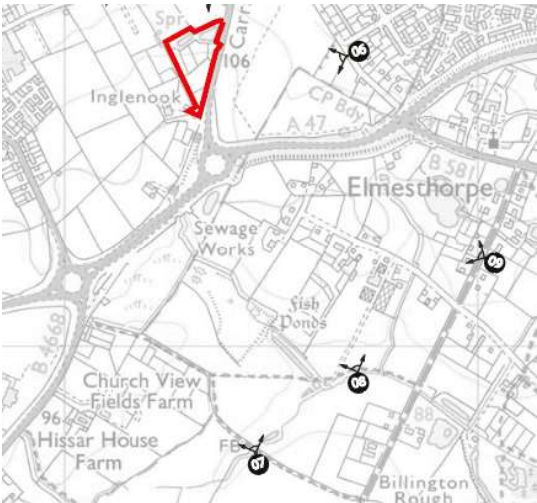
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Camera:	Canon EOS 6D					
Lens:	50mm f/5.6					
Date:	15.02.24					
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP07	13.19	SP 445447 , 295776	741m	92m	
Distance to Site/ Elevation	VP08	13.36	SP 445686 , 295928	704m	92m	

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VP 07 Location



VP 08 Location

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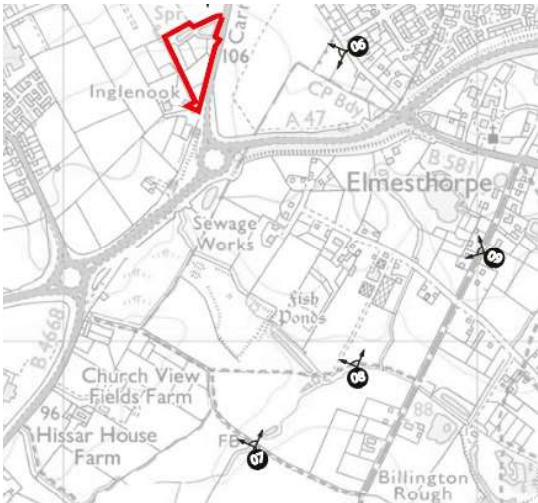


Viewpoint 09

Viewpoint and Camera Details:

Camera:	Canon EOS 6D				
Lens:	50mm f/5.6				
Date:	15.02.24				
Time/ OS Grid Reference:	VP09	14.09	SP 446038 , 296275	742m	95m
Distance to Site/ Elevation					

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VP 09 Location

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