

# LAND EAST OF THE COMMON, BARWELL

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

On behalf of REDROW HOMES LTD. (HARROW ESTATES  
DIVISION)

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## Contents.

|                                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION .....                                 | 1  |
| 2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY .....                       | 5  |
| 3. LANDSCAPE POLICY BACKGROUND .....                  | 9  |
| 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE .....                | 19 |
| 5. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY ..... | 30 |
| 6. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS .....              | 41 |
| 7. ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS .....                 | 54 |
| 8. GREEN WEDGE .....                                  | 59 |
| 9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....                      | 66 |

## Figures.

|           |                                                    |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Figure 1: | Site Location                                      |
| Figure 2: | Planning Designations                              |
| Figure 3: | Topography                                         |
| Figure 4; | Landscape character                                |
| Figure 5: | Zone of Theoretical Visibility                     |
| Figure 6: | Viewpoint Locations and Public Rights of Way       |
| Figure 7: | Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment |
| Figure 8: | Landscape and Visual Analysis                      |
| Figure 9: | Illustrative Landscape Masterplan                  |

## Appendices Contents.

APPENDIX A: LVIA Methodology

APPENDIX B: Visually Verified Montages

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Terms of reference

- 1.1. Pegasus Group has been instructed by Redrow Homes Ltd. (Harrow Estates Division – the applicant) to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in relation to the proposed development of Land east of The Common, Barwell, (hereafter referred to as the 'site').
- 1.2. This LVIA will consider existing landscape and visual receptors in the study area, these include:
  - Landscape character, including physical landscape resources; and
  - Views and visual amenity experienced by residents, recreational users (including visitors and tourists) and road users.
- 1.3. Principles and good practice for undertaking LVIA are set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (2013) <sup>1</sup>, as published by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). The detailed methodology used for this LVIA is included in **Appendix A**.

## Recent Planning History

- 1.4. The site has been the subject of two previous outline applications.
- 1.5. Firstly (May 2017, ref. 17/00531/OUT) for (up to) 185 no. units with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access (Gladman Developments Ltd.). This application was refused, and subsequently appealed (ref. APP/K2420/W/17/3188948) in June 2018. That appeal was dismissed.
- 1.6. Secondly (December 2021, ref. 21/01470/OUT) for (up to) 110 no. units with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access (Harrow Estates). This application was refused, and subsequently appealed (ref. APP/K2420/W/22/3295558) in February 2023. That appeal was also dismissed.
- 1.7. The physical extent of the Gladman proposal, specifically the area for proposed development, was significantly greater than that which was proposed by Harrow Estates in their first application. The proposal now the subject of this LVIA illustrates a further iteration on the basis of a different approach to design and design development generally, together with some changes in respect of land under the applicants control.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (April, 2013)

- 1.8. This LVIA makes reference to the previous Harrow Estates application/appeal proposal where relevant to specific matters of landscape and visual impact, and design, at both baseline and assessment stages.

## Site Location, Context and Description

### Location

- 1.9. The site extends to ca. 10.92 hectares (ha) of land and is located directly adjacent to (and contiguous with) the southern edge of the settlement of Barwell, Leicestershire. Barwell is located approximately 4 miles north-east of Hinckley and west of Earl Shilton, with which it has coalesced, in Leicestershire.

### Settlement Context

- 1.10. The settlement of Barwell extends northwards and westwards from the site, extending over a topographical ridge that rises in excess of +130 metres AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). It is primarily a residential settlement, nucleated in overall form, with a clearly defined centre and associated facilities. Its south-western edge is separated from the neighbouring larger settlement of Hinckley by open agricultural land, and its western and northern edges are set against substantial tracts of mixed agricultural landscape that extend for long distance northwards.
- 1.11. In contrast, the eastern edge of the settlement has coalesced, both physically and visually, with the neighbouring settlement of Earl Shilton, also a nucleated settlement of similar size to Barwell, in several locations. These include at the junctions of Shilton Road and Hinckley Road, and also along Heath Lane further to the north.
- 1.12. Such are the physical articulations of the southern edge of Barwell and the south-western edge of Earl Shilton, that as they have coalesced, a residual element of undeveloped land has remained, that is broadly rectangular in shape. It is defined by Dawsons Lane and Shilton Road to the north and their associated residential built forms; the A47 corridor to the south; Elmeathorpe Lane (Earl Shilton) to the east and its associated residential built form; and The Common (Barwell) to the west.
- 1.13. This rectangular piece of land is covered by Green Wedge Policy. It comprises a mix of urban fringe land uses including intensely grazed horse paddocks; allotments; and various "functional" building groupings and a salvage/storage yard. The eastern section is bisected by Leicester Road (also known as Carrs Hill) which links the A47 with Shilton Road. East of this road corridor, the residual triangular piece of land supports substantial areas of regenerating woodland, as well as some smaller paddock enclosures.
- 1.14. Landform rises northwards across this piece of land from ca. +96 metres AOD along the A47, to ca. +130 metres AOD at Shilton Road. The site forms the very western section of this piece of land, as illustrated on **Figure 1: Site Location Plan**.

### Wider Context

- 1.15. Consequently, existing urban settlement extends for some distance from the site to the north, east (beyond the open land described above) and to the west. Further to the south,

there is a large tract of mixed agricultural land, generally lying at a lower topographical level than the settlements, which extends down to the eastern edge of Hinckley, with the smaller villages of Stoney Stanton and Sapcote to the south-east.

- 1.16. This area of agricultural landscape is bisected by several transport corridors including the A47 just south of the site; the Leicester to Birmingham railway line; and further south the M69 corridor. Whilst agriculture is the main land use, there are also extensive areas for recreation including Hinckley Golf Course, and Burbage Common and Woods Country Park. Within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth, the majority of this land, including that extending between Barwell and Hinckley, is Green Wedge.

### **Site**

- 1.17. The site comprises a series of 10 no. relatively small scale field enclosures, defined by a mature hedgerow network that is absent in part, in combination with post and rail/wire fencing in part. It is generally irregular in plan form; the northern, southern and eastern boundaries are defined by "straight lines", with the western boundary more articulated in its arrangement along the existing settlement edge.
- 1.18. The northern boundary is defined by Dawsons Lane, which provides access to a number of large residential units directly to the north. Dawsons Lane is generally well vegetated either side with hedgerows and trees, punctuated only by access to either residential properties (to the northern side) or field gates (to the southern side).
- 1.19. The southern boundary comprises a straight line, which is well defined by the existing mature hedgerow network around the field enclosures. The eastern boundary also forms a continuous straight line and is defined along its length by a mature hedgerow, with gaps for gated access to the fields further east in several locations.
- 1.20. The western boundary is the most articulated, defined by a variety of features, including a timber post and rail fence at the northern end adjacent to a commercial premises, that then links to a partly fragmented hedgerow which includes some mature trees that continues all the way around the Garner Close residential development before reverting back to fencing and associated infrastructure to the rear of properties on the eastern side of The Common. A mature hedgerow then continues between the southern-most property and the field enclosure fronting onto The Common that forms the south-western corner of the site. This particular hedgerow is reinforced by some substantial thicket planting that has grown behind it on the site itself. There is a single gated access point along The Common frontage, directly south of no. 89 The Common.
- 1.21. The 10 no. enclosures are generally defined by the mature hedgerow network across the site. There are instances where the hedgerows have been removed, such that the sub-division is by way of post and rail/wire fence. Some enclosures are also further sub-divided into smaller paddocks by similar fencing. There are also a number of storage containers and maintenance equipment etc. in two locations: firstly, in close proximity to the access to the paddock directly off The Common towards the south-western part of the site; and secondly in the north-eastern corner of the site just off Dawsons Lane.
- 1.22. The condition and general qualities of the hedgerows, trees and grazed paddocks across the site are described in more detail in the Ecological Survey and Assessment (PCA,

December 2023), and the Arboricultural Survey (TBA Landscape Architects, August 2021, revised (A) September 2023).

- 1.23. Levels across the site generally rise to the north, consistent with the wider topographical character of the area. Topography lies at ca. +114–115 metres AOD along the northern (Dawsons lane) boundary, and falls to ca. +99 metres AOD along the southern (field/hedgerow) boundary (ref. Geomatic Survey Ltd. Topographical Survey dated 14.07.2021). The rise/fall in topography is generally consistent across the site.
- 1.24. There is no public access on site. The closest public footpath lies to the east, linking Carrs Hill to the eastern end of Dawsons Lane.
- 1.25. Additional information and a more detailed description of the physical components, landscape and townscape character and visual amenity of the site and context are set out in later sections of this LVIA.

## 2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The approach and methodology used for this LVIA has been developed using best practice guidance, as set out in the following documents:
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition;
  - Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;
  - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note O6/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals (September 2019); and
  - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note O2/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.
- 2.2. Reference has also been made to several additional sources of data and information; these are referred to in the relevant sections of the baseline information. A number of drawings have also been produced as part of this LVIA and are included as **Figures 1 to 10**.

### Level of assessment

- 2.3. Principles and good practice for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessment are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environment Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3).
- 2.4. The GLVIA3 acknowledges the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) can be carried out either as a standalone assessment or as part of a broader EIA. GLVIA3 notes that the overall principles and core steps in the process are the same but that there are specific procedures in EIA with which an LVIA that sits within an EIA must comply.
- 2.5. This assessment has been prepared as a detailed LVIA and addresses matters of individual resources, character areas and representative viewpoints. The LVIA also considers the interaction between landscape character and views in relation to physical components of the landscape. The LVIA draws upon professional judgement in relation to sensitivity of receptors (both landscape and visual), the nature of impacts and consequential likely effects. This process informs judgements on a landscape mitigation strategy which will avoid, reduce, or remedy adverse impacts.
- 2.6. Landscape features and elements provide the physical environment for flora and fauna and the associated importance of biodiversity assets. This LVIA does not consider the value, susceptibility or importance on ecology and biodiversity, not does it consider impacts from an ecological stance.
- 2.7. Heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas all contribute to the overall present-day landscape character, context and setting of an area. These aspects have been given consideration in the LVIA in terms of physical landscape resources (for example, trees and hedgerows) and landscape character. However this LVIA does not address the historic significance, importance or potential impacts on heritage

assets and designations; these assets are assessed in the context of landscape and visual matters only.

## **Lighting/Night time impacts**

- 2.8. At paragraph 6.12, GLVIA3 notes that for some types of development, the visual effects of lighting may be an issue, and in such cases, it may be important to conduct night-time 'darkness' surveys of the existing conditions in order to address the potential effects of lighting.
- 2.9. Further reference to lighting and night time impacts is made in section 4 at the end of sections 6 and 7 of this LVIA.

## **Cumulative effects**

- 2.10. Chapter 7 of GLVIA3 sets out guidance in respect of cumulative landscape and visual effects, and specifically paragraph 7.2 notes that cumulative landscape and visual effects must be considered in LVIA when it is conducted as part of an EIA. This proposal is not the subject of an EIA.
- 2.11. Paragraph 7.9 notes that cumulative effects can be relevant to any form of development, and that a proportional response to the particular development proposal should be reached. Paragraph 7.10 notes that in most cases the cumulative assessment will be on the additional effects of the project in conjunction with other developments of the same type – in this case, residential development.
- 2.12. Further reference to cumulative effects is made at the end of sections 6 and 7 of this LVIA.

## **Approach**

- 2.13. The overall approach to the identification, evaluation and assessment of landscape and visual effects is summarised as follows:
- Determine the scope of the assessment;
  - Collate baseline information for landscape and visual receptors, including completing desk study research and undertaking field based survey work;
  - Review the type of development proposed and identify and describe the likely impacts (enabling specific judgments to be made on sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors);
  - Establish the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors (balancing judgments on value and susceptibility);
  - Determine the magnitude of impacts (balancing judgments on size / scale, duration and reversibility);

- The assessment of the significance of likely landscape and visual effects through a balanced approach and clear description of professional judgments on sensitivity and magnitude; and
- The identification of measures to avoid or remedy impacts and the subsequent re-assessment of likely effects.

## Scope of assessment

- 2.14. The spatial scope (or study area) for the LVIA is initially determined by reference to the area of landscape that may be affected and from which the proposed development may be visible.
- 2.15. The preliminary study area for the LVIA has as such been set at an approximate radius of 1.5km from the site. Based on data produced by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), discussed in more detail in Section 4 of this report, this is considered sufficient to account for the likely impacts that will be generated by the proposed development. That is not to say that the proposed development may still have some influence on landscape character or visual amenity beyond this distance, but any effects are judged to be not significant.
- 2.16. The professional judgements in this LVIA consider landscape and visual effects in the short term, at completion, but also in the longer term after fifteen years when mitigation measures (such as planting) will have matured, and the mitigation measures are likely to perform the intended function (for example, screening or enhancement of landscape infrastructure).

## Collating baseline information

- 2.17. Information has been collated using a process of desk study and field survey in order to capture a comprehensive description of the baseline position for landscape and visual receptors. The desk study includes reference to published landscape character studies.
- 2.18. Field survey work was completed between September to December 2023, including both on-site walks and extensive coverage of the study area.
- 2.19. A series of illustrative and representative photographs were taken during the field work (December 2023 when the very vast majority of leaves had fallen from deciduous vegetation. These photographs were taken with a digital camera with a 50mm lens (equivalent focal length) at approximately 1.6 metres in height. These are presented as a series of panoramic viewpoints with a full-size single image centred on the site and have been used to inform both the landscape and, separately, visual assessment (included as **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment**).

## Assessment of effects

- 2.20. Having established the relevant baseline position, the assessment process then completes the following specific stages:
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and visual receptors, specifically in response to the nature of the proposed development (sensitivity is not standard

and depends on the nature and type of development proposed and also the value and susceptibility of the receptor to that type of development);

- Identify the potential magnitude of impact on the physical landscape, on landscape character and on visual receptors; and
- Combine judgments on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) to arrive at clear, professional judgments of significance.

2.21. For both landscape effects and visual effects, the final conclusions on significance are based on professional judgements combining the specific analysis of the sensitivity of receptors and detailed predictions on the magnitude of change (or impact). GLVIA3 advocates a balanced justification of these issues using professional judgement rather than formulaic matrices. The rationale for the overall judgement on significance is based on the application of professional analysis and judgement and the subsequent combination of each of the criteria in order to reach a conclusion.

2.22. The detailed thresholds and criteria for each of the stages of analysis and assessment of landscape and visual impacts are included in the detailed methodology (**Appendix A**).

### 3. LANDSCAPE POLICY BACKGROUND

- 3.1. This section sets out a review of national and local policy relevant to landscape and visual matters.
- 3.2. In the context of the relevant planning framework, this section also sets out a summary of those policies specific to the landscape and visual issues pertaining to the proposed development (refer to **Figure 2: Planning Designations**).

#### European Landscape Convention

- 3.3. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes. The convention was adopted on 20 October 2000 and came into force on 1 March 2004. The ELC is designed to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes and organises cooperation on landscape issues. The convention defines landscape as:  
  
*"...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors)"*
- 3.4. The importance of this definition is that it focuses on landscape as a resource in its own right and moves beyond the idea that landscapes are only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.5. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in September 2023<sup>2</sup>, setting out the Government's planning policies for England and providing a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.6. The NPPF sets out three dimensions to achieving sustainable development that include economic, social and environmental considerations. It places an onus on the planning system to perform a role in relation to the environment that 'contributes to the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment...' going on to note that sustainable solutions should take account of local circumstances and reflect the character of each area. This underpins the strategic guidance set out in the NPPF in relation to landscape and visual matters.
- 3.7. In relation to landscape and visual matters, achieving well-designed places (Section 12) aims to ensure that developments are 'visually attractive', are sympathetic to local

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<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, September 2023

<sup>3</sup> NPPF para. 2

character (including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting) and to establish and maintain a strong sense of place<sup>4</sup>.

- 3.8. NPPF notes the importance that designs 'evolve' in response to local issues and to the views of the community<sup>5</sup>.
- 3.9. Section 15 of the NPPF addresses on 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' stating that policies and decisions should contribute to this by 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (noting that this should be commensurate with a statutory status or identified quality identified in a development plan) and also recognising the 'intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'<sup>6</sup>.

## Planning Practice Guidance Documents

- 3.10. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource prepared by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The NPPG sets out guidance across various topics and effectively supersedes previous guidance on many aspects of planning; topics are updated as required.
- 3.11. The PPG for the 'Natural Environment' (updated July 2019) addresses agricultural land, green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape.
- 3.12. In relation to green infrastructure (GI) the PPG acknowledges how a 'range of spaces and assets' can provide 'environmental and wider benefits'. The PPG states that GI can include<sup>7</sup>:  
  
*"...parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies."*
- 3.13. The PPG goes on to recognise how GI can help achieve well designed spaces, and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The PPG also recognises the benefit of considering GI 'at the earliest stage of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets'.
- 3.14. In relation to landscape, the PPG reiterates the requirements of the NPPF in terms of 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'. The PPG states that<sup>8</sup>:  
  
*"Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out*

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<sup>4</sup> NPPF Para. 130b

<sup>5</sup> NPPF Para. 133

<sup>6</sup> NPPF Para. 174b

<sup>7</sup> NPPG, Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 8-004-20190721 (21 July 2019)

<sup>8</sup> NPPG, Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721 (21 July 2019)

*necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary."*

- 3.15. The PPG also notes the relevance of landscape character assessment, landscape sensitivity/capacity assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment. However, whilst recognising these different aspects of landscape analysis, the PPG does not reflect the subtle variations in these and potential overlap between their different uses and requirements.
- 3.16. This LVIA includes reference to published landscape character assessments which have been prepared at a range of scales and detail (see section 4). Reference has also been made to the local landscape character by reference to the key characteristics of the site and its immediate context, including existing, enhanced and potentially new green infrastructure. Therefore, this LVIA responds fully to the requirement of the PPG.

## Local planning policy

- 3.17. The following section sets out the local planning policy background relevant to the site. The site is located within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

### Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan

- 3.18. At the time of writing, the planning context for the area relevant to the site is set out in the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2006 to 2026, comprising the Core Strategy (2009), the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016) and Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan (AAP) Development Plan Document (2014).
- 3.19. HBBC are also in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will set out land allocations and planning policies for the period 2020 to 2039 (Consultation Draft Plan, June 2021).
- 3.20. Policies contained within the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan, relevant to a study of landscape and visual issues are set out in **Table 1** as follows.

**Table 1. Adopted Core Strategy policies relevant to landscape and visual matters**

| Policy reference                  | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy 3 – Development in Barwell | <p>In summary, this policy states that development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 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.</li> <li>– Deliver safe, high quality cycling routes as detailed in Policy 5 with a particular focus on routes to Barwell local centre and schools, existing and proposed residential and employment areas, community and leisure facilities, the Hinckley town centre and railway station and into the countryside to provide an alternative to car travel and encourage physical exercise.</li> </ul> |

|                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 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 development.</li> <li>– Expect development to respect Barwell’s industrial heritage through sympathetic reuse of existing buildings unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable.</li> <li>– Require development to be of the highest environmental standards in line with Policy 24.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Policy 6 – Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge | <p>The Core Strategy sets out that the green wedge 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 to quality of life.</p> <p>This policy sets out several land uses considered acceptable in the Green Wedge, including agriculture, recreation, forestry, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, burial grounds, nature conservation. It states that:</p> <p>Any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge</li> <li>(b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas</li> <li>(c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation and</li> <li>(d) Should retain the visual appearance of the area.</li> </ul> |
| Policy 20 – Green Infrastructure                             | <p><b>In relation to the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge, this policy states:</b></p> <p><i>"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 Sustainable Urban Extensions and residents living in North Hinckley."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

3.21. Policies contained within the Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, relevant to a study of landscape and visual issues are set out in **Table 2** as follows.

**Table 2. Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD policies, relevant to landscape and visual matters**

| Policy reference                                            | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation | <p>This policy outlines circumstances when development in the countryside would be considered to be sustainable, as follows:</p> <p><i>"a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or</i></p> <p><i>b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or diversification of rural businesses; or c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or</i></p> <p><i>d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or</i></p> <p><i>e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 -Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation.</i></p> <p><i>and:</i></p> <p><i>i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and</i></p> <p><i>ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and</i></p> <p><i>iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development; with Core Strategy Polices 6 and 9; and iv) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line</i></p> <p><i>v) If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21."</i></p> |
| DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest    | <p>Developments must illustrate how they will "conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including proposals for their long term future management." Large scale developments should also provide biodiversity gains.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| DM10: Development and Design                                | <p><b>The policy states that developments will be permitted providing that the following requirements are met:</b></p> <p>It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features.</p> <p>It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting.</p> <p>An appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme is submitted to and approved by the relevant Authority. Schemes should incorporate wildlife areas, ponds, swales and permeable paving where appropriate.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

3.22. Policies contained within the Consultation Draft Local Plan, relevant to a study of landscape and visual issues are set out in **Table 3** as follows.

**Table 3. Consultation Draft Local Plan policies relevant to landscape and visual matters**

| Policy reference                                   | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NATO1: Green Infrastructure                        | <p>This policy sets out that developments must support the growth and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure networks in line with the local context and character. Proposals should be designed according to the 'Building with Nature' standards, be resilient to climate change and consider long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| NATO2: Green Wedges                                | <p>This policy states that the function of the Green Wedges in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough are:</p> <p><i>"Preventing the merging of settlements</i></p> <p><i>Guiding Development Form</i></p> <p><i>Providing a green lung into urban areas</i></p> <p><i>A recreational resource"</i></p> <p>The following land uses (agriculture, recreation, forestry, footpaths, burial grounds, nature conservation and environmental education centre) are only acceptable provided the primary functions are preserved. All land uses in the green wedge must:</p> <p><i>"Retain the function of the Green Wedge</i></p> <p><i>Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas</i></p> <p><i>Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation</i></p> <p><i>Retain the visual appearance of the area</i></p> <p><i>In the case of Rothley Brook Meadow, retain and enhance function as a floodplain and infiltration basin"</i></p> |
| NATO3: Trees, Hedgerows, Woodlands and Development | <p>This policy states that proposals that negatively affect trees, woodland and hedgerows will not be permitted particularly if they are:</p> <p><i>"Protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO)</i></p> <p><i>Ancient woodlands including individual ancient and veteran trees and those defined in Natural England's inventory of ancient woodlands</i></p> <p><i>Within a site of nature conservation importance which has Statutory Protection"</i></p> <p>Development proposals should include tree planting particularly on street frontages and they should aim to retain and appropriately manage existing trees, woodland and hedgerows. Sites of 0.5ha or more should provide a tree canopy cover of 20% of the site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| NATO9: Development in the Countryside              | <p>Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable and permitted if:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and Settlement Separation  | <p>It is for outdoor sports or recreation it demonstrates that the development cannot occur within or close to settlement boundaries.</p> <p>It includes the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings leading to the improvement of the immediate setting.</p> <p>It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or the expansion of rural businesses</p> <p>It is for agriculture or forestry services</p> <p>It contributes to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments according to CCO4</p> <p>It contributes to the provision of residential settlements according to HO08</p> <p>The proposal is in the National Forest and contributes to tourism, leisure or woodland economy.</p> <p>The development must not significantly affect the intrinsic value or landscape character, undermine the physical/perceived separation between settlements, create or exacerbate ribbon development.</p> <p>If the development is in a green wedge, it must protect its function in accordance with NATO2.</p> |
| NATIO: Landscape Character | <p>This policy states that development must protect and improve "<i>key landscape features and visual sensitivities</i>" of the landscape character. Proposals must:</p> <p>Implement landscape strategies and guidance outlined in the latest Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study</p> <p>Protect and enhance the character of the local landscape through appropriate design and management strategies</p> <p>Retain and enhance features of landscape importance</p> <p>Create landscape mitigation</p> <p>A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be undertaken if the development is likely to have a significant effect on the landscape.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

### Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge Review (April 2020)

- 3.23. The site is located within the north-eastern area of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge, directly adjacent to the settlement of Barwell. The Green Wedge covers an area of approximately 444ha and extends from the south of Barwell, stretching across to Earl Shilton (refer to **Figure 2: Planning Designations**).
- 3.24. The Green Wedge Review provides an assessment of the land within it using the following assessment criteria:
- Preventing the merging of settlements;

- Guiding Development Form;
- Providing a Green Lung into urban areas; and
- Acting as a recreational resource.

3.25. The site is located within Assessment Area C: East of The Common and South of Shilton Road (refer to **Plate 1**). In relation to Area C, in conclusion the assessment states (with reference to paragraphs 7.7 to 7.11, and the Gladman (2017) Appeal):

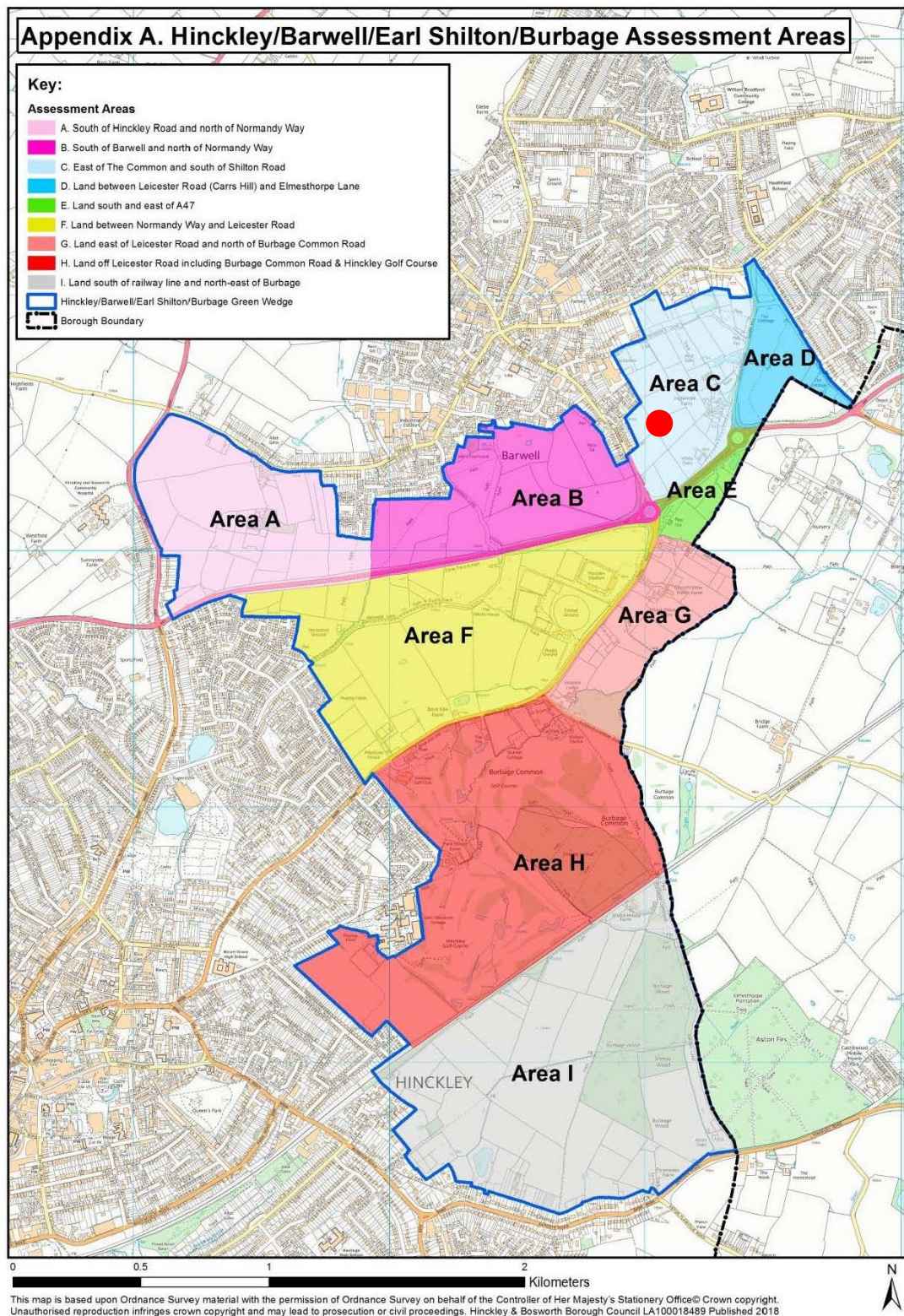
*"7.7 Similar to Area B, topography is an important consideration within this part of the Green Wedge. The topography enables a unique character to the edge of Barwell; there are long distance views from Shilton Road. From this vantage point it is possible to view Burbage, Elmesthorpe and the spire of the church in Stoney Stanton. Paragraph 24 of the Inspector's Planning Appeal Decision for Shilton Road also found this area was particularly sensitive in terms of providing a green lung. The Inspector stated 'I consider the scheme would have a substantial and adverse effect on the third purpose – that of providing a green lung into the urban areas. Attributable in no small part to the elevation of Shilton Road, the existence of the appeal site as undeveloped land ensures the extension of the countryside into the built-up area of Barwell in a particularly attractive manner'. The Landscape Character Assessment (2017) supports this and identifies that a key sensitivity within this area is the 'extensive visibility and long distance views across open expanses of rolling farmland' and 'any change/development has the potential to be widely visible'.*

*7.8 This area helps to guide development form and contributes collaboratively to the prevention of the merging of settlements. It provides access via public rights of way, allotments and horse paddocks, performing the role of a green lung and a recreational resource.*

*7.9 The area is particularly sensitive to coalescence, providing a green lung and acting as recreational resource. It also plays an important role in connecting Barwell to Earl Shilton and provides intra-visibility between a number of the settlements.*

*7.10 In the recent Appeal Decision at The Common, Barwell, the Inspector identified that the appeal site would was an integral part of the Green Wedge. He noted that 'the site would significantly erode the function of coalescence, visual appearance and the green lung element afforded by this site. These harms together lead me to conclude that substantial harm arises to the character and appearance of the countryside'. This highlights the importance of this area in the function of the green wedge.*

*7.11 There are no suggested boundary amendments for this assessment area."*



**Plate 1: Green Wedge Review Appendix A: Assessment Areas**

3.26 The red dot indicates the location of the site.

## Designations

- 3.27 The site itself is not located within any statutory or non-statutory protected landscape designations (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks etc).
- 3.28 Other related designations include:
- Green Wedge – the site is located within the north-eastern part of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge policy area;
  - Scheduled Monuments – the nearest being St Mary's Church, ca. 880m east of the site;
  - Listed Buildings – there are a limited number of listed buildings in the local context, the nearest being the Church of St Mary, Church Lane, ca. 600m from the site;
  - Conservation Area – there are two Conservation Areas in Barwell, they are Barwell (High Street) Conservation Area, 500m north-west of the site and Barwell (Arthur Street) Conservation Area, 400m north of the site;
  - Country Park – Burbage Common & Woods Country Park is located ca. 1km south-east of the site;
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest – Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI is located ca. 1.7km south-east of the site;
  - Ancient Woodland – Burbage Common & Woods is located ca. 1.2km south-east of the site; and
  - CROW Land – encompassing the northern part of the Burbage Common & Woods (Ancient Woodland).

## 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

- 4.1. The following section describes the individual components of the physical landscape that are present in the study area. These have been described to establish an understanding of the specific landscape baseline, including individual elements and more distinctive features which together contribute to landscape character.

### Physical landscape resources

#### Topography and landform

- 4.2. The landform of the site is generally sloping from north to south. The northern boundary of the site lies at ca. +115m AOD (above ordnance datum); the southern boundary of the site lies at ca. +99m AOD. Further north, the local topography ascends relatively steeply to a localised high point 'Red Hall Top' along Shilton Road (ca. 130m AOD), where a break in the building line allows long distance views to the south.
- 4.3. In the wider landscape, topography is generally falling to the valley of a tributary to the Thurlestone Brook. The settlement of Hinckley to the south-east occupies an area of locally elevated landform, reaching ca. 120m AOD at Brick Kiln Hill (refer to **Figure 3: Topography**).

#### Land use

- 4.4. The land use of the site itself comprises a mix of intensively grazed horse paddocks, defined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees and in part fencing. The immediate context of the site is influenced by the settlement edge of Barwell, comprising residential and commercial development along the boundaries of the site. There are other typical 'urban fringe' land uses to the east/south-east, including allotments and an antiques/salvage yard and storage areas.
- 4.5. Land use across the wider area is very mixed, with uses often related to the adjacent urban areas, including recreational facilities between Hinckley and Barwell (Leicester Road Stadium, sports ground and Hinckley Golf Club), public rights of way, paddocks, a cemetery and infrastructure including the A47 bypass.

#### Vegetation patterns

- 4.6. There are a number of substantial and varied vegetation patterns across the site and study area, which all combine to form an extensive network of Green Infrastructure. These include the mature hedgerow (and associated trees) network both across the site and adjacent local landscape, which combine with the younger but still mature planting belts along the A47 corridor to the south of the site to form a comprehensive whole. These elements combine with an extensive area of young and establishing/regenerating woodland planting to the east between Leicester Road and Elvesthorpe Road, to provide a well vegetated context to the landscape local to the site.
- 4.7. Further to the south and south-west the agricultural landscape continues to be enclosed by a more or less continuous mature hedgerow network, with instances of small woodland copse areas e.g. directly west of the Leicester Road football stadium and sports club. To the south-east, in the vicinity of the small village of Elvesthorpe there are a number of

instances of small ponds with associated mature riparian vegetation, together with mature tree planting associated with the gardens and land holdings of larger private properties.

- 4.8. Stream corridors to the south are also populated along their length with riparian vegetation including mature groups of trees. Further to the south, towards the eastern edge of Hinckley there are substantial mature woodlands (in part Ancient Woodland) on Burbage Common, adjacent to the well wooded Hinckley Golf Course. Other extensive woodland areas lie further to the south.

#### **Public access**

- 4.9. There is no public access to the site in terms of rights of way or defined public open space. A public right of way extends from the end of Dawson's Lane and connects with Carrs Hill to the east, and which also links northwards into the urban area of Barwell. To the east of the site, on the western side of The Common is a large public recreation ground.
- 4.10. In the wider landscape, there is a relatively extensive network of public rights of way (PROW) to the west circulating around the south-western edge of Barwell and linking Barwell with Hinckley. These include a number of different public footpath routes, and the Leicestershire Round Long Distance Footpath which heads south to cross the publicly accessible Burbage Common, and then extends across the M69 corridor. South and south-east of the site, a variety of public footpaths and bridleways extends across open countryside, connecting it with the various surrounding settlement areas.

#### **Development and transport patterns**

- 4.11. The site is contiguous with the southern edge of the settlement of Barwell in this location. The northern and western boundaries are defined by residential and commercial development and there are built form elements to the south-east, as well as the road corridor of the A47 which mean the site is heavily influenced by the local development pattern.
- 4.12. In the wider landscape, there are settlements of various scales, including Hinckley to the west, as well as interspersed development predominantly consisting of farmsteads.

#### **Landscape character**

- 4.13. In addition to the physical description of the site and its local landscape context, reference has been made to published guidance on landscape character for the area. The site is in the following landscape character types/areas (LCT/As) (refer to **Figure 4: Landscape Character**):
- National level – National Character Area 94: Leicestershire Vales.
  - Regional level – East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 5A: Village Farmlands.
  - Borough level – Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland.

- 4.14. The following sections set out a summary of the characteristics contained in published guidance, relevant to the site and study area.

#### **National landscape character**

- 4.15. At a national level, the site is situated within the National Character Area (NCA) 94: Leicestershire Vales. Whilst the key characteristics of the NCA tend to be more generalised across the wider area there are some descriptors which are relevant to the site and study area, including:

- *"An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys and occasional steeper scarp slopes.*
- *The landscape and settlement pattern appears uniform to the eye.*
- *Land use is a mix of pasture and arable, that has developed on the clay soil.*
- *Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift. Flat flood plains, gravel terraces and tributaries. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs. Water bodies resulting from gravel extraction.*
- *Woodland character formed by spinneys and copses on higher ground. In the valleys, waterside and hedgerow trees, and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedges varies across the area.*
- *Small towns and large villages generally have red brick buildings. Attractive stone buildings are found in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Many imposing churches with spires, and fine examples of other historic buildings."*

- 4.16. Given the scale of the NCA and the diversity of the key characteristics, the landscape components which define the character at this regional level are represented across the wider context of the NCA. Therefore, in this context changes at a site level will be small scale and not likely to impact upon landscape character as defined by the NCA.

- 4.17. To complete a more detailed appraisal of potential landscape and visual issues, reference has been made to the published landscape character assessment prepared at a finer grain and more local scale.

#### **East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment**

- 4.18. The EMRLCA is a strategic regional level assessment. It subdivides the East Midlands Region into 31 Regional Landscape Character Types (LCT).

- 4.19. The site and study area lies within LCT 5A: Village Farmlands. Key characteristics are described as follows:

- *"Gently undulating lowlands, dissected by stream valleys with localised steep slopes and alluvial floodplains;*
- *Moderately fertile loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage over extensive till deposits on higher ground and gravel terraces bordering main rivers;*

- *Mixed agricultural regime, with localised variations but with a predominance of either dairy farming on permanent pastures, or arable cropping;*
- *Small and moderately sized broadleaved woodlands and copses, often on sloping land extensive new areas of planting associated with The National Forest;*
- *Hedgerows and frequent oak and ash trees along hedge lines and streams contribute to well treed character of landscape;*
- *Moderately sized well maintained hedged fields across rolling landform create patchwork landscape of contrasting colours and textures;*
- *Extensive ridge and furrow and small historic villages linked by winding lanes contribute to historic and rural character of the landscape; and*
- *Localised influence of large estates."*

4.20. The assessment identifies the likely or potential forces for change for each of the regional LCTs. In summary, the following potential forces for change are identified for LCT 5A:

- Village expansion
- Mixed-used development on the fringe of larger settlements.

4.21. Under 'Shaping the Future Landscape', the assessment suggests the following actions for LCT 5A:

*"The aim should be to protect the character of villages and consider the visual impact of any new development.*

*....Planting of new trees around settlement fringes should also be encouraged, helping to integrate new development into the landscape.*

*...The aim should be to manage the growth of larger settlements, ensuring development is appropriate in terms of design and scale.*

*...Care should also be taken to prevent coalescence, ensuring separation is maintained between the urban fringe and surrounding settlements."*

#### **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment**

4.22. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council commissioned LUC in November 2016 to review and update the existing Landscape Character Assessment (2006). The Landscape Character Assessment is intended to provide context for policies and proposals for the next Local Plan period: 2016–2036, inform the determination of planning applications, and inform the management of future change, as well as inform Local and Neighbourhood Development Plan policy development.

### **Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland**

- 4.23. The site is located within Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland (refer to **Figure 4: Landscape Character**). The key characteristics of this LCA are set out by the published assessment as follows:

*"1) Large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland with local variations in topography influenced by small streams.*

*2) Burbage Common and ancient woodland is of national and local importance as an ecological and recreational resource.*

*3) 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.*

*4) Urban fringe influences as a result of exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton situated on higher ground and recreational uses around Burbage Common.*

*5) Sparse settlement within the area, comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes.*

*6) Major transport corridors dissect the landscape and introduce noise and movement.*

*7) 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.*

*8) Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round, concentrated around Burbage Common and extending outside the borough into Blaby.*

*9) Green Wedge providing separation between Hinckley and Barwell and green infrastructure to the cluster of settlements of Burbage, Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton."*

- 4.24. The published assessment sets out the 'key sensitivities and values' of LCA F, as follows:

*"1) Burbage Common provides natural and recreational interest, of particular value in close proximity to urban areas, as are nearby sports facilities and public rights of way.*

*2) Woodland and mature trees provide biodiversity and visually screen nearby development. Woodland spinneys, streams and small water bodies in and around Lutterworth Road provide naturalistic and recreation interest.*

*3) The generally rural character and undeveloped landscape of the Green Wedge which forms an important gap between Hinckley and Barwell and a green infrastructure link to the wider landscape in the north.*

*4) Low hedgerows and hedgerow trees surrounding fields reflect the parliamentary enclosure field pattern and form part of the overall ecological network connecting with mature woodland planting, some of which is ancient.*

*5) Isolated farmsteads scattered through the farmland landscape reflect the agricultural origins.*

*6) Extensive visibility and long distance views across open expanses of rolling farmland are sensitive as any change/development has the potential to be widely visible.*

*7) The area east and south of Burbage provides a rural setting to the historic settlement.*

*8) Uncluttered views of church spires in the nearby ridge top settlements (e.g., Burbage) provide an important sense of place."*

4.25. The published assessment also sets out several 'landscape strategies', as follows:

*"1) Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands style' hedge laying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character. Restore hedgerow trees.*

*2) Respect and enhance the essentially rural character of the landscape. Ensure any new and existing development is integrated into the landscape such as ensuring built form is orientated to provide broken rooflines and integrated with woodland copses.*

*3) The Sustainable Urban Extension to the southeast of Earl Shilton should aim to create a distinct new and contemporary identity and character(s) whilst responding to the existing context.*

*4) Maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation.*

*5) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including Burbage Common and rights of way.*

*6) Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and unimproved acid grassland.*

*7) Consider a strategic scale woodland planting initiative (e.g., linked to the National Forest) to help screen nearby urban development.*

*8) Consider the opportunity for using the historic parkland of the Burbage House estate as a framework for new green infrastructure links across the area and into nearby settlements."*

4.26. The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment also describes the urban and townscape character of the fourteen principal settlements within Hinckley and Bosworth. In each case it addresses the historic designations, landmark buildings and general architectural styles. Based upon this analysis, key characteristics are identified, together with recommended management strategies intended to protect and promote local distinctiveness and unique townscape qualities.

## Urban Character Area 9: Barwell

4.27. The site is located adjacent to Urban Character Area (UCA) 9: Barwell. The published assessment sets out the 'key characteristics' of this UCA as follows:

*"1) Ridgetop settlement with views to the open landscape north and south, the settlement appears relatively well-integrated in views from the north;*

*2) Workers terraces and factory buildings of red brick are a reminder of the industrial heritage of the town from the boot and shoe industry in the 19th and 20th centuries;*

*3) Rural setting of the countryside to the south and west which maintains separation between Hinckley and Burbage;*

*4) Dense, fine grained streetscape with the majority of buildings fronting onto the street. Modest scale of predominantly two storey buildings;*

*5) The Church of St Mary, a landmark feature;*

*6) Some interesting historic buildings such as the Queens Head pub;*

*7) Red brick and simple built form are the typical local vernacular.*

4.28. In terms of 'key sensitivities and values' of UCA 9, the published assessment sets out the following:

*"1) The rural setting and 'green wedge' to the south of Barwell which provides a sense of separation from Hinckley.*

*2) The views from the south of the settlement and from Shilton Road to the countryside provide a sense of space and sense of place.*

*3) The legacy left by the boot and shoe industry in the remnant factory buildings which provide a sense of local identity.*

*4) The local vernacular of red brick and simple factory buildings.*

*5) Interesting buildings and historic features including the Queens Head pub and the church which have local distinctiveness and sense of history.*

*6) Public footpaths and bridleways connecting the settlement with the surrounding countryside have recreational value and are tied into the local history of the area.*

*7) Areas such as Barwell Lane in the south and Kirkby Road in the north which have a more rural character and relate strongly to the surrounding countryside are sensitive to change.*

*8) Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round which are valued for the recreation opportunities and connection to the countryside they afford.*

*9) St Mary's Church is valued for its sense of history and the role it plays as a local landmark."*

4.29. The published assessment also sets out several 'townscape strategies', as follows:

*"1) Encourage local distinctiveness and high quality design in new developments, reinforcing the distinct identities of Earl Shilton and Barwell. Regenerate and reinforce the focus of the town centre, improving the quality of the streetscape and built form.*

*2) Consider enhancing and reinforcing the connection between the town centre and church, enhancing the sense of 'high street' linking the two.*

*3) Conserve and enhance historic features, particularly buildings and architectural features.*

*4) The proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to the north and west of Barwell should aim to create a distinct new and contemporary identity whilst responding to its current context.*

*5) Improve the 'gateway' and sense of arrival from the west along Hinckley Road. Improve green infrastructure links through Barwell and with the surrounding countryside by enhanced street tree planting and incidental green spaces.*

*6) Consider strategies for improving the visual clutter caused by street parking.*

*7) Consider enhancing the setting of the church and historical/ visual/ green infrastructure links."*

#### **Landscape character of the site and its local landscape context**

4.30. The published landscape character assessments are informative insofar as they offer context and descriptions of the prevailing wider landscape. Whilst the site and study area do share some commonality with the published assessments, it is useful to go a step further and consider the site and its more local landscape character in order to understand what if any further influences are at play.

4.31. For the purposes of this LVIA, the site and its local landscape context is considered to be that area defined by:

- Shilton Road/Dawsons Lane and their associated settlement pattern to the north;
- The A47 corridor and adjacent landscape extending from Leicester Road football stadium to Elmesthorpe, to the south;
- Elmesthorpe Road and its associated settlement pattern to the east; and
- The Common/junction with Dawsons Lane and its associated settlement pattern and recreation ground to the west.

4.32. The parliamentary enclosure field pattern of the site and its immediate context is generally typical of the local area. Field parcels are contained by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees and whilst largely intact, sufficient enough to provide enclosure, some are unmanaged, fragmented and/or thinning at the base. In a number of locations, the hedgerow pattern has been replaced by lengths of post and rail or post and wire fencing.

- 4.33. Much of the site itself is made up of intensively grazed horse paddocks, sub-divided by hedgerows together with a mix of timber post and rail fencing in varying condition, post and wire fencing and plastic paddock stakes and tape. There are occasional tin structures, small brick buildings and equine shelters associated with the land use on the site. To the north-east a line of 11kv distribution poles and cable cross the site.
- 4.34. The immediate context of the site comprises a mix of residential, commercial and 'urban fringe' land uses, including Dawson's Lane allotments to the north-east and an antiques centre and salvage yard to the south-east. The A47 dual carriageway (Leicester Road) forms the main arterial transport route through the area. Residential development comprises areas of post-war linear development, mid-century infill and modern backfill development. There are several larger, commercial buildings directly north-west of the site, which are noticeable in views across it.
- 4.35. In terms of topography, the site is falling to the south, lying at ca. +115m AOD at its highest point to the north, and ca. +99m AOD at its lowest point to the south. Barwell itself is located across a local ridgeline, the landform of which continues to rise to the north of the site and serving to enclose it from the wider landscape to the north.
- 4.36. This analysis of the local landscape character of the site and its context is taken through to inform judgements on value, susceptibility and overall landscape sensitivity, included later in this LVIA (Section 6).

## Visual baseline

- 4.37. This section provides a description of the nature and extent of the existing views from, towards and between the site and the surrounding area. It also includes reference to specific locations that will potentially be subject to impacts as a result of the proposed development.
- 4.38. Establishing the specific nature of these views provides an understanding of the context and setting of representative viewpoints and also the nature of views in terms of distance, angle of view, and seasonal constraints associated with specific visual receptors. The identification of key sensitive receptors and links to the representative viewpoint are carried forward to the assessment process (refer to **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment**).

### Overview

- 4.39. The visual envelope is the area of landscape from which a site or proposed development, or part of it, will potentially be visible from. It accounts for general judgements on the theoretical visibility of a site or proposed development and sets a broad context for the study area within which to address landscape and visual impacts. The extent of a visual envelope will be influenced by the physical landscape components of an area, such as hedgerows, woodlands or buildings and can also be influenced by distance from a site.
- 4.40. In this case, the visual envelope can be summarised as:
- From the north, views of the site are limited by the combination of built form, vegetation, and the rising topography of the ridgeline that Barwell and Earl Shilton are

located along. There is however a view from an elevated position on Shilton Road to the north, looking across the wider landscape to the south, including parts of the site. There are also 'slot views' from Dawson's Lane across the site, and from adjacent private residences in part;

- From the east, there are views at close distances on the approach to the site along Dawson's Lane and some filtered views from the public right of way extending towards Leicester Road, but these are generally limited by intervening vegetation. Views further east are limited by establishing tree cover at Carrs Hill;
- From the south, there are longer distance views from lower lying topography (including the public right of way network north of Bridge Farm), looking up towards the Barwell/Earl Shilton ridgeline. Further south views are limited by intervening vegetation and the Birmingham to Peterborough railway line. At shorter distance, there is also a slot view across a field gate on the A47; and
- From the west, there are some limited views from a local high point south of St Mary's Church, but views are generally limited by linear development along The Common, with occasional 'slot views'. There also views from adjacent private residences in part.

### **Zone of Theoretical Visibility**

- 4.41. To further test the visibility of the proposed development, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been undertaken (refer to **Figure 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility**).
- 4.42. Digital information inputs into the ZTV map include:
- Input from OS mapping and LIDAR data for topography and blocks of vegetation; and
  - The proposed building heights (set as a maximum of 9m to the ridge of the proposed residential units).
- 4.43. The ZTV has been modelled upon a screened scenario which adds existing buildings and existing blocks of vegetation, as identified by OS mapping and LIDAR data.
- 4.44. A ZTV is not a conclusive product in terms of determining the visibility of a given development proposal; nor does a ZTV define the degree of change or impact. Instead, the ZTV is used as a tool that provides an indication of 'potential' visibility, which then guides the spatial extent of a study, informs the nature and location of potential receptors and contributes to an understanding of scale of impacts (in terms of area covered).
- 4.45. It should be noted that GLVIA3 acknowledges that ZTV is the desk study component of the visibility analysis and that several landscape components that effect visibility may be difficult to add to digital models accurately. Input to ZTVs for existing vegetation includes only data quantified in LIDAR and OS data; therefore, only larger blocks of woodland are included as input to the model, whilst hedgerow trees and linear tree belts tend to be excluded. The ZTV therefore presents a 'worst case scenario' in terms of visibility.
- 4.46. This initial appraisal of theoretical visibility has then been used to inform the field work, subsequent assessment and input into design and mitigation.

### **Representative viewpoints and visual receptors**

- 4.47. The visual assessment references a series of photographic viewpoints (December 2023) that are representative of visual receptors in the area. These viewpoints have been selected based on the findings of the ZTV exercise, together with discussions with HBBC planning officers and agreement of data in advance of the 2023 appeal. They illustrate views towards the site in the context of the surrounding landscape and are used to inform judgements on impacts for specific receptors (refer to **Figure 6: Viewpoint Locations and PRow** and **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment**).
- 4.48. A detailed description for each of the locations identified as receptors for this LVIA, including judgements on overall sensitivity of visual receptors, is included in later sections of this report under the assessment of visual effects.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

5.1. This section considers the type of development proposed and the nature of the impacts that are likely to occur; thereafter it draws the landscape and visual baseline information together and summarises the key constraints and opportunities in the existing landscape.

5.2. In summary the proposed development comprises (refer to **Appendix B: Illustrative Masterplan**):

- Residential development of up to 95 new homes (including an element of self-build), with a maximum height parameter of 9 metres AGL (Above Ground Level);
- Site access and internal road layout;
- Retained green infrastructure including mature hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting, and grasslands/field enclosures;
- Proposed green infrastructure including native woodland belt and woodland copse planting; semi-mature tree planting; semi-ornamental landscape planting associated with the development parcels; and open space incorporating an equipped play area with open access; and retained grassland enclosures managed for ecological purposes;
- A public access route linking Dawsons Lane in the north with the The Common in the south (utilising “blue line” land in part); and
- Attenuation areas and drainage.

### Likely causes of impact

5.3. Although a landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscapes contain a range of components which will respond differently to change, subject to the type of the development that is proposed. Therefore, in order to inform the analysis of impacts, judgements should be made with reference to the specific changes which arise from the type of development being considered.

5.4. The following section sets out the likely causes of impacts which would occur in relation to the specific type of development proposed (i.e., residential led development).

#### Causes of temporary impact during construction

5.5. The temporary construction works which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:

- site clearance and accommodation works (including vegetation clearance where required in the vicinity of the site access);
- movement and presence of associated construction vehicles and plant;

- presence of a construction compounds, site office and welfare facilities;
- earthworks and construction of internal road infrastructure and practical development platforms;
- phased implementation and emerging built form of residential units; and
- alterations to the existing road network for access improvements.

#### **Causes of impacts at completion**

- 5.6. The permanent components of the proposed development which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:
- the built form of residential development (incorporating highways infrastructure); and
  - mitigation integrated into the proposed development (i.e. green infrastructure and landscaping), including retained trees, hedgerows, open space provision, attenuation areas and new planting.

#### **Landscape and visual analysis**

- 5.7. On the basis of the description of the landscape and visual baseline, the landscape and visual analysis is illustrated on **Figure 8: Landscape and Visual Analysis** and summarised as follows.

#### **Contextual Landscape and Visual Analysis**

- 5.8. The contextual landscape and visual analysis can be summarised as follows:
- The site lies in an area of gently sloping topography (north to south) and forms part of an undeveloped area that serves to separate parts (not all) of Barwell to the west, and Earl Shilton to the East;
  - Notwithstanding this, the two settlements are clearly physically and visually joined in the vicinity of Shilton Road/Bellevue Road/Hinckley Road areas to the north and north-east of the site;
  - Land use in this undeveloped area varies, include intense horse grazing across defined paddocks; extensive allotments; buildings/salvage yard/storage units; and (east of Leicester Road), naturally regenerating woodland areas and smaller scale paddocks;
  - These uses, in combination with the presence of built form along the settlement edges, cast a 'degraded' character across parts of the site and local landscape;
  - The site is generally well visually and physically enclosed in both the local and wider landscape, however it is present in some view corridors;
  - From higher lying topography north of the site, on Shilton Road, there are very extensive panoramic views looking southwards, where the site (primarily its

vegetation as opposed to its ground plane) forms part of the fore/mid-ground to varying degrees (see viewpoints 1a, b and c);

- From slightly elevated topography on Dawsons Lane there are instances of longer distance views to the south, where the site forms part of the foreground (see viewpoints 2 and 3)
- Occasional views looking east from the edge of Barwell (see viewpoint 6) towards Earl Shilton, and looking west from the edge of Earl Shilton towards Barwell (see view 9) show only glimpsed elements of the built form of each settlement across the local landscape due to the 'layering' of the various vegetation patterns, in combination with topographical change;
- Views looking west from the public footpaths east of the site (viewpoints 10, 11 and 12) do indicate elements of built form to a greater or lesser extent on the edge of Barwell;
- There are longer distance views from the south (viewpoints 13 and 14), where the undeveloped landscape between Barwell and Earl Shilton is evident, rising up the topography, with the site forming part of the western flank of this area;
- The public footpath network extending from Leicester Road in the east, to Dawsons Lane offers an impression of travelling between settlements by foot, in the context of an urban fringe landscape; and
- As such, the functions of this part of the Green Wedge in terms of separation between settlements (Barwell and Earl Shilton), and green lung are evident from specific locations.

### **Site Specific Landscape and Visual Analysis**

5.9. The site specific landscape and visual analysis can be summarised as follows:

- The site forms part of a local landscape that is characterised by land uses often described as "urban fringe", which has degraded it in places, and where its condition has in part deteriorated;
- This includes the intensity of the grazing on the paddocks, and the visual appearance this casts, together with some hedgerow loss and the "ad-hoc" appearance of some of the structures associated with the grazing paddocks;
- Notwithstanding this, it retains a mature hedgerow network that encloses the paddocks to form part of the local landscape character;
- The combination of the mature hedgerow network and falling topography limit intervisibility across the site itself and the local landscape, such that they are "compartmentalised";
- Built form casts strong influence across the site, by way of physical and visual enclosure, in particular the residential development on Gamer Close and The Common; and the commercial development on Dawsons Lane, directly adjacent to the site;

- The site is also well enclosed to the north by the (albeit lower density) residential development along Dawsons Lane; and
- The site is generally very well related to the eastern edge of Barwell.

## Constraints and opportunities

5.10. In the context of the analysis set out above, together with the likely impacts, the following constraints and opportunities have been identified (with reference also to the fieldwork and landscape character assessment work).

### Constraints

5.11. Constraints for the site are considered to be:

- The role of the site as part of the Green Wedge policy, including separation and green lung;
- Potential visual impact from (limited) publicly accessible areas to the north, east, west and at longer distance from the south; and
- Need for removal of hedgerow vegetation to accommodate site access.

### Opportunities

5.12. Opportunities for the site are considered to be:

- The location of the site directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Barwell to the north and west, and its strong relationship with the settlement;
- The presence of other 'urban fringe' elements that cast an influence on the local landscape, including its condition, value and reduced susceptibility to accommodate new residential development;
- Strong visual and physical enclosure of the site in the local and wider landscape;
- Potential to improve and enhance existing hedgerows and associated green infrastructure, retaining the spatial qualities of this elements of local landscape character and using it as a driver in a development framework;
- Biodiversity improvements associated with new hedgerow planting, woodland planting, and displacement of intense grazing with grassland meadows; and
- Potential to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists from Dawsons Lane to The Common.

## Landscape strategy components

5.13. The development framework and inherent landscape/design strategy for the site has been primarily developed in response to the constraints and opportunities identified for the site.

This includes clear acknowledgement and a positive response to matters of Green Wedge functionality that exist across the site and local landscape.

- 5.14. In addition, the development framework has responded to a number of points raised in the Inspector's Report following the dismissed 2023 Appeal.
- 5.15. As such, the extent of the proposed built form (the "Development Envelope") has again been carefully considered and landscape and visually led, with the visual mitigation strategy informed with the aid of "wireline" Visually Verified Montages (VVMs) which have served as a tool in the design process. This includes a compare and contrast exercise between this development proposal, and the one dismissed at the 2023 Appeal.
- 5.16. In addition, the strategy has been considered seamlessly with a series of ecological design principles in order to positively address biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.17. The overall landscape strategy and design is summarised below.

### Development envelope

- 5.18. In order to appreciate how development framework responses have evolved for this site. **Plate 2 (a, b)** below illustrates its progression since the Gladman Application/Appeal in 2017/18 (note: plans not to scale).



**Plate 2a: Gladman Proposal (2017/2018)**      **Plate 2b: Harrow Estates (first) Proposal (2021/23)**

- 5.19. As illustrated on **Plate 2a**, the Gladman proposal included development extending south beyond the alignment of the existing development along The Common, and across a paddock in the central southern section of the site. The first Harrow Estates Application/Appeal retracted development such that it did not extend south of The Common, and did not utilise the central southern section of the site.

5.20 The development envelope for the revised (second) Harrow Estates Proposal illustrates a number of differences in comparison to the dismissed 2023 Appeal proposals, as illustrated on **Plate 2b**.



**Plate 2b: Harrow Estates (first) Proposal (2021/23) and second Proposal (2023)**

5.21 This comparison exercise between the 2021/23 and 2023 proposals serves to illustrate the following changes between the respective development frameworks, summarised as follows:

- Inclusion of an additional grass paddock at the north-western corner of the masterplan, adjacent to the existing commercial development;
- Retraction of the development envelope from the northern site boundary (Dawsons Lane);
- Greater articulation of the eastern edge of the development envelope;
- Adjustment of the cells at the south-eastern corner of the development envelope; and
- Inclusion of a small area of development to the north of the access road from The Common.

5.22 There is also a reduction in the overall numbers of proposed units, from 110 no. at the 2023 Appeal to 95 no. now, across a slightly extended development area. Consequently, this arrives at a less dense masterplan configuration where elements of soft landscape are more present and “penetrative” across and around the development cells, with all existing hedgerow and associated vegetation comfortably retained in landscaped channels. Further details on this different approach are set out below.

North-western grass paddock

- 5.23 The inclusion of the paddock at the north-western corner of the masterplan is a logical addition to the framework, linking existing and proposed development on the settlement edge as opposed to the retention of a single, isolated paddock that has limited aesthetic merit.

Northern (Dawsons Lane) boundary

- 5.24 Retraction of the development southwards offers a significant width to accommodate both retained hedgerow planting along Dawsons Lane together with additional infrastructure planting.

Eastern boundary

- 5.25 The articulation of the eastern development envelope offers the prospect of areas of open space penetrating into the development cells, and providing an overall softer outer edge, set some distance from the adjacent retained hedgerow.

South-eastern corner

- 5.26 Inclusion of a small area of development at the very south-eastern corner of the envelope, to provide a double-fronted street scene.

Site access

- 5.27 Inclusion of a small area of development to the north of the site access, to provide a more robust and meaningful design response at the site entrance, with a greater design focus on the access generally whilst restricting built form to within the alignment as the existing southern built edge of The Common (western side).
- 5.28 See also section 7 and **Appendix B** of this LVIA for visual effects in respect of the south-eastern corner and site access areas.

Generally

- 5.29 As previously, the overall development envelope mirrors the existing articulations of the settlement edge, and still positively addresses matters of Green Wedge policy in respect of separation between settlements by tying in neatly existing and proposed settlement edges/corners, at key points where they may be experienced by road users and pedestrians dependent upon location.

**Elements of Green Infrastructure, Landscape Strategy and Design**

- 5.30 Green Infrastructure forms an extremely important part of this proposal, both in terms of the need to respond to the Green Wedge context; matters of local landscape character; quality of design; and also biodiversity enhancement. The key elements of the overall strategy are summarised below.

### **Existing Vegetation**

- 5.31 The existing vegetation on site has been considered both out in the field in terms of its presence and role in the local landscape, and also in the context of the Tree Survey (ref. TBA Landscape Architects, September 2023).
- 5.32 In summary it is proposed to retain the very vast majority of the existing vegetation, notably the mature hedgerow framework (and its associated trees) across the site and use it to guide both the extent and internal divisions of the development envelope, and enclose areas of open space. The hedgerow network will be subject to an appropriate management regime, and additional planting where required to fill in gaps etc. This approach will ensure the influence of the hedgerow framework in the local landscape is retained.
- 5.33 Loss of vegetation is detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (ref. TBA Landscape Architects, December 2023). See also below for site access arrangements and existing vegetation management.

### **Woodland Belt and Copse Planting**

- 5.34 Strategically located small native woodland copses and woodland belts form an important part of the mitigation strategy, serving to reinforce the existing hedgerow framework. They are located to provide additional visual and physical containment to the proposed built form, and read consistently with elements of local landscape character, in locations as follows:
- Along the northern (Dawsons Lane) boundary of the site to further contain views from Dawsons Lane, looking south/south-eastwards towards development, supplementing existing hedgerow planting and to fill existing gaps associated with field access gates and to provide a soft setting for that part of Dawsons Lane as it enters/exists the settlement;
  - Along the articulated eastern edge of the development envelope to provide additional visual containment and screening, from views along Dawsons Lane and the public footpath linking eastwards to Leicester Road, and also in respect of the elevated views from Shilton Road looking south across the site to the wider landscape; and
  - At the south-eastern corner of the development envelope, again providing some additional visual containment with respect to views from the south, north and north-east.
- 5.35 These elements of native planting will all combine to provide a "comprehensive whole" that serves to visually and physically contain the site in a manner consistent with local landscape character, which also addresses matters of visual connectivity across the local landscape between Barwell and Earl Shilton with respect to Green Wedge functions.

### **Site Entrance**

- 5.36 There will be some modifications to the hedgerow at the site access point. The proposed access road into the site is 5.50 metres wide with footpaths either side, together with a footpath link extending northwards along the eastern side of The Common. A much shorter

southerly link then extends across the road to the western side of The Common (see Stantec drawings for more detail).

- 5.37 The Blackthorn thicket that sits behind the existing hedgerow to the south of the proposed site access point is of sufficient depth and density such that a robust existing landscape feature will remain in that location behind the visibility splay.
- 5.38 There will be a replanting of new native hedgerow infrastructure behind the visibility splays, together with additional planting behind the new hedgerow to both sides of the site access, including tree planting. These combined groups of old and new vegetation will over time establish to enclose either side of the site access point.
- 5.39 Across the paddock adjacent to the site entrance, the road will curve northwards into the main component of the built form through the grassland, with a limited number of units to its north, fronting southwards across a very simple yet strong composition of a series of tree groups in an open grassland meadow setting.
- 5.40 Road frontage trees would provide a setting for the residential units, and this entire site entrance setting will sit in front of the retained mature hedgerow infrastructure to the south and east.

#### **SUDs**

- 5.41 The area for the SUDs lies at the lower levels of the site, adjacent to the southern site boundary, and contained within a field enclosure. It is likely to retain an element of permanent water to maximise biodiversity opportunities, and be enclosed in part with a series of riparian tree plantings together with understorey, marginal and aquatic planting.

#### **Active Public Open Space**

- 5.42 Embedded within the eastern flank of the development envelope, is an enclosure of open space that will contain an area of equipped play (LEAP). This is likely to take on a more "natural" appearance with timber logs, boulders and localised level change etc.
- 5.43 Locating the area for equipped play within the main part of the development envelope, and the SUDs in a well physically and visually contained location will ensure that the vast majority of the development will sit in a grassland/meadow landscape contained by hedgerows and trees that is an essential characteristic of the local landscape.

#### **Grassland Meadows and Biodiversity Enhancement**

- 5.44 The remaining paddock areas along the eastern flank of the site, and with reference to the ecological management strategy for the site, will be managed as grassland meadows. As such, their appearance as simple paddocks or field enclosures will be both retained and enhanced, maintaining all their positive attributes in terms of landscape character but simultaneously improving their current intensively grazed appearance and biodiversity credentials.
- 5.45 Specific measures that are likely to be required to achieve this are set out in the Ecological report, summarised as follows:

- Weed control followed by hard grazing e.g. sheep as an early stage to grassland restoration;
- Scarification prior to new seedling establishment;
- Supplementary seeding to assist establishment, by gathering green hay or seed from the best sections of grassland on the site; and
- Hay Cutting – once established, managing the fields in a traditional manner typically involving a single late-summer hay cut with all arisings removed.

### **Public Access**

- 5.46 It is proposed to (permanently) link Dawsons Lane in the north with the A47 Leicester Road in the south (last section across blue land within applicants control), via a well-defined public access route. .
- 5.47 The route of the footpath will take the user through different experiences including along the residential edge adjacent to mature existing hedgerows; past the play area; through new woodland copse planting; adjacent to the grassland meadow edge with views across the field enclosure; and via the pond side of the attenuation areas. Its detail in this respect will seek to ensure the right balance between circulation control, natural surveillance and appropriate materials/signage.
- 5.48 From this route there will be spurs that link it through the development envelope to the west to offer a good level of permeability and offer multiple opportunities for access from the existing and proposed settlements into the adjacent (Green Wedge) local landscape.
- 5.49 Across the meadow grassland themselves, a series of mown pathways would offer some less formal access from controlled points along the main public footpath.

### **Street Tree Planting**

- 5.50 Across the development envelope, the relative density of the proposed units is sufficient to ensure the successful provision of a substantial number of street trees (together with associated hedgerow, shrub and ground cover planting) in the public realm across the envelope.
- 5.51 The effect of the street tree planting will be to both sub-divide the different development cells, emphasising the former sub-division of the local landscape, and also providing a setting for the adjacent residential units.
- 5.52 This approach is supported strongly in the NPPF, paras. 130b and 131, and also serve to break up the overall mass of the envelope when viewed from elevated locations on Shilton Road.

### **Landscape Design Coding and Detailed Design**

- 5.53 In order to illustrate a number of the elements of landscape strategy above, **chapter 4** of the submitted **Design Code** presents a landscape design approach specific to the site, to

give an insight as to how the sense of place will be created with a high degree of surety. This includes more detailed consideration of the site access landscape design proposals.

- 5.54 All proposed landscape strategy and design will be subject to a detailed landscape scheme that will ensure that the functions of the landscape components are delivered; this will also reflect positively on the design quality of the proposed development as a whole. At the detailed design stage, the selection of species for trees and hedgerows will refer to indigenous native species as well as those present in the context of the local landscape character, wherever appropriate.
- 5.55 See also **Figure 9, Illustrative Landscape Masterplan**, the **Design and Access Statement (DAS)** and the **Design Code**.

## 6 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

### Overview of landscape effects

- 6.1 Landscape sensitivity is a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements on the value related to a landscape (i.e. the receptor) with the susceptibility of the landscape to the specific type of change proposed. Receptors can include specific landscape elements or features or may be judged at a wider scale and include landscape character parcels, types or areas.
- 6.2 As advocated in the GLVIA3, professional judgement is used to balance analysis of value and susceptibility in order to determine sensitivity. Each of these aspects of the analysis will vary subject to the scale and detail of the assessment.
- 6.3 The landscape character of the study area is documented at national, regional and at a more local level. The findings of these studies represent a thorough and generally consistent analysis of landscape character, and this has been supported by an analysis of the local landscape character of the site in its context.
- 6.4 This assessment of landscape effects focuses on the area of landscape defined at a borough level as Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland, as previously noted in the baseline section of this LVIA, and which presents guidance at an appropriate scale and detail for the area.
- 6.5 The assessment is then also applied at a more refined level to consider additional judgements based on the local landscape character.

### Landscape sensitivity

- 6.6 In order to inform judgements on value and susceptibility the following section refers to the baseline information (Section 4) and additional consideration of the local character in relation to the site and its immediate context. These judgements are then carried through to the analysis of landscape sensitivity.

### Landscape value

- 6.7 In LVIA, landscape value is the value attached to a potentially affected landscape. It is relative in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape. Although factors such as formal designations are an important component when determining value, other aspects are also considered as part of the judgement process. These include issues related to condition (of features and elements), seclusion and presence of detracting influences, rarity and the degree of representativeness. Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered, even where a landscape is included in the boundaries of a formal designation.

## Value of Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland

6.8

This section determines the value of the defined LCA relevant to the site and study area, utilising the criteria set out in Box 5.1 of the GLVIA3, together with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21: "Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations", and summarised in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Value of LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland**

| TGN Factor                                                    | LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural heritage<br><i>(Conservation interests)</i>           | <p>There are some areas of Ancient Woodland (Sheepy Wood, Burbage Wood) within the LCA in this location, specifically associated with Burbage Common, which is also a Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p>The published assessment states that the woodland and common are of national and local importance in ecological and recreational terms. Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI is also located further south.</p>                                                                    |
| Cultural heritage<br><i>(Conservation interests)</i>          | There are no specific cultural heritage assets in this part of the LCA.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Landscape condition<br><i>(Landscape quality - condition)</i> | Overall, the landscape condition of LCA F is generally fair to good. The network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees reflect the parliamentary enclosure field pattern, and this is generally intact (although there are some instances where gaps have appeared, notably towards the settlement edges), albeit not always well maintained. The A47 road corridor is a detracting feature, but its influence diminishes towards Burbage Common in the south.                          |
| Associations                                                  | There are no known associations with people or events in history in relation to LCA F.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Distinctiveness<br><i>(Rarity / Representativeness)</i>       | LCA F is present across a relatively extensive area stretching from the south-eastern edge of Earl Shilton, across the landscape south of Barwell and along the eastern and southern extents of the rural fringe around Hinckley. It is not considered that the components of this LCA are particularly rare, notwithstanding some individual features such as Burbage Common are identified as having some importance at a local and national scale by the published assessment. |
| Recreational<br><i>(Recreation value)</i>                     | In terms of recreational opportunities, there are several PROWs, including part of the Leicestershire Round recreational route. There are no other promoted routes or National Trails within the study area. The presence of Burbage Common and associated woodland is as set out previously, of importance in recreational terms.                                                                                                                                                |
| Perceptual (Scenic)<br><i>(Scenic quality)</i>                | <p>In terms of perceptual aspects relation to the visual sense, the published assessment states that:</p> <p><i>"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."</i></p> <p>As indicated in the published assessment, the aesthetic qualities of the LCA are mixed. The change from lower lying areas to the south to the ridgeline along which</p>    |

|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                       | development lies to the north is relatively distinct. However, detracting features including the A47 road corridor and other infrastructure also influenced scenic quality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Perceptual – wildness and tranquillity<br><i>(Perceptual aspects)</i> | In relation to perceptual aspects, according to the published assessment: <i>"The landscape is influenced by large scale infrastructure such as the M69 and the A47 as well as the Leicester to Nuneaton railway line, which introduce noise and movement into an otherwise rural landscape, and a link to the adjacent urban development. Electricity pylons also punctuate the landscape and can be seen on the skyline in many views."</i> These elements serve to reduce wildness and tranquillity across the LCA. |
| Functional                                                            | A large part of the LCA contributes to the function of the Green Wedge policy area (Assessment Area C in the vicinity of the site), which according to the published assessment: <i>"...forms an important gap between Hinckley and Barwell and a green infrastructure link to the wider landscape in the north."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Designations                                                          | No landscape planning or other amenity designations across this LCT within the study area, with the exception of part of a conservation area in the centre of Barwell.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

6.9 On balance, the wider landscape context of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland in this location is considered to be of **medium to high value** in landscape terms.

#### Value of the local landscape character

- 6.10 In relation to natural heritage interests, there are no ecological or geological designations on the site or its immediate context. There are three hedges that are important under the HEGS Regulations (H5, H10 and H14) by the Ecological Survey and Assessment that accompanies the application. The site comprises several grassland field enclosures, some further divided into horse paddocks, defined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Fields 5, 9 and 10 retain greater ecological interest than the other fields.
- 6.11 In terms of cultural heritage interests, there are no historic landscape features on the site or within its immediate context, the nearest listed building is ca. 600m to the east and the site does not form any part of either of the two conservation areas in Barwell (400–500m to the north-east).
- 6.12 The condition of the site and its local context is considered to be fair. Whilst the generally intact pattern of parliamentary field enclosures, punctuated by several mature trees (some of which are identified as Category A by the Arboricultural Survey) that define the site itself contribute to the quality of the landscape in this location, most hedgerows are 'grown out' rather than regularly maintained and there is fragmentation/gapping and thinning at the base of some, together with visually evident erosion caused by the intensive grazing patterns.
- 6.13 The further division of field enclosures by typical 'horsiculture' post and rail/wire paddocks and associated makeshift gates, disused brick buildings, tin sheds, plastic paddock posts and tape, feed storage and various other associated equipment also influences the condition of the local landscape, contributing to a degraded appearance in part.
- 6.14 In terms of landscape associations, there are no known associations with people or events in history in relation to the site and its immediate context.

- 6.15 The scale, land use and landscape components of the site are generally characteristic of the local agricultural landscape and reflect the wider pattern of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland. As such it is not considered that the landscape elements on the site are particularly rare. Due to its location adjacent to the settlement edge, the site is also influenced by urban fringe characteristics in a way that other areas of the wider farmland are not.
- 6.16 In terms of recreational opportunities, there is no public access onto the site itself. Locally, a public footpath passes east from Dawson's Lane and splits off into three separate routes to the north connecting to Shilton Road, and to the east connecting to Carrs Hill. Further west, The Common recreation ground is home to a local sports club.
- 6.17 In relation to perceptual aspects, whilst the site itself retains a generally open character, it is influenced by the horsiculture land use across a large part of it, as well as adjacent allotments and urban land uses as a result of its location close to the southern settlement edge of Barwell, which in this location is comprised of both residential and commercial properties. It is also defined in part by Leicester Road (A47) to the south. This serves to reduce levels of tranquillity at a local level. There are other typical urban fringe land uses such as the allotment gardens to the north-east and an antiques centre and salvage yard to the south-east that also exert some influence.
- 6.18 In terms of views across the site and its immediate context, these are generally localised and gained predominantly from the boundaries of the site itself or in close proximity, including along Dawson's Lane and The Common (road) itself. There is also a local view across this piece of landscape from an elevated point along Shilton Road to the north.
- 6.19 In relation to functions of the landscape, the site forms a small part of the wider Green Wedge area in this location, that extends to Shilton Road in the north and across the landscape to the south/south-east.
- 6.20 Overall, the local landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounding context is considered to be of **medium value** in landscape terms.

## Landscape susceptibility

- 6.21 In LVIA, landscape susceptibility is the ability of a landscape to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Different types of development can affect landscapes in different ways; therefore, landscape susceptibility is specific to the type of development proposed (i.e., residential).

### Susceptibility of Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland

- 6.22 This section determines the susceptibility of the defined LCA, relevant to the site and the local landscape character.
- 6.23 In relation to the scale of enclosure, the published assessment states that *"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."* Whilst closer to settlement edges, enclosure does increase due to a greater prevalence of smaller, mature hedged field boundaries with trees, the LCA overall is generally open, and this serves to

influence the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the type of development proposed.

- 6.24 In terms of the nature of land use across the LCA, large areas of it comprise the small to medium scale agricultural field pattern of the farmland surrounding the settlements of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton. There is a sparse settlement pattern within the LCA itself, comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes. There are some major transport corridors which dissect the landscape.
- 6.25 In terms of landscape elements, the hedgerow and tree network are extensive and are relatively easy to replace/substitute. However, according to the published assessment, *"Burbage Common and ancient woodland is of national and local importance as an ecological and recreational resource."* and is therefore not easily retained, replaced or substituted.
- 6.26 Detracting features within the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland include the A47 road corridor and railway line, some more prominent built form such as the Leicester Road Sports Stadium and several electricity pylons that cross the landscape. Lighting columns and telegraph poles with associated overhead wires are common where the wider LCA meets the 'Urban' character identified across the settlement area by the published assessment.
- 6.27 On balance, the wider landscape context of Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland is considered to be of **medium to high susceptibility** in landscape terms.

#### **Susceptibility of the local landscape character**

- 6.28 In relation to the scale of enclosure, whilst the site and its local context is located on a broad topographical slope, the strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees serve to both physically and visually contain it. This point, in combination with the built form of the existing settlement edge to the north and west, provide enclosure and positively influence the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the type of development proposed.
- 6.29 In terms of the nature of land use, the site and its local context sit directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Barwell, an area which reflects the modern character of late 20th century residential development. As a result, there is clear existing reference to the type of development proposed, as well as the presence of commercial development.
- 6.30 In relation to the nature of existing elements, the site and its local context are characterised by intensively grazed field enclosures, defined by hedgerows, trees and woodland which vary in their scale, density and continuity, but are generally in fair condition, although some gaps and erosion at the base from grazing are evident.
- 6.31 The existing land use of the site itself will be susceptible to any new residential development. However, as field work clearly illustrates the intensity of the current horse grazing has left extensive areas of the paddocks on site in a particularly degraded state, which together with the presence of other elements of horsey culture infrastructure (fencing (post and electrical), containers, shelters etc. have reduced its aesthetic qualities.

- 6.32 It is the northern/north-western section of the site that is particularly eroded in this respect; further to the south and east the aesthetic quality of the field enclosures starts to improve.
- 6.33 Notwithstanding the changes to part of the site from a paddock to residential built form, substantial parts of the site will also be retained as grassland meadows and offer opportunities for improved grassland management; additional habitats included woodland copse and tree planting; and water features (SUDs).
- 6.34 Elements such as field boundary vegetation can readily be both enhanced through additional planting and management and accommodated into a residential led layout and addressed by appropriate stand offs between the built form and vegetation. Opportunities are available to retain these landscape elements as part of the scheme, reducing susceptibility, in combination with new green infrastructure, beneficial to the local landscape character, and this reduces susceptibility accordingly.
- 6.35 Overall, it is considered that in the context of the existing settlement edge and in relation to the matters described above, the site and local landscape character is of **medium susceptibility** in landscape terms.

## Landscape sensitivity

- 6.36 The following conclusions on sensitivity are based on the detailed description and justification presented in the previous sections, balancing the professional judgements on value and susceptibility. Following a review of the types of impact on physical landscape resources, the conclusions on landscape sensitivity are then taken forward to address the impact and effect on landscape character.
- 6.37 Overall, the landscape analysis has determined the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland within the study area to be of **medium to high value** and **medium to high susceptibility**. As a result of this, combined with the analysis of the current baseline conditions set out in this LVIA, it is considered that this part of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland is considered to be of **medium to high sensitivity**.
- 6.38 At a local level, the landscape analysis has determined the character of the site and its immediate context to be of **medium value** and **medium susceptibility**. Therefore, the site and its immediate context is considered to be **medium sensitivity** in landscape terms.

## Landscape impacts

### Impacts on physical landscape resources

- 6.39 The following section describes the predicted changes to the physical landscape elements and features on the site that will give rise to the subsequent perceived changes in landscape character.
- 6.40 Construction impacts will include initial ground clearance, earthworks, demolition and limited clearance of existing vegetation (site access point). This process will also include the implementation of temporary measures such as site hoardings, temporary fencing and vegetation/tree protection measures. These impacts will be temporary.

- 6.41 Impacts at completion are concerned with the long-term alteration in the landscape from the current undeveloped context of the site to the future scenario of the proposed development. The built form of the proposed development will be complete and will be a permanent component in the landscape.
- 6.42 In the long term, impacts will be associated with the influence of mitigation measures on landscape character. This establishes the changes to landscape character because of built development but with proposed mitigation measures fully established and performing their intended function. The impacts are considered to be long term and not reversible.
- 6.43 In terms of physical landscape resources, the direct changes will be restricted to the site. These will include some limited changes to landform required for the creation of practical development platforms, taking into account the proposed drainage strategy and also impacts generated by the change in land use from the current field enclosures to residential led development; areas of existing green infrastructure will be retained and enhanced, and new areas of open space created (including proposed planting).
- 6.44 The exception to this is where some vegetation will require removal in order to facilitate access into the site. This loss will be mitigated by proposed planting throughout the site.
- 6.45 Overall, the physical landscape impacts are considered to be direct and will be limited to the extent of the site (and therefore the settlement edge). There will be no additional direct impacts on the wider areas around Barwell or the wider landscape context of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland.
- 6.46 In the context of the impacts considered above, the following sections set out an assessment of the likely landscape effects on the relevant LCA and local landscape character.

#### **LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland**

- 6.47 In the scale and context of the LCA, the proposed development will form a minor extension to the settlement pattern of Barwell, at the junction between the boundary of the LCA and the 'Urban' character area identified by the published character assessment (refer to **Figure 4: Landscape Character**). As such this part of the LCA is already influenced by the adjacent settlement edge.
- 6.48 The site forms a very small part of the wider LCA area. The main impact will be the change in land use for ca. 3.89 hectares of the 10.92 hectares of the agricultural land that makes up the site, on the edge of the settlement, where existing grassland will be replaced by residential led development (i.e. the development cells and access roads). The proportion of grassland lost as a result at an LCA scale will be very small.
- 6.49 Furthermore, the site is visually contained from the wider LCA by mature vegetation and the existing settlement edge to the north and west and as such the visibility of the proposed development from within and across the wider LCA is limited, and dependent upon local combinations of topography, built form and vegetation. It is considered that the proposed development would influence the landscape in the local context of the site and no further.

- 6.50 Whilst the site forms a small part of the "*undeveloped landscape of the Green Wedge*", which is identified in the list of 'key sensitivities and values' in the published character assessment, only a limited part of it will be developed. Other key characteristics and values/sensitivities identified in the published character assessment including Burbage Common; woodland spinneys; streams and small water bodies; isolated farmsteads; the hedgerow network; long distance views across open expanses of rolling farmland; the rural setting of Burbage; and views of church spires will not be directly affected by the proposed development. The nature and scale of change to key characteristics at the scale of the LCA in this location is therefore considered to be very limited.
- 6.51 In terms of existing landscape elements and features, the very vast majority of the existing hedgerows and mature trees are proposed to be retained (see Arboricultural Impact Assessment).
- 6.52 There will be removal of ca. 52 linear metres (171 square metres) of hedgerow vegetation (ref. 75H in the Arboricultural Report and Arboricultural Impact Assessment) at the proposed site access point.
- 6.53 Notwithstanding this removal, which represents a worst case scenario, the retention of the vast majority of the existing Blackthorn thicket (behind the sections of removed hedgerow in part) to the south of the access road will ensure the presence of a mature landscape feature.
- 6.54 The existing vegetation has, in essence been used as a framework upon which to base the form of the proposed development by way of appropriate offsets and the route of the proposed road structure through existing gaps.
- 6.55 Overall, the magnitude of impact on this LCA will be **negligible**; assessed alongside the **medium to high sensitivity**, this will result in a **negligible to minor adverse effect**.
- 6.56 At year 15 after completion, the proposed landscape planting strategy will have established sufficiently to help further integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape character. The magnitude of impact will reduce and there will be a **negligible adverse effect**.

#### Site and local landscape character

- 6.57 Regarding the site and its immediate context, the proposed development will result in the direct loss of ca. 3.89 hectares of the intensively grazed pasture land on the site. The residual (and collectively substantial) areas of the site to the north, south and east will generally be retained as open space to include managed grassland; the retention and improved management e.g. laying of the existing hedgerow infrastructure; some additional hedgerow and woodland copse planting; and the resultant biodiversity enhancement (ref. Character Assessment, LCA F, Landscape Strategies 1, 2 and 6).
- 6.58 The layout of the development envelope and the cells within it are generous in ensuring there are large and meaningful setbacks from the existing hedgerow infrastructure; with the set back of the development envelope itself limiting 'encroachment' of built form into the wider landscape. These changes take place in the context of the existing settlement edge to the north and west, which has a notable influence on the site itself.

- 6.59 The set back of the development envelope from the vegetation along the boundaries of, and across the site will ensure that these features remain part of the landscape infrastructure across the site into the future, providing a natural breakdown of the site together with a visual screening and filtering of the proposed development.
- 6.60 The supplementary planting along site boundaries and as part of the hedgerow infrastructure will also help establish and present a soft, integrated edge to the settlement.
- 6.61 In terms of the nature and type of built form itself, the introduction of new residential development of the type, character and density proposed (ref. Garner Close directly to the west) is not an uncharacteristic addition to the local landscape on the settlement edge, and these elements in combination ensure that the proposed development will not detract from the sense of place.
- 6.62 Within the retained areas of open space, targeted habitat enhancement measures will include grassland restoration and future management, in particular along the eastern flank of the site. From an ecological perspective, the key objective will be to establish these fields as lowland meadow priority habitat type (see Ecological Report for more detail).
- 6.63 In terms of settlement pattern, the proposed development will represent a minor extension to the settlement edge in this part of Barwell. The extent of the development has been restricted based on the landscape and visual constraints and opportunities offered by the site, such that it is aligned with the southernmost existing point of development along the western side of The Common, and articulates northwards to tie in with the easternmost point of existing development along Dawsons Lane (taking into account the overall alignment of the settlement and adjacent landscape at this point).
- 6.64 This also lends itself to respecting, and positively responding to matters of physical and visual separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton to the east that the Green Wedge policy seeks to protect. Similarly, the presence of a robust "green lung" extending up to Shilton Road will be retained, with proposed development form guided by the lung in combination with the articulated existing settlement edge of Barwell. Again, these are functions of the Green Wedge policy that will be retained (see section 8 of this LVIA for more detail).
- 6.65 New public access will be introduced throughout the site and will include new pedestrian links and cycle links through the development, with the potential to connect with the existing public right of way network, specifically from Dawsons Lane in the north down to The Common and the A47 to the south. These routes will also link to the existing settlement area, to offer a benefit in terms of Green Wedge policy and functionality.
- 6.66 Any visual impact as a result of the proposed development is addressed separately in this LVIA at section 7 and at **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment**, and these consider the impact on specific visual receptors. However, in landscape character terms, the proposed development will have a more limited influence in this case due to the restricted inter-visibility with the wider landscape as a consequence of prevalent vegetation patterns and topographical change, which serves to reduce the overall level of impact on landscape character.
- 6.67 With regard to the site itself, the magnitude of impact is considered to be **high** (which is to be expected of the vast majority of residential developments on greenfield land, common to many settlement edge locations). This is however balanced with the design of the outline

proposals (refer to Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, **Figure 10**, the **DAS** and **Design Code**) and its associated inherent landscape mitigation. Taking into account the medium sensitivity of the site landscape character, the overall site specific significance of effect will be **moderate to major adverse**, reducing in the longer term.

6.68 With regard to the local landscape, the magnitude of impact is considered to be **low to medium**. This is similarly balanced with the design of the outline proposals and its associated inherent landscape mitigation. Assessed alongside the **medium sensitivity**, this will result in a **minor to moderate adverse effect**.

6.69 At year 15 after competition, the proposed landscape planting strategy will have established sufficient to help further integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape character. The magnitude of impact will reduce to **low** and there will be a **minor adverse effect**.

### Landscape features

6.70 An important part of this assessment of effects on landscape character, relates to the landscape features themselves that make up individually and jointly, part of the character of the landscape. **Table 5** summarises likely effects on landscape features.

6.71 As is frequently the case with residential developments on green field sites, provision of additional landscape features is likely to provide benefits to varying degrees. This is the case here, with specific reference to the mosaic of features habitats that will be provided, together with landscape management, notably across the grassland meadows and with regard to the existing hedgerow infrastructure.

6.72 Such benefits have been reflected in the overall assessment of likely effects on landscape character as set out above.

**Table 5: Effects on landscape features**

| Feature                    | Sensitivity | Change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Effect (beneficial/adverse) |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Topography</b>          | Medium/high | Gradual slope very slightly adjusted to create building platforms, road access areas and SUDs.<br><br>Balance of cut and fill on site easily achieved. Fill material from SUDs used locally for landscape earth modelling and potentially in natural play area. | <b>Neutral</b>              |
| <b>Hedgerows (on site)</b> | Medium/high | The existing hedgerow network on site will be retained in the vast majority, with gaps plugged; additional native hedgerows planted; and improved management e.g. hedge laying.                                                                                 | <b>Beneficial</b>           |

|                                             |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                        |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                             |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                        |
| <b>Hedgerows (The Common Road frontage)</b> | Medium/high | At the site access, there will be loss of ca. 52 linear metres of hedgerow for visibility splays.<br><br>Comprehensive new hedgerow planting will replace that lost with the exception of the access route itself.                 | <b>Adverse/neutral</b> |
| <b>Improved grasslands/pasture</b>          | Medium/high | Displaced in part by development; retained areas subject to improved management.                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Beneficial</b>      |
| <b>Woodland</b>                             | Medium      | Introduction of locally characteristic new woodland copses, in key locations to enclose the proposed development and enhance its setting.                                                                                          | <b>Beneficial</b>      |
| <b>Trees (on site)</b>                      | Medium/high | Retained and additional hedgerow trees planted together with numerous opportunities to plant trees in the public realm across the development envelope given the density of the proposed development (ca. 26.6 dph).               | <b>Beneficial</b>      |
| <b>Public access</b>                        | Medium/high | Provision of a new public footpath and permissive footpath linking Dawsons lane in the north to the A47 on the south, and thereafter wider open countryside to the south. Proposed development generally permeable and accessible. | <b>Beneficial</b>      |
| <b>Water features</b>                       | Medium      | Creation of a SUDs feature at the southern end of the site and all associated riparian habitat hierarchy.                                                                                                                          | <b>Beneficial</b>      |

### Night time/lighting impacts

- 6.73 With regard to landscape character and lighting effects, the residential development will be subject to a lighting scheme that is entirely consistent with all lighting schemes for this type and scale of development, with no elaborate or unique lighting features.
- 6.74 Light sources already exist in the area directly adjacent to the site, specifically residential lighting, with which the proposed development will be consistent. Any such lighting scheme will not present the proposed development as a separate and distinct form of development.

6.75 The proposed development is not likely to generate significant lighting effects on landscape character.

### Cumulative Impacts

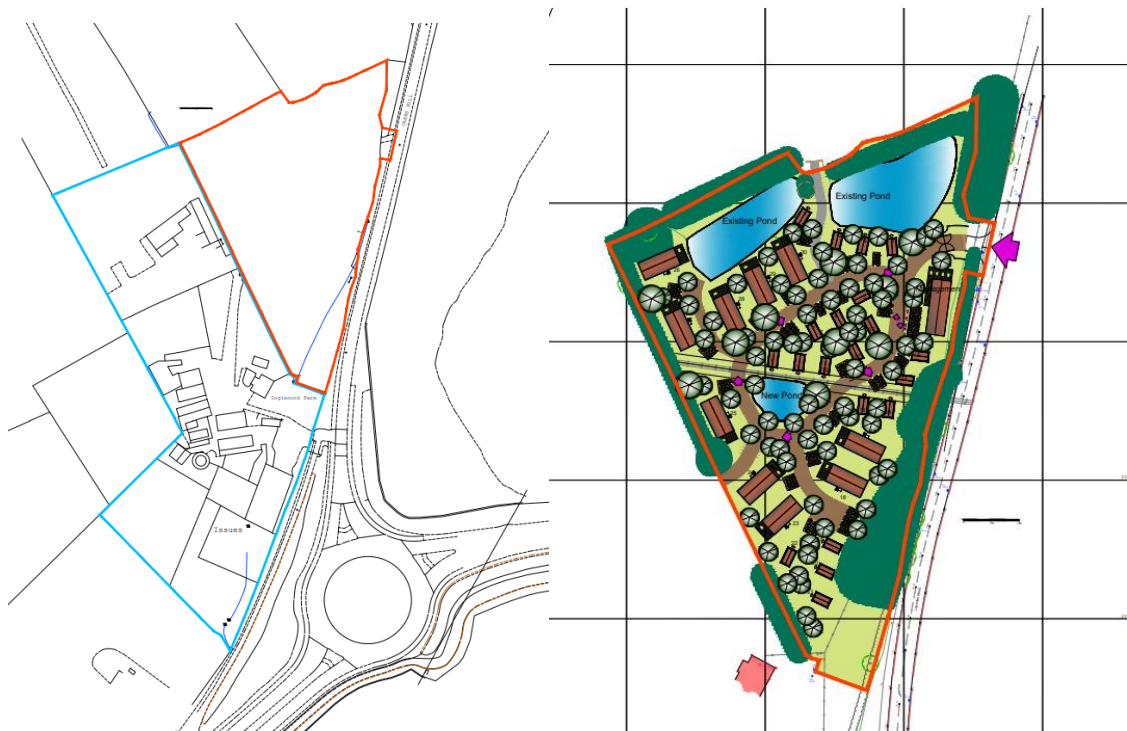
6.76 With regard to landscape character and cumulative effects, the site does not lie in close proximity to other similar types i.e. residential of proposed development.

6.77 There is however an application for a holiday lodge facility to the east of the site, at Inglenook Farm, directly adjacent to Leicester Road, see **Plate 3**, and **Figure 2, Landscape Planning Designations**. This is currently submitted for planning, as has not received approval, and hence is not part of the existing baseline context.

6.78 It occupies a single triangular shaped field enclosure, currently with an eroded appearance, but will retain (based on the illustrative material available) all perimeter features including mature vegetation and 2 no. ponds. Proposals include 20no. accommodation pods and 10 no. holiday lodges (all single story) plus ancillary development.

6.79 Notwithstanding that, the proposed facility would introduce, if permitted, another form of development that would displace an additional field enclosure in this part of the local landscape that is also part of the Green Wedge.

6.80 As such, in combination with the proposed development that is subject to this LVIA, there are likely to be some adverse cumulative effects, however these are not considered to be significant with regard to local of wider landscape character.



**Plate 3: Inglenook Farm Holiday Lodge Facility, Leicester Road, Barwell**

### Summary Comparison with previous Harrow Estates Proposal

- 6.81 With regard to landscape character and features, there are a number of improvements with respect to the likely adverse effects generated by the re-crafting of the development envelope, together with the different landscape (and urban) design approach to the residential development.
- 6.82 With regard to landscape character, whilst the *overall* assessment of likely effects remains the same as previously concluded, the reduction in overall net density of built form will enable the design to accommodate a greater degree of soft landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, shrub and ground cover material, and associated lawns and grassed areas. As such, the overall appearance of the development is likely to benefit from a more verdant landscape setting that will mature over time to allow the soft landscape, existing and proposed, to take greater overall effect.
- 6.83 Whilst there will remain a change in landscape character primarily by virtue land use, it is considered that the character and appearance of the proposed development both on the site and in the local context, in general terms will be improved.
- 6.84 With regard to landscape management and enhancement, the combination of landscape features with the strategy for wildlife and habitat enhancement, will also contribute to the improved character and appearance, and provide an increased level of benefit accordingly.

## 7 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

### Visual sensitivity

- 7.1 The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a function of the value attached to a particular view balanced with the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in a view and/or visual amenity. The criteria for the sensitivity of visual receptors are set out in the detailed methodology (**Appendix A**).

### Visual impacts

- 7.2 Visual impacts are considered separately to landscape impacts. For landscape impacts it is necessary to understand the combination of direct and indirect impacts on the landscape resources potentially affected by a proposed development and therefore it is possible to provide a description and overview of the key impacts that are likely to affect the study area.
- 7.3 However, for visual receptors it is necessary to understand the specific, direct impacts on each view. Therefore, the causes of impact are considered on the basis of individual receptors and are set out in the following sections as an integral part of the assessment of visual effects.

### Visual effects

- 7.4 The following section summarises the main visual impacts which are likely to be generated by the proposed development. This includes reference to the likely significance of effects on specific visual receptors.
- 7.5 A number of representative viewpoints were captured during the field work, and these are presented as a series of panoramic photos and included as **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Impact Assessment**. Two wireline Visually Verified Montages have also been provided for viewpoints 1a and 12 (refer to **Appendix B: Visually Verified Montages**).
- 7.6 The locations of all viewpoints, and the scope of the Verified Views are based on the previous LVIA, the SoCG at the previous appeal; and Appendix C of the local Authority's Landscape and Visual Evidence at that appeal. As such they comprise a representative whole.
- 7.7 A detailed analysis has been completed for each of the representative viewpoints. This includes reference to the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the nature and degree of the likely changes to the view. This is presented at **Figure 7: Viewpoint Photographs and Visual Assessment**.

### Overview of visual effects

- 7.8 The following section provides an overview of visual effects.

#### Views from the public right of way network

- 7.9 Views of the proposed development from the PRow network, including within and across the wider Green Wedge area, are generally limited.
- 7.10 There are however some distant views from the south where the rising landform along which the settlements of Barwell and Earl Shilton are located is visible, and where the site forms a very small part. In these views at, the southern part of the site is generally filtered by intervening vegetation. The northern part of the site is more visible as a result of rising topography, but in both cases, it appears in the context of the existing settlement edge at distance. The proposed development will appear from these locations as being 'subservient' to the existing built form as it rises further up the slope (refer to viewpoints 13 and 14, **Figure 7**).
- 7.11 There are also limited, filtered views towards the site from the PRow that extends from the eastern end of Dawson's Lane, connecting with Carrs Lane/Leicester Road. In these views at shorter distances, the site is generally "filtered" by a series of layers of intervening vegetation and as such views of the proposed development will be very limited (refer to viewpoints 10 and 11, **Figure 7**).
- 7.12 Whilst it is not a public right of way at this point, there is a view of the site from Dawsons Lane adjacent to the entrance to the allotments (refer to viewpoint 12, **Figure 7**). From this location, the proposed development will be visible beyond the layers of existing vegetation (and in front of the existing settlement edge of Barwell), but it will be filtered in part, by this vegetation, and more so in the longer term.
- 7.13 A visually verified "wireline" montage illustrating the extent of the development envelope in block format (no detail of units) view has been prepared from view 12 (**Appendix B**), that superimposes the extent of the proposed development envelope (purple line) against that for the previous 2021/23 Harrow Estates Application/Appeal (orange line). As is evident from this exercise, the change in the appearance of the extent of the development envelope for each proposal, is extremely limited.

#### **Views from the local highways network**

- 7.14 There will be a number of views from the local highways network. This includes views from Dawsons Lane adjacent to the northern site boundary (refer to viewpoints 2 and 3, **Figure 7**) where there are gaps in the existing mature hedgerow vegetation, for example at the north-western corner of the site, and through a field gate. Substantial areas of proposed mitigation along the site boundary in this location will establish in the longer term (15 years) to provide physical and visual containment of the proposed development, in a character that is already prevalent along this section of Dawsons Lane.
- 7.15 There will also be views from the southern part of The Common adjacent to the western site boundary, in particular at the proposed site entrance point (refer to view 6, **Figure 7**) where there will be a gap created in the existing hedgerow for the access, with mitigation planting including replacement hedging and trees that will establish in the longer term (15 years) to provide a good degree of physical enclosure to the access point.
- 7.16 From Shilton Road further to the north, looking south (referenced in the Green Wedge Review), there will be views of part of the proposed development, specifically areas of roof scape of residential units nestling amongst the mature vegetation infrastructure across the site (refer to views 1a, 1b and 1c, **Figure 7**). There is variance in these views, by way of

example from view 1b no proposed development will be visible as it will be screened by a hedgerow in the foreground. The overall composition of the long distance view, however, will not change.

- 7.17 Another visually verified “wireline” montage illustrating the extent of the development envelope view has been prepared from view 1a on Shilton Road (**Appendix B**), that superimposes the extent of the proposed development envelope (purple line) against that for the previous 2021/23 Harrow Estates Application/Appeal (orange line). As is evident from this exercise, the change in the appearance of the extent of the development envelope for each proposal, again, is extremely limited.
- 7.18 Whilst this development proposal extends the envelope slightly further to the south, it also retracts is from the east where proposed built form will be less visible.
- 7.19 Whilst the inclusion of development across part of the paddock at the north-western corner of the site extends the envelope in this direction, it is all screened by intervening topography.
- 7.20 Views from the A47 Leicester Road to the south are generally limited on the basis of the mature belt of vegetation that runs along the northern edge of the A47 corridor (refer to views 7 and 8, **Figure 7**). There is also a “slot” view looking across a field gate towards the site from the northern side of the A47 (refer to viewpoint 7a, **Figure 7**), from where limited elements of the southern part of the proposed development are likely to be seen adjacent to the proposed site entrance.
- 7.21 Views from Leicester Road/Carrs Hill to the east are limited by intervening vegetation, as are those from Elmesthorpe Road on the edge of Earl Shilton (refer to viewpoint 9, **Figure 7**).

#### **Views from the settlement edge/adjacent neighbours**

- 7.22 Views from properties adjacent to the site on the existing settlement edge of Barwell are generally localised and limited to the north (in part) along Dawsons Lane; and the west along the rear of Garner Close and sections of The Common (refer to Viewpoints 2, 3, 4a, 4b, and 6, **Figure 7** which illustrate views from the public realm in these locations).
- 7.23 Residencies along Dawsons Lane at this point generally have long front garden spaces, which slope upwards to the north and as such they are slightly elevated above site level. South facing elevations will consequently have views towards parts of the site, filtered in part by the mature vegetation in their front gardens and also that along Dawsons Lane. The proposed planting mitigation along the northern boundary of the site will serve to provide some visual containment to the proposed development from these locations as it establishes into the long term (15 years).
- 7.24 Those residencies along the southern and eastern edge of the more recent development within Garner Close will also have short distance views across the site and proposed development, however these are likely to be filtered by the mature vegetation that runs along these boundaries (individual trees and hedgerows). All such vegetation will be retained as part of the design proposals, and as such will provide a degree of filtering and visual containment.

- 7.25 A number of existing residencies towards the southern end of The Common (both eastern and western sides) will also have views towards the site, and specifically to the small area of proposed development adjacent to the stie access road, and the access road itself. The scale of the change in views here will be due to the very close proximity of these private visual receptors, and would be expected for receptors on the boundary of any development site in a greenfield or any other location.

#### **Night time/lighting impacts**

- 7.26 With regard to visual amenity and lighting effects, as noted in the previous section of this LVIA, the residential development will be subject to a lighting scheme that is entirely consistent with all lighting schemes for this type and scale of development, with no elaborate or unique lighting features.
- 7.27 Light sources already exist in the area directly adjacent to the site, specifically residential lighting, with which the proposed development will be consistent. Any such lighting scheme will not present the proposed development as a separate and distinct form of development.
- 7.28 The proposed development is not likely to generate significant lighting effects on landscape visual amenity.

#### **Cumulative Impacts**

- 7.29 With regard to visual amenity and cumulative effects, and with further reference to the proposed Holiday Lodge facility at Inglenook Farm, there are limited locations from where both the proposed development and this Lodge Facility are likely to be visible in tandem.
- 7.30 There may be some very limited instances in views from the public footpath adjacent to Leicester Road/Carrs Hill (refer to viewpoints 10 and 11, **Figure 7**) where glimpses of both development may be visible, however the vegetation network in this area is such that any such cumulative visual effects are not likely to be significant. The same applies for the eastern end of Dawsons Lane (refer to viewpoint 12, **Figure 7**)
- 7.31 Any glimpsed views of both developments from the vicinity of the A47/Leicester Road; Leicester Road/Carrs Hill; and Elvesthorpe Lane (Barwell) are also not likely to be significant for the same reasons.
- 7.32 Any views of the Holiday Lodge facility from Shilton Road at locations where the proposed development is visible in part (refer to viewpoints 1a and 1c, **Figure 7**) are also likely to be limited, and as such the overall composition of the view will be retained, and any such cumulative visual effects are not likely to be significant.

#### **Summary of visual effects**

- 7.33 In summary, the greater degree of visual effects will be from those areas in close proximity, such as receptors looking south from Shilton Road (where interactions of topography and vegetation allow), and from the boundaries of the site, which is to be expected for receptors on the boundary of any development site in a greenfield, and any other location.

- 7.34 Where the proposed development is seen from more distant locations, it will appear set within a strong framework of existing vegetation, in the context of the existing settlement of Barwell, and will not appear to reduce separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton.

#### **Summary Comparison with previous Harrow Estates Proposal**

- 7.35 With regard to visual amenity, there are again a number of improvements with respect to the likely adverse effects generated by the re-crafting of the development envelope, together with the different approach landscape (and urban) design of the residential development.
- 7.36 With respect to the elevated views from Shilton Road, where the proposed development is likely to be visible from, (views 1a and 1c), the relative reduction in overall net density will enable the design to accommodate a greater degree of tree planting across the development envelope, that will establish and mature to provide a more comprehensive fragmentation of the groupings of roofscapes of the proposed development in the longer term.
- 7.37 In addition, the greater articulation of the of the eastern flank of the envelope, and the increased amount of infrastructure planting along the northern site boundary will also assist in containing the spread, and increasing the visual enclosure of the proposed development (respectively), more robustly.
- 7.38 With regard to views from Dawsons Lane, a combination of the setback of the development envelope into the site, and increased planting along that boundary to complement the existing hedgerow, is similarly likely to provide a more robust mitigation strategy in the longer term.
- 7.39 With regard to the site entrance proposal, the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment has given a clear indication of the likely loss of hedgerow vegetation in that location. This loss of vegetation is capable of being mitigated successfully with new hedgerow and tree planting, with a narrower site access road serving to reduce the overall extent of road material visible.

## 8 GREEN WEDGE

### Overview

- 8.1 Green Wedge designation is one of land use control, whereby areas of Green Wedge primarily seek to guide the development form of urban areas, with policy designed to retain the functions of the Green Wedge. Green Wedge designation is not one that seeks to protect a landscape of any particular quality or amenity value.
- 8.2 According to HBBC's Green Wedge Review (2020): *"The presence of the green wedge helps to maintain settlement identity whilst providing green infrastructure links between settlements"*.
- 8.3 As set out in earlier sections of this LVIA, the site is located within the north-eastern area of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge, directly adjacent to the settlement of Barwell. The Green Wedge Review divides it into several 'Assessment Areas' and the site and its local landscape area located in Assessment Area C: East of The Common and south of Shilton Road.
- 8.4 The previous sections of this report have dealt with the issues of landscape resources (i.e. elements and features), character and visual amenity. This section considers the site and its landscape context in relation to the functions of the Green Wedge, and how the development proposals are likely to affect those functions.

### Functions of the Green Wedge

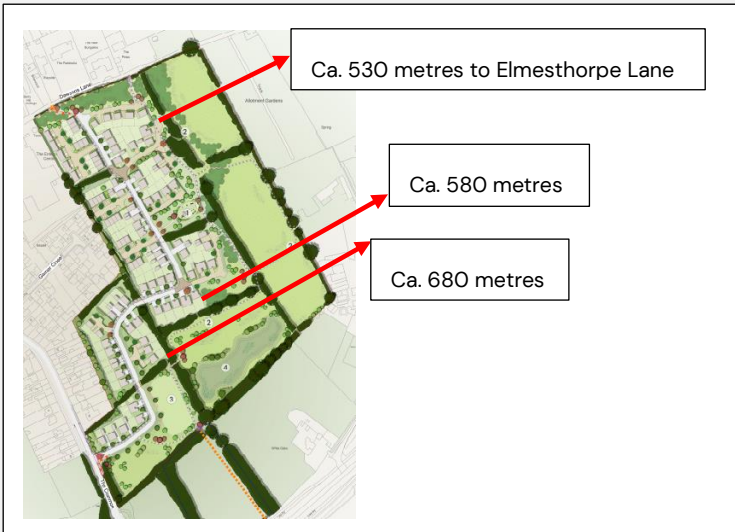
- 8.5 The Green Wedge Review provides an assessment of the Green Wedge using the following assessment criteria:
  - Preventing the merging of settlements: *Green Wedges will safeguard the identity of communities within and around urban areas that face growth pressures. The coalescence of settlements should be considered in terms of both physical separation and the perception of distance between the settlements.*
  - Guiding Development Form: *Green Wedges will guide the form of new developments in urban areas. Consideration will be given to designating new green wedges or amending existing ones where it would help shape the development of new communities' such as potential sustainable urban extensions.*
  - Providing a Green Lung into urban areas: *Green wedges will provide communities with access to green infrastructure and the countryside beyond. They are distinct from other types of open space in that they provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into urban areas. Green wedges could also provide multi-functional uses such as:*
    - *Open space, sport and recreation facilities*
    - *Flood alleviation measures*

- *Improving air quality*
- *Protection/improvement of wildlife sites and the links between them*
- *Protection/improvement of historic/cultural assets and the links between them*
- *Links to green infrastructure at both a strategic and local level*
- *Transport corridors*
- Acting as a recreational resource: *Green wedges will provide a recreational resource. This will include informal and formal facilities now and in the future. Public access will be maximised.*

## Potential impact on the Green Wedge

- 8.6 The following analysis provides an appraisal of the site's contribution towards the functions of the Green Wedge in respect of landscape and visual matters. The analysis considers the potential impact of change on the site in terms of introducing built form to the scale and character of that proposed.
- 8.7 Each of the functions of the Green Wedge are considered in **Table 6**, as follows.

**Table 6. Appraisal of the site's contribution to Green Wedge functions and potential impact of the proposed development**

| Green Wedge function                  | Contribution of the site to the Green Wedge function                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Impact on Green Wedge function                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Preventing the merging of settlements | <p>The site is located directly adjacent to the southern settlement edge of Barwell. From its north-eastern corner it is ca. 445m west of the settlement of Earl Shilton (taken as Elmesthorpe Lane to the east). From its south-eastern corner it is ca. 465m west of Earl Shilton. Notwithstanding this, Barwell and Earl Shilton are already joined further to the north, such that the site forms part of the Green Wedge where settlement coalescence has already taken place.</p>  | <p>Whilst the proposed development will extend new built form slightly closer to the settlement edge of Earl Shilton to the east, it will be well contained by a combination of new and existing landscape / green infrastructure.</p> <p>The Green Wedge Review states that in relation to Assessment Area C, "any significant built development would have an impact on the coalescence of Barwell and Earl Shilton", however it identifies that this is "with particular reference to the area close to Carrs Hill" (paragraph 5.13), which is located away from the site to the east.</p> <p>In terms of physical separation, the proposed development has been set back from the eastern and southern boundaries of the site, such that from the eastern extent of the development envelope itself is ca. 530 m west of Elmesthorpe Lane (at its nearest point). The remainder of the development envelope to the east and south is stepped back further and is between ca. 580m and 680 m from Elmesthorpe Lane (see adjacent diagram).</p> <p>In terms of the perception of separation, the proposed units do not extend beyond the 'built threshold' set by existing properties along Dawson's Lane (The Pines) to the north of the site; and likewise not extend beyond the southern edge of existing development along The Common (western side).</p> <p>As such the perception of physical and visual distance between the two settlement areas will be retained. The visual assessment undertaken as part of this LVIA also demonstrates that there are very limited locations from where the proposed development would be seen in conjunction with the edge of Earl Shilton. In these views, retained open land south of Shilton Road</p> |

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>and woodland planting at Carrs Hill will maintain a strong physical and visual 'break'.</p> <p>Overall, in landscape and visual terms, development of the site to the scale and character of that proposed will have only a <b>limited impact</b> on this function of the Green Wedge.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Guiding development form                | <p>As set out in earlier sections of this LVIA, the site and its local context are not covered by any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. The site is not protected for any particular quality or amenity value in landscape and visual terms.</p> <p>The site lies directly adjacent to the southern edge of Barwell and the combination of the existing articulated settlement edge, recreational land uses, major road infrastructure, commercial properties and other 'urban fringe' land uses such as the salvage yard and horsiculture serves to cast an urbanising influence across it. This influences the capacity of the site to accommodate development.</p> | <p>The existing settlement edge is articulated and not well defined in landscape terms, relying on the existing hedgerow network and boundary treatments to the existing residential and commercial land uses in varying condition.</p> <p>The proposed development will deliver a well-defined and robust landscape edge to the settlement, also articulated in form, using the existing vegetation framework to build on with additional woodland copse and tree planting, as well as the enhancement of existing hedgerows where necessary. This will guide and shape development form along this edge of Barwell.</p> <p>Overall, in landscape and visual terms, development of the site has responded positively to the identified landscape and visual constraints of the site and its context, which have guided it's form in a sensitive and responsive manner, and only have a <b>very limited impact</b> on this function of the Green Wedge.</p> |
| Providing a Green Lung into urban areas | <p>In terms of providing communities access to green infrastructure and the countryside, notwithstanding that a large part of it is in use for keeping horses, the site is not publicly accessible.</p> <p>It is however part of the wider Green Wedge area in this location that extends to Shilton Road in the north, which both physically and visually appears to extend into the urban area, in a "funnel" arrangement up the topographical slope.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>The Green Wedge Review highlights the "<i>gap established by the Green Wedge from The Common across to Elmesthorpe Lane, with the extension of open paddocks extending up to Shilton Road providing an important green lung element...</i>".</p> <p>As set out previously, the proposed development is retained by the 'built threshold' set by existing properties along Dawson's Lane (The Pines) to the north of the site, and the western edge of The Common to the south, and will be subject to a new robust landscape mitigation strategy.</p> <p>Proposed residential built form/road access will occupy 3.5 hectares and the rest of the site will remain open, maintaining its contribution to the green lung aspect.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                                                                                                                                           | <p>The Green Wedge Review also identifies an 'important vista' from Shilton Road towards Burbage, Elmesthorpe and the church spire at Stoney Stanton. Whilst the site is located just south of this view, the proposed development will be visible from only part of Shilton Road, not all of it. This is due to the visual screening of the site by the interactions of vegetation and topography. The proposed development will not materially interrupt these extensive panoramic views across the landscape from these locations. When considered from the south, the proposed development likewise will not materially change the appearance of the undeveloped landscape on the slope rising up to Shilton Road.</p> <p>Overall, in landscape and visual terms, development of the site to the scale and character of that proposed will have a <b>limited impact</b> on this function of the Green Wedge.</p> |
| Acting as a recreational resource | In terms of acting as a recreational resource, notwithstanding that a large part of it is in use for keeping horses, the site is not publicly accessible. | <p>The proposed development will allow opportunities for recreation. This includes proposals for a new public footpath through the site along the eastern flank of the development envelope, expanding the public footpath network that extends from Dawson's Lane to the east, and a new cycle route that utilises the proposed access road network. New play space will also be provided, with opportunities for mown paths through the managed meadowlands across the eastern flank of the site.</p> <p>Overall, in landscape and visual terms, development of the site to the scale and character of that proposed will have a <b>beneficial effect</b> (positive influence) on this function of the Green Wedge.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## Summary

### Green Wedge Functions

- 8.8 As set out, the Green Wedge Review divides the Green Wedge policy area into several 'Assessment Areas' and the site is located in Assessment Area C: East of The Common and south of Shilton Road. Assessment Area C is described as follows:

*"This area helps to guide development form and contributes collaboratively to the prevention of merging settlements. It provides access via public rights of way, allotments and horse paddocks, performing the role of a green lung and a recreational resource."*

*The area is particularly sensitive to coalescence, providing a green lung and acting as recreational resource. It also plays an important role in connecting Barwell to Earl Shilton and provides intravisibility [sic] between a number of settlements."*

- 8.9 **Table 6** provides a specific appraisal of the site's contribution towards the functions of the Green Wedge in this location, in respect of landscape and visual matters, and the likely effects of the proposed development on those functions.
- 8.10 In relation to preventing the merging of settlements, whilst the site is located between the settlements of Barwell and Earl Shilton (which have already joined further to the north), it is located contiguously with the southern settlement edge of Barwell and lies between ca. 445 and ca. 465m west of Earl Shilton (taken from the eastern site boundary to Elmesthorpe Lane to the east). It forms a small part of the separation functionality of this part of the Green Wedge.
- 8.11 In relation to guiding development form, the site is not protected for any particular quality or amenity value in landscape and visual terms. A combination of the existing settlement edge and other 'urban fringe' land uses such as the storage/salvage yard and horsiculture serves to cast an urbanising influence across it. This influences the capacity of the site to accommodate development.
- 8.12 In relation to providing a green lung into urban areas, the site forms part of the Green Wedge that extends physically and visually up the slope towards Shilton Road, offering panoramic elevated views southwards across the wider landscape, and more distant views northwards where the "funnel" of Green Wedge is evident.
- 8.13 In relation to acting as a recreational resource, notwithstanding that a large part of it is in use for keeping horses, the site is not publicly accessible.

### Green Wedge Impacts

- 8.14 Regarding preventing the merging of settlements, the analysis in **Table 5** demonstrates that the proposed development will only have a **limited impact** on this function of the Green Wedge.
- 8.15 Regarding guiding development form, the analysis demonstrates that the proposed development will only have a **very limited impact** on this function of the Green Wedge.

- 8.16 Regarding the green lung, again the analysis demonstrates that the proposed development will only have a **limited impact** on this function of the Green Wedge.
- 8.17 Regarding a recreational resource, the analysis demonstrates that the proposed development will have a **beneficial effect** (positive impact) on this function of the Green Wedge.
- 8.18 Overall, it is considered that in landscape and visual terms, the site does not perform a significant role in respect of any of the Green Wedge functions identified. The proposed development is likely to result in a limited impact on these functions, as well as providing some benefits.

#### **Summary Comparison with previous Harrow Estates Proposal**

- 8.19 With regard to matters of Green Wedge functions, the proposed development will generate no additional adverse effects in comparison to the previous proposal.
- 8.20 The improvements inherent in the lower residential density; increased planting along the Dawsons Lane site boundary; and increased elements of landscape features across the site (in particular across the development envelope) generally, are also likely to improve the appearance of the development proposal in its Green Wedge setting.

## 9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

- 9.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to determine the likely effects of the proposed development on land east of The Common, Barwell. The LVIA has addressed the following landscape resources and visual receptors:
- Landscape character, including physical landscape elements and features; and
  - Views and visual amenity experienced by residents, recreational users (including visitors and tourists) and road users.
- 9.2 The LVIA identifies the key constraints and opportunities present in the site and surrounding landscape, and also the nature of the likely impacts that may arise from the proposed development. The LVIA has analysed the baseline information in the context of the proposed development and has informed the proposals for landscape mitigation.

### Planning History

- 9.3 There have been two previous applications for residential development on this site. Firstly by Gladman Developments in 2017 (Appealed 2018); and secondly by Harrow Estates in December 2021 (appeal February 2023). Both applications were refused, and thereafter dismissed at appeal.
- 9.4 The Harrow Estates proposal comprised a significantly reduced scale and form of development than the previous Gladman proposal.
- 9.5 The proposed development that is subject to this LVIA, comprises a similar scale of development to that of the previous Harrow Estates proposal in terms of the extent of the development envelope, but with significantly reduced unit numbers (up to 95 as opposed to up to 110). This has allowed a different design approach to be adopted in direct response to a number of the concerns raised by the Inspector at the dismissed 2023 appeal.

### Landscape Character

- 9.6 In the wider context, the surrounding area lies within NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales and within East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 5A: Village Farmlands. At a borough level, the site is located within Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment).
- 9.7 The parliamentary enclosure field pattern of the site and its immediate context is generally typical of the local area. Field parcels are contained by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees and whilst generally intact and sufficient to provide robust

enclosure, some are unmanaged, fragmented and/or thinning/eroded by grazing at the base.

- 9.8 As part of this, the site is characterised by field enclosures used for intense horse grazing, with further sub-divisions by a mix of timber post and rail fencing in varying condition, post and wire fencing and plastic paddock stakes and tape. There is an evident presence of degradation across many parts of the site, specifically its northern and western flanks that are the direct result of its current land use, and the apparent lack of any positive landscape management.
- 9.9 The immediate context of the site comprises a mix of residential, commercial and 'urban fringe' land uses, including Dawson's Lane allotments to the east and an antiques centre and salvage yard to the south-east. Land form rises to the north across the site, and then extends to greater elevation into Barwell up to a local ridgeline.
- 9.10 Barwell to the west, and Earl Shilton to the east have already physically and visually joined in the vicinity of Shilton Road, Belle Vue Road and Hinckley Road.
- 9.11 The assessment of impacts on landscape character has determined that the significance of effect on Landscape Character Area F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland within the study area will be **negligible to minor adverse**. At year 15 after completion, the magnitude of the impact of the proposed development will reduce, resulting in a **negligible adverse effect**.
- 9.12 In order to consider impacts on landscape character at a more detailed level, this LVIA has also considered the character of the site and its local landscape context. This level the assessment concludes that the proposed development will result in a **minor to moderate adverse effect**. At year 15 after completion, the magnitude of the impact of the proposed development will reduce, resulting in a **minor adverse effect**.
- 9.13 In both instances, it is clear that the effects are limited and localised.
- 9.14 These overall conclusions on landscape character are consistent with those found for the previous Harrow Estates proposal.
- 9.15 However, as a direct consequence of the revised development and design approach to the site, the reduced unit numbers and associated density offers greater benefits in terms of the delivery of landscape features both across the development envelope and to its perimeter.
- 9.16 This includes the retained existing vegetation infrastructure and its future management, and more generally the greater influence of existing and proposed landscape inherent in the design approach itself. The result of this is firstly an improved appearance of the proposed development in overall terms; and secondly a series of greater benefits in terms of landscape features that was previously the case.

## Visual Amenity

- 9.17 Views across the site and its immediate context are generally limited by the various interactions of topography, vegetation and built form. As such the majority of views of the site are from positions on its boundaries, or in close proximity. Where there are views, they are typically filtered by the 'layering' of field boundary vegetation across the area, which is regular and forms effective screening, even during the winter months.
- 9.18 A detailed analysis has been completed for a range of representative viewpoints (informed by the previous LVIA work and discussion at the 2023 appeal), including reference to the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the nature and degree of the likely changes to the view.
- 9.19 Views from the PRoW network, including within and across the Green Wedge area, are generally gained from the south where the rising landform along which the settlements of Barwell and Earl Shilton are located, allows distant views towards the site. There are also limited, filtered views towards the site from the public right of way that extends from the eastern end of Dawson's Lane, connecting with Carrs Lane to the east.
- 9.20 In overall terms, the greater degree of visual impact will be from those areas in close proximity, such as receptors looking south from Shilton Road (where interactions of topography and vegetation allow), and from the boundaries of the site, which is to be expected for receptors on the boundary of any development site in a greenfield location. Where the proposed development is seen from more distant locations, it will appear set within a strong framework of existing vegetation, in the context of the existing settlement of Barwell.
- 9.21 On a "view by view" basis, the conclusions in respect of likely visual effects are, generally, consistent with those found for the previous Harrow Estates proposal.
- 9.22 However, again as a direct consequence of the revised development and design approach to the site, it is likely that the elevated views from Shilton Road will have a reduced adverse effect in the longer term on the basis of the increased tree planting across the development envelope; and views from Dawsons Lane will similarly have a reduced adverse impact in the longer term on the basis of the greater setback of the development envelope and the increased planting along that boundary.

## Green Wedge

- 9.23 The analysis presented in this LVIA provides an appraisal of the site's contribution towards the functions of the Green Wedge in respect of landscape and visual matters. It also considers the potential impact of change on the site in terms of introducing built form to the scale and character of that proposed.
- 9.24 Overall, it is considered that in landscape and visual terms, the site does not perform a significant role in respect of any of the Green Wedge functions identified.

The proposed development is likely to result in either limited or very limited impact on these functions, as well as providing some benefits.

- 9.25 These conclusions match those found for the previous Harrow Estates proposal. In addition, the proposed development is likely to have an improved appearance in its Green Wedge setting.

## **Conclusion**

- 9.26 A range of landscape and visual receptors have been tested and impacts have been identified for both landscape character and for visual receptors. This includes an iterative process whereby potential impacts have informed the landscape strategy for the site and mitigation has become embedded in the proposed development. This allows the proposed development to respond to the context of the setting of the local landscape and the policy context of the Green Wedge, together with its identified functions.
- 9.27 Overall, the proposed development will result in limited impacts at a localised level. The scale and form of proposed development is likely to result in impacts which are limited to the site area and its immediate context. Furthermore, the proposals for open space and green infrastructure will deliver enhancements in terms of the physical landscape resource.
- 9.28 The revised development and design approach in comparison to the previous Harrow Estates proposal also results in a series of reduced adverse effects from specific visual receptors, with greater benefits in terms of landscape features and the overall appearance and setting of the proposed development.
- 9.29 As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms.



## FIGURES 1-9



## APPENDIX A: LVIA Methodology



## **APPENDIX B: Visually Verified Montages**

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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