



## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

LAND SITUATED NORTH OF NORMANDY WAY, HINCKLEY,  
LEICESTERSIRE, LE10 1UP

ON BEHALF OF

MORRO PARTNERSHIPS LTD

JANUARY 2026

V3

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

- 1.1. BLADE Landscape Architects Limited ('BLADE') were commissioned on behalf of Morro Partnerships Ltd (the 'Applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) following feedback from the Local Planning Authority and to support the planning application 25/ 00199/FUL.
- 1.2. The Site is situated north of Normandy Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1UP, and located at OS Grid Reference: SP 43192 95799 (Site centre); see Appendix BLA 1. The Site is located within the administrative authority of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (the 'LPA').

### The Proposed Development

- 1.3. The Applicant is seeking planning permission for the erection of 25 dwellings, new access off Normandy Way, amenity space, parking and community orchard (the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.4. The Site and the Proposed Development is described in further detail in Section 2 and 3 respectively, and the Proposed Site Plan contained in Appendix BLA 2.
- 1.5. This LVA is part of a suite of documents accompanying a planning application for the Proposed Development. The Site and Proposed Development are described later within this LVA, with further Site details given in the Planning Statement which accompanies the planning application.

### The Purpose of this Landscape Visual Appraisal

- 1.6. This report has been prepared by a Chartered Landscape Architect and a Professional Member of the Landscape Institute with experience in landscape design and planning in the development sector. All drawings referenced within this assessment are in Appendices of the LVA.
- 1.7. The purpose of this LVA is to identify the baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics that might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. It then provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects predicted to arise from the development of the Site as follows:
  - Landscape fabric, when there is physical change to components of the landscape; landform, land use or land cover;
  - Landscape character, caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape; and
  - Visual amenity caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape because of Development.
- 1.8. This report is set out in the following sections:
  - The Site and the Project Description – This describes the elements of the Proposed Development with the potential to cause effects on landscape fabric, landscape character and/or visual amenity. The Site selection and design measures incorporated into the final design to help mitigate potential impacts are also outlined, this is contained in Section 2 and 3 with mitigation measures detailed in Section 4.

- **Findings of the Beline Assessment** – This section identifies the relevant guidance used to carry out the assessment, consultation to date, viewpoint selection and defines the study area; this is contained in Section 5. The detailed methodology can be found in the final appendix of this report.
- **Relevant Landscape Related Planning Policy** - The main planning policies, guidance, and background documents relevant to this appraisal; see Section 6.
- **Baseline Conditions** – The landscape and visual character of the Site and its setting is provided, establishing receptors within the study area with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development; see Section 7.
- **Potential Landscape and Visual Effects** – An assessment of potential effects on the landscape and visual receptors identified in the baseline assessment, drawing upon a combination of representative and specific viewpoints to demonstrate the potential effects because of the Proposed Development; see Section 8 and 9.
- **A review of the Site's contribution to the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge and how releasing this land for new homes would influence the function of the wider Green Wedge;** see Section 10.
- **Summary of Findings and Conclusion** – This section provides an overview of the Proposed Development in its landscape and visual context, drawing out the key findings of the assessment and concluding on the acceptability of the proposed development in landscape and visual terms; see Section 11.

## 2.0 THE SITE

### The Site

- 2.1. The Site is identified by the Council as allotment, but it has never been available for public access. Currently, the Site area is derelict and redundant.
- 2.2. The Site is situated off the A47, Normandy Road, close to the junction of Normandy Way with Ashby Road on the northeastern edge of Hinckley town. The Site is overlooked by existing residential development on its southwest-western edge, where there are existing homes oriented looking across the Site from their rear elevations.
- 2.3. There is no public access to the Site area, and no pedestrian pathway passing through the Site along Normandy Way. There are no Public Rights of Way ('PRoW') passing through the site, or along its boundaries.
- 2.4. Landform within the Site is gently rolling and is virtually flat, ranging from 124m AOD to 125m AOD, with similar topography reflected locally to the Site.

### 3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The Applicant is seeking planning permission for the erection of 25 dwellings, new access off Normandy Way, amenity space, parking and community orchard. The Proposed Development is shown in Appendix BLA 2. A brief summary of the proposed development is detailed below:

- Up to 25 no. new houses and 4 no. apartments are proposed.
- All new building are of two storey in height.
- Access to the development will be via a single vehicle and pedestrian access from Normandy Way through the existing gated access to the public allotments at the Site.
- The integration of the built scheme with extensive green infrastructure, creating new landscape buffers and public open space with pedestrian routes linking with Ashby Rood to the southwest linking to the wider urban area and open countryside beyond the boundary of the site.

3.2. The DAS supporting this application provides full details of the development proposals, and proposed schedule of implementation, and the Proposed Site Plan is contained in Appendix BLA 2 of this LVA report.

## 4.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

- 4.1. In siting the proposed development, the physical constraints of the Site and its topography have been taken into consideration to minimise the potential for the proposed development to not break skylines or represent a series of prominent new structures in views towards the Site.
- 4.2. The landscape and visual sensitivities of the Site have been influential in the development of the site's layout (contained in Appendix BLA 2). The development of the site's development framework design was an iterative process with input from Landscape Architect through the development of an emerging masterplan, and the eventual application.

### Imbedded Mitigation

- 4.3. With consideration of the foregoing, recommendations for the layout, position, height and extent of new built form have been integrated into the masterplan layout of the Site (N.B. Landscaping and landscape mitigation is considered further in this section of the LVA).
- 4.4. The prescription of the building heights for each proposed dwelling, and the relative finished floor level ('FFL') for each proposed unit have been tested through on-Site assessment, so that the proposal is not substantially greater, and is reflective of built context of the Site.
- 4.5. The mitigation measures embedded through the layout and arrangement of the Site are as following:
  - All dwellings are predominantly 2 storey in height.
  - The scheme is proposed at a similar density to the existing settlement pattern neighbouring the site along the Ashby Road (A447), and reflective of the wider urban area to the south of Normandy Way at the northeastern edge of the town; including the modern housing situated on Falmouth Road, Cornwall Way and Penzance Close.
  - The Site is identified by the Council as allotment, but it has never been available for public access.
  - The Proposed Development would retain the existing hedgerow and hedge line trees which enclose the site to the north and east, as well as protecting trees neighbouring the Site.
  - To retain and extensively bolster the existing hedgerow along Normandy Way with new hedgerow and hedge line tree planting, which in combination with the wider site edges would strengthen the landscape structure of the Site.
  - The proposed new residential dwellings have been deliberately arranged within the body of the Site to enable the conservation and enhancement of the Site's boundaries. This includes bolstering the existing hedgerow along Normandy Way with new hedgerow and hedge line tree planting, which in combination with the wider site edges would strengthen the landscape structure of the Site.

- Stepping development away Normandy Way to buffer the southern edge of the scheme for new landscaping and public open space.
- These buffers are not intended as ‘defensive screens’, but as natural features to provide an interface with the existing environment of Normandy Way, and those dwellings neighbouring the Site’s southwestern and western edge.
- Development is concentrated where it is most appropriate in environmental terms to do so, locating the proposed built form closest to the existing two storey homes neighbouring the Site to its southwestern edge.

4.6. This green infrastructure is an integral part of the proposed Site layout, which in turn, will deliver the enhancement of the local landscape and betterment of ecological habitat value. The proposed landscape strategy contained within Appendix BLA 4, has been designed to best integrate the development at the Site through new landscaping, as well as the conservation and enhancement of typical landscape fabric, rather than simply filtering and screening views.

### **Landscape Mitigation Measures**

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

4.8. In the development of the landscape strategy (contained in Appendix BLA 4) BLADE has considered the ‘host’ landscape character which the scheme would be set within. In the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (published September 2017) the Local Planning Authority identifies the site to be situated within a landscape character area which recommends maintaining and enhancing the fabric of the host landscape character area.

4.9. The Local Planning Authority has published a number of landscape guidelines for this host landscape character area, including the following:

- *‘Encourage the use of traditional ‘Midlandsstyle’ hedge laying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character. Restore hedgerow trees.*
- *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.*
- *Maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation.*
- *Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and unimproved acid grassland.’*

4.10. The combination of these factors has iteratively guided the Proposed Site Layout, as well as the landscape proposals for the development. This is illustrated on the drawn Illustrative Landscape Masterplan in Appendix BLA 4. Furthermore, these principles will be instrumental in developing the detailed design for the discharge of planning conditions post approval.

4.11. Drawing on this LVA and the forgoing technical information, the Proposed Development aims to offset and reduce the effect of the proposal through measures which include the following:

- Retention of the existing landscape fabric where practicable, including existing hedgerows, hedge line trees and protecting trees to the Site boundaries for visual mitigation, as well as enhancing the setting for the new built form.
- Retaining and enhancing vegetated boundaries for ecological links, amenity benefit and for habitat retention. The Site layout has been developed to maximise the retention of this landscape fabric within the Site and along its boundaries.
- Additional tree planting would also be provided to the southern boundary to Normandy Way and further native tree and mixed native scrub planting would be provided within the public open space within the proposed scheme.
- New ornamental shrub and tree planting is proposed to the edges of the car parking as well as native hedgerow. This would aid in increasing visual mitigation and securing arboricultural continuity for the long-term establishment of tree planting within the Proposed Development as well as providing ecological mitigation.
- The proposed development would retain the existing landform (except for the minor remodelling for new homes, roadway and the proposed attenuation pond), and therefore, the general pattern of the Site's landform would be retained.

4.12. In collaboration with the consulting Arboriculturist and Ecologist for this proposal, several green and blue infrastructure initiatives, and ecological enhancements have been integrated into the proposed development. The focus of these measures is less about screening and filtering views, rather, the enhancement of the local landscape and habitat value, as well as the better integration of development at the Site through new landscaping and the conservation and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site.

4.13. In combination, the establishment of these measures serves to reduce the potential for landscape and visual effects on the identified baseline receptors. The focus of these measures is less about screening and filtering views, rather, these measures are about enhancing the existing landscape resources and integrating the proposal well within its setting.

## Construction Phase

4.14. Given the foregoing, the following activities and elements have the potential to cause a temporary direct effect on the landscape fabric of the application Site, and an indirect effect, on the landscape and visual amenity of the study area:

- Erection of, and visual effect, of temporary site hoarding / fencing to enclose the Site, and tree protection fencing (to accord to BS 5837: 2012) within the Site, and along its boundaries;
- Temporary portacabin structures for site welfare and office, and vehicle parking area.
- Earthworks excavation for the formation of construction levels.
- Utility of the existing gated access from Normandy Way for the construction stage, and the permanent access / egress proposed for the scheme.
- HGV deliveries to Site and movement of vehicles on Site delivering materials.

4.15. All ground disturbances would be confined as far as practicable and working widths during construction operations would be restricted resulting in a minimal interference with existing soil structures and habitats.

## Construction Mitigation

4.16. The details of construction methods, timing and phasing are not known at this stage; however, this appraisal has assumed a reasonable worst-case scenario. The following measures should be implemented and adhered to during the temporary construction phase:

- An approved Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS) incorporating best practice guidance set out in British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction could be adopted, which would ensure retained trees and hedgerow are not adversely affected during the construction process;
- Visual screening, such as hoardings, could be adopted around sections of the Site boundary to protect visual receptors in proximity, including residential dwellings and Road Users passing along Normandy Way in proximity of the Site;
- Construction works that create dust would be kept to a minimum within proximity of residential receptors and receptors near the Site; and
- Mitigation measures for construction lighting are likely to include directional fittings and restricted hours of operation, and if requested by the LPA, could be outlined within the Lighting Strategy for the project.

## 5.0 FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE APPRAISAL

- 5.1. This LVA has involved a desk study, field work, data processing and analysis as well as interpretation using professional judgement undertaken by a Landscape Architect in early December 2025 and based on best practice guidance. Prior to this, the assessing Landscape Architect has iteratively worked on the assemblage of the Proposed Development through the development of an emerging masterplan, and the eventual application.
- 5.2. Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. 15 years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the shorter-term effects (which may often be rather 'raw' before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long time.
- 5.3. This LVA has involved desk study, field work, data processing and analysis as well as interpretation using professional judgement undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced member of BLSADE's team of Landscape Architects. This was undertaken in mid-December 2025 and based on best practice guidance<sup>1</sup>.
- 5.4. An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken and a series of photographs taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The assessment was undertaken in winter-time conditions in mid-December 2025.

### Definition of the Study Area

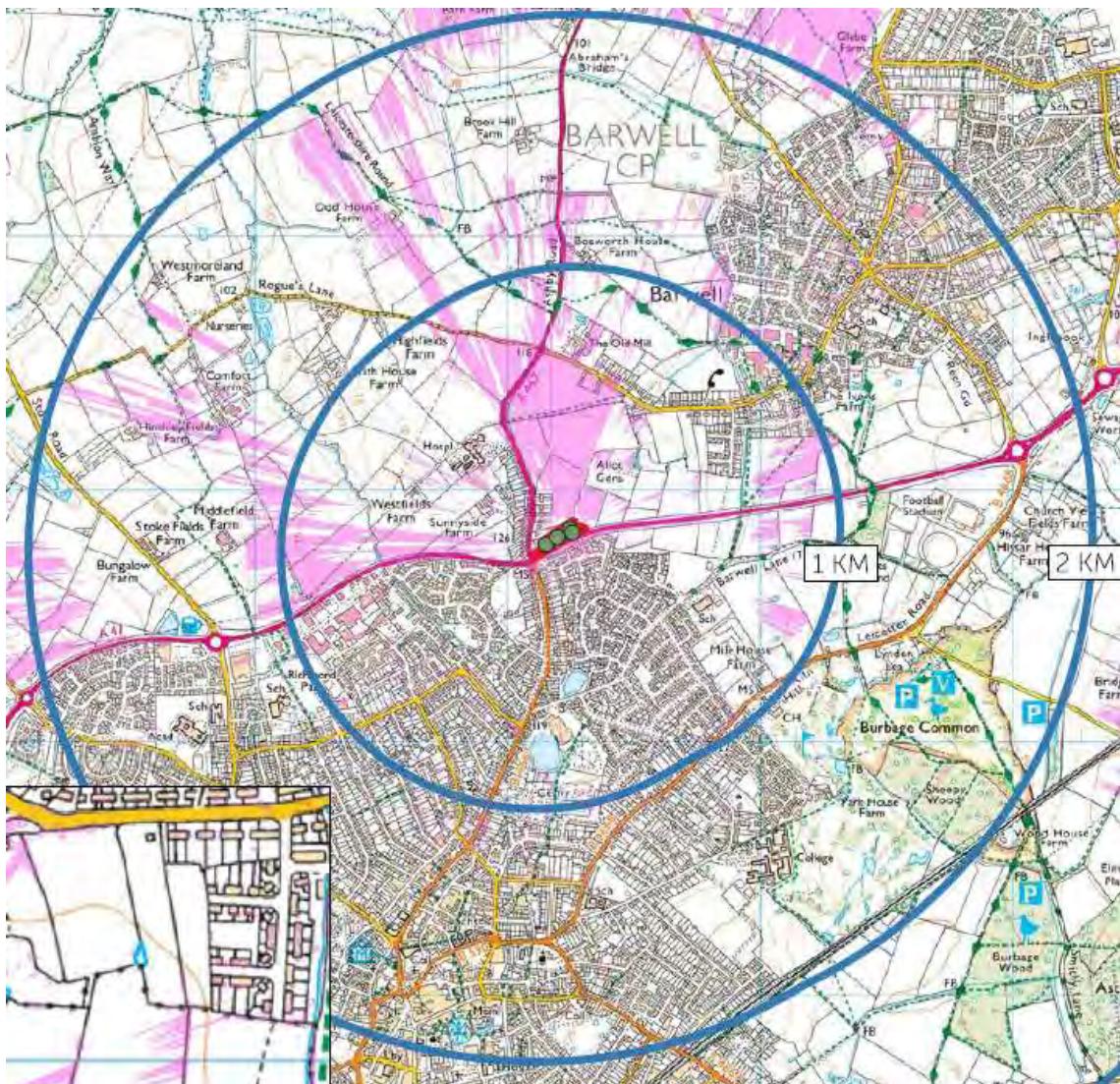
- 5.5. Initially, a broad 'study area' was adopted, the extent of which is illustrated on the Site Context plan (see Appendix 1), this was formed mainly on a desk based study. This broad study area enabled the geographical scope of the appraisal to be defined based on the Site's environmental planning context and the extent of views to and from the Site
- 5.6. To establish the baseline context of the Site and its surrounding, and to assess the potential limit of material effects, the study area was informed through a plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility ('ZTV'). This ZTV was plotted over a radius of 5km distance from the Site's boundary.
- 5.7. The ZTV study area enabled the geographical scope of the appraisal to be defined based on the Site's environmental planning context and the extent of views to and from the Site. This informed the field-based assessment to the land area most likely to experience the effects of the Proposed Development.
- 5.8. For brevity and accuracy of the likely potential area affected by the Proposed Development, the ZTV was prepared using LIDAR data, rather than a more simplistic bare earth model. The use of LIDAR data enables the influence of more than landform to be considered and plotted; see Appendix BLA 3.
- 5.9. For instance, the effect of built development, walling, hedgerows, hedge line trees, tree groups, woodland and other features is mapped, and this plotted to determine how these features would restrict the visibility of the Proposed Development.

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

- 5.10. Through on-site observations, a Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) was also identified. By visiting publicly accessible locations, walking PRoW routes and the local road network, BLADE have determined a zone by which the Site is discernible.
- 5.11. In this case, the area of the ZTV is very restricted given the existing hedgerow and tree belts to the Site boundaries, as well as those along Normandy Way, enclosing the wider urban area of Hinckley to the south and existing residential development aligned to the Ashby Road to the west. The combination of these features and the gently undulating landform leads to a coalesce of tree components and hedgerows enclosing the area local to the Site.
- 5.12. Given the foregoing, the Zone of Primary Visibility is limited to a very minor geographical area within close range of the Site with no long distance views available. The scale and extent of surrounding field hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and enclosing the Site itself limits the discernibility of the Proposed Development.
- 5.13. In many situations, the Site is not seen wholesale, and as demonstrated above, in many situations, views of the Site are substantially filtered along the boundaries, and the entirety of the Site cannot be viewed from any one location given the layering of internal boundary vegetation.
- 5.14. The primary zone of visibility is where representative viewpoints are assessed, and whilst there may be views from the wider area beyond the primary zone, views are less open, and likely to be filtered, or to an extent screened by existing landscape features, built development or landform.
- 5.15. To demonstrate the foregoing, Image BLA 5.1 contains an extract from the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3):

Image BLA 5.1: Extract from the Zone of Theoretical Visibility plotted by BLADE; see Appendix BLA 3



5.16. In summary, the Site's Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) extends barely beyond the boundaries of the Site itself (when considered in terms of the broader visual context) and within isolated areas of the open countryside beyond the town of Hinckley to the north of Normandy Way.

5.17. In my experience, this is an extraordinarily limited zone of visibility for a land parcel of this size so close to a relatively large settlements such as Hinckley, and large village such as Barwell and Earl Shilton. Together these features provide a very well contained context for a development of new homes, especially, as the scheme would repurpose the now redundant former land use of the Site.

### Viewpoint Selection

5.18. Given the foregoing, representative viewpoints have been selected, and during mid-December 2025. In selecting these viewpoints, BLADE has been conscious of appraising the Site from all points of the compass, as well as within a range of distances to the Site, as well as testing the development proposals from a range of receptor types.

5.19. A list of the selected viewpoints and their reasons for selection is provided in Table BLA 5.2 overleaf. The location of representative viewpoints is illustrated on the Site Context Plan (Appendix BLA 1).

5.20. Viewpoint Sensitivity is defined as high, medium or low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters, as follows and defined in Table BLA 5.1 (overleaf):

- Location and context of the viewpoint;
- Land use or main activity at the viewpoint;
- Frequency and duration of use;
- Landscape character and quality of the intervening landscape; and
- Value attached to view.

**Table BLA 5.1: Visual Sensitivity in relation to Main Activity at Viewpoint**

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
Very High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clear value but may be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
Medium	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
Low	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
Negligible	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.

Table BLA 5.2 – Summary of Representative Viewpoints

View	Location	Eastings and Northings	Approx Distance from the Closest Site Boundary	Reason for Selection (Site Topography: c. 125-126m AOD)
1	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the north of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell	443002, 296275	0.45km N/0 degrees looking S/180 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside on the outskirts of Hinckley and Barwell. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. This route has an urban edge setting. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change (at most) and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 120m AOD.
2	View from Ashby Road looking south towards the Site as Road Users pass through open countryside approaching the settlement edge Hinckley	443220, 296888	1.1 km NE/40 degrees looking SW/220 degrees	View from a public roadway approaching the settlement edge of Hinckley. Road Users would be transient. The route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation. Road Users would have a medium susceptibility to change and a medium visual sensitivity. Topography: 112m AOD.
3	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U36/3) situated to the northeast of the Site passing to and from the settlement edge of Barwell	443546, 296714	1.25 km NE/45 degrees looking SW/225 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside on the settlement edge of Barwell. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change (at most) and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 113m AOD.
4	View from Hinckley Road passing to and from Barwell to the northeast of the Site	443420, 296409	0.55km NE/40 degrees looking SW/230 degrees	View from a public roadway approaching the settlement edge of Barwell. Road Users would be transient. The route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation. Road Users would have a medium susceptibility to change and a medium visual sensitivity. Topography: 112m AOD
5	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the northeast of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell	443451, 296378	0.5km NE/40 degrees looking SW/230 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside on the outskirts of Hinckley and Barwell. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. This route has an urban edge setting. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change (at most) and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 112m AOD.
6	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U44/2) situated to the east of the Site passing between Barwell and Hinckley through open countryside	444005, 295976	0.75km E/80 degrees looking W/280 degrees	View from PRoW passing between the built up areas of Barwell and Hinckley. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change (at most) and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 115m AOD.

7	View from Penzance Close, a residential street in Hinckley south of the A47	443231, 295758	Within 0.1km S/160 degrees looking N/340 degrees	View from a residential street to the south of the A47 and within close range of the Site. The route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation. Road Users would have a medium susceptibility to change and a medium visual sensitivity. Topography: 125m AOD
8	View from the junction of the A47 and Ashby Road to the southwest of the Site	443089, 295697	Within 0.1km SW/240 degrees looking NE/60 degrees	Neither route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation. Road Users would have a medium susceptibility to change and a medium visual sensitivity. Topography: 125m AOD.
9	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U3/2) passing through open countryside to the west of the Site	440570, 296019	2.4km W/270 degrees looking E/90 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside within very long range distance of the Site. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 110m AOD.
10	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T60/2) passing through open countryside to the north west of the Site	441879, 296235	1.55km NW/310 degrees looking SE/130 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside within long range distance of the Site. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 113m AOD.
11	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through open countryside to the north-north west of the Site	442671, 297089	1.30km N-NW/340 degrees looking S-SE/160 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside within long range distance of the Site. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 106m AOD
12	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through open countryside to the north of the Site	443167, 296687	0.95km N/350 degrees looking S/170 degrees	View from PRoW passing through open countryside within medium range distance of the Site. This route is neither a promoted route to passing through a National or local landscape designation. PRoW Users would have a high susceptibility to change and high visual sensitivity. Topography: 115m AOD
13	View from Ashby Road looking southeast towards the Site as Road Users enter Hinckley	443021, 296164	0.4km N/340 degrees looking S/160 degrees	View from a public roadway passing through Hinckley near to the location of the Site. Road Users would be transient. The route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation. Road Users would have a medium susceptibility to change and a medium visual sensitivity. Topography: 122m AOD

## 6.0 THE PLANNING CONTEXT AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

### National Planning Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup>

- 6.1. The NPPF was updated in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2. The NPPF Para 131 states that '*The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*'.
- 6.3. Para. 136 states that '*new streets [should be] tree-lined*', and '*that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible*'.
- 6.4. Paragraph 187 notes that the '*intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services*' should be recognised. Paragraph 188 makes it clear that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that the development plans should distinguish between these and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.
- 6.5. Relevant Planning Policy Guidance that accompanies the NPPF includes that relating to Green Infrastructure, Landscape, and Design (including the National Design Guide).

### Local Planning Policy

- 6.6. The Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026) was adopted in December 2009, and includes the over-arching general policies, to which the development proposals will be tested within the accompanying Planning Statement. Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are:

#### Policy DM4

- 6.7. Policy DM4 is entitled 'Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation', and states the following:

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

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<sup>2</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. (2024) NPPF. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

*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*

*b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting;*

*and:*

*i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and*

*ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and*

*iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development.....'*

6.8. BLADE notes that this is the main Local Planning policy which the development proposals will be appraised against in this LVA. Further to this, the following policy is pertinent:

#### **Policy DM10**

6.9. Policy DM 10 is entitled 'Development and Design' and states:

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

*c) It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;*

*e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting.....'*

#### **Consultation Draft Local Plan 2024-2045 (August 2025)**

6.10. The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan will set out the vision and objectives for the growth of the borough up to 2045. The plan will:

- *'Identify land and areas for development for a broad range of uses;*
- *Identify areas that should be conserved or enhanced and where future development should be carefully managed;*
- *Set clear policies that guide decisions on planning applications; and*
- *Indicate how the plan will be delivered, including infrastructure, and how progress will be monitored.'*

6.11. The LPA are currently consulting on their Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. This consultation ran from the 17 October to Friday 28 November 2025. Pertinent Draft (Consultation) policies include the following:

#### NAT10

6.12. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT10 is titled 'Landscape Character Development', and states the following:

*'Development Proposals will protect and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the landscape character areas identified in the latest Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study. Proposals will be required to:*

*a. Where appropriate incorporate and implement the landscape strategies and/or guidance set out in the most up to date Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study;*

*b) Protect and enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design and management;*

*c) Make provision for the retention and enhancement of features of landscape importance;*

*d) Where appropriate, provide landscape mitigation;*

*e) Where significant landscape impacts are likely to occur a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be prepared.'*

6.13. BLADE notes that this is the main landscape derived policy within the Draft Consultation Local Plan, and further to this, the following Draft (Consultation) policies are pertinent:

#### NAT01

6.14. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT01 is titled 'Green Infrastructure', and states:

*'Development proposals will be supported which contribute to the growth and enhancement of the Borough's multi-functional green infrastructure network in line with the following requirements:*

*On-site green infrastructure requirements should be planned and designed from the outset as a network of multifunctional spaces which identify and respond to the sites local context.....*

*The scheme identifies important local character features as a starting point for the green infrastructure proposals and incorporates them into the scheme to reference, reflect and enhance the local environment.....*

*Development shall contribute to the green network through the integration of multi-functional green infrastructure into masterplans, or where it can be demonstrated to be more appropriate, through delivery of enhancements or expansion of the green network through off-site delivery, in accordance with the latest Borough Council Green Infrastructure Strategy.....*

*Developers must consider the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure and should demonstrate how these considerations have informed site proposals.....'*

#### **PMD01**

6.15. Draft (Consultation) Policy PMD01 is titled 'High Quality Design', and states:

*'The Borough Council will require the highest standards of design, architecture, inclusivity and place-making. Development will be supported where it positively takes into consideration the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Good Design Guide (SPD), the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, any Design Guide contained in a made Neighbourhood Plan, and any other relevant national design guidance.'*

6.16. Part D and Part J state:

*'d). The development complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regards to scale, layout, density, massing, design, high quality materials and architectural features.'*

*j). Provides an appropriate level of well-designed and well-located high quality landscaping, including all new streets to be tree-lined where appropriate, and the implementation of green and/or blue infrastructure in line with, in particular, policies NAT01 and NAT11'.*

#### **NAT11**

6.17. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT11 is titled 'Blue Infrastructure', and states:

*'New development will be required to contribute towards the delivery of a high quality multi-functional Blue Infrastructure network by expecting Blue Infrastructure assets to be provided, protected, maintained and enhanced to deliver multiple benefits and services for biodiversity, recreation and landscape.'*

#### **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Good Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council 2020**

6.18. This supplementary planning document will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted development plan to ensure adherence to Borough-wide and location specific policy. The SPD does the following:

- *'Provides details of the design development and planning application process, including clearly setting what will be required of applicants;'*
- *'Provides Borough-wide, strategic urban design principles that all development should seek to reflect, together with introducing the key components of development as a means of describing design and highlighting how good design can mitigate potential impacts on climate change;'*
- *'Provides place-specific understanding and principles that reflects the Borough's rich local identity;'*

- *Provides use-specific design principles on key development types: new residential developments.'*

6.19. The Design Guide states:

*'One of the key factors for design in the Borough is acknowledging that it is predominantly rural. The area's urban and rural settlements interact with a significant landscape backdrop. This backdrop has a varied and diverse character including settled forests, rolling farmland, open farmland, village farmland, and agricultural parkland associated with historic aristocratic estates.'*

6.20. The Design Guide continues and highlights the following objective:

*'To protect this natural landscape environment, development should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*

6.21. Pertinent to the site, and its location, the Design Guide states:

*'At a wider level protect the perception of separation between settlements, including those in the designated green wedges, ensuring that new development does not result in harm to existing environments.'*

### **Landscape Designations**

6.22. The Site does not lie within any national or local designations for landscape, and the Site is not located within the Green Belt.

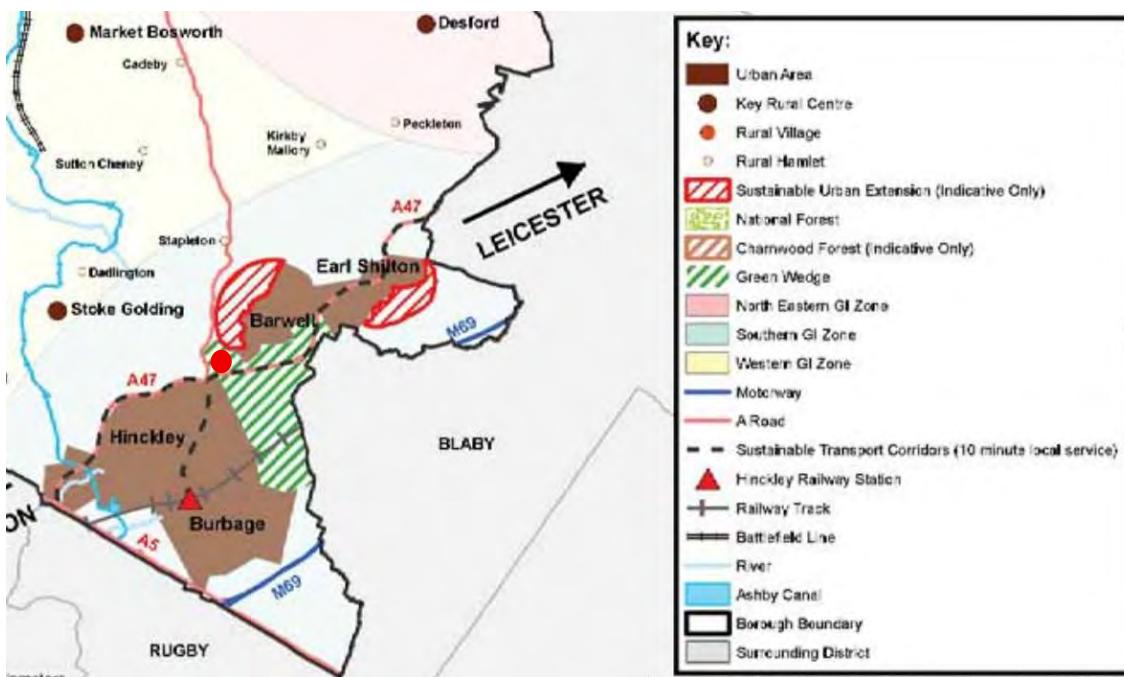
### **Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings**

6.23. As demonstrated by the Site Context Plan contained in Appendix BLA 1; the Site is not situated within or adjoining a Conservation Area, and does not contain or adjoin any Listed Buildings.

### **Green Wedge**

6.24. With consideration of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026), the Site is situated within, albeit on the peripheral edge, of a locally designated Green Wedge, the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge; see Image BLA 6.1:

Image BLA 6.1: Extract from the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026), Policies Map, page 25. N.B. The approximate location of the Site is shown by BLADE with a solid red circle



6.25. At paragraph 4.26 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026), the LPA states:

*'The green wedge between Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton protects the separation of the three settlements, helping to protect their individual identities and provides easy access from the urban areas into green spaces, contributing towards the quality of life for residents in these urban areas. Maintaining the Green Wedge is an important part of protecting the green infrastructure of the borough. There are opportunities within the green wedge for enhancement to further increase its amenity as well as ecological value. A green wedge management plan will be produced to ensure appropriate future management of this important area. A review of the boundary of the green wedge will take place through the Site Allocations and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Document'.*

6.26. Policy 6 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy is titled 'Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge' and is specifically for the Green Wedge in which the Site is located. Policy 6. The proposed development's compliance with this policy is considered within Section 10 of this LVA.

## Interim Summary

6.27. Given the foregoing, BLADE notes the following:

- The NPPF shows a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- The Site is situated within, albeit on the peripheral edge, of a locally designated Green Wedge, this is the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge.
- The site does not fall within, or adjoin, any National or local landscape designations; and
- There are no heritage assets within, or adjoining the quantum of the site.

6.28. Given the foregoing, the site is not afforded elevation protect under National and local planning policy.

6.29. The Local Planning Policies (adopted and draft (presently undergoing consultation)) contain a number of overarching policies of relevance to this study. The main themes of these policies, against which the proposed development could be tested, have been summarised here for convenience:

- Development proposals should consider the latest Landscape Character Assessment and its guidelines to retain and manage landscape features that contribute to wider landscape character and the setting of development.
- New development should seek to conserve and restore the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the host landscape character area.
- The location, materials, scale and use of any proposed development should be sympathetic to and complement local landscape character.
- An assessment of landscape and visual effects is required to support a planning application where there is possibly a detrimental effect on landscape as a resource.

## 7.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Landscape Character

#### Existing Landscape Character Assessment

- 7.1. This section appraises the existing, or baseline conditions of the character of the Site, and its landscape context through consideration of published landscape assessments.
- 7.2. Such an assessment is worthwhile enabling a better understanding of the site, and its context, but rarely delivers sufficiently site-specific or contemporary information to enable robust conclusions about the significance of any change through the proposed development. As such, BLADE has also undertaken its own field-based assessment of the site and its context, which is included later in this section.

#### Background Published Evidence Base Documents

- 7.3. The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this LVA:
  - Natural England National Character Assessment;
  - Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017); and
  - Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017).

#### National Character Assessment

- 7.4. The landscape of England has been subject to a nationwide Landscape Character Assessment, 'The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features' (Natural England). The Site is located wholly within the National Character Area (NCA) 94, the 'Leicestershire Vales'. NCA 94 extends across a total area of nearly 72,000 Hectares; see Image BLA 7.1:

Image BLA 7.1: Extract from Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 94: Leicestershire Vales. N.B. BLADE has marked the approximate location of the site with a red circle



7.5. Natural England describe this National Character Areas as follows:

*'This is a large, relatively open and uniform landscape composed of low-lying clay vales interrupted by varied river valleys. Its sense of place comes less from its overall landform and more from its visually dominant settlements and views of the surrounding higher ground, particularly to the north of Leicester'.*

7.6. Natural England continues:

*'Other large- to medium-sized settlements include Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Hinckley, with many attractive small towns and villages, and buildings and features of historic interest in between. In the north of the area there is a predominance of built settlements and a general associated lack of tranquillity'.*

7.7. Natural England recognises a number key characteristics for this National scale landscape area, including the following:

- *'An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups bedrock but with an extensive cover of superficial deposits occasionally giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes. There is an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern.*
- *Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils.*
- *Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces together with tributaries including the Sence. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common, along with waterbodies resulting from gravel extraction.*
- *Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedgerows varies throughout.*
- *Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.*
- *Frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Frequent, imposing spired churches are also characteristic, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings.*

7.8. Natural England highlights the following sensitivities occurring within this National Character Area:

- *'SEO 1: Protect and appropriately manage the strong historic character and heritage and the geological assets within the rural and urban landscapes, maintaining the evidence of past land use and connections between agriculture, settlement pattern and topography, as well as the significant places and events that took place within the area, so that the area can be enjoyed by all. Ensure that development is fully integrated into and informed by the landscape.'*
- *'SEO 2: Manage, conserve and enhance the woodlands, hedgerows, streams and rivers – particularly the rivers Soar, Sence, Swift and Welland – in both rural and urban areas, to enhance biodiversity and recreation opportunities; improve water quality, flow and availability; benefit soil quality; and limit soil erosion.'*
- *'SEO 3: Increase, manage and enhance the recreational assets, principally the rights of way network, country parks such as Watermead and historic linear features such as the canals. Improve access to these assets and the open countryside from the city of Leicester and surrounding rural communities and provide green infrastructure to help improve people's health and wellbeing.'*
- *'SEO 4: Create new habitats where opportunities exist, such as woodlands and wetlands at old gravel extraction sites, to extend, link or buffer areas of existing habitat to reduce the impacts of fragmentation. Manage existing grassland, woodlands, coverts and spinneys that contribute to sense of place, enhancing biodiversity resilience and habitat networks'.*

7.9. With consideration of BLADE's field-based assessment, while NCA 94 is broadly representative of the Site's landscape, and its context, the description is far too generic to robustly inform an assessment of the suitability of the development proposals at the Site.

7.10. The National level assessment gives a broad brush impression of a region and provides a useful contextual overview of the character of the wider landscape. However, the proposed development is not considered to have the potential to result in any perceptible effects on landscape character at this national scale and - to remain proportionate to the small scale of the Site in relation to the NCA - focus is placed upon the local landscape character.

7.11. For the scale of the Site and potential developable area the description of landscape character undertaken at a more localised level is more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline.

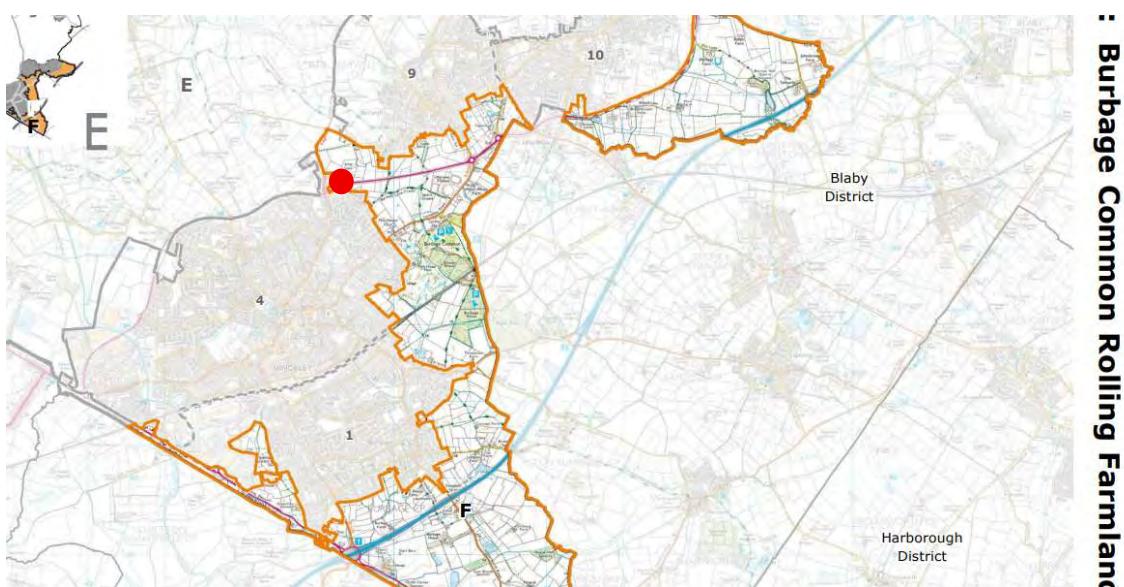
### **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment**

7.12. Guidance of the local landscape character of the area can be found in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, which was published in September 2017. This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides a broad scale understanding of the landscape across the Borough, setting out character types relative to the context of the site, and enable a more focussed understanding of the landscape within the study area.

7.13. The Local Planning Authority identifies broad Landscape Areas based on their physical, cultural, natural and perceptual characteristics. In each case the key characteristics which contribute to the Character Area's local distinctiveness and sense of place are set out, together with supporting information. The LPA then break these areas down into smaller, more discrete areas, which it refers to as Landscape Types.

7.14. With consideration of Figure 7 (titled 'Landscape Character Areas and Types') of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the LPA find the site to be situated wholly within the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area, and wholly in the 'Rolling Farmlands' Landscape Type; see Image BLA 7.2:

Image BLA 7.2: Extract from the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), page 31. N.B. BLADE has shown the approximate location of the Site with a red circle



7.15. The Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area is described by the LPA as follows (N.B. BLADE has underlined those landscape features common to the Site's surrounding context):

Land cover comprises large scale, arable farmland with blocks of broadleaved woodland in and around Burbage Common and smaller spinneys and copses in the southern part of the area. Smaller scale pasture fields are common around the settlement edges. The field pattern is typical of parliamentary enclosure, in the form of geometric field boundaries, defined by low hedgerows and post and wire fencing. Field boundaries often follow contours and occasionally contain mature hedgerow trees, although the lack of trees overall creates an open character.

#### Key landscape Features

7.16. The following key features are noted below (N.B. BLADE has underlined those landscape features common to the Site's surrounding context):

- 'Large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland with local variations in topography influenced by small streams.'

- *Burbage Common and ancient woodland is of national and local importance as an ecological and recreational resource.*
- *Medium to large scale rectilinear field pattern bounded by low hedgerows and post and wire fencing with smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements. Field boundaries and hedgerows generally follow contours.*
- *Urban fringe influences as a result of exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton situated on higher ground and recreational uses around Burbage Common.*
- *Sparse settlement within the area, comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes.*
- *Major transport corridors dissect the landscape and introduce noise and movement.*
- *Open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views to edge of settlement, often situated on the skyline, and punctuated by major infrastructure.*
- *Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round, concentrated around Burbage Common and extending outside the borough into Blaby.*
- *Green Wedge providing separation between Hinckley and Barwell and green infrastructure to the cluster of settlements of Burbage, Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton.'*

#### Historical and Cultural Influences

7.17. The following influences are noted below (N.B. BLADE has underlined those landscape features common to the Site's surrounding context):

- *The field pattern in this area is largely a result of parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries, producing the traditional geometric fields defined by hedges and roads with wide grass verges.*
- *Areas of irregular (curved or dog-leg field shapes) are located throughout the landscape and indicate piecemeal enclosure, in post-medieval times, of the open medieval fields. Many isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout the landscape and are likely to have been built in the 18th and 19th century following the enclosing of the previously-open fields.*
- *The medieval open field system that existed prior to enclosure is still visible in part due to surviving ridge and furrow earthworks, particularly noticeable in fields adjacent to Barwell.*
- *Burbage House, now demolished, was once a grand gothic mansion owned by Mr JS Crosland and stood to the south of Burbage. Two cottages remain along Lutterworth Road (both Grade II listed) and were previously a pair of lodges flanking the driveway up to the house. Remnant parkland features including spinneys and small lakes are also discernible in the area.'*

## Natural Influences

7.18. The following influences are noted below (N.B. BLADE has underlined those landscape features common to the Site's surrounding context):

- *'Burbage Common and Woods is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site for semi-natural woodland and unimproved acid grassland.*
- *Burbage Wood and Aston Firs is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and contains one of the best remaining examples of ash, oak and maple woodland in Leicestershire.*
- *Sheepy Wood, Burbage Wood and Aston Firs (within Blaby District) are ancient semi-natural woodland of importance as an ecological habitat.*
- *The disused quarry and lake at Barrow Hill provides local landscape and biodiversity interest in the north of the area.*
- *Woodland spinneys, streams and small water bodies south of the M69 around Lutterworth Road provide valuable habitats'.*

## Key Sensitivities

7.19. The LPA identified the following key sensitivities for the long term management of this landscape character area (N.B. BLADE has underlined those landscape features common to the Site's surrounding context):

- *'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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Isolated farmsteads scattered through the farmland landscape reflect the agricultural origins.*
- *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.*

- *The area east and south of Burbage provides a rural setting to the historic settlement.*
- *Uncluttered views of church spires in the nearby ridge top settlements (e.g. Burbage) provide an important sense of place.'*

#### Recommended Landscape Guidelines

7.20. The LPA's Landscape Character Assessment identifies the following strategies for the long term management of Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area, those of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development are as follows:

- *'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.'*
- *'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.'*
- *'Maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation.'*
- *'Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and unimproved acid grassland.'*

7.21. The published analysis and assessment of landscape character provides a contextual appreciation of the wider landscape i.e., the surroundings to the Site. However, the Site is identified by the Council as allotment, but it has never been available for public access, and as observed at our site based assessment (more recent than the LPA's 2017 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment), there has been a noticeable degradation of landscape fabric and character through the Site.

7.22. In their Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), the Local Planning Authority recognises the limitations to such character assessments *'whilst using the Landscape Character Assessment to inform decision making, it is important to note that the boundary between one character area and the next is transitional and there is rarely a clear cut change.'* Given the site's location on the urban edge of Hinckley, the site and its immediate context represent a 'hinterland' between the broad character of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area, and the urban environment of Hinckley town.

#### Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017)

7.23. The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire was published in October 2017). This study was undertaken by a technical third party organisation, and was prepared for the Local Planning Authority, as well as neighbouring authorities, including, Leicestershire County,

Leicester City, Blaby District, Charnwood Borough, Harborough District, Melton Borough, North West Leicestershire District and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

- 7.24. The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study provides evidence to help ensure that locations identified for economic and housing development conserves and enhances landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure. Using a systematic assessment framework it examines the sensitivity of the landscape, exploring the extent to which different areas can accommodate development without impacting on their key landscape qualities.
- 7.25. It also consider: 'the potential for positive change, particularly through the development and enhancement of GI. This includes identifying opportunities to develop GI that delivers benefits or services including better connected biodiversity networks, flood risk management, recreation and carbon management. The aim is to create resilient, high quality development which meets communities' aspirations whilst contributing to net biodiversity gains across the county as whole.'
- 7.26. The LPA finds the site to be sited within the 'Mease/Sense Lowlands' Landscape Character. This landscape character area is described as follows (N.B. BLADE has underlined those elements common to the site's context):

*'Undulating landform, with frequent small streams feeding into the larger water courses of the Mease and Sence Rivers which characterise the area. Fields are a mix of arable and pasture, and generally medium-large in size. Fields are bound by hedgerows with frequent trees (mature oaks), while willows are found adjacent to streams and field ponds. Settlement is comprised of small villages, which are often located on higher ground.'*

- 7.27. This study continues, and states the following (N.B. BLADE has underlined those elements common to the site's context):

*'Wide, panoramic views are afforded across the flat floodplain landscape, although views are occasionally enclosed by woodland copses and hedgerow vegetation. Existing large farm buildings can be prominent in views. Churches within the villages form important skyline features, including the spires of the Church of St Margaret in Stoke and St Edith's in Orton-on-the-Hill, located on hill-top positions (both Grade I listed). Occasional wind turbines form moving vertical structures visible in some views. Elevated land in the west affords expansive views beyond the county boundary.'*

- 7.28. The LPA continues and states the following (N.B. BLADE has underlined those elements common to the site's context):

*'In areas where arable intensification has occurred, the loss of hedgerows and trees results in an open and exposed character. This is generally a rural, quiet and tranquil area, with urbanising influences limited to pylons, masts and occasional wind turbines. Traffic on the busy M/A42, A5, A444 and A47 can detract from tranquillity locally.'*

- 7.29. It is considered that typical landscape features highlighted above are more common across the wider open countryside of the host landscape character area (which is the wider and greater scaled area of Mease/Sense Lowlands Landscape Character, rather than the smaller local landscape area of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area).

- 7.30. The urban context, built form and the transient movement of vehicles along the A47 are prevailing across the site. This reinforces the perception of the site on the urban edge i.e., residential development along Ashby Road, as well as the wider industrial/commercial built form off the A47 including McDonalds, Morrisons, Wickes store and officing.
- 7.31. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site's perception as the site being situated within an urban edge setting. This land use defines a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the town, rather than feeling divorced from it, in the open countryside.

### Site Specific Landscape Character and Landscape Sensitivity

- 7.32. To independently assess the likely level of landscape and visual effects which the development proposals might incur will require an appropriately detailed assessment of the Site itself and its immediate surroundings.
- 7.33. Recognising that 'landscape' is a multi-dimensional concept embracing 'what we see', its time-depth and physical attributes, this LVA reviews and assesses change to landscape character in terms of the physical landscape and the Site's character.

### Landscape Susceptibility ad Landscape Value

- 7.34. Landscape sensitivity and the susceptibility of the landscape to change, is defined as the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

### Landscape Value

- 7.35. As set out within GLVIA3, when analysing the landscape baseline, it is necessary to establish the relative value of the potentially affected landscape. Para. 5.19 of the GLVIA3 states that: 'A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape such as trees, buildings or hedgerows may also have a value. All need to be considered where relevant'.
- 7.36. TGN 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations identifies a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value. The Site does not lie within a landscape designation. Table BLA 7.1 is derived from TGN 02/21 and provides a description as to the extent the valued factors are present within the Site based upon both the published landscape character and Site specific character.

Table BLA 7.1 - Site Specific Landscape Appraisal by BLADE

Aspect	Definition	Observations
<b>Natural Heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	<p>There are no Ancient Woodlands or Veteran Trees within or bounding the Site, with the Arboriculture Survey identifying 56 no, trees and 6 no. tree groups. Of the trees and tree groups surveyed almost all were Category C, with only 5 Category B trees. Additionally, the majority of the Site was managed previously as a community orchard, a redundant land use. Hedgerows bounding aspects of the Site are of native species which are found locally.</p> <p>The natural heritage of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>low</b>.</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	<p>There are no designated heritage assets within the Site. The Site does not adjoin a Conservation Area, and is not situated within a National landscape designations.</p> <p>The cultural heritage of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>negligible</b>.</p>
<b>Landscape Condition</b>	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.	<p>The Site is influenced by landscape detracting features such as the A47 roadway with the effect of vehicle movement, noise and lighting adjacent to the Site. The Site is overlooked partially by existing residential development to the southwest and west. The scheme is not experienced as open countryside, rather it is enclosed from the countryside giving the land an urban edge character.</p> <p>The landscape condition of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>low</b>.</p>
<b>Associations</b>	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.	<p>The Site has no known notable cultural associations with art, literature or events in history.</p> <p>Associations are therefore considered to be <b>low</b>.</p>
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity and whether it contains rare character or features which are considered particularly important examples.	<p>The Site has been previously developed as a community allotment, and now derelict and unused. Hedgerows to Normandy Way are gappy and degraded. Overall few typical landscape features at the Site with the land having little landscape intactness. Features such as landform, boundary hedgerow and hedge line trees are present across the wider LCA, but are not rare locally to the Site's context.</p> <p>The distinctiveness of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>low</b>.</p>
<b>Recreational</b>	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.	<p>No public access is afforded within the Site and no public access route pass the Site. The Site is located off the A47, a busy roadway. There are no National Trails or National Cycle Route passing through the Site or along its boundaries.</p> <p>The recreational value of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>negligible</b>.</p>
<b>Perceptual (Scenic)</b>	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.	<p>The site is enclosed by native hedgerows, head line trees, residential development to the southwest-west, as well as the route of the A47 roadway which is lined with extensive tree belts. The Site is experienced as being on the edge of Hinckley, but within the open countryside surrounding the town.</p> <p>The perceptual quality of the Site is therefore considered to be <b>negligible</b>.</p>

7.37. Overall, the Site is considered to be of **low** landscape value. On balance, when combined with the susceptibility of the landscape (medium), the Site is considered to exhibit a **low** landscape sensitivity overall. The Site's context within the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area has a medium landscape sensitivity (as a whole); although less susceptible to change in the neighbouring urban area of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton.

## 8.0 POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

### Potential Effect on Landscape Resources

8.1. The construction of the Proposed Development would have a degree of adverse effects, but these would be for a temporary time-period and would cease on completion of the construction phase. However, this effect would not be detrimental to the enjoyment and appreciation of the wider landscape, and should not, in and of itself, be a reason to raise an objection either by the Local Planning Authority or consultees.

8.2. The construction works will result in changes to the landscape of the Site by way of the Site clearance, including removal of site vegetation plus topsoil stripping, a moderate sections of hedgerow and early mature trees for highways, and a small number of mature trees within the Site's interior.

8.3. This will be followed by the construction work including the bulk earthworks required to accommodate the proposed development platforms and access roads, plus the construction of the new buildings themselves.

8.4. Boundary hedgerows and trees will be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations, prior to commencement and retained throughout the construction phase. A proposed landscape scheme, indicated by the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Appendix BLA 4) will be implemented during the first available planting season, with the emphasis on achieving ecological enhancement and integration into the surrounding landscape, which would have a beneficial effect on landscape resources as well as visual amenity.

8.5. The existing outer boundary vegetation would be retained. Therefore, the majority of the native, valuable landscape components within the Site would therefore be retained and protected, and where needed, 'gappy' or declining hedgerow sections would be enhanced through new planting to bolster their structure and afford continuity for the future.

### Potential Effects during the Construction Stage

8.6. During construction, the principal effects as a result of the proposed scheme will be the transition of the Site to a new residential development. For the purposes of this assessment, activities that could cause landscape and visual effects include:

- Clearance of vegetation within the construction area, where appropriate;
- Erection of Site hoarding and fencing around vegetation (tree protection scheme);
- Earthworks and temporary storage of topsoil;
- Removal of unwanted waste from the Site;
- Erection of temporary structures within the main contractor's construction compound, plus materials stockpiling and lay-down areas;

- Potential lighting of the works (particularly during winter months);
- Erection of scaffold structures;
- Movement of construction vehicles;
- Formation of a new access point to the southeastern boundary (pedestrian and vehicular) and construction of the internal access/road circulation routes;
- Works associated with the implementation of the landscape scheme; and
- Removal of temporary construction facilities.

#### Changes to the landscape character of the Site - Direct Effects

8.7. Construction activities, movement of Site traffic, lighting, noise, and sound would be present during the construction process. This would be carefully controlled by a conditioned construction method statement. Recommendations for protection of the retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837: 2012, would ensure the rooting areas of the trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.

8.8. The construction stage is a temporary phase, and the effects generated through the building out of this new housing would cease after the development has been completed. The development proposed would change the character of the Site from a green field and alter the landscape fabric at the Site.

8.9. Within the Site, construction activity would inevitably result in a very high magnitude of change on the existing nature of the Site; however this is a discrete geographical unit of the wider landscape, and one which is not experienced as part of the wider open countryside, but as land on the urban edge of Hinckley. The existing field boundary vegetation and hedge line trees would be retained with the exception of a limited section of the hedgerow removed to accommodate the Site access off the A47 to the southern boundary.

8.10. Given the presence of construction activities (including movement of Site traffic, lighting, noise and sounds), and the conversion of the Site from greenfield to new houses, a noticeable adverse change upon the perceptual and sensory dimension of the Site's character, which is not surprising during the construction stage.

8.11. The sensitivity of the landscape character of the Site is considered to be low. The magnitude of change is considered to be very high. Therefore, there are likely to be direct, temporary, short-term, adverse effects which are considered to be **Moderate adverse**. These are direct effects within the quantum of the Site area only and experienced on a temporary base during the construction stage.

8.12. The impacts identified above at the construction stage will be carefully controlled by the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which will form as part of the additional mitigation strategy.

### Changes to the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area during the Construction Stage - Indirect Effects

- 8.13. During the temporary construction period, construction activities (including movement of Site traffic, lighting, noise and sounds) will be present during the construction process.
- 8.14. Construction activities, movement of Site traffic, lighting, and noise will be experienced during the construction process. This is not unusual (for a construction project of this nature) and will be carefully controlled by a conditioned construction method statement. During construction, the proposed scheme will not directly affect the wider landscape context as the physical effects of construction (i.e. changes to fabric and character) will be contained within the Site (a 'direct effect').
- 8.15. There will be localised excavation of land, ground remodelling and the storage of topsoil, and the stripping of vegetation where required to facilitate the Site access. Additionally, movement and machinery associated with the Site operations will introduce additional localised activity. In the wider context, higher-level construction activities may be visible, and experienced.
- 8.16. However, the A47 is illuminated and the effect of traffic movement along this arterial route would offset and reduce the construction effects of the scheme including noise, vibration, lighting and the general movement of vehicles, plant and machinery within the Site area.
- 8.17. The sensitivity of the landscape character of the immediate Site context within the host landscape is considered to be medium. In the round across the wider open countryside, the landscape has a similar medium landscape setting.
- 8.18. From the outset of realising the proposed scheme, it was imperative that the scheme retains the gently rolling landform of the Site, its enclosure by native hedgerows and hedge line trees, and the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees which contribute to enclosing the Site area.
- 8.19. The scheme would protect the existing landscape fabric for the best integration of the scheme. Recommendations for protection of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS5837, will ensure that the rooting areas of trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process. This would enable the existing landscape structure of the Site to be retained at the Site, which in itself would inherently mitigate effects from the scheme at this Construction Stage.
- 8.20. At the construction stage, the magnitude of change is considered to be high. Therefore, there is likely to be an indirect, temporary, short-term, adverse effect which is considered to be **Moderate, adverse** and will extend for only the duration of the construction stage, which will diminish expeditiously with distance from the Site. However, due to the enclosed nature of the Site, and its location adjoining the A47 roadway, this level of effect would diminish rapidly within a short distance of the Site.

### Changes to the Rolling Farmlands Landscape Type during the Construction Stage (Regional)

- 8.21. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this regional scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

#### Changes to the NCA 94 Leicestershire Vales during the Construction Stage (National)

8.22. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this nationally scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

#### Potential Effects at Year 1/First Occupation – Direct Effects

8.23. The main changes to the Site which would influence the landscape resources and visual amenity at the initial occupation stage (Year 1) are as follows:

- New buildings and structures within a residential land use.
- Car vehicle movement into and out of the Site.
- Juvenile landscaping (prior to establishment and maturation).

#### Changes to the landscape character of the Site at Year 1/First occupation - Direct Effects

8.24. Following construction and the establishment of the landscape strategy, existing landscape fabric will be enhanced, and new landscape planting will be managed in accordance with an appropriate landscape management plan, or similar, to ensure the longevity of the green infrastructure as part of the development.

8.25. The implementation of the proposed development would become part of the built settlement along the northeastern edge of the town, and the scheme would adopt similar characteristics of built form already experienced between the A47 and Ashby Road, and along Ashby Road (heading north and south into and out of Hinckley) in a similar linear, way-side type of arrangement. There are both long-standing residential and contemporary development at this location, and the scheme would 'union' with this town edge related built form.

8.26. The scheme would retain and bolster the existing field pattern and would not physically extend beyond the vegetated limits of this individual land parcel which are defined by the existing field hedgerows and strong tree cover. The scheme would be set within these vegetated buffers and not extend into the surrounding field pattern of open agricultural fields.

8.27. The landscape mitigation measures integrated within the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Appendix BLA 4) would establish new landscape infrastructure across the wider Site area enhancing existing weak fabric, enhancing existing hedgerow and tree planting and providing new tree planting and open space areas of semi-natural and natural green space through the scheme.

8.28. This new planting would be too juvenile to offset and reduce effects.. The new development would be set within the retained mature landscape fabric, but at Year 1, the character of the scheme would be new homes with associated infrastructure.

8.29. In the first year, the prevailing characteristic will be the new dwellings, roads and lighting, whilst the proposed trees, ground cover and hedgerow will still be in relative infancy. There may be some establishment of meadow grassland within the public open space, but overall the magnitude of change will reduce only slightly from very high to high, due to the cessation of the construction activities.

8.30. This would yield ***Moderate/-minor, adverse*** level of effect when combined with the low sensitivity of the Site.

#### Changes to the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area at Year 1/First Occupation - Indirect Effects

8.31. Through the design, siting and mass of new built form in the proposal, the scheme preserves the typically 'rectilinear field pattern bounded by hedgerows' with 'smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements'. Whilst the host landscape character area has an 'open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views'; there is extensive tree experienced locally to the Site along the A47, within the residential curtilages neighbouring the Site to its western edge, and within the small to medium scale fields situated between the A47 and Hinckley Road to the north.

8.32. The combination of retaining, enhancing and bolstering hedge lines around the Site, and new tree planting within the scheme would effectively coalesce in their effect to enclose and contain the proposed scheme, and so the scheme would not extend incongruous into the 'generally rural character and undeveloped landscape of the Green Wedge which forms an important gap between Hinckley and Barwell.'

8.33. At Year 1, the magnitude of change across the Site would be tempered by the following considerations:

- Apart from minor ground remodelling the scheme would preserve landform pattern within the Site area. Locally to the Site landform is typically gently rolling with '*smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements*'.
- The proposed scheme would protect and retain the existing landscape structure of the Site's location, bolstering existing field hedgerow and hedge line trees as well as new landscape planting and habitat within the Site, and particularly along its boundaries, to further strengthen the structure of the landscape which typically along this northeastern edge of Hinckley is extensively tree'd enclosing and restricting views of the wider open countryside between the A47 and Barwell.
- As demonstrated within Section 7 of this LVA, the published landscape management guidelines (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2017) have been considered as part of the proposed landscape strategy for the scheme (see Appendix BLA 4), with particular emphasis on the conserving and enhancing 'hedgerows and hedgerow trees surrounding fields reflect the parliamentary enclosure field pattern' with 'mature trees provide biodiversity and visually screen nearby development' conserving the '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'. This would involve appropriate landscape management to retain strong hedgerow structure and the planting of individual trees along field boundaries contributing to the strong hedgerow and tree belt structure situated nearest to the Site's location.

- The proposed dwellings would be arranged to enable to protect and retain existing vegetated site boundaries, as well as enable green buffers to the periphery of the scheme to strengthen the basic landscape fabric of the Site – the hedgerow tree populations. This would respect the existing broadleaved character of the landscape and adhere to existing field pattern and to reflect the scale of the landscape experienced at the northeastern edge of Hinckley. This would enable the development to conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting.
- Green infrastructure is an integral part of the proposals which will deliver the enhancement of the local landscape structure of the Site, and betterment of ecological habitat value, as well as the better integration of development through new landscaping and the conservation and enhancement of typical landscape fabric, rather than simply filtering and screening views.
- The scheme is designed to integrate within the core of the Site area, retaining part of the Site as new public open space with room for new landscaping/green infrastructure with new tree planting integrated into the built form. These features would coalesce and filter views of the built form locally o the Site.
- The proposed development would be consistent – in land use terms – with the neighbouring residential development along this northeastern edge of Hinckley and would not constitute a land use that is neither un-neighbourly in the settlement context through the repurposing of a derelict allotment site. This is demonstrated by our field-based assessment, whereby, BLADE determined that the Site has only a minor Zone of Primary Visibility, and where seen it is experienced in combination with the wider built up/settled edge of Hinckley around the A47 and Ashby Road where seen between strong tree cover.
- The proposed landscape strategy (Appendix BLA 4) has sought to conserve and enhance the representation of hedgerow trees and strengthening the strong tree cover at the Site, and around the A47 and Ashby Road to moderate the impact of urban development.

8.34. The development would result in a complete variance to the existing character of the Site's ground cover. However, the conservation of existing hedgerows and hedge line trees, and their subsequent gapping up with new planting and new trees to reinforce perceived tree covet to improve the overall quality and condition of the site's landscape structure. The area of public open space will feature new grassland to provide at least a localised provision of species-rich grassland.

8.35. The focus of these measures is less about screening and filtering views; rather, the enhancement of the local landscape and habitat value, reinforcing the landscape scale and the enclosed character of the Site and its immediate environment, as well as to provide the best integration of development at the Site. This is done through new landscaping and the conservation and enhancement of the local landscape character, and the creation of new planting of hedgerows and trees as part of the green infrastructure at the Site.

8.36. In the first year, the prevailing characteristic will be the new dwellings, roads and lighting, whilst the proposed trees, ground cover and hedgerow will still be in relative infancy (along the existing features retained as part of the Site's landscaping and green infrastructure. The magnitude of change would reduce due to the cessation of the construction stage to medium, resulting in a reduced level of effect to **Moderate.-minor, adverse** at Year 1 where neighbouring the Site, but this level of effect would diminish rapidly with distance from the Site.

**Changes to the Rolling Farmlands Landscape Type at Year 1/First Occupation (Regional)**

8.37. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this regional scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

**Changes to the NCA 94 Leicestershire Vales at Year 1/First Occupation (National)**

8.38. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this nationally scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

**Residual Effects on Landscape Character (Yr 15 Long Term Onwards)**

**Changes to the landscape character of the Site at Year 15 - Direct Effects**

8.39. Between 0 and 15 years, with good maintenance and longer term management, bolster/enhancement planting as well as new hedgerow and tree planting and ecological enhancements would be established and maturing providing a greater degree of filtering and screening of built development overtime.

8.40. This would ensure a strong landscape framework and appropriate setting for the proposed development, which would assist in minimising the adverse impacts of proposed development on local landscape character and on views from the surrounding landscape.

8.41. This would result in a reduction of the perceived magnitude of change to medium and the residual level of effect would **Minor, adverse** by Year 15. This is the permanent effect of the scheme.

8.42. The scheme would repurpose the disused, redundant site area and improve its landscape structure and enhance hedgerow and tree planting. This would have an overall beneficial effect. Whereas, the new built form would reduce the perception of openness within the Site, which would have a negative effect.

8.43. The landscape of the wider Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area is noted for its overall open character. However, the Site is located within the urban edge of Hinckley which is far more enclosed through a smaller field pattern common to the settlement edge, as well as the extensive tree belts along the A47 and wider residential built form restricting views to a minor area local to the Site. Given this, it is judged that the proposed scheme would not have a significant effect on the landscape character of the Site through its development.

### Changes to the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area at Year 15 -Indirect Effects

- 8.44. The maturation of landscape buffer mitigation planting and new characteristic tree and hedgerow planting will further enclose the Site and aid in filtering views of the Proposed Development by Year 15. After 15 years, new tree planting shown on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Appendix BLA 4) would reach a height of up to 12m.
- 8.45. This planting would comprise deciduous trees and understorey, compatible with the existing local landscape character of hedge line trees and the occasional woodland blocks in the wider open countryside, bolstering the existing hedgerow lines, as well as creating a well tree'd environmental internally within the Site (with streetscape and on-plot landscaping) that would connect with the existing field hedgerows and tree groups off-Site reinforcing the landscape framework for the Proposed Development.
- 8.46. Despite the proposed scheme being only 2 stray in height, it is not possible to mitigate entirely the landscape effects of the proposed development. However, the existing boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained, buffered, strengthened and appropriately managed for longevity. Additional tree planting around and within the proposed development will add to the landscape fabric and biodiversity value, and afford an enhanced setting to the scheme to integrate the built form within.
- 8.47. By Year 15 the growth of new hedgerows and trees, ongoing management of existing hedgerows and trees and encouragement of species diversity through gapping up, is expected to strengthen the contribution these features make to the well treed character of this part of the LCA.
- 8.48. The benefits offered by the embedded landscape proposals once established, and managed through the implementation of effective landscape management and maintenance, would lead to a low magnitude of change, which when combined with the medium overall sensitivity, will reduce the level of effect on this small part of the LCA, to Minor, adverse, which would diminish expediently with distance from the Site. Consequently, this residual landscape effect would be low and limited to a small geographical, but one which would not be experienced across the wider LCA.

### Changes to the Rolling Farmlands Landscape Type at Year 15 (Regional)

- 8.49. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this regional scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

### Changes to the NCA 94 Leicestershire Vales at Year 15 (National)

- 8.50. The key characteristic features which make up this area will remain unaffected by the proposed development across this nationally scaled area; **Negligible/Imperceptible**.

## 9.0 POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

- 9.1. An assessment of effects on each representative viewpoint carried forward to this analysis has been undertaken, and a summary of the result contained in Table BLA 9.1; and the representative viewpoints are contained in Appendix BLA 5.
- 9.2. This assessment was undertaken in mid-December 2025. The selection of these viewpoints was agreed with the Local Planning Authority in advance of the assessment; see the final Appendix of this LVA.

Table BLA 9.1 - Summary of Visual Effects on Representative Viewpoints

View	Location	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
1	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the north of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible Impreceptible Impreceptible
2	View from Ashby Road looking south towards the Site as Road Users pass through open countryside approaching the settlement edge Hinckley	Approaching Hinckley. The route is not a promoted or tourist route and the roadway is not passing through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>Medium Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible Impreceptible Impreceptible
3	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U36/3) situated to the northeast of the Site passing to and from the settlement edge of Barwell	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible Impreceptible Impreceptible
4	View from Hinckley Road passing to and from Barwell to the northeast of the Site	Passing through the settlement edge of Barwell. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>Medium Visual Sensitivity</b>	Negligible (Con) Negligible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Minor/-negligible, adverse Minor/-negligible, adverse Imperceptible
5	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the northeast of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Negligible (Con) Negligible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Minor, adverse Minor, adverse Imperceptible
6	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U44/2) situated to the east of the Site passing between Barwell and Hinckley through open countryside	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Low (Con) Low (Yr1) Negligible (Yr15)	Moderate/-minor, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Minor, adverse
7	View from Penzance Close, a residential street in Hinckley south of the A47	Residential street is not located within a National or local landscape designation.  <b>Medium Visual Sensitivity</b>	Low (Con) Negligible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Minor, adverse Minor/-negligible, adverse Imperceptible

8	View from the junction of the A47 and Ashby Road to the southwest of the Site	Settlement edge/urban context. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>Medium Visual Sensitivity</b>	Medium (Con) Low (Yr1) Negligible (Yr15)	Moderate/-minor,, adverse  Minor, adverse  Minor/-negligible, adverse
9	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U3/2) passing through open countryside to the west of the Site	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible  Impreceptible  Impreceptible
10	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T60/2) passing through open countryside to the north west of the Site	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible  Impreceptible  Impreceptible
11	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through open countryside to the north-north west of the Site	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible  Impreceptible  Impreceptible
12	View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through open countryside to the north of the Site	PRoW. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>High Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible  Impreceptible  Impreceptible
13	View from Ashby Road looking southeast towards the Site as Road Users enter Hinckley	Passing through the settlement edge of Hinckley. Route does not pass through a National or local landscape designation.  <b>Medium Visual Sensitivity</b>	Indiscernible (Con) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Impreceptible  Impreceptible  Impreceptible

### National Cycle Route Users

9.3. With consideration of the Sustrans National Cycle Route Map contained on their Website ([www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)), there are no National Cycle Route passing through the Site or along its boundaries. Moreover, there are no National Cycle Routes passing through the assessment area. It is judged there would be no discernible effect on National Cycle Route users.

## Outlying Settlements within Close to Very Long Range Distance

9.4. As demonstrated by the plotted Zone Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3), there is no scope to see the Site of the proposed development from the wider open countryside around existing settlements outlying to the northern edge of Hinckley around Ashby Road. It is judged there would be no discernible effect on outlying settlements.

## Residential Dwellings

9.5. Given our field based assessment, and analysis presented earlier in this LVA at Section 5, a number of residences have been scoped out of this appraisal. BLADE appraised those dwellings which abut the Site to the southwest and west are those most likely to experience the Site's proposed redevelopment. Additionally, those dwellings situated south of Normandy Way (around Falmouth Road (and streets thereof), have the potential to see over the A47 towards the Site from their first floor rooms.

9.6. For those dwellings immediate of the Site; it is considered that the construction stage would lead to ***moderate, adverse*** (upper rooms with direct views of the Site) and ***moderate-minor, adverse*** (ground floor) effects due to noise, dust and vibration, movement of plant, machinery, deliveries and general construction activities. This is not a permanent effect and would cease on the completion of this short-term construction stage.

9.7. Following completion of the construction phase at Year 1, the proposal would be experienced as an extension of the existing housing situated locally around the junction of Ashby Road and Normandy Way, and would not be experienced as out of context or unneighbourly in this location; therefore, not incongruous to those looking out from these dwellings.

9.8. The existing vegetation to the Site boundaries would be retained offering some filtering effect to the adjacent dwellings from day 1; with further enhancement planting to further filter views of the scheme establishing.

9.9. At Year 1, the character of the Site would have changed from a former, derelict allotment to that of a small number of new homes, access roadway, public open space and also new planting. At this stage, the proposed landscape strategy would be juvenile and unlikely to filter views. The scheme would introduce new built form where it is currently an open green field, and this new development would be of similar scale and layout to the existing neighbouring homes.

9.10. However, the scheme would not be experienced as sporadic or extending incongruously into the open countryside as the scheme would be contained within the enclosed character of its boundaries, built form to Ashby Road to the west as well as the wider field pattern of hedgerows and hedge line trees.

9.11. The resulting level of effect at Year 1 will be ***moderate-minor, adverse*** where the scheme is directly overlooked, or where views are oblique or from ground floor positions where the field hedgerows and trees would mitigate views, the likely effect would be less through a less elevated magnitude of change – therefore ***minor, adverse***.

- 9.12. By Year 15, the long term residual effect would be reduced following the weathering of materials and maturation of the landscape strategy which includes proposed new tree planting through the Site, within individual plots, as well as the wider green infrastructure associated with the scheme's public open space area.
- 9.13. The additional planting will increase the filtering effect so the development causes a more limited visual intrusion, assimilating further into the settlement context, reducing the overall residual effect of the Proposed Development as reducing to *minor, adverse to negligible* within the neighbouring context of the Site.

## 10.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICY 6

10.1. Further to Section 6 of this LVA, the Site is found within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge; see Section 6, Image BLA 6.1. Policy 6 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy is titled 'Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge' and is specifically for the Green Wedge in which the Site is located. Policy 6 states:

*'Within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge uses will be encouraged that provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land to ensure that the Green Wedge remains or is enhanced as an attractive contribution to the quality of life of nearby urban residents'.*

10.2. The policy continues and states:

*'The following land uses will be acceptable in the Green Wedge, provided the operational development associated with such uses does not damage the function of the Green Wedge:*

*(a) Agriculture, including allotments and horticulture not accompanied by retail development*

*(b) Recreation*

*(c) Forestry*

*(d) Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways*

*(e) Burial grounds*

*(f) Use for nature conservation.'*

10.3. Whilst the proposals incorporate measures for nature conservation through the retention of existing landscape fabric, new planting and habitat creation for ecological betterment, and does afford public access, the proposed scheme is for a new development of houses and associated infrastructure.

10.4. Policy 6 continues to state the following:

*'Any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge should:*

*(a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge*

*(b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas*

*(c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation and*

*(d) Should retain the visual appearance of the area'.*

10.5. With consideration of the evidence base which supported the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, the LPA did not provide a Green Wedge Study that examined this space in further detail.

10.6. In terms of Green Wedge functions, as referred to in Policy 6 (a), the CS policy does not provide a clear description of functions. However, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies paragraph 3.43 states:

*'Areas of green wedge primarily seek to guide the development form of urban areas. The presence of a green wedge helps to maintain settlement identity whilst providing green infrastructure links between settlements as a 'green lung' and recreational resource'.*

10.7. These are the functions that are set out in the Leicestershire Green Wedge Methodology that has been signed up to by Leicestershire LPAs. There is no specific, recognised guidance for the assessment of green wedges, with the LPAA utilising the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology from July 2011.

10.8. This Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology was agreed by a number of Local Planning Authorities, including Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (the LPA). This methodology has a 'broad-chich' approach, but is assumed, has been based on past experience of settlement gaps studies and reflects the LPA's requirement of evidence to support the Green Wedge designation.

10.9. Contained within Chapter 3 of their report are a list of criteria for an evaluation to determine the distinction of a land parcel; these are repeated below. Following a field-based assessment, I make the following observations:

- **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'.*

**Application Site:**

- The Site would not lead to the physical joining of Hinckley to Barwell; see Viewpoint 1,3 to 6 (Appendix BLA 5).
- The Site and the proposed development would not be seen from those outlying settlements of Earl Shilton and Burbage which are located within the wider extent of the Green Wedge. From our field based assessment, there is no discernibility of the Site and the proposed development from either of these settlements due to the effect of intervening built form, landform and landscape features; see the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3).
- The Site cannot be seen from Barwell to the northeast and east, there is no discernibility of the Site from within the open countryside between the Site (and housing situated on the Aashby Road and the southwestern and western outskirts of Barwell, and as demonstrated by the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3), the proposed scheme is not likely to be seen across Barwell through the open countryside between Hinckley and Barwell; see Viewpoint 1,3 to 6 (Appendix BLA 5).

- **Guiding Development Form:**

- *"Green wedges will guide the form of new developments as urban areas extend. Consideration will be given to designating new green wedges or amending 7 existing ones where it would help shape the development of new communities such as potential sustainable urban extensions'.*

- **Application Site:**

- The Site is located adjoining the edge of Hinckley town, and is found situated between the A47 Normandy Way and the A447 Ashby Road. The Site is experienced within the built limits of Hinckley. This is a small pocket of land that is compartmentalised within its own physical and landscape boundaries.
- The Site has intervisibility with those residential dwellings situated to the south of the A47 Normandy Way and with filtered views of dwellings immediately west on the A447 Ashby Road.
- The Site has a visual association with Hinckley (albeit at the edge of the town) rather than the settlement of Barwell, or those outlying settlements of Earl Shilton and Burbage; see Appendix BLA 3. The distinction between Hinckley and Burbage is strong due to the intervening countryside to the north of this location and its openness; see Viewpoint 1,3 to 6, 7 and 8 (Appendix BLA 5).
- There is limited built form in the Green Wedge. However, the Appeal Site contains built development, and the site adjoins those dwelling situated on A447 Ashby Road and looking south across the A47 to modern day residential development; see Viewpoint 1,3 to 6, 7 and 8 (Appendix BLA 5).
- The proposed scheme would not necessitate an additional vehicular link within the Green Wedge; rather the existing gated access off the A47 Normandy Way would be utilised. This would retain the existing hedge line to the southern edge of the Site which can be further enhanced and integrated within the wider green infrastructure setting of the scheme.

- **Providing a Green Lung into urban area:**

- *'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 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’.*

- **Application Site:**

- The Site has no cultural or heritage connection to Hinckley, or those outlying settlements of Barwell, Earls Shilton and Burbage.
- The Site is not prominent in views, and as demonstrated by Viewpoints 1 to 8 (Appendix BLA 5), the Site has a very limited Zone of Primary Visibility (Appendix BLA 3).
- The Site does not contain any important landscape fabric such as a Veteran Trees, Ancient Woodland or similar.
- The Green Wedge is crossed by a number of public roadways. Closest to the Site is the A47 Normandy Way and the A447 Ashby Road to the south and west respectively. The proximity to these two busy roads contain the Site and limits rural character. These are clear physical boundary features that marks the settlement edge (to Hinckley) even if it does not form a visual barrier.
- The Site is identified by the Council as an allotment, this is a typically urban/urban edge land use reflecting the Site location on the edge of Hinckley town. The Site is privately owned and provides no public access. However, the proposed scheme would allow public access through its green infrastructure and public open space elements of the scheme.
- The landscape strategy for the scheme proposes to retain existing landscape fabric at the Site including hedgerows and hedge line trees, which would be enhanced and bolstered, and within the proposed public open space undertake green infrastructure and habitat initiatives to provide ecological betterment.

- **Acting as a recreational resource:**

- *‘Green wedges will provide a recreational resource. This could include informal and formal facilities now and in the future. Public access will be maximised.*
- *The review could inform the preparation of each Local Authority’s Core Strategy and subsequent Allocations DPD. The Core Strategy could show the broad location and extent of green wedges in a “Key Diagram”, the Allocations DPD could show the precise areas subject to Green Wedge policy on the Proposals Map.’*

- **Application Site:**

- The landscape strategy for the scheme proposes to retain existing landscape fabric at the Site including hedgerows and hedge line trees, which would be enhanced and bolstered, and within the proposed public open space undertake green infrastructure and habitat initiatives to provide ecological betterment.

10.10. The foregoing enables an examination of the Site's contribution to the Green Wedge. It is judged that the qualities of the Site do not make this land an important feature between (primarily) Hinckley and Barwell, and (secondly) those outlying settlements on the periphery of the Green Wedge at Earls Shilton and Burbage.

## 11.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

- 11.1. BLADE were commissioned on behalf of the Applicant to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal following feedback from the Local Planning Authority to support the planning application 25/00199/FUL.
- 11.2. The Applicant is seeking planning permission for the erection of 25 dwellings, new access off Normandy Way, amenity space, parking and community orchard.
- 11.3. This Landscape Visual Appraisal has carefully set out the respective landscape effects and visual effects.

### Landscape Effects

- 11.4. BLADE have had particular regard to the published landscape management guidelines for the host landscape, the Rolling Farmlands Landscape Type and the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area (as per the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2017) including the pressures for change/key issues and landscape/management strategies, with particular emphasis on the conserving and enhancing 'hedgerows and hedgerow trees surrounding fields reflect the parliamentary enclosure field pattern' with 'mature trees provide biodiversity and visually screen nearby development' conserving the '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'.
- 11.5. The Site is a disused and derelict allotment Site that the Applicant is proposing to re-purpose, and with the Site being situated on the A47 Normandy Way and overlooked by residential development, and being of a much smaller scale to that of typical rectilinear medium scale field pattern; BLADE judges that the Site has few key landscape characteristics and a number of landscape detractors. Given this, it is considered that the Site has a low landscape value and a low landscape susceptibility and sensitivity.
- 11.6. Outside of the wider urban setting, which is predominant to the Site's setting, the wider open countryside beyond has a medium landscape value and does not lie within a designated landscape. This open countryside has a medium sensitivity and susceptibility to change, as undesignated countryside, with some distinctive characteristics and few landscape detractors.
- 11.7. The Site is extensively enclosed by boundary vegetation, including native hedgerows, hedge line trees and is benefited by nearby vegetation and trees with residential curtilages to the southwest, with an existing hedgerow to the A47 which would be enhanced.
- 11.8. With this setting, the Proposed Development has been designed to step development away from the A47 Normandy Way, and provide an open setting with public open space, new tree and orchard tree planting and semi-informal landscaping.

- 11.9. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan within Appendix BLA 4 has closely followed the management guidelines for the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area published in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2017, including planning new, and management hedgerows improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character, restoring hedgerow trees, as well as ensuring any new and existing development is integrated into the landscape.
- 11.10. Additionally, as can be demonstrated through BLADE's examination of representative viewpoints in this LVA, the proposed scheme would 'maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation'; see Viewpoint 1-5 (to the north-northeast in and around the gap), as well as Viewpoint 6 (to the east), and as seen within Viewpoint 3,10 and 11 which are situated beyond the gap within the wider open countryside.
- 11.11. Additionally, the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan allows for the protection existing hedgerows integrated unto the scheme which would be bolstered with enhancement planting, as well as the provision of new native tree, hedgerow and scrub planting, as well as enhanced grassland to 'create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and unimproved acid grassland.'
- 11.12. For all these reasons, at Year 15, the effects on the Site will be **minor, adverse** and effects on the host landscape character area, the Southern Countryside LCA will be **minor, adverse**.

### Visual Effects

- 11.13. The visual effects from the Proposed Development have also been carefully tabulated within the LVA, and detailed within Section 9.
- 11.14. As the LVA explains, there are limited close range views into the site, with the Site being seen only from the immediate setting of the Road Users passing along the A47 Normandy Way and at the junction of the A47 and Ashby Road. This is mainly due to the low height and degraded nature of the boundary hedgerow to its southern edge with the A47.
- 11.15. However, given the Site is extensively enclosed along its north, east and western edges by a combination of built form, field hedgerows and headline trees and a small wooded block/ tree group. From BLADE's field-based assessment the Site is experienced from only a very minor geographical area for a short time duration. This is reflected by the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3), and examined within Section 5 of this LVA.
- 11.16. In my experience, this is an extraordinarily limited zone of visibility for a land parcel of this size so close to a relatively large settlements such as Hinckley, and large village such as Barwell and Earl Shilton. Together these features provide a very well contained context for a development of new homes, especially, as the scheme would repurpose the now redundant former land use of the Site
- 11.17. Generally, for the PROW walked apart of the LVA, the Site is indiscernible and the effect of the scheme would be largely imperceptible residually. As the Viewpoints in Appendix BLA 5 demonstrate the Site is largely screened from view by the surrounding built form on Ashby Road nearest to the Site and within the open space between Hinckley and Barwell; see Viewpoint 1,4,5,6 and 13 (Appendix BLA 5).

11.18. Whereas, the combination of landform, smaller fields scale and more extensive hedge line trees and tree belts around Hinckley is sufficient to screen the Site from view across the wider open countryside; see Viewpoints 2,3, 6 11 and 12 looking across then gap between settlements, and also Viewpoints 9 and 10 further afield in the open countryside.

11.19. Where seen, the development would therefore be experienced against the wider urban settlement; albeit on the peripheral edge of the town in combination with an arterial route (A47) and the surrounding residential development on Ashby Road immediate to the Ste, and those dwellings situated on Ashby Road (south of the A47) and along Falmouth Drive to the south.

11.20. Consequently, through the undertaking of this LVA, BLADE considers that the effects of the Proposed Development would be limited and localised. At Year 15, the vast majority of the identified viewpoints experiencing imperceptible or minor, adverse effects, with views form the small number of those dwellings bounding likely to have filtered views.

### Landscape Strategy

11.21. The preparation of the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Appendix BLA 4) has drawn on the published landscape management guidelines for the host landscape, the Rolling Farmlands Landscape Type and the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland Landscape Character Area (as per the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2017) .

11.22. Furthermore, these principles will be instrumental in developing the detailed design for the discharge of planning conditions post approval. The Proposed Development aims to offset and reduce the effect of the proposal through measures which include the following:

- Retention of the existing landscape fabric where practicable, including existing hedgerows, hedge line trees and protecting trees to the Site boundaries for visual mitigation, as well as enhancing the setting for the new built form.
- Retaining and enhancing vegetated boundaries for ecological links, amenity benefit and for habitat retention. The Site layout has been developed to maximise the retention of this landscape fabric within the Site and along its boundaries.
- Additional tree planting would also be provided to the southern boundary to Normandy Way and further native tree and mixed native scrub planting would be provided within the public open space within the proposed scheme.

### Compliance with National Planning Policy

11.23. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; this being the golden thread running throughout the document. For landscape, this means recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (paragraph 187 b) and balancing any 'harm' to the landscape resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects.

11.24. Paragraph 187 b states:

*'Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem service including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland'*

11.25. The Proposed Development would accord with this NPPF test. The development has clearly 'recognised' countryside and taken opportunities to contribute to the landscape through reinstatement of some of the representative features on site, as recommended by the County and Borough's own Landscape Character Assessments.

11.26. NPPF 135 (a) states;

*'.....will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development'*

11.27. This LVA has demonstration through its examination, that the effect of the scheme would be very localised and limited. The effect on the wider landscape character area is considered to be limited and diminishes rapidly with distance from the Site.

11.28. The scheme would integrate within its locality and would not be an adjunct to the settlement pattern, and would not be incongruous through its nature due to the retention and enhancement of landscape fabric and new landscaping to reflect local character and species of planting. The development would therefore plainly function well and add to the overall quality of the area.

### Compliance with Local Planning Policy

11.29. Policy DM4 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026) is titled 'Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation', and states that the requirement '*to protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development*' which emphasis on:

*i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and*

*ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and*

*iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development.....'*

11.30. This will be a very open development, when considered as a whole. Development is concentrated where it is most appropriate in environmental terms to do so, with areas proposed for forms of open space use.

- 11.31. The proposed scheme would provide a significant contribution to local Green Infrastructure in the form of increased tree cover, habitats and public access is a feature of the proposals – reflecting the landscape management guidelines as prescribed within the LPAA's own landscape character assessment. The site is of sufficient scale that it can integrate the scheme within green infrastructure of retained and bolstered landscape fabric, as well as new landscaping and habitat creation.
- 11.32. It will be of similar density, height and nature of development creating an neighbourly scheme which is assimilated through landscape design focussing on local planting types and species. The scheme would not lead coalescence in the host landscape character area, which would remain as having a scattered pattern of development in the wider open countryside beyond Hinckley.
- 11.33. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix BLA 3), as well as BLADE's examination of representative viewpoints, the proposed scheme would be imperceptible to settlements outlying to Hinckley.
- 11.34. Policy DM10 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026) is titled 'Development and Design' promoting design quality, local character and distinctiveness.
- 11.35. In terms of local distinctiveness, the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Appendix BLA 4) shows how the published landscape management guidelines can be incorporated for the host landscape character area. The detailed landscape design (at reserved matters stage) would specify native species of local importance reflecting the species of planting found locally in hedgerows and trees with planting supplied with local provenance where available, as well as the provision of an orchard of local fruit species.
- 11.36. As discussed above, the proposal would not lead to any physical or visual coalescence. The scheme would be contained and reinforce the scattered settlement pattern noted within the host landscape character area and type.
- 11.37. The Consultation Draft Local Plan 2024-2045 (August 2025) Policy NAT10 is titled 'Landscape Character Development', and further to the above points, this LVA has examined the potential for visual effects across the wider countryside beyond Hinckley, the open gap between Hinckley and Barwell, as well as the immediate setting of the scheme.
- 11.38. Overall, this LVA has demonstrated that there is likely to be no discernible effect of the scheme across very long to long range of the Site, as well as medium to close range of the Site. The scheme would be experienced within this town edge location which has extensive urban features and character including the A47 roadway, the Ashby Road and its pedestrian pathways, existing homes and urban land uses.
- 11.39. At this local range, the change of land use at the Site would be experienced, but given the current disused and derelict nature of the Site, the proposal would have beneficial effect through repurposing the land, retaining and enhancing existing landscape fabric and the provision of new landscaping which would all be managed and maintained for longevity.

- 11.40. The Site is situated within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge, and the scheme as proposed would retain the function of the Green Wedge.
- 11.41. In landscape terms, this is an undesignated landscape of a medium to low value; it is land whose intrinsic character and beauty the NPPF 187 (b) states should be 'recognised' rather than 'protected and enhanced' in accordance with 187(a).
- 11.42. The land is not a Valued Landscape or a high quality landscape, is not prominent and is currently without public access. Whilst the Site is located within the Green Wedge, it contributes little to nothing to its openness.
- 11.43. It is clear, this land is not an unbreeched open landscape, rather it is situated on the roadside of the A47 Normandy Way as a small pocket of land nearest to existing residential areas on the A447 and the A47 roadways.
- 11.44. The Site is enclosed by physical features, with views of the site are uncelebrated and are not promoted, and this LVA has demonstrated that the Site is not a Valued Landscape. Furthermore, the Site is recognised by the adopted Local Plan as being within Open Countryside which does not relate to protection of high-quality landscape, and is not designated at a local or National level for its landscape importance or scenic qualities.
- 11.45. The Site has a visual association with Hinckley (albeit at the edge of the town) rather than the settlement of Barwell, or those outlying settlements of Earl Shilton and Burbage; see Appendix BLA 3. The distinction between Hinckley and Burbage is strong due to the intervening countryside to the north of this location and its openness; see Viewpoint 1,3 to 6, 7 and 8 (Appendix BLA 5).
- 11.46. From the undertaking of this LVA, and specifically, the examination in Section 10, it is clear that the Site affords a very limited contribution to the Green Wedge. Its repurposing for new houses would be largely imperceptible across the Green Wedge, still retaining its openness and visual character outside of the Site area, and in particular between Hinckley and Barwell; see Viewpoints 1 to 8 (Appendix BLA 5).
- 11.47. Given this, it is clear that the Proposed Development can be accommodated at the Site without harming the function of the Green Wedge, and so complies with Policy 6 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

## Conclusion

11.48. To conclude, the proposals will allow for a clear buffer, appropriate vegetation and a sensitive layout will all be readily apparent for the plans and the overall scale of the site.

11.49. Through the undertaking of this Landscape Visual Appraisal it is clear that this is a Site with relatively few intrinsic landscape constraints to the Proposed Development; as summarised below:

- The Site is identified by the Council as an allotment, this is a typically urban/urban edge land use reflecting the Site location on the edge of Hinckley town. The Site is privately owned and provides no public access.
- The Site is not designated at a local or National level for its landscape or scenic qualities, nor does it adjoin or neighbour any such designation.
- The Site has no cultural or heritage connection to Hinckley, or those outlying settlements of Barwell, Earls Shilton and Burbage.
- The Site is not prominent in views, and as demonstrated by Viewpoints 1 to 8 (Appendix BLA 5), the Site has a very limited Zone of Primary Visibility (Appendix BLA 3).
- The Site does not contain any important landscape fabric such as a Veteran Trees, Ancient Woodland or similar.
- The Site is not situated within, and does not neighbour a Conservation Area.
- Through BLADE's own Site-specific assessment, it is considered that the Site does not qualify as a Valued Landscape
- There are no listed buildings on the Site.
- No part of the Site lies within or close to any parks or gardens listed on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest.
- Whilst there are mature hedgerows and hedge line trees, neither the condition of the Site, or its character, are unique or rare locally.
- The Proposed Development can be accommodated at the Site without harming the function of the Green Wedge, and so complies with Policy 6 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

11.50. The Site has been previously developed and managed as an allotment facility, which is now unused and derelict. Consequently, the proposed scheme would repurpose the Site, and through its proposed use would have a beneficial effect locally to the Site when compared to the Site being un-managed and derelict in the long term.

- 11.51. Due to the proposed change in land use to residential, there will be a discernible change to the character of the Site. However, where possible, existing features have been retained and this serves to moderate the effects. Over the duration of the assessment period, there will be reduction in effects with the reduction being a direct result of the landscape strategy designed for this Site.
- 11.52. For the reasons amplified within this appraisal, the Site's town edge location and the qualities of the new landscape proposed, as well as the proposed layout delivering new homes within a location neighbouring built development, the proposed scheme is neither incongruous nor unneighbourly.
- 11.53. From the outset of masterplanning the scheme, there has been a clear objective to reduce and offset the likely landscape and visual effect on the Site's setting, as well as retaining and enhancing the existing landscape fabric of the Site. The Proposed Development would be concentrated where it is most appropriate in environmental terms to do so, and would interface with the neighbouring built form affording a proportion of the Site as open and undeveloped, as well as retaining and bolstering the existing landscape fabric, and not leading to the amalgamation and enlargement of the existing fieldscape pattern.
- 11.54. Consequently, in landscape terms, the Site is entirely well suited to such a purpose as proposed, subject to appropriate design and sensitive mitigation measures, which the Applicant's proposals has developed through iterative working with wider disciplines. Given this, BLADE judges that there are no matters of such over-riding landscape importance that they outweigh the logic and suitability of this Site.
- 11.55. Consequently, in landscape terms, the Site is entirely well suited to such a purpose as proposed, subject to appropriate design and sensitive mitigation measures, which the Applicant's proposals has developed through iterative working with wider disciplines, including landscape through the undertaking of the Landscape Visual Appraisal. Given this, BLADE judges that there are no matters of such over-riding landscape importance that they outweigh the logic and suitability of this Site.
- 11.56. For these reasons, the proposed residential development represents an appropriately-scaled feature, which is designed to be in keeping with the local landscape character and landscape setting. It would result in a limited number of material landscape or visual effects, which would be highly localised to the existing settlement edge location, and would not lead to any coalescence of settlement pattern or loss of settlement identity between Hinckley and Barwell, and so accords to National and local planning policy.

## APPENDIX BLA 1

### Site Context Plan



## APPENDIX BLA 2

### Development Proposals



## APPENDIX BLA 3

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

KEY

- Application Site
- Distance Intervals (1km)
- Viewpoints (1-12)
- ZTV Reference Point
- ZTV 11.5m
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) calculated at 11.5 metres above ground level within the quantum of the site

NOTES:

This figure is based on the following parameters (height above ground level):

Pedestrian height: 1.6m

Viewers height: 2.0m

Landform data: LiDAR 2m DSM

Proposal height: 11.5m

This ZTV is based on a bare earth model of the landform and does not illustrate any effects of screening such as buildings and vegetation.

**BLADE**

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CLIENT  
Morro Partnership

PROJECT  
Normandy Way, Hinckley

DRAWING TITLE  
Theoretical Visibility (11.5m)

DRAWING STATUS  
Planning

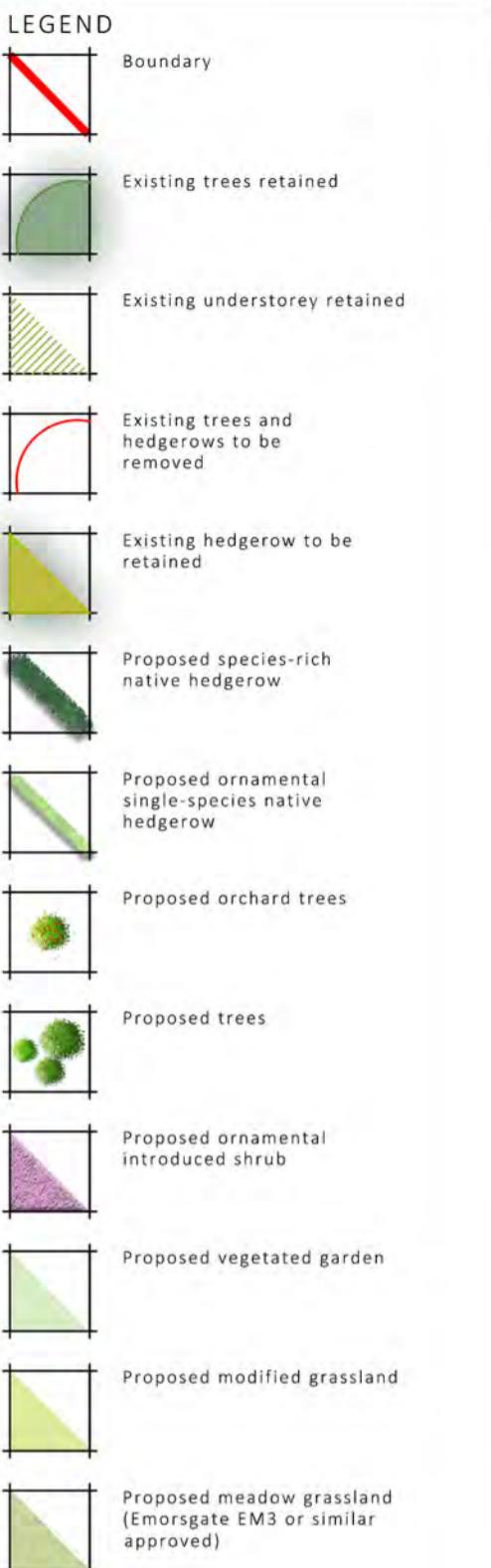
DRAWING NO. 1863-L-RP-LVA-PL-102 REVISION V1

SCALE @ A3 1:30,000 DATE DEC 2025



## APPENDIX BLA 4

### Illustrative Landscape Masterplan



**BLADE**

30 St Georges Square, Worcester, WR1 1HX 01905 947558 www.weareblade.co.uk	REVISION V1			
CLIENT Morro Partnerships Ltd.				
PROJECT Land north of Normandy Way, Hinckley				
DRAWING TITLE Illustrative Landscape Masterplan				
DRAWING STATUS Planning				
DRAWING NO. 1863-L-D-PL-200				
DRAWN KC	CHECKED JB	SCALE 1:200	PAPER SIZE A2	DATE DEC-2025



## APPENDIX BLA 5

### Representative Viewpoints



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 1:**

**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the north of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell**

Grid Reference 443002, 296275  
Elevation 120m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.45km N/0 degrees  
View Direction S/180 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 13.12 (24HR CLOCK)

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Morro Partnerships

PROJECT  
North of Normandy Way, Hinckley

DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 1

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 2:**

View from Ashby Road looking south towards the Site as Road Users pass through open countryside approaching the settlement edge Hinckley

Grid Reference 443220, 296888  
 Elevation 112m AOD  
 Distance to nearest Site Boundary 1.1 km NE/40 degrees  
 View Direction SW/220 degrees  
 Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
 Camera Sony A7 II  
 Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
 Projection Cylindrical  
 Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 12.32 (24HR CLOCK)

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PROJECT  
 North of Normandy Way, Hinckley

DRAWING TITLE  
 Viewpoint 2

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



#### WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

#### VIEWPOINT 3:

View from Public Right of Way (PROw LPA ref: U36/3) situated to the northeast of the Site  
passing to and from the settlement edge of Barwell

Grid Reference 443546, 296714  
Elevation 113m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 1.25 km NE/45 degrees  
View Direction SW/225 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 12.42 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 3

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 4:**  
View from Hinckley Road passing to and from Barwell to  
the northeast of the Site

Grid Reference 443420, 296409  
Elevation 112m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.55km NE/40 degrees  
View Direction SW/230 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 13.00 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 14

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 5:**  
**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U43/1) situated to the northeast of the Site passing between Hinckley and Barwell**

Grid Reference 443451, 296378  
 Elevation 112m AOD  
 Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.5km NE/40 degrees  
 View Direction SW/230 degrees  
 Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
 Camera Sony A7 II  
 Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
 Projection Cylindrical  
 Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 12.58 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
 Viewpoint 5

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 6:**

**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U44/2) situated to the east of the Site passing between Barwell and Hinckley through open countryside**

Grid Reference 444005, 295976  
Elevation 115m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.75km E/80 degrees  
View Direction W/280 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 13.49 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 6

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 7:**  
View from Penzance Close, a residential street in Hinckley south of the A47

Grid Reference 443231, 295758  
Elevation 125m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary Within 0.1km S/160 degrees  
View Direction N/340 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 11.37 (24HR CLOCK)

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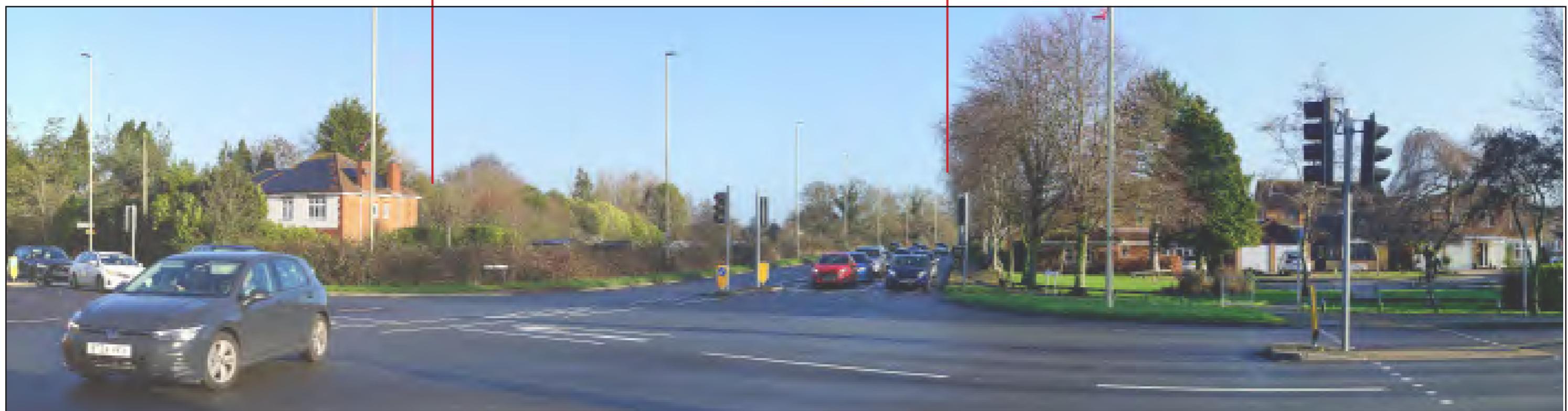
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PROJECT  
North of Normandy Way, Hinckley

DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 1

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 8:**  
View from the junction of the A47 and Ashby Road to the  
southwest of the Site

Grid Reference 443089, 295697  
Elevation 125m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary Within 0.1km SW/240 degrees  
View Direction E/90 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 11.46 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 7

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 9:**  
**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: U3/2) passing through  
open countryside to the west of the Site**

Grid Reference 440570, 296019  
Elevation 110m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 2.4km W/270 degrees  
View Direction E/90 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 14.05 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 9

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 10:**  
**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T60/2) passing through  
open countryside to the north west of the Site**

Grid Reference 441879, 296235  
Elevation 113m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 1.55km NW/310 degrees  
View Direction SE/130 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 14.29 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 10

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 11:**  
**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through  
open countryside to the north-north west of the Site**

Grid Reference 442671, 297089  
Elevation 106m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 1.30km N-NW/340 degrees  
View Direction S-SE/160 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 12.19 (24HR CLOCK)

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PROJECT  
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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 11

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025

APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE



**WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 12:**  
**View from Public Right of Way (PRoW LPA ref: T37/3) passing through  
open countryside to the north of the Site**

Grid Reference 443167, 296687  
Elevation 115m AOD  
Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.95km N/350 degrees  
View Direction S/170 degrees  
Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
Camera Sony A7 II  
Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
Projection Cylindrical  
Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 11.57 (24HR CLOCK)

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DRAWING TITLE  
Viewpoint 12

DRAWING STATUS Planning DATE Dec 2025



WIDE ANGLE BASELINE PANORAMA OF EXISTING VIEW TOWARDS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT ONLY

**VIEWPOINT 13:**  
**View from Ashby Road looking southeast towards the Site as**  
**Road Users enter Hinckley**

Grid Reference 443021, 296164  
 Elevation 122m AOD  
 Distance to nearest Site Boundary 0.4km N/340 degrees  
 View Direction S/160 degrees  
 Paper Size 420 x 297 mm A3  
 Camera Sony A7 II  
 Lens Sony E-mount E50mm F1.8oss  
 Projection Cylindrical  
 Photograph Date and Time 19/12/2025 @ 13.14 (24HR CLOCK)

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 Viewpoint 13

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## APPENDIX BLA 6

### Methodology

This methodology is specific to developments determined by the Local Planning Authority as not requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment. The Third Edition of the GLVIA3 provides clarification that the same principles and processes apply for EIA and non-EIA assessments however there is no requirement for establishing whether the effects are significant given this development falls out with the formal requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment.

The methodology sets out the approach for the core steps in describing the baseline conditions, identifying where potential impacts may occur and evaluating the subsequent effects. In accordance with GLVIA3, the appraisal reflects the clear distinction between the landscape as a resource and visual amenity. The steps of the methodology used in the LVA are set out below:

- Illustrative Tools
- Baseline Conditions:
  - Landscape Baseline
  - Visual Amenity Baseline
- Potential Effects - including magnitude of change and nature of change:
  - Assessment and Evaluation of Landscape Effects
  - Assessment and Evaluation of Effects on Visual Amenity

### ILLUSTRATIVE TOOLS

In accordance with The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, a proportionate approach has been applied to determine the visualisation type appropriate for this project. It is considered annotated viewpoint photographs are sufficient level of detail to support the appraisal.

The viewpoint assessment is illustrated by photographs taken to represent a maximum visibility scenario. Photographs have been annotated to show the extent of the Site within the view, its context and highlight key features. The photographs used have been taken using a full frame sensor digital camera with a 50 mm lens equivalent mounted on a tripod, which conforms to the GLVIA guidance since this lens size is considered to most closely represent the view obtained by the human eye. The photographs have been taken to most represent a maximum visibility scenario during the season in which the assessment is undertaken.

It should be noted that whilst photography is a valuable tool to assist in the visualisation process, it cannot be expected to replicate the actual view or predicted view which would be attained on the ground. The photographs provide the viewer with a fair representation of the proposed development Site within its setting.

## BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Desktop Survey Work

The following desktop sources were consulted in order to compile the baseline information:

- Existing Landscape Character Assessments;
- Register of Parks and Gardens;
- Ordnance Survey Maps; and
- Aerial photography.

### Landscape Baseline

**Landscape receptors** comprise the landscape fabric of the site, landscape character areas/ types and designated landscapes which may be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed Development.

**Existing Landscape Character Assessments** have been reviewed and interpreted for use within the appraisal based on field work and further desktop survey work. A description is provided of the existing landscape elements, features, characteristics, designations and the value, condition and importance of the landscape and resources within the study area which are likely to have potential impacts as a result of the proposed Development.

An evaluation is required for each landscape character area/ type and landscape receptor which has the potential to interact with the development on:

**Landscape value** – It is often regarded in association with landscape designations however other more local factors have been considered such as local heritage or community interest. Key factors in regard to landscape value include landscape condition, scenic quality, rarity, recreational value, tourism, local heritage and community interest.

**Susceptibility to change** – Landscapes are constantly changing and evolving. The current pressures in the landscape have been clearly stated in the absence of the proposal for each landscape character area/ type.

**Landscape sensitivity** to changes has been defined as high, medium, low or negligible based on professional interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- The value placed on the landscape as defined by designation/other identifiable form of recognition;
- The scale and pattern of the landscape and its elements/features;
- The simplicity or complexity of the landscape;
- The nature of skylines;
- Landscape quality or condition;
- Existing land-use;

- Visual enclosure/openness of views and distribution of visual receptors; and
- The scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape.

Table A.2: Sensitivity of The Landscape Baseline

Landscape Sensitivity	Land Use
Very High	<p><i>Value:</i> Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.</p>
High	<p><i>Value:</i> Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.</p>
Medium	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.</p>
Low	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.</p>
Negligible	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change</p>

### Visual Amenity Baseline

**Visibility Analysis** concentrated on publicly accessible areas and key receptors including residential and outdoor recreational areas, as well as road and public footpath networks. The aim is to identify the interactions between the proposal and the visual receptors.

The study area is based upon analysis of the natural landform, using contours from the 1:25k Ordnance Survey map and a desktop review of intervening structures which are predicted to screen views of the Development such as buildings on mass and block woodland from the aerial.

Fieldwork is undertaken to establish the extent of available views towards the Site and to establish the extent of views from the Site.

**Visual receptors** comprise those individuals or groups of people who may have views of the Proposed Development. The main groups of visual receptors are usually defined as follows:

- Residents;
- Tourists or visitors, which includes users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or public rights of way whose attention would be focused on the landscape; important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; principal views from residential buildings; beauty spots or picnic areas;
- Hill walkers, which includes those walking on unmarked footpaths; and
- Road users.

**Viewpoint Assessment** - A selection of viewpoints was identified and considered to be representative of the main sensitive receptors in the study area for the purposes of assessing the proposed Development. The viewpoints have been numbered in a clockwise direction starting in the north and were chosen to be representative such as a promoted visitor attraction or illustrative to demonstrate a particular effect or theme from the appraisal.

**Viewpoint Description** - The extent and nature of the existing views are described by reference to the following and illustrated through annotated photographs:

- Composition of the view, landscape character, features, visual amenity and quality of the landscape;
- nature of the view;
- elevation;
- direct or indirect/ angled;
- full or partial;
- open or filtered;
- seasonal variation; and
- extent.

The extent of view and proportion of the development which is visible is categorised as follows:

**Full views** - Where greater than 75% of the proposed Development is visible

**Partial views** - Where less than 75% of the proposed Development is visible

**Restricted views** - Where less than 50% of the proposed Development is visible and/ or very limited views of the proposed Development

Distance: The distance of the views towards the application and development is categorised below:

**Short distance** - less than 0.5km

**Medium distance** - between 0.5 and 1km

#### Long distance - Greater than 1km

Viewpoint Sensitivity is defined as high, medium or low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters, as follows and defined in Table A.1:

- Location and context of the viewpoint;
- Land use or main activity at the viewpoint;
- Frequency and duration of use;
- Landscape character and quality of the intervening landscape; and
- Value attached to view.

Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity in relation to Main Activity at Viewpoint

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
Very High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
Medium	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
Low	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
Negligible	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.

## POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The text below provides an analysis of the potential direct/ indirect impacts based on site reconnaissance to make a professional judgement on the magnitude and evaluation of effects of the main landscape and visual receptors identified in the study area as outlined in the Baseline Conditions.

### Assessment of Landscape Effects

**Magnitude of Landscape Effects** - The effect on landscape character as a result of the proposed Development is largely dependent on; the characteristics of the receiving landscape, the consistency of the proposed development in relation to the receiving landscape and the perceptions of the proposed development influenced by distance, weather and appearance.

**Landscape effects** are classified as substantial, moderate, slight, negligible and none based on a professional judgement which combines landscape sensitivity, value, susceptibility to change and the level of interaction with the proposed Development.

The criteria utilised in ascribing magnitude of change of landscape effects throughout this assessment are as follows:

**Very High:** Total loss or considerable alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the view that is directly visible resulting in a substantial change to the baseline condition;

**High:** Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements

**Medium:** Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change perceived as a partial or localised change within a broader, unaltered context which may be noticed directly or obliquely;

**Low:** Limited loss or small alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change is discernible but underlying composition of the view would be similar to baseline;

**Negligible:** Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape

**Indiscernible:** In some circumstances, changes to key landscape components will be lower than negligible and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Landscape effects also consider whether the Development:

- Reinforces the landscape elements, structure and key landscape characteristics (positive). Or would it include low or negligible changes that maybe considered part of the baseline condition (neutral). Or an adverse effect which may include the loss of landscape elements such as mature trees and hedgerows as part of construction leading to a reduction in the landscape quality and character of an area.
- Would have a physical change to landscape fabric (direct) or consequential change (indirect).
- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the landscape.

## Assessment of Effects on Visual Amenity

**Magnitude of the Visual Effects** - The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
- Duration of the predicted impact;
- Extent of the development in the view, e.g. the horizontal angle subtended by the development;
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- Degree of contrast;
- Visual permeability of proposed Development, i.e. extent to which views would be blocked or would be restricted;
- Background to the Development; and
- Extent and nature of other built development visible.

In the case of magnitude of change occurring within designated areas or along roads or recreational routes, the proportion of the designated area or length of the route affected by the proposals is also a consideration.

The criteria utilised in ascribing visual magnitude of change throughout this assessment are as follows:

- Very High: Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view
- High: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.
- Medium: Moderate alteration to one or more key characteristics of the baseline view.
- Low : Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
- Negligible: Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
- Indiscernible: In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints will be lower than negligible and changes to the existing baseline of the view will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Visual effects also consider whether the Development:

- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the visual amenity.

## EVALUATING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape or visual effects have been assessed as major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/minor, minor or minor/negligible. These categories have been based on combining viewpoint sensitivity and predicted magnitude of change (Table A.2).

Table A.2: Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Effects

	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE				
Receptor Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor
High	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor
Medium	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible	Negligible/-none

The matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool, and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Thus in some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.

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