



## **Proposed Residential Development Barton Road, Barlestone**

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment





## REPORT AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Barton Road, Barlestorne

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A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, in consideration of the proposal for the installation of a solar array.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Terms of Reference

1.1 ISL Associates Ltd (Ian Stemp Landscape Associates) have been appointed by the Client, in respect of their proposals for the development of a site off Barton Road, Barlestoke, for residential use. This is the second phase of an already approved phase 1 which is currently under construction. The written report should be read in conjunction with the separate A3 Appendix 1 which contains Figures 1-8, and Appendix 2, which contains Photo Views 1 to 16.

1.2 Please refer to the site location plan **Figure 1** in the A3 Appendix 1.

### Aim of the Study

1.3 Landscape and visual effects are two of the key environmental issues associated with developments in the countryside, including sites on the fringe of villages, and the assessment of such effects is an important component of the process for determining the suitability of such developments within a particular location.

1.4 The purpose of this study is therefore to:

- Investigate and review any extant assessments of landscape character that have been carried out and published for the context of the site.
- Record the existence of any sensitive landscape features or sites of special landscape significance on or near to the site.
- Undertake a landscape appraisal of the site and its surroundings, with particular reference to landform, vegetation and land-use.
- Determine the potential visibility of the development on the site within its landscape context.
- Consider the consequences on the site's contextual landscape character and visual amenity of developing the site for housing in accordance with the present proposals.
- Recognise possible conservation and enhancement measures that could be incorporated as part of the development scheme, and suggest forms of mitigation to reduce any potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity, if there are found to be any.



## 2.0 Methodology

2.1 The methodologies adopted for this Landscape Character and Visual Assessment are based on guidance given in the following publications.

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' by the L.I. and I.E.M.A.' (Third Edition) 2013, and 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidelines for England and Scotland' by Scottish National Heritage and The Countryside Agency (Natural England) 2002.
- An approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014) by Natural England.
- Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (September 2019) by The Landscape Institute.

2.2 An important part of the assessment has been the on-site work, which involved landscape survey on site and in the walking of footpaths and traversing of roads within the vicinity of the site. Views of the site from publicly accessible places within the surrounding countryside and from nearby residential properties were given particular attention, and a series of photographs taken where appropriate.

2.3 The majority of the photographs were taken with an Apple iPhone 16 Pro with the lens fixed at a digital focal length equivalent to an analogue 50mm lens. These photographs are for illustrative purposes only and are not an exact representation of the human field of view.

2.4 The proposed development may be visible from several private, residential properties, as well as private places of work which are not accessible. In such cases, consideration of the visual impact will be addressed within the written supporting text.

2.5 All photographs have been taken from ground level. They are therefore not wholly representative of any views from upper windows, or elevated views within vehicles or from horseback.

2.6 By consideration of the position of development within the landscape; the local topography; and the size of the site and extent of the proposed development, the geographical study area for this assessment has been confined to a 2.0-kilometre radius circle around the site. Beyond 2.0 km the potential for the proposed development on the site to be visible or influential on character is either negligible or not possible.

2.7 The landscape survey work was undertaken in the early summer season when the trees and hedgerows were predominantly in leaf. The potential decrease in the screening effects that the established vegetation may present, by the absence of leaves on deciduous trees and hedges in the late autumn to spring, should be taken into consideration.



- 2.8 For some forms of development, it may be necessary to carry out night time surveys of the existing conditions to ascertain the potential effects of lighting on the adjacent landscape.
- 2.9 Chapter 7 of GLVIA3 sets out guidance for cumulative landscape and visual effects and these must be considered within the report if forming part of a larger Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Although this report does not form part of an EIA, an assessment of the cumulative impact of the development will be included.
- 2.10 The survey work was followed by a desk-top study and internet trawl, with particular reference to published landscape character assessments at national and local level, local authority adopted development plans and any supporting documentation.



## 3.0 Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy

#### European Landscape Convention

3.1 The United Kingdom remains a party to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), also known as the Florence Convention. The UK signed the Convention in 2006, and it came into force on 1 March 2007. The Convention promotes the protection, management, and planning of landscapes across Europe and encourages public awareness and participation.

3.2 The ELC applies to all types of landscapes—urban, rural, natural, and degraded—and emphasizes their importance to cultural heritage, quality of life, and well-being. The UK continues to uphold the Convention's principles through national and regional policies, including landscape planning and conservation efforts.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

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

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

3.5 Paragraph 180 states at part a) that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise "*the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.*"

3.6 Paragraph 181 advises that:

*"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*



## Local Planning Policy

3.7 Policy Designations are shown in Figure 6.

### Adopted Policies

#### Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

3.8 The site lies within the boundaries of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, whose planning decisions are measured primarily against the policies of their 2006 to 2026 Local Plan, which consists of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD.

The Core Strategy DPD, adopted in December 2009 has the following 'Spatial Objectives'.

*Spatial Objective 9: Identity, Distinctiveness and Quality of Design To ensure development contributes to the local distinctiveness of the borough, and enhances both settlement identity and the environment through the quality of sustainable design. Design and other measures will be used to develop strong community identities and neighbourhood pride.*

*Spatial Objective 10: Natural Environment and Cultural Assets To deliver a linked network of green infrastructure, enhancing and protecting the borough's distinctive landscapes, woodlands, geology, archaeological heritage and biodiversity and encourage its understanding, appreciation, maintenance and development.*

3.9 The following policies within the Core Strategy DPD are relevant.

#### Policy 11: Key Rural Centres Stand Alone

##### Barlestorne

*To support the local services in Barlestorne and maintain rural population levels the council will:*

- Allocate land for the development of a minimum of 40 new homes. Developers will be required to demonstrate that the number, type and mix of housing proposed will meet the needs of Barlestorne, taking into account the latest Housing Market Assessment and local housing needs surveys where they exist in line with Policy 15 and Policy 16.
- Support additional employment provision to meet local needs in line with Policy 7.
- Support the improvement of the GP facilities in Barlestorne to support the increase in population, to be delivered by the PCT and developer contributions.



- Address the existing deficiencies in the quality and accessibility of green space and play provision in Barlestorne as detailed in the council's most up to date strategy and the Play Strategy. New green space and play provision will be provided where necessary to meet the standards set out in Policy 19.
- Implement the strategic green infrastructure network detailed in Policy 20. To achieve this, the following strategic interventions relating to Bagworth will be required: Tourism Support and the Bagworth to Market Bosworth Multifunctional Corridor.
- Deliver safe cycle routes as detailed in Policy 14, in particular from Barlestorne to Thornton to connect up with the network through to Bardon Industrial Estate and Ellistown and to the old Nailstone Colliery site.
- Allocate land for a new cemetery to ensure future provision.
- Support improvements in the quality of the following facilities; community centre/Barlestorne St Giles and Parish Pitches Bosworth Road as supported by the Hinckley & Bosworth Cultural Facilities Audit.

### **Policy 19: Green Space and Play Provision**

The following standards will be used in relation to green space and play provision in the borough to ensure all residents have access to sufficient, high quality, accessible green spaces and play areas:

#### Quantity

Equipped Children's Play Space - A minimum of 0.15 ha/1000 population (excluding buffer zones)

Casual/Informal Play Space - A minimum of 0.7 ha/1000 population

Outdoor Sports Provision – A minimum of 1.6 ha/1000 population

Accessible Natural Green Space - A minimum of 2 ha/1000 population In areas with populations under 1000 people, a pro-rata approach will be used.

#### Accessibility

District Parks and Green Spaces - All households should be within 5 kilometres of an open space of at least 10 hectares which provides general facilities for recreational activity within a landscaped setting

Neighbourhood Parks and Green Spaces - All households should be within 600 metres of an open space of between 1 and 10 hectares which provide general facilities for recreational activity within a landscaped setting

Local Parks and Green Space - All households should be within 400 metres of an open space of between 0.2 - 1.0 hectare which provide facilities for recreation within a localised area, catering for the specific informal needs of the local community

Incidental/Amenity Green Space - All household should be within 300 metres of a small formal or informal area of open space

The above standards will be used to determine:



- a) Where improvements are needed to existing green spaces and play areas
- b) Where new provision of green spaces and play areas are required to support existing and new residents and workers in the borough

Standards need to be assessed according to their geographical context and in rural areas and smaller settlements with lower populations these standards may be difficult to achieve. In such cases access to provision in larger neighbouring settlements should be identified and accessibility improved where practical.

#### **Policy 20: Green Infrastructure**

The implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network as outlined on the Key Diagram is a key priority of the council.

Barlestorne is situated on the edge of the National Forest and as such the policy regarding 'tourism support' is relevant.

*Tourism Support - Continue to develop relationships with the National Forest, Stepping Stones Project and the Charnwood Forest to enable the continued implementation of these initiatives. Protect existing access routes and create physical connections between settlements and the National Forest and Charnwood Forest areas to increase the potential for tourism income and protect existing assets from possible overuse as a result of growth within and outside the borough. Promote the settlements within the National Forest (Markfield, Thornton, Stanton Under Bardon and Bagworth) and on the fringe (Groby, Ratby, Newbold Verdon, Desford, Barlestorne and Nailstone) as 'gateway' villages to the National Forest*

The following policies within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (DPD) are relevant.

#### **Policy DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation**

*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:*

- 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; or
- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; or
- d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or
- e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 - Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation.



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;
- iv) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9; and
- v) If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21

#### **Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest**

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

Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services.

Proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity or geological interest will be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies in the plan.

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

If the harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against or appropriate compensation measures provided, planning permission will be refused.

In addition to the above, where specific identified sites are to be affected the following will be taken into account:

#### **Internationally and Nationally Designated Sites**

International and Nationally Designated Sites will be safeguarded.

Development which is likely to have any adverse impact on the notified features of a nationally designated site will not normally be permitted.

In exceptional circumstances, a proposal may be found acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:



- a) A suitable alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available; and
- b) The on-site benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the site and where applicable, the overall SSSI or habitat network; and
- c) All appropriate mitigation measures have been addressed through the development management process; and
- d) Development likely to result in a significant effect on internationally designated sites will be subject to assessment under the Habitats Regulations and will not be permitted unless adverse effects can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated.

#### **Irreplaceable Habitats**

Proposals which are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat would only be acceptable where:

- e) The need and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and,
- f) It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained with the proposed scheme; and
- g) Appropriate compensation measures are provided on site wherever possible and off site where this is not feasible.

#### **Locally Important Sites**

Development proposals affecting locally important sites should always seek to contribute to their favourable management in the long term.

Where a proposal is likely to result in harm to locally important sites (including habitats or species of principal importance for biodiversity), developers will be required to accord with the following sequential approach:

- h) Firstly, seek an alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed;
- i) Secondly, and if the first is not possible, demonstrate mitigation measures can be taken on site;
- j) Thirdly, and as a last resort, seek appropriate compensation measures, on site wherever possible and off site where this is not feasible

#### **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan Review 2020-2041**

3.10 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council are currently working on a Local Plan which will set out planning policies for the period 2024-2045. The plan is currently undergoing consultation.

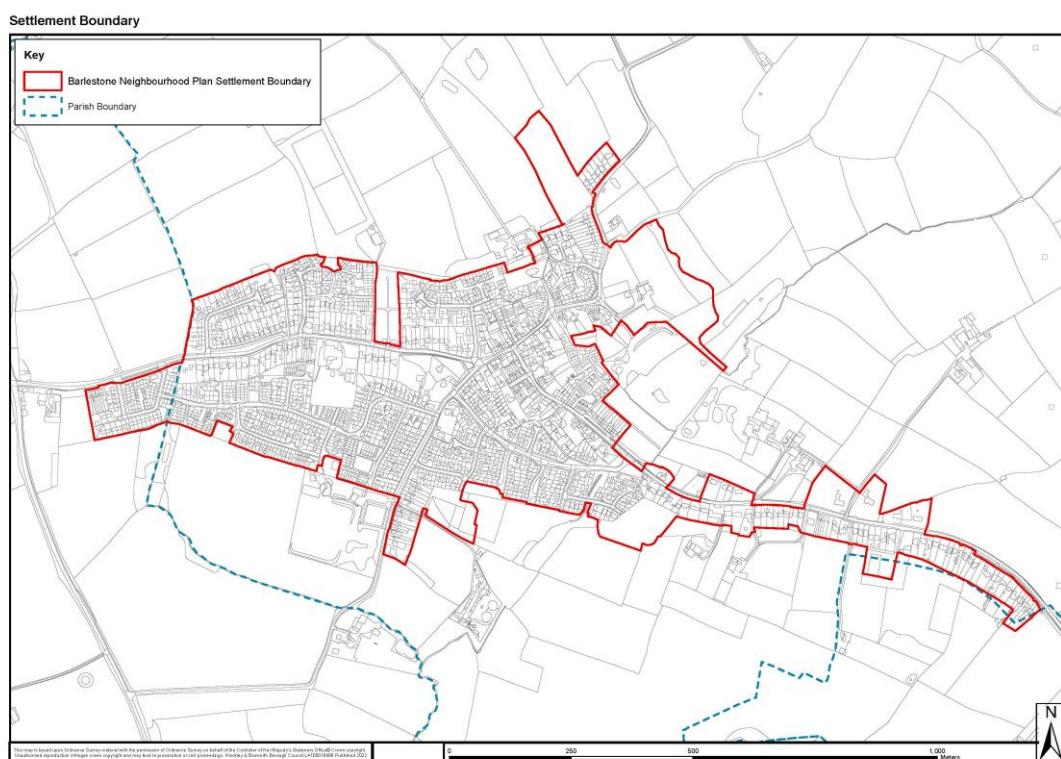


## Neighbourhood Plans

### 3.11 Barlestoke Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2039

There is no Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Osbaston, within which parish the site is situated. However, the Barlestoke Neighbourhood Plan was passed by referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 and is now part of planning law for the area. Although the development site falls outside of the designated plan boundary it does lie directly next to it, and the following policies are deemed relevant to consider.

**POLICY H2: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY** – Development proposals on sites within the Settlement Boundary will be supported where they respect the character of that area of Barlestoke and comply with other Plan policies. Land outside the defined Settlement Boundary will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.



**POLICY H6: – DESIGN STANDARDS** - Development proposals for one or more properties, replacement dwellings and extensions will be supported where they meet the following building design principles to a degree that is proportionate to the scale of the development:

a) Proposals should respect the character and historic context of nearby existing development within the village. Proposals should demonstrate how they meet the design features as described in the Character Assessment (Appendix 5) and incorporate local materials where practicable. Contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where positive improvement can be demonstrated without detracting from the historic context. Care should be taken to



ensure that the development does not disrupt the visual impact of the street scene or adversely affect any wider landscape views;

b) Sufficient off-road parking should be provided at a minimum of the standards in the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide. In particular there should be adequate parking areas for residents and visitors within each development;

c) The proposal does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise; d) Proposals should be enhanced by landscaping with existing trees, protecting existing trees and hedges whenever possible to promote biodiversity. Where watercourses (either man-made or natural), dry ditches, or other water drainage exists, these must be retained. Wherever practicable, plots should be enclosed by native hedging, wooden fencing or walls in keeping with the local style;

e) Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques, to a minimum of the standards contained within the relevant Building Regulations in force at the time of development and proportionate to the scale of the development, to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology such as solar panels and rainwater harvesters;

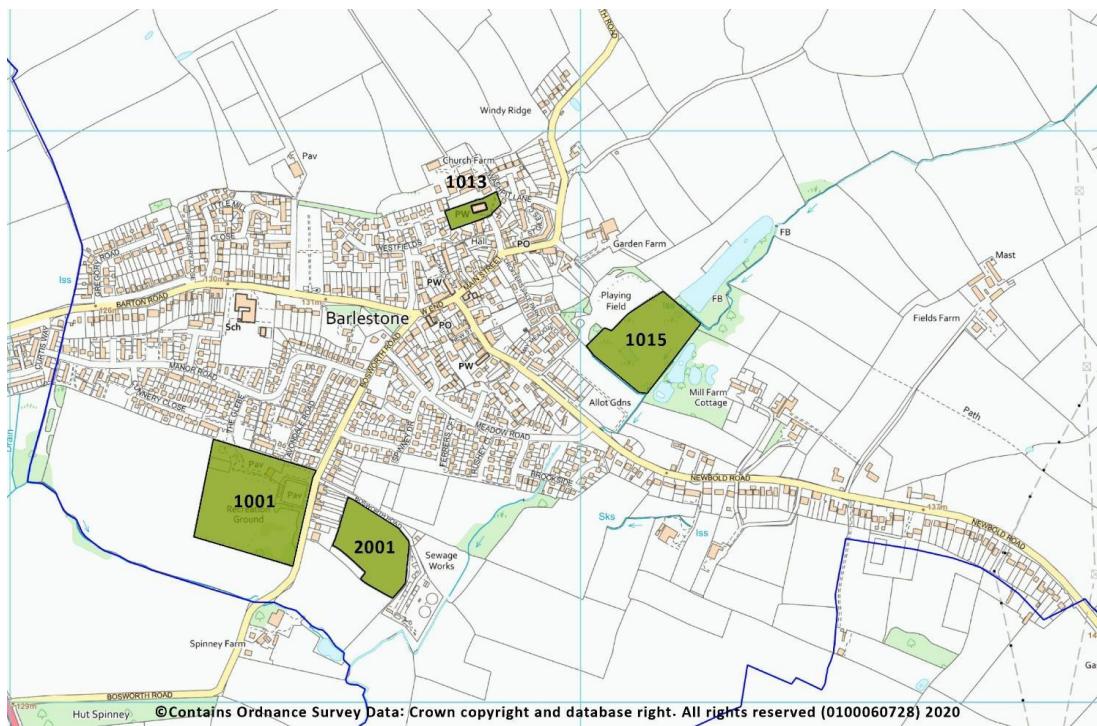
f) Proposals should provide species friendly features, such as holes in fencing for hedgehog movements and bat boxes as required with roof and wall construction following technical best-practice recommendations for integral bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites;

g) Development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems such as use of water butts, permeable surfaces and balancing ponds to retard surges and to minimise the vulnerability to flooding and poor drainage. 22 Development proposals should demonstrate that all surface water discharges have been addressed in a sustainable way so that discharge to the public sewerage systems is avoided. All major developments shall ensure that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off are put in place unless demonstrated to be inappropriate;

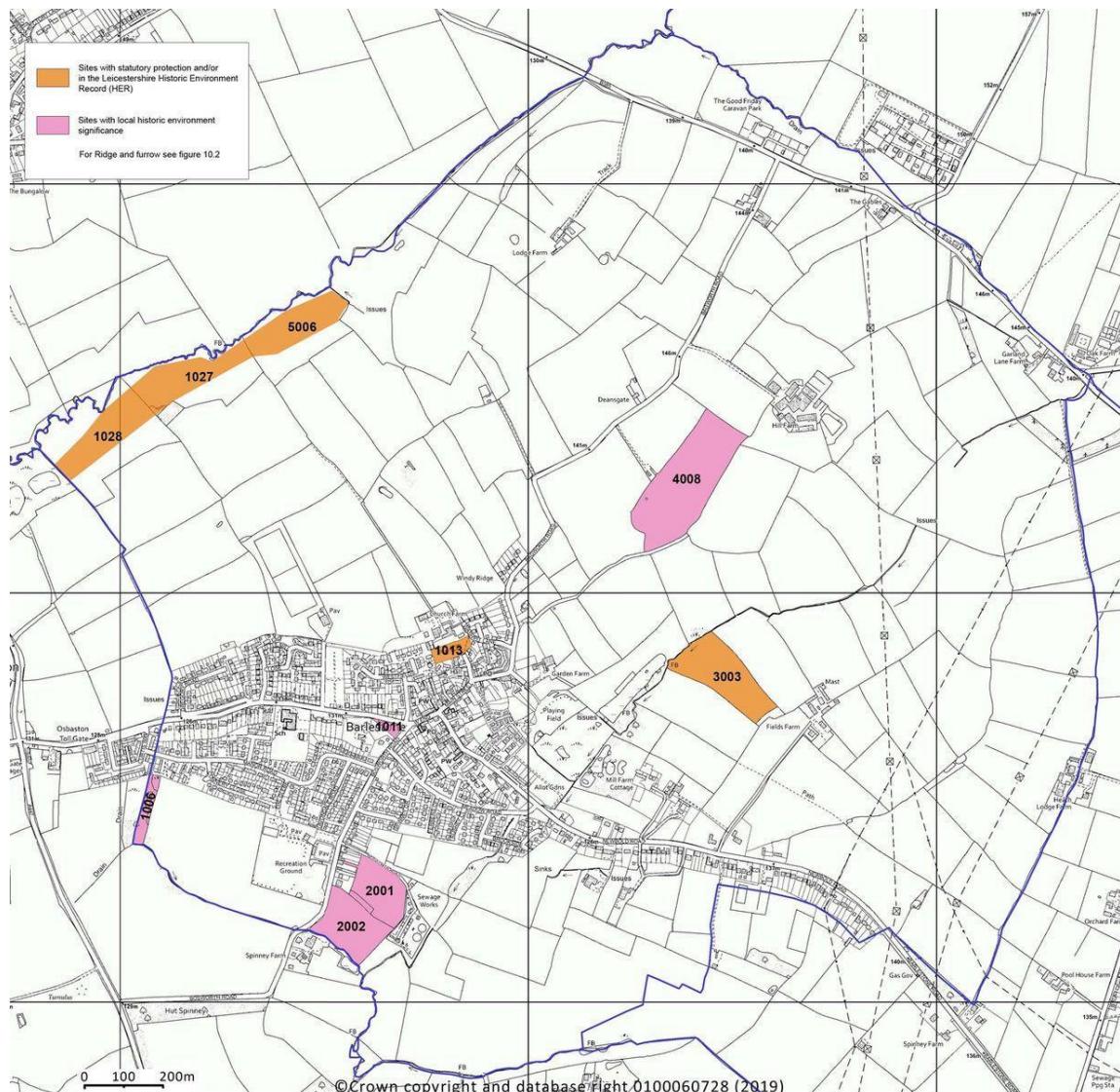
h) The lighting design, location, type, lux levels of development proposals should take account of best practice including advice from the Institute of Lighting Professionals; and

i) Development proposals should make appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recycling.

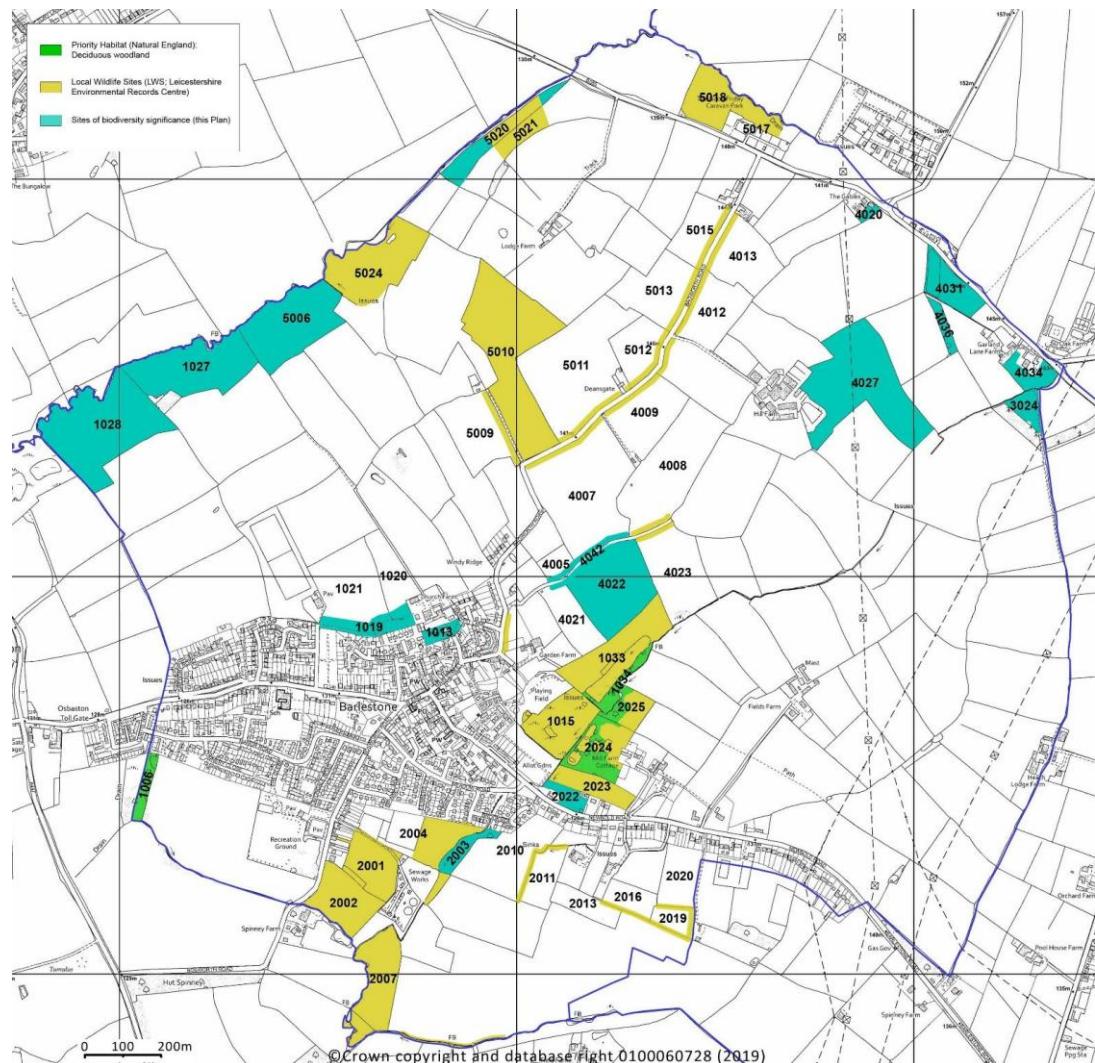
**POLICY ENV 1: PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE** – The Plan designates the following as Local Green Space (as shown in figure 6; details Appendix 8) : • St Giles churchyard (inventory reference 1013) • The Boardwalk (inventory reference 1015) • Bosworth Road Playing Fields (inventory reference 1001) • Old Pasture (inventory reference 2001)



**POLICY ENV 2: PROTECTION OF SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE –**  
 The sites listed and mapped (figure 7.1) are non-designated local heritage assets and have been identified as being of significance for their historical environmental features (built heritage or archaeology). They are important in their own right and are locally valued. The historical and cultural significance of the sites and the features present on them should be balanced against the local benefit of any development that would affect or damage them having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.



**POLICY ENV 3: PROTECTION OF SITES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE** – The Plan identifies a series of sites (as shown on Figures 7.1 and 7.2) as having significance for their natural environment features (habitats and species). Development proposals affecting the identified sites should safeguard and where practicable enhance their environmental features. To be supported development which would affect the identified sites should demonstrate that the development's value outweighs the natural environment significance of the site or features.



**POLICY ENV 4: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES** – The Plan identifies the following sites (and as shown on Figure 8) as open spaces with a sport and/or recreation function, amenity value, or significance for the contribution they make to the neighbourhood area's setting and character.

The Bullpiece; inventory reference 1006; Glebe Land owned by St Giles church rented by Barlestone PC; designated in this plan as natural and semi-natural green space

May Meadow; inventory reference 1014; owned by Barlestone PC; HBBC amenity greenspace and outdoor sports facility BARL16

The Roundhouse Spinney and Mine Wheel; inventory reference 1011; part owned by Barlestorne PC (spinney), part owned by Leicestershire CC Highways (wheel area), maintained by Barlestorne PC; HBBC amenity greenspace BARL11

Barlestone Cemetery; inventory reference 1010; owned by Barlestone PC; H&BBC  
churchyards & cemeteries BARL06



Barlestone allotments; inventory reference 1016; owned by H&BBC, maintained by Barlestone PC; H&BBC allotments BARL15

St Giles Sports & Social Club Grounds; inventory reference 1009; owned by club members; H&BBC outdoor 30 sports facilities BARL05; also (this plan) provision for children and teenagers

Avondale Road/Kirkman Close amenity greenspace; inventory reference 1002; owned and maintained by Leicestershire CC Highways; H&BBC amenity greenspace BARL09

The Glebe amenity greenspace and play area; inventory reference 1003; land owned by Jelson; play equipment owned by Barlestone PC; maintained by Barlestone PC; H&BBC amenity greenspace, facilities for children and teenagers BARL08

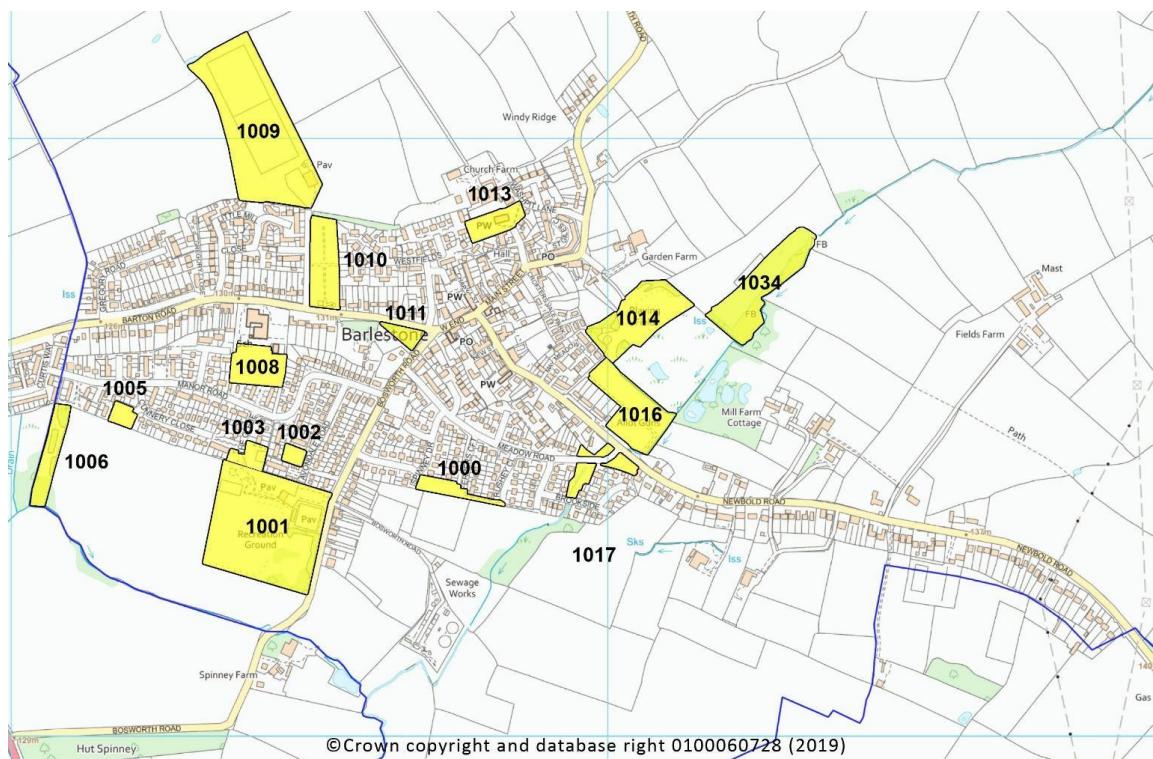
Cunney Close amenity greenspace; inventory reference 1005; owned by Jelson, maintained by Barlestone PC; H&BBC amenity greenspace BARL04

Meadow Road amenity greenspace; inventory reference 1000; owned by Wimpey, maintained by Barlestone PC; H&BBC amenity greenspace BARL13

Barlestone Primary School Grounds; inventory reference 1008; jointly owned by LCC and the Diocese of Leicester, maintained by LCC; H&BBC outdoor sports facilities BARL07

The Brook and Barle Stone; inventory reference 1017; owned by Leicestershire CC Highways; H&BBC amenity greenspace BARL14

Field 1034 (The Fishing Lakes); privately owned.





## 4.0 Baseline Conditions

### Landscape Character

4.1 Generally, a landscape character would have reduced capacity to accept change if the change proposed involves elements that do not already exist or if the landscape character is particularly sensitive to change. The character of an area might be sensitive to change because it is very visible in the landscape, so an exposed landscape of scenic beauty would probably be spoiled by most forms of development; but if the character of an area is considered to be poor, such a change may be beneficial rather than adverse. A landscape is also more likely to be sensitive to change if it is a mature landscape with long-established features or historical connotations; in which case a development upon it might remove those connotations without the possibility of them being reinstated in the short term.

4.2 In LVIA studies, judgments for significance of impact of a proposed development are informed by the sensitivity of the landscape resource or visual receptor, and the magnitude of the effect likely to be brought about by the development.

4.3 To determine the value of the resource and its susceptibility it is necessary to understand the character of the area in which the site lies, and the contribution the site makes to that character. It can then be considered whether the development proposed upon it would so change the site that it would significantly alter the character of the area as a whole.

4.4 To make such a judgment it is necessary to be informed by the following:

- the site's position and orientation in the landscape
- the character and value of the area's landscape
- the site's physical condition and inherent character
- the visibility of the site within its landscape setting
- the form of development proposed

4.5 By assimilating information from the above bullet-pointed studies, the relative sensitivity of the landscape resource to the proposed change can be assessed and rated as being high, medium or low, as categorized in the following table:

Landscape/ Landscape Resource Categories	Sensitivity*
Landscapes in good condition and with a high degree of uniformity and/or valued features, with a low capacity to accept change. These landscapes would not already be characterised by the elements proposed within the Development. The objectives of these areas would be to conserve the existing distinctive character and there would be limited scope for mitigation.	High
Landscapes with less defined character in reasonable condition with some valued features, but exhibiting signs of erosion or modification of character as a result of some intrusive elements. There would be some scope for development, mitigation and / or	Medium



Landscape/ Landscape Resource Categories	Sensitivity*
enhancement.	
Landscapes often with poorly defined character in poor condition/repair, which may have occasional valued features but also many detractive elements. They would either already be characterised by similar forms of development or have a higher scope for landscape change given suitable mitigation and/or enhancement.	Low

### National England Character Area Profile

4.6 The landscape character of England and Wales has been assessed at a broad national scale by Natural England. Whilst the landscape impact of this development will not impact upon the landscape character of the wider area, they provide a wider landscape context as well as statements of opportunity which may feed into the design process. The site is located within NCA 71: Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield and is adjacent to NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales.

4.7 Key characteristics are described as follows.

### Character Area 71 Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield

- The landscape is unenclosed with shallow valleys, subdued sandstone ridges and a gently undulating plateau.
- There are heavy, poorly draining soils over the Coal Measures and mudstones of the Mercia Mudstone Group, and free-draining soils on the sandstone ridges.
- The area forms part of a regional watershed between the River Mease to the south and the River Soar to the east and has many minor, swift-flowing streams draining the area, for example Saltersford Brook and Rothley Brook. Flooded clay pits and mining have resulted in many subsidence pools or flashes, which in combination with Thornton Reservoir provide valuable open water sites for nature conservation and recreation.
- The area has a developing woodland character that is heavily influenced by the work of The National Forest initiative, which augments locally dense riparian woodland and prominent amenity trees around settlements with developing woodland on former colliery sites.
- Small to medium-sized fields occur with a wide variation in field pattern, including some narrow, curved fields that preserve the strips of the open field system. Where arable production predominates, fields have been enlarged.



Hedgerows are low with a few scattered hedgerow trees and in places show the effects of former open cast workings. Agriculture comprises a mixture of arable and mixed sheep and beef units and, to a lesser extent, dairy. Combinable crops are grown on the freer-draining soils. Potatoes are grown in rotation on the heavier soils around Measham and Packington.

- There is remnant acid grassland over sandstone with neutral grassland in the valleys, and acid heathland on open mosaic habitats on previously developed land, particularly colliery spoil. The River Mease SSSI and SAC has internationally important spined loach and bullhead fish and nationally important white-clawed crayfish, otter, and aquatic plants such as water crowfoot.
- Rich heritage assets include Ashby-de-la-Zouch medieval castle and industrial heritage including the Ashby Canal and Moira Furnace, one of the best examples of an early 18th century blast furnace. Archaeological assets include a moated medieval village at Desford and the Roman town at Ravenstone.
- Traditional vernacular is predominately locally manufactured red brick with tile or slate roofs. Some older buildings are of stone. Locally characteristic around Measham is a double-sized brick of the late 18th century known as the 'Measham gob'. There are many three-storey brick-built farmhouses.
- The settlement pattern is dominated by mining settlements. Isolated hamlets along the roadsides and small villages centred on a church contrast with extensive areas of 20th-century housing and prominent industrial and commercial distribution warehouses at the edge of larger centres, notably Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Measham and Coalville.
- Around Coleorton, a more dispersed pattern of settlement associated with small-scale bell pit mining of the 13th century, spoil heaps, small fields, a dense network of footpaths and a fine example of historic parkland landscape contribute to the distinctiveness of this part of the coalfield landscape.
- The area is easily accessible by major roads and rail and is close to East Midlands Airport. Long-distance recreational routes include the Ivanhoe Way, the Leicestershire Round, and a wide network of local trails and footpaths associated with the recreational assets of The National Forest. The Ashby Canal also provides a link to the wider area.

#### 4.8 Statements of Environmental Opportunity are described as follows.

**SEO 1** Protect and manage the area's riverine and flood plain environment, its manmade and natural wetland habitats, especially the River Mease for its internationally and nationally important species and range of river plants, for the benefit of biodiversity, sense of place, water quality, recreation

**SEO 2** Manage and conserve ancient and plantation woodland and plan appropriately scaled new woodland cover, particularly in The National Forest; restore and reinstate hedgerows and hedgerow trees and increase biomass provision, timber



supply and biodiversity that will mitigate the impact of climate change and enhance the experiential qualities of the area.

**SEO 3** Protect and manage the industrial/mining heritage of the coalfield and wider historic landscape; balance the needs of forestry, commercial, industrial and agricultural growth with the developing visitor economy and maintain a high level of public access to the wealth of recreational experiences the National Character Area offers.

**SEO 4** Take an integrated approach to managing the natural environment that reflects the strong link between geology and its influence on landscape, biodiversity, industrial development, heritage and settlement pattern of the National Character Area; promote greater understanding of the contemporary link between wildlife and geodiversity, particularly in the distribution of habitats and species, and recognise the importance of former extraction sites for both geodiversity and biodiversity.

### **Character Area 94 Leicestershire Vales**

- 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.
- Rich and varied historic landscape, with the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield near Sutton Cheney, prominent historic parklands and country houses, ridge-and-furrow earthworks and important medieval settlement remains, for example at Wistow Hall, Gumley, Knaptoft and Peatling Magna.

#### 4.9 Statements of Environmental Opportunity are described as follows.

**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.

#### 4.10 Such national assessment is useful as a character reference where regional planning issues and large-scale developments are being considered, or where there are not more detailed assessments available. Where these are available, they are more suitable than Natural England's assessment as a reference base for the consideration of small-scale developments. The following regional and local landscape character assessments have been prepared.



## Local Landscape Character Areas and Types

### Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment 2017

4.11 The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment was published in September 2017 and is intended to be used in planning control and offer guidance for the whole of the countryside. The assessment recognises several Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), within the borough. Each presenting unique and distinctive characters with detailed description and recommendations for Landscape Objectives for each area.

4.12 The proposed development site falls at the edge of the LCA B Charnwood Fringe within the Settled Forest Hills Landscape Character Type. The study area also covers the adjacent Barton Village Farmlands, Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland and Bosworth Parkland. The characteristics of each area are shown below.

#### **LCA B: Charnwood Fringe Settled Forest Hills**

4.13 Key Characteristics are as follows.

*Gently undulating landform with small plateaus on higher ground and rising to the adjacent Charnwood Forest area to the east.*

Contrast between areas which are visually open and enclosed depending on the elevation of the landscape and the presence of woodlands and vegetation.

Large scale irregular field pattern of mainly arable and some pasture, with smaller fields around settlements. Fields enclosed by hedgerows with scattered trees.

Industrial heritage of quarrying and mining resulting in areas of restored land.

*Part of the National Forest and Charnwood Forest with areas of new woodland plantations associated with former industrial areas.*

*Dispersed pattern of former mining villages following a linear pattern on ridgetops, either located close to a colliery or providing housing for mine workers. Good public access and footpath network throughout, especially within National Forest area.*

*Predominantly rural landscape with arable and rough set-aside, influenced by industrial / urban features such as masts, poles and pylons.*

4.14 Key Sensitivities and Values are as follows.

Woodlands, copses and individual trees are important as areas of connective habitats such as hedgerows and river corridors which link to the nearby woodlands of the National Forest. They are also important for their recreational value for local communities.

*Rural character and the dispersed pattern of villages where the landscape away from the settlements is characterised by dark skies at night and a sense of tranquillity.*



Recreational value of the restored mining sites including Bagworth Heath Woods Country Park as well as the value for leisure and access provided by the network of footpaths and bridleways including the Leicestershire Round.

Thornton Reservoir which provides a popular recreational facility on the edge of Thornton village.

The historic and cultural associations with mining in the area related to the former pits.

The historic character of the landscape evident in the presence of Scheduled Monuments and the pattern of irregular fields of piecemeal enclosure and the small irregular fields surrounding settlements. Hedgerow boundaries and mature trees reinforce this character which also provides visual interest and biodiversity value.

Semi-improved grasslands and lowland meadow habitats which are particularly valued in the area due to the relative scarcity of biodiversity assets as a result of intensive farming regimes.

#### 4.15 Landscape Strategies are as follows.

Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed species woodland – as well as for areas beyond the National Forest boundary, encouraging, connecting and enhancing habitats such as hedgerows, tree planting, farm woodlands and lowland meadows.

Conserve and enhance the historic core of village settlements and ensure extensions are well integrated within this wooded landscape.

Restore typical zones of woodland types from alder, crack willow, hazel and grey willow in valleys, to oak/birch woodland on higher slopes; developing and managing transitional scrub communities between woodland and adjoining habitats.

The siting and design of new development should complement the existing settlement pattern. New developments, extensions or alterations should be of appropriate materials, scale, massing and location within their plot to the rural context of the area. Removal of traditional building features such as crown chimney pots and boundary walls of brick, stone, metal railings and timber fences should be avoided.

Conserve the historic features of the landscape including industrial heritage of mining villages, railways.

#### **LCA C: Bosworth Parkland**

#### 4.16 Key Characteristics are as follows.

Rolling farmland and parkland with gentle slopes which rise and fall reaching a high point around the town of Market Bosworth.

Scattered trees, woodlands and smaller fields of pasture around settlements add interest to the regular pattern of enclosure fields divided by low hawthorn hedges.



A rural and peaceful character with development limited to scattered farm buildings and historic settlements well-integrated into the landscape by vegetation and small scale of buildings.

Parkland of Bosworth Park with avenue trees and Bosworth Hall country estate.

Recreation and tourism- Market Bosworth Country Park and a good network of public footpaths and routes popular with cyclists. Destinations include Market Bosworth, the Battlefield Visitor Centre, the Battlefield Line Railway and the Ashby Canal.

Bosworth Battlefield has strong heritage associations.

Historic villages of Cadeby and Sutton Cheney, with attractive red brick buildings and farm cottages, have a strong relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Market Bosworth provides an important focus within the area and St Peter's church provides a key landmark.

#### 4.17 Key Sensitivities and Values are as follows.

Historic value and associations with the nearby Bosworth Battlefield.

Bosworth Hall and Park which has a strong sense of place as a result of the intact parkland and features of historic interest. Bosworth Country Park is a valuable recreational resource.

Earthworks at the old village of Ambion are a reminder of a much older history.

The rural character and relative sense of tranquillity. The rural settlement pattern of small linear villages and scattered farmsteads provide continuity with their agricultural origins.

Mature trees and ancient woodland are an important habitat for many species including bats and birds. Hedgerows and trees are important features, creating structure and pattern to the landscape.

The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage

The quintessential East Midlands landscape of mixed farming with pasture, arable and ridge and furrow providing a strong sense of place as well as field patterns, country houses, canals and rivers. The attractive villages and small towns feature many notable older buildings including Market Bosworth and its landscape setting of fields and trees.

The rural setting and views to the church spire in Market Bosworth.

#### 4.18 Landscape Strategies are as follows



Promote the strong historic character and heritage including connections with the Battle of Bosworth and important medieval settlement remains.

Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.

Maintain the rural character of the landscape, ensuring development responds sensitively to the landscape context. Enhance and manage the diversity of parkland meadows, and retain features such as estate fencing and open roadsides with grass verges.

Maintain views to the church spire on the wooded skyline at Market Bosworth and rural views and setting of Market Bosworth.

Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.

Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular lowland wood pasture and parkland, wet woodland and grazing marsh.

### **LCA C: Bosworth Parkland**

#### **4.19 Key Characteristics are as follows.**

Gently rolling landform rising to the north from the lower lying land around the River Soar.

Clustered villages of varying size centred on crossroads.

Predominantly arable farmland with clustered areas of industry and recreational facilities near to the village fringes.

Tree cover is limited, with scattered trees and small linear woodland copses.

Large to medium sized field pattern defined by single species hawthorn hedgerows.

Good network of footpaths link settlements.

Few major roads.

Open views where hedgerows have been removed, giving an impression of a large scale landscape.

Electricity pylons and wind turbines are often prominent vertical features in this open landscape.

#### **4.20 Key Sensitivities and Values are as follows.**



*The remaining areas of ridge and furrow which create a sense of historic time depth.*

*The rural settlement pattern of compact and nucleated agricultural settlements connected by a network of rural lanes and minor roads is largely unspoiled. The rural landscape and sense of tranquillity is sensitive to change from further development.*

*Isolated farmsteads interspersed throughout the farmland contribute to the historic rural character and provide continuity to the past.*

*The estate at Mallory Park has strong historic and cultural associations and provides a nationally-popular attraction.*

*Long distance and panoramic views from the elevated land in the north creates a high scenic quality and adds to the visual amenity.*

*Relatively small communities of mesotrophic grassland and deciduous woodland provide valuable habitat in a predominantly agricultural landscape.*

*The areas which provide a rural setting to the settlements are sensitive to changes as a result of new development, as well as views from the wider landscape to church spires.*

#### **4.21 Landscape Strategies are as follows**

*Conserve historic field patterns where possible, and the agricultural setting to isolated farmsteads.*

*Conserve the relatively small-scale villages and ensure any new development contributes positively to the character and built vernacular.*

*Conserve and enhance pedestrian access between adjacent villages including the recreational and ecological corridor of Rotherley Brook.*

*Conserve Mallory Park and its predominantly rural setting.*

*Conserve and enhance the long, panoramic views from higher ground of uncluttered skylines and church spires, and consider the visual impact of vertically prominent elements in any new development.*

*Conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the landscape through a mosaic of habitats.*

*Identify opportunities for replacement of hedgerows along roadsides and their future management as landscape features*

*Promote regeneration and enhancement of tree cover through establishment of linear copses and hedgerow trees within field boundaries and around urbanising influences.*



## **LCA J: Barton Village Farmlands**

### **4.22 Key Characteristics are as follows.**

*Undulating landform which rises to the east.*

*Mix of arable and pasture farmland.*

*Vegetated character as a result of individual trees, small copses and scattered trees within mixed hedgerows.*

*Regular pattern of medium sized fields which are smaller around settlements, including potential areas of ridge and furrow.*

*Rural, tranquil character with areas of little light pollution.*

*Few main roads with rural lanes lined by ditches, hedgerows and grass verges with little or no street lighting.*

*Small linear hilltop villages of Carlton, Barton in the Beans, Odstone and Nailstone which are well-integrated into the landscape and surrounded by vegetation creating an overall harmonious landscape pattern.*

*The church spire of Nailstone church which is a distinctive landmark on a wooded horizon.*

*Long distance footpaths and public rights of way pass through the area providing recreational amenity.*

*Visitor attractions including the Battlefield Line and Ashby Canal enable appreciation of the landscape and provide evidence of the history of the area.*

### **4.23 Key Sensitivities and Values are as follows.**

*The small to medium size of the landscape pattern and remnant fields with ridge and furrow evident are likely to be sensitive to larger scale developments and removal of hedgerows.*

*The rural, tranquil character of the landscape and settlements, and lack of light pollution across the west of the area.*

*The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage*

*The historic character as a result of the settlement pattern of dispersed, small, nucleated villages on low ridges constructed in characteristic red brick with slate or clay tile roofs.*



The scattered woodlands, copses, trees and hedges which increase biodiversity and visual amenity value across the character area.

Rural agricultural setting to villages and the extensive rural views from them.

Church spires such as All Saints Church, Nailstone, and church towers form distinctive landmarks, and extensive views of them in a rural setting.

**4.24 Landscape Strategies are as follows.**

*Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed-species woodland to link to Charnwood National Character Area – as well as for areas beyond the National Forest boundary, encouraging connecting and enhancing habitats such as hedgerows, tree planting, farm woodlands and lowland meadows.*

*Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.*

*Maintain rural views including to church spires and towers and the rural setting.*

*Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat. Conserve the enclosed small-scale field pattern by protecting and enhancing the hedgerow network and hedgerow trees and conserve extant areas of ridge and furrow.*

**Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Sensitivity Study 2017**

The site and surrounding area are not covered within this study, which assesses landscapes against their sensitivity to development.

**Landscape Designations**

**4.25** The site itself is not covered by any local, regional, or national landscape designations.

**Contextual Landscape**

**4.26** Whilst it is useful to have a broad understanding of the landscape character of an area, as described in the published landscape character assessments, when considering a development on an individual site it is important to appraise the character of the site itself and the immediate surroundings. By so doing, site-specific landscape elements that are not possible to consider in wider-ranging studies, and aesthetic elements such as scale and enclosure, can be given due attention.

**4.27** A site's own character is determined both by the landscape features that exist on it, and those features of the surrounding area that are visible from it or perceived to be associated with it. The most significant features in the formation of landscape character are normally topography and vegetation, but other features such as structures and watercourses, are also important.



### **Location and Context**

- 4.28 Please see Figure 1 and Figure 2 for the site location and an aerial image of the surrounding area to give an overall context of the site setting.
- 4.29 The site is situated within the county of Rutland within the local administration of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

### **Land-use and Vegetation**

- 4.30 The predominant land use in the study area is agriculture, with the surrounding landscape being predominantly rural in character. In recent months a large solar farm has been constructed on land between Barlestorne and Nailstone and this dominates many views across this area of the landscape.
- 4.31 Woodland cover is limited within the study area, however mature field hedgerows and trees and roadside planting mean that the landscape is well treed and the edges of adjacent settlements and other built infrastructure are visually contained across the landscape.
- 4.32 There are no significant water courses or areas of standing water within the study area.

### **Topography, settlement and transport links**

- 4.33 Barlestorne is the largest village within the study area, the village centre being some 0.7km to the east of the site. However, the site itself is situated to the village's immediate western boundary. Barlestorne is some 9km to the north of Hinckley and 15km to the west of Leicester.
- 4.34 The second largest village is Nailstone, 1.3km to the north of the site, which occupies an elevated position, with its church spire being prominent.
- 4.35 There are smaller villages at Osbaston, 1.5km to the southeast, within which parish the site sits. Carlton lies approximately 1.8km to the west.
- 4.36 The villages of Nailstone and Osbaston are covered by Conservation Area status.
- 4.37 There are also several farmsteads within the study area, Inghams Farm being the closest at 0.25km to the northwest, which also includes a farm shop. Other farmsteads include Osbaston House Farm, Lount Farm and Osbaston Lodge Farm to the west and south west, Fields Farm to the southeast and Lodge Farm and Hill Farm to the northeast.
- 4.38 The study area is divided into two halves, east and west, by the A47 Hinckley Road, which is some 120m to the west of the site. Other roads within the study area include Barton Road, on which the site lies, which runs in a general east-west direction across the study area. Minor roads connect from the A47 to the smaller villages of Nailstone, Osbaston and Carlton Gate to the west.



4.39 There are no railway lines within the study area.

#### **Prominent structures and features**

4.40 Other than some electric pylons, prominent structures are limited within the landscape. All Saints church spire at Nailstone is prominent across many areas and the spire of St Peters at Market Bosworth is also visible. The most prominent feature is the recent solar farm construction that covers an extensive area on land between Barlestoke and Nailstone and has reduced the landscapes' overall sensitivity to development.

#### **Public Rights of Way and accessible places**

4.41 By reference to the Location Plan Figure 1, in addition to the public roads and footpaths, there is an array of Public Rights of Way across the study area, to the north, east, south and west of the proposed development site, although no PROW comes adjacent to or through the site itself and most are visually separated by landform and vegetation.

4.42 The Gate public house is situated 0.5km to the northwest of the site.

#### **On-site features**

4.43 As part of a larger agricultural field the site does not contain features upon it and measures just over 1 hectare in total. For an appreciation of the position and extent of the proposed development in relation to the existing buildings, please refer to **Figures 2 and 4**.

4.44 The site is a former agricultural field and is currently being used for storage of building materials relating to the phase 1 development.

4.45 There are mature hedgerows to the south and eastern boundary containing a mixture of native species. The northern boundary has been defined by a new post and rail fence which now delineates the site from the larger field within which it is contained.

4.46 There are several large trees to the southeast corner of the site, surrounding a small pond, which will be retained within the development.



## Landscape Value of the Site

4.47 In terms of "landscape value" it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in the GLVIA3 (Box 5.1, page 84). This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below.

### Landscape Designations

4.48 The site is not subject to any national or District landscape designation.

### Landscape Quality (Condition)

4.49 The existing hedgerows and trees around the site are in a well-maintained condition.

### Scenic Quality

4.50 The site is currently being used as a storage area for the adjacent phase 1 development, and any intrinsic scenic value of the site has been lost.

### Rarity and Representativeness:

4.51 The land type is not particularly rare and is representative of the surrounding countryside which is generally well managed.

### Conservation Interest

4.52 The ecological value of the site at this stage is low. It has no designated conservation status.

4.53 Recreational Value

The site is not accessible to the public and has no recreational value.

### Perceptual Aspects

4.54 Views from the site are limited to the immediate surrounding fields and residential areas on the edge of Barlestorne.

### Associations

4.55 There are no associations with artists or writers.

4.56 In conclusion, and having appraised the above factors, the study area contains characteristics of medium and low value. It is judged that although the landscape value of the wider area is deemed to be **medium**, the site and the immediate landscape are of **low** landscape value due to the presence of existing residential areas, the adjacent phase 1 and limited visual connectivity to the surrounding landscape.



## 5.0 Development Proposals

5.1 The Planning Statement by MyPad states the following. The site development proposals are shown in **Figure 5**.

### 5.2 Scale and massing

All dwellings are proposed to be either 1 or 2 storey in height, under a pitched roof. Dwellings are either arranged in pairs (semi detached) or in short terraces of 3no dwellings. There is 1no detached dwelling on the proposals. Dwellings are separated by a mix of rear access pathways or side parking (driveways) serving either 1, 2 or 3 dwellings therefore having various widths. This creates a variety in the massing and distribution of dwellings across the site. This scale and massing of buildings is in keeping with the surrounding context and typical of such a residential development.

### 5.3 Appearance and materiality

The proposed dwellings have been designed specifically for this site, to provide corner turn dwellings where required and to create a strong sense of place. The proposed dwellings have a mix of red brick(s), timber effect cladding in two colours, under pan tile or interlocking concrete tile roofs, with white upvc windows.

Whilst relatively traditional in their style they avoid creating a pastiche of either the historic centre of Barlestone, or the immediate context of mid 20th century design. The typical elevation style is indicated below, with a simple palette of details and features used across the site to provide a cohesive development.

### 5.4 Access and car parking

The proposed site access was approved at outline planning stage and has been adhered to for this reserved matters application. The primary access route through the site has been designed to provide turning facilities for emergency vehicles and refuse vehicles, being to adoptable standards. The private drives (shared surface) are proposed to have a grasscrete link with bollards to provide emergency vehicle access to avoid the need for turning heads to these streets. Bin collection points are proposed to these private drives, in close proximity to the adopted highway.

Car parking is proposed to be a mix of frontage and side drives, depending on the position within the site, this reflects the local character. Where parking is located to the side of the dwellings it is set behind the building line, generally tandem in nature, this allows a strong frontage closer to the pavement, and breaks up long runs of parking. Frontage parking is limited to 4no spaces in any unbroken run, with soft landscaping and tree planting used between blocks of parking. Parking courts have been avoided.



## 6.0 Landscape and Visual Effects

### Landscape Effects

- 6.1 Landscape character is defined as the distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape. It is these patterns that give each locality its 'sense of place'.
- 6.2 By cross-referencing **Figure 3** Landscape Character Areas with **Figure 6** Projected Visual Envelope, it can be seen that it is only the Charnwood Forest Settled Hills LCA that falls within the visual envelope of the proposed development and that there is only a slight incursion into the Barton Village Farmlands LCA on a section of the A47 as it passes the site. There is no impact upon the Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland or Bosworth Parkland LCA's.
- 6.3 The development proposals will mean the loss of an agricultural field of low landscape and ecological value.
- 6.4 No important features and elements of the landscape, including mature trees and hedgerows, areas of sensitive habitat will be lost as part of the installation. The proposal will also not affect any areas of sensitive or protected landscapes.
- 6.5 Due to the limited visual envelope, the proposed development does not affect any important local views across the adjacent landscape. The development would also not affect views from or towards any landscaped based receptor, including from public rights of way or from historic parks and gardens or from any designated wildlife site.
- 6.6 New native trees, hedgerow planting and grassland habitat will enhance the local landscape and increase biodiversity in the area.
- 6.7 The size and scale of the development is considered very small and the proportion of loss of the existing landscape and its perception from receptors is considered negligible. The low sensitivity of the site and the wider landscapes medium sensitivity would result in a minor adverse effect to the landscape character.

### Visual Effects

- 6.8 The appraisal of visual effects has been undertaken to assist in the understanding of whether the proposed development may have effects on the character of the landscape, and to determine how it might affect views from personal receptors.
- 6.9 It does need to be borne in mind that should the site be re-developed, it is possible that some existing views would be modified dependent upon the height and orientation of the proposed development, associated landscape features and screen planting; however, it does not follow that such modification to views would be adverse.



6.10 The visual appraisal for the existing site was carried out during the late winter months of 2025. The leaves were absent on the deciduous trees and hedgerows, so that in spring and summer through to early autumn, the deciduous vegetation screens would become more effective in screening views.

### Visual envelope

6.11 By reference to **Figure 7**, the predicted visual envelope of the proposed development is shown by the purple shading on the figure, and equates with private land or buildings, or publicly accessible places, from which the site or adjoining house are visible. From places where there are unrestricted views, the shading on the plan is solid, whilst hatched shading indicates that the views are interrupted or partially screened by vegetation or other intervening elements. To illustrate the predicted relative dominance of the development within a scene from a given viewpoint or viewing area, the closer the viewpoint is to the site, the deeper the intensity of the shading hue.

### Visual receptors

6.12 The visual appraisal has concentrated on assessing the degree to which the proposed development is likely to be seen from publicly accessible places and private residences within the study area, taking into account distances from the site, topography and the screening and/or filtering effect of buildings and vegetation. The places where views of the site are possible – i.e. visual receptors — are categorised into the following groups where relevant, with an indication of the relative sensitivity each category is considered to have to changes in visual amenity:

Receptor Category	Relative sensitivity to change*
• Most vehicular routes & transport Links	Low
• Recreation areas focused on elements of the landscape	Medium
• Public rights of way	Medium
• The setting of heritage features	Medium
• Long-distance footpaths	High
• Residential properties	High

6.13 \*The assessment of sensitivity is arrived at by professional judgement and drawn from the perceived amenity value of the receptor category and its susceptibility to the type of change proposed.

The visual receptors identified for the proposed development are listed and described in **Table 2** (see below). As well as giving their sensitivity rating, they are rated as to how much they are likely to change by the development appearing in the view.

6.14 As well as the presence of existing development, the loss of any notable landscape elements and the extent, density, scale and form of any new development will all have a bearing on how much the character of the landscape and the visual amenity of receptors are likely to be affected. The combination of these factors will bring about a certain magnitude of change to the present condition. The magnitude of



change is interpolated accordingly and rated against each receptor as scheduled on **Tables 1 & 2** (see below)

### Magnitude of change

6.15 From the table below and in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, the magnitude of change for visual effects is categorised as being High, Medium, Low or Negligible. These same ratings will be applied to the predicted magnitude of change to landscape character. However, it is recognised that for some developments in certain locations there may be combinations of factors that do not comply with the range of effects set out in the table. In these situations, professional judgement is used to define the level of landscape effects.

**Table 1** is given below:

<b>Table 1: Measuring the Magnitude of Change</b>	
<b>Predicted Changes Brought About by the Development</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>
Total loss or major alteration to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline conditions such that character/ composition/ attributes of the baseline will be fundamentally changed. These notable changes may occur over an extensive area, or be intensive over a more limited area.	High
Partial loss or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline conditions such that the character/ composition/ attributes of the baseline will be partially changed.	Medium
Minor loss or alteration. Change arising from the loss/ alteration will be discernible but the underlying character/ composition/ attributes of the baseline condition will be similar to the pre-development circumstances/ patterns.	Low
Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline conditions. Changes will be barely distinguishable, approximating to a 'no change' situation.	Negligible

### Significance of Effect

6.16 It is necessary in LVIA studies to assess whether the proposed Development is likely to have a *significant (important)* effect on the landscape or visual amenity of the area in which the Site lies. The baseline information gathered has been measured against the proposed Development and an assessment made as to how much of an impact, and resultant effect, there might be.

6.17 The significance of impact or effect is determined by combining the sensitivity of the landscape resource or visual receptor with the magnitude of change likely to be caused by the proposed Development. The following chart explains how the



judgements of sensitivity and magnitude combine to arrive at a significance rating of minimal, slight, moderate, major-moderate or major.

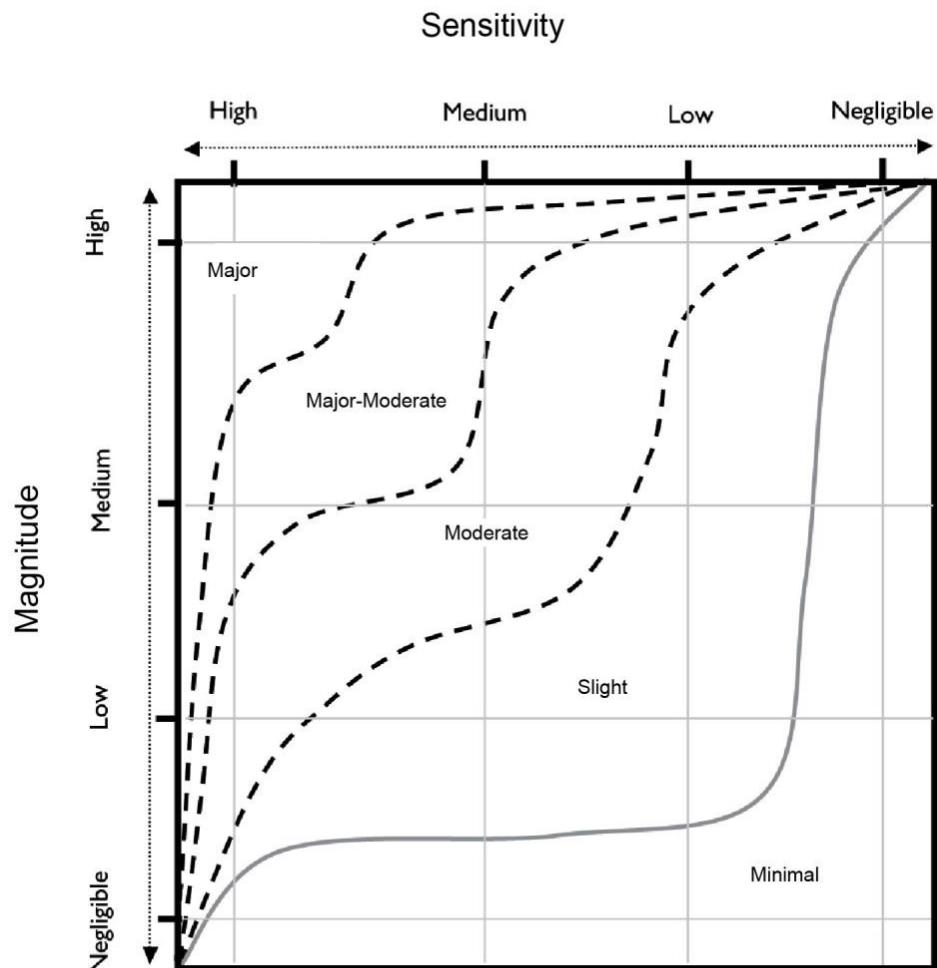


Chart showing how the significance of effect is derived

6.18 Effects may be adverse, neutral or beneficial. Adverse landscape or visual effects would be accrued if the proposed Development were to be harmful to the features of the Site or the character or attractiveness of its surroundings; but if the proposed Development includes elements that add value to the landscape or subdue the effects of existing features that degrade the landscape and reduce its potential, then the effects of the proposed Development could be beneficial. Where effects are not considered to be adverse or beneficial, or where beneficial effects counter-act adverse ones, they are assessed as being neutral.

6.19 The **significance of effect** (the importance of the change) that the development will have on each of the receptors is assessed by interpolation from the chart above and given in **Table 2** above. Please also note that the ratings given are very much a worse-case scenario, to allow for the expected reduction in the screening effect of vegetation once the leaves fall from deciduous trees and hedgerows in the



wintertime. Consequently, for the majority of the year the significance of the effect of the proposed development will be far less.

## **Visual Impact Assessment**

6.20 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis. See Appendix 2 for Photo viewpoints and **Figure 8** for photo locations.

6.21 The appraisal has been undertaken to assist in the understanding of whether the proposed development may have effects on the character of the landscape, and to determine how it might affect views from personal receptors.

6.22 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g., rights of way users. The photographs demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short- and long-range views.

### **Photo Viewpoints**

6.23 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section.

#### **View 1 From A47 Hinckley Road**

Distance to site: 0.46km

##### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

##### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

##### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

#### **View 2 From Bosworth Road south of the site**

Distance to site: 0.68km

##### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

##### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

##### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

#### **View 3 From Public Right of Way S40/1 southeast of the site**

Distance to site: 0.85km

##### **Effect of Development:**



Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

**Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

**Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

**View 4 From Bosworth Road, southeast of the site**

Distance to site: 0.66km

**Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

**Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

**Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

**View 5 From Bosworth Road, northeast of the site**

Distance to site: 1.00km

**Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

**Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

**Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

**View 6 From Bosworth Road, northeast of the site**

**Effect of Development:**

Distance to site: 1.60km

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

**Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

**Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

**View 7 From Public Right of Way R66/4 at its junction with Bosworth Road, northeast of the site**

Distance to site: 1.86km

**Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

**Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

**Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.



### **View 8 From Public Right of Way R66/3, north of the site**

Distance to site: 1.86km

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 9 From Public Right of Way S29/2, north of the site**

Distance to site: 1.00km

#### **Effect of Development:**

The landscape between Nailstone and Barlestone is now dominated by a large solar farm.

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 10 From Public Right of Way S29/3, northeast of the site**

Distance to site: 0.85km

#### **Effect of Development:**

The landscape between Nailstone and Barlestone is now dominated by a large solar farm.

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 11 From Barton Road, east of the site**

Distance from site: 126m

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of Phase 1 can be seen from approaching from the east and will block any views of Phase 2 development.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 12 From Barton Road, east of the site**

Distance to site: 44m

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of Phase 1 can be seen from approaching from the east and will block some of the views of Phase 2 development. Given the presence of existing residential areas on Barton Road and the Phase 1 under construction this is not considered a change from the baseline condition and the visual impact is negligible.



### **Construction Effects**

There will be views of protective fencing, construction machinery and dwellings under construction.

### **Residual Effects**

In the long term, new planting will mitigate some of the visual impact, however views of upper elevations will remain but seen in context of the development as a whole.

## **View 13 From Barton Road, adjacent Osbaston Toll Gate, west of the site**

Distance to site: 1.10km

Development of Phase 2 will increase the visual impact of development when approaching from the west, however given the presence of Phase 1 in the field of view as well as existing dwellings on Barton Road, this is considered a minor adverse significance of visual effect. After 15 years the significance of visual effect will be a Neutral

### **Construction Effects**

There will be views of protective fencing, construction machinery and dwellings under construction.

### **Residual Effects**

In the long term, new planting will mitigate some of the visual impact, however views of upper elevations will remain, and the significance of the visual effect will be neutral.

## **View 14 From Barton Road junction with A47, west of the site**

Distance to site: 136m

### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

## **View 15 From permissive footpath northwest of the site**

Distance to site: 0.66km

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

### **Construction Effects**

During the construction views of the site will not be possible.

### **Residual Effects**

At 15 years post completion the view will be unchanged, and there will be no residual effects.

## **View 15 From Barton Road west of the site**

Distance to site: 0.72km

### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.



### **View 16 From Public Right of Way S48/4 northwest of the site**

Distance to site: 1.00km

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 17 From A47 north of the site**

Distance to site: 1.04km

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 18 From A47 north of the site**

Distance to site: 0.59km

#### **Effect of Development:**

Views of the development will not be possible from this public right of way due to intervening topography and vegetation.

#### **Construction Effects**

There will be no visual impact during the construction phase

#### **Residual Effects**

There will be no visual impact in the long term.

### **View 19 From A47 northwest of the site**

Distance to site: 220m

#### **Effect of Development:**

Filtered views of upper elevations may be possible through gaps in hedgerows, however they will be fleeting to receptors in passing vehicles. This would be a negligible magnitude of change and a neutral significance of visual effect.

#### **Construction Effects**

Filtered views of dwellings under construction may be possible, site infrastructure and construction machinery will be screened by hedgerow to north of the site.

#### **Residual Effects**

After 15 years visual impact will remain negligible and a neutral significance of effect.

### **View 20 From A47 west of the site**

Distance to site: 120m

#### **Effects of Development**

Filtered views of upper elevations may be possible through gaps in and above hedgerows, however they will be fleeting to receptors in passing vehicles. This would be a low magnitude of change and a negligible adverse significance of visual effect.

#### **Construction Effects**



Filtered views of dwellings under construction may be possible, site infrastructure and construction machinery will be screened by hedgerows.

#### **Residual Effects**

After 15 years, and maturation of proposed tree planting, the magnitude of change will be negligible and a neutral significance of effect.

#### **Summary of Visual Impact**

- The development is the second phase of a development with phase 1 under construction and the additional visual impact is minimal.
- Visual impact is limited to the areas directly adjacent to the site.
- Visual impact on residential areas is limited to dwellings to the immediate south of the site and to Osbaston Toll House to the west, but the magnitude of change is low due to the presence of the existing phase 1 and the significance of the visual impact is minimal.
- There is no visual impact on receptors using the public rights of way within the study area.
- Visual impact on public highways is limited to those adjacent to the site, views will be fleeting, a low magnitude of change from the baseline condition and a slight significance of visual impact.
- No sites of public interest, cultural interest or historic interest will be affected by the proposals.



## 7.0 Proposed Mitigation, Conservation and Enhancement Measures

7.1 The following measures are recommended.

- Retention of all existing boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees to maintain the character of the landscape and to provide instant visual containment.
- Retain the existing pond to the southeast corner of the site to retain the site biodiversity.
- Plant new native hedgerows to the northern and western boundary to provide general amenity, create further visual separation to the surrounding landscape and to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- Plant new native trees around the perimeter of the site to provide general amenity, create further visual separation to the surrounding landscape and to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- Seed suitable areas of open space, including around the proposed retention pond with appropriate native wildflower and grass mixes to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- Planting semi-ornamental trees and shrubs within the site to soften the hard-paved areas, reduce visual impact of vehicles on the street scene and to add general visual amenity.
- Fixing bat boxes and bird boxes where possible to extend opportunities for wildlife habitat.
- Providing a sustainable drainage system for the development.
- Re-using existing topsoils on site.
- The lighting proposals for the Development to incorporate luminaires with full horizontal cut-off shields to reduce light spill and the brightening of the night sky.



## 8.0 Conclusions

### Landscape Character

- 8.1 The proposed development is located within a landscape of low sensitivity and occupies an agricultural field assessed as having limited landscape and ecological value.
- 8.2 Analysis of the Projected Visual Envelope (Figure 6) in conjunction with the Landscape Character Areas (Figure 3) confirms that only the Charnwood Forest Settled Hills LCA lies within the visual envelope, with a minor incursion into the Barton Village Farmlands LCA along the A47. There is no effect on the Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland or the Bosworth Parkland LCAs.
- 8.3 The development will not result in the loss of any key landscape elements such as mature trees, hedgerows, or areas of sensitive habitat, nor will it impact any protected or designated landscapes.
- 8.4 Views from public rights of way, heritage assets, historic parks and gardens, and designated wildlife sites will remain unaffected due to the limited visual envelope. The scheme includes new native tree and hedgerow planting and the creation of grassland habitat, which will contribute positively to landscape enhancement and biodiversity gain.
- 8.5 Given the very small scale of the development and the negligible impact on existing landscape perception, the overall effect on landscape character is considered to be minor adverse.

### Visual Amenity

- 8.6 The proposed development represents the second phase of an existing scheme, with Phase 1 currently under construction.
- 8.7 The additional visual impact associated with Phase 2 is minimal, particularly in the context of the baseline established by the presence of Phase 1.
- 8.8 Visual effects are confined to areas immediately adjacent to the site, with limited visibility from surrounding residential properties. Some minor visual impact is anticipated for a small number of dwellings located directly south of the site and at Osbaston Toll House to the west; however, the magnitude of change is low due to the existing built context, resulting in a minimal significance of visual impact.
- 8.9 There will be no visual effect on receptors using public rights of way within the study area. Views from public highways are restricted to roads adjacent to the site, where any visibility will be brief and transient. These represent a low magnitude of change from the baseline and equate to a slight visual impact.



8.10 The proposed development does not affect any sites of public, cultural, or historic interest.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)**

8.11 The development proposals would be in accordance with paragraph 180 as the overall landscape character is protected and conserved due to the minimal visual envelope and because no existing landscape features will be lost. The area will be enhanced by native trees and shrub planting and provide a net gain for biodiversity.

#### **Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan**

##### **Policy 19: Green Space and Play Provision**

8.12 The proposed development will provide an area of open space and play provision as part of the overall development in accordance with the borough requirements for play provision.

##### **Policy 20: Green Infrastructure**

8.13 The planting of native trees and hedgerows around the periphery of the development site will add to local green infrastructure and increase overall tree cover within the local area.

##### **Policy DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation**

8.14 The development lies adjacent to an existing planning approval for phase 1 (24/0029/REM) and the principle of development within this area has been already accepted. The second phase has a limited visual envelope and requires the loss of part of a low landscape value agricultural field. The landscape impact is considered minor adverse, and the limited visual envelope means that the perceived physical separation and open character of the landscape between Barlestorne and adjacent settlements is unaffected.

##### **Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest**

8.15 The proposed development will not impact or harm any areas of nature conservation or geological value. The existing boundary trees and hedgerows will be retained, and no natural features will be lost.

8.16 The existing pond to the southeast corner of the site will also be retained and protected, the retention of land around the pond that will be seeded with wildflower species will be an overall enhancement to its setting.

8.17 The development will include the planting of native trees and hedgerows as well as areas of native wildflower seeding which will ensure a biodiversity net gain across the site.

#### **Barlestorne Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2039**

##### **POLICY H2: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY**



8.18 Although the site is outside of the settlement boundary it is in accordance with other relevant local plan policies.

**POLICY H6: – DESIGN STANDARDS –**

8.19 The development will be in accordance with national and local design codes and standards.

8.20 The development will include measures for ecological enhancement such as badger fences, and in-built brick bird and bat boxes

8.21 The development will include a balancing pond and sustainable drainage system to minimise flooding potential.

8.22 It is recommended that the lighting design recognise the adjacent countryside setting and allows for minimal light intrusion to that area,

**POLICY ENV 1: PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

8.23 The development does not impact upon any local green spaces.

**POLICY ENV 2: PROTECTION OF SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE**

8.24 The development does not impact any sites of historical environmental significance,

**POLICY ENV 3: PROTECTION OF SITES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE**

8.25 The development does not impact any sites of natural environmental significance.

**POLICY ENV 4: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES**

8.26 The development does not impact on any important open spaces as noted within the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.27 Overall, this appraisal has demonstrated that, in terms of landscape character and visual amenity, the site is suited for the development as proposed, and that the development would be in accordance with relevant Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.