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Land South of Sacheverell Way, Groby

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of

Bloor Homes Limited

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CONTENTS

APPENDICES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Define was instructed by Bloor Homes Limited (the applicant) to carry out a Non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) to inform to inform an outline planning application for the delivery of up to 180 dwellings and associated infrastructure at 'Land South of Sacheverell Way, Groby' (hereby referred to as 'the Site', refer to **Figure 1**, **Appendix B**).

1.1.2 The Site comprises 10.5 hectares of agricultural land on the southern edge of Groby, which borders Sacheverell Way to its northwest and the A46 (Leicester Western Bypass) to its east. It falls within the administrative authority of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) but is near to its boundary with Blaby District, Charnwood District and the City of Leicester.

1.1.3 The LVIA provides a description of the existing landscape and visual conditions of the Site and its surroundings, commentary regarding the impacts of the application scheme, and an appraisal of the likely effects on:

- The defining elements of the landscape;
- The specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities of the landscape;
- The character of the landscape; and
- People who will be affected by changes in views or visual amenity.

1.1.4 The LVIA has been informed by a desk-based review of relevant policy documentation, published guidance and mapping information, and through fieldwork conducted in January 2025.

1.1.5 The study area used for appraising potential landscape and visual effects extends approximately 1.5km from the perimeter of the Site (refer to **Figure 1**, **Appendix B**). This study area was defined through a survey of the pattern of existing land use, landform and land cover within the landscape surrounding the Site, through field survey activities and through the preparation of bare earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (refer to **Figures 10 and 11**, **Appendix B**).

1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

1.2.1 The LVIA contains the following information:

- A summary of the landscape and visual policies relevant to the site, its surrounding context and development proposals (Section 2);
- A description of the baseline landscape and visual conditions associated with the Site and the surrounding area (Section 3);
- A description of the Proposed Development, including any embedded landscape-based mitigation measures (Section 4);

- An appraisal of the landscape and visual receptors that are considered potentially sensitive to the form of development proposed (Section 5); and
- A summary and overall conclusions (Section 6).

1.3 METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

1.3.1 The methodology used for this LVIA follows the principles and approaches set out in the third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3)[1] and associated clarifications published by the GLVIA panel.

1.3.2 The purpose of the LVIA is to identify potentially adverse landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development and to identify potential measures to prevent, avoid, or reduce those effects.

1.3.3 Potential landscape or visual effects are determined by:

- Identifying potential landscape and visual receptors to an environmental effect;
- Considering the value and susceptibility of those receptors to the type of change proposed; and
- Describing the change that would be experienced by those or at those receptors.

1.3.4 Landscape and visual appraisals are separate, although linked, procedures. The landscape baseline and its analysis contribute to the baseline for the visual appraisal.

1.3.5 This LVIA considers effects at both completion at year 1 and 15 years after completion. Consideration of effects at year 15 is useful to determine the effectiveness of the proposed landscape mitigation.

1.3.6 Full details of the approach to assessing magnitude of effect (along with details of the approach to assessing sensitivity of receptors) is provided in **Appendix A**.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1.4.1 It should be recognised that the application has been submitted in outline form and will therefore inevitably be subject to design evolution through the detailed design process. Nonetheless, the conclusions of this LVIA will remain valid where the detailed design proposals do not materially depart from the principles and parameters that underpin the assessed Masterplan.

1.4.2 In that regard, the following assumptions have been made in undertaking this LVIA, as are relevant to policy requirements:

[1] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (2013)

- Landscape proposals and other green infrastructure elements would broadly reflect those indicated on the Masterplan (refer to **Figure 12**, **Appendix B**).
- Lighting treatments to be agreed as reserved matters would be designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution, employing energy-efficient forms of lighting that also reduce light scatter and have regard to the current guidelines established by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.
- The specification of the proposed buildings and associated infrastructure, to be agreed at reserved matters, would deliver high-quality place design, that is responsive to the local area and which reflects the principles set out within HBBC's The Good Design Guide SPD (2019).
- The specification of landscape treatments to be agreed as reserved matters and as set out in the design code and would take into consideration landscape character guidance set out in HBBC's Landscape Character Assessment (2017).
- All existing vegetation within the Site, unaffected by the Proposed Development and in good health, would be retained and protected in accordance with BS5837:2012 (refer to Arboricultural Survey Report prepared by FPCR).
- It has been assumed that the growth of new trees would reflect that set out within IEMA's guidance note 'Predicting tree and hedge growth', which estimates that mixed native trees grow about 30cm per year for the first 5 years and 50cm per year for the next 10 years. It has therefore been assumed that proposed trees would typically be at least 6.5m taller than when planted 15-years after completion, although the growth rates of extra heavy standard and semi-mature trees may be slower in early years than for younger stock (i.e. native woodland, comprising whips and transplants and feathered trees, would typically have achieved heights of around 7-8m; extra heavy standard trees heights of around 8-10m; and semi-mature trees heights of around 10-12m after 15 years).
- It has also been assumed that mixed-species hedgerows planted using 0.6-0.8m height plant stock (or larger) would have established and would be maintained at a height of at least 2.0m within 8 years.

1.4.3 Fieldwork was undertaken from publicly accessible locations only. The LVIA did not therefore consider specific views from private residential properties, although judgements of effect on some residential receptors are provided based on the nature of existing views in close proximity to those residential properties.

1.4.4 No other limitations have been identified that would affect the conclusions of this appraisal.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the landscape and visual policies applicable to the preparation of LVIA's, the Site and its surrounding context, and the Proposed Development.

2.2 NATIONAL POLICY

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024, includes several references to landscape and visual matters as outlined below.

2.2.2 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out national policy in relation to the design of new development. Paragraph 135 lists several criteria in respect of the design of new development. The criteria explain that development should be *"…visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping…."* and *"…sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change"*.

2.2.3 Section 15 of the NPPF sets out national policy on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 sets out various criteria which afford protection to the natural and local environment including "*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes….*" and "*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits… of trees and woodland*".

2.2.4 Section 16 of the NPPF considers the historic environment and sets out various policies and principles for development affecting heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas).

2.3 LOCAL POLICY

2.3.1 Adopted local policies are set out in Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that make up HBBC's adopted Local Plan 2006 to 2026. Adopted local policies of relevance to the purposes of this appraisal are noted in the Core Strategy DPD and Site Allocations\Development Management Policies (SADC) DPD are summarised below:

- Core Strategy Policy 9: Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge, requires land use or associated development in the green wedge to retain the visual appearance of the area;
- Core Strategy Policy 8: Key Rural Centres Relating to Leicester, requires new development to respect the character and appearance of the Groby Conservation Area by incorporating locally distinctive features of the conservation area into the development;
- Core Strategy Policy 20: Green Infrastructure, requires tree planting alongside the A46 to the north and east of Groby to reduce the visual and physical effects of the roads;

- SADC Policy DM4 affords protection to the countryside in the district: It includes a presumption against development which would have a significant adverse on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside and which would undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements;

2.3.2 Emerging local policies of relevance to development at the Site are set out in HBBC's 'Consultation Draft' (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2020-2041 include:

- Policy SP08: High Quality Design, requires a high-quality standard of design, architecture, inclusivity and place making. This includes consideration of the amenity and privacy of nearby residents and proposed users in matters of lighting, air quality, odour, noise, vibration and visual intrusion. The development must also complement or enhance character of the surrounding area with regards to scale, layout, density, massing, design, materials and architecture.
- Policy SP10: Preventing Pollution, advises that proposals must take reasonable steps to ensure the abatement of obtrusive light to avoid sky glow, glare and light spill and intrusion and must not cause noise or vibrations of a level which would disturb areas that are valued for they tranquillity in terms of recreation or amenity.
- Policy SP20: Green Infrastructure, requires high quality places that identify and respond to the Site's local context, identify important local character features and incorporate these into the scheme to reflect, reference and enhance the local environment. Green infrastructure should minimise the scheme's environmental impact with respect to air, soil, light, noise and water and enhance the quality of these.
- Policy SP21: Green Wedges, reflects extant Policy 9, requiring that any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge must retain the visual appearance of the area.
- Policy SP27: Landscape Character, requires proposals to conserve and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the landscape character areas identified in the Borough Councils Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study, through design and management, retention of features of landscape importance, provision of landscape mitigation and that proposals on the edge of a settlement will be expected to create a positive interface between the urban and rural environments.

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

3.1.1 This section describes the baseline landscape and visual conditions associated with the Site and the surrounding area. This section includes:

- a description of the various landscape elements and features present within the Site and study area;
- a summary of the relevant landscape character areas identified in published documentation;
- a description of the Site's visibility within the study area; and
- identification of any anticipated changes within the landscape as a result of development allocations, consented developments etc.

3.1.2 The published documentation that has informed this section includes:

- National Character Area Profile 73 'Charnwood', published by Natural England;
- National Character Area Profile 94 'Leicestershire Vales', published by Natural England;
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council 'Consultation Draft' (Regulation 18) Local Plan 2020-2041 (2024);
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009);
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2017);
- Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2020);
- Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge Review (2020);
- 'National Map of Planning Data' website, built by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- 'MAGIC' website, managed by Natural England and delivered by Landmark.1:25,000 Ordnance Survey mapping of the Site and surroundings; and
- Aerial Mapping and Google Maps.

3.1.3 This section also draws upon other technical reports submitted as part of the application, including the Arboricultural Survey Report produced by FPCR; the Agricultural Land Classification report produced by Daniel Baird Soil Consultancy; and the Ecological Impact Assessment produced by FPCR.

3.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

3.2.1 The Site is not subject to any national landscape designations, nor does it contribute to the setting of any such designations. Similarly, the Site is not covered by any locally designated landscapes though all trees, groups of trees and hedgerows within the Site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (see 3.3.6 below).

3.3 LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS AND FEATURES

Landform, Hydrology and Soils

3.3.1 Topography within the Site gently rises from a low point of around 77m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on the southern boundary, to around 90m AOD on the northern boundary where the Site borders Sacheverell Way (refer to **Figure 2**, **Appendix B**). The Site contains an existing watercourse, that is partly culverted, which conveys flow from Sacheverell Way, north east of the Site, to flood alleviation in the field adjacent to the western Site boundary.

3.3.2 The landscape surrounding the Site is undulating, rising gently towards Martinshaw Wood and the northern edge of Groby, north of the Site; and within land to the west of the Site, near Ratby. Land falls away to the south of the Site into the Rothley Brook watercourse at 70m AOD, a tributary of the River Soar which extends south west of the Site, before rising again towards Kirby Frith and Kirby Muxloe.

3.3.3 The Site is underlain by a bedrock geology of mudstone ('Edwalton Member' in its north and 'Gunthorpe Member' in its south) and overlain with 'Oadby Member' diamicton superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. The Site is provisionally determined as being in Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3b, and soils within the Site are described as being slowly permeable loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.

Land Cover, Vegetation and Land Use

3.3.4 The Site comprises an arable field that is bordered on its northern, eastern and southern sides by several hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees (refer to **Figure 3**, **Appendix B**). A dismantled railway runs along the western boundary of the Site and is bordered by mature trees and hedgerow planting.

3.3.5 The land to the west of the dismantled railway, beyond the Site boundary contains more scattered tree planting and hedgerows and mature trees along several of its boundaries and down the centre and is bordered by a wide belt of new tree planting (refer to **Figure 4**, **Appendix B**).

3.3.6 An Arboricultural Assessment (AA) of the site (including trees outside the boundary that are potentially within influencing distance of the site) has been undertaken and submitted with the planning application. The AA surveyed twenty-six individual trees, eight groups of trees and five hedgerows. 10 trees were assessed as category A (all located outside of the site), A total of five individual trees, three groups, and three hedgerows were assessed as Category B. Of these, 1 individual tree and four groups are located within the site. Category C trees comprised eleven individual, five groups and two hedgerows. All of these are located within the site, save for trees T12 and T14. No trees within the Site are categorised as being veteran, however all trees, groups of trees and hedgerows within the Site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

3.3.7 The Site borders the southern edge of the existing settlement of Groby. Land to the south and west is agricultural with a number of fields used as paddock. The residential areas of Ratby and Glenfield are also located within relatively close proximity to the Site.

3.3.8 Belts of new tree planting are present across the surrounding landscape, in particular along Sacheverell Way and Groby Road and the fields to the north. Martinshaw Wood lies approximately 1km north of the Site, which comprises 103 acres of Woodland Trust managed land that forms part of the National Forest. A designated SSSI at Groby Pool and Sheet Hedges Wood (also designated as ancient woodland and a country park) is located immediately north of Groby (**Figure 5**, **Appendix B**). Land to the immediate south-west of the site (within the "blue line") is a Candidate Local Wildlife Site (cLWS).

3.3.9 Two areas of open space sit on the north site of Sacheverell Way, adjacent to the existing settlement of Groby (refer to **Figure 6**, **Appendix B**). Stamford Memorial Park sits north east of the Site and covers approximately 3.9ha of open space. It provides an open playing field with football pitches and associated car parks and is adjacent to Marina Park further north, another area of open space, which has an existing playground and BMX track. To the north west is Butler's Field, approximately 2ha of open space, that is more natural in appearance and extends along the southern edge of the Groby Parish Cemetery and nearby field.

3.3.10 220m south-east of the Site boundary, across the A46, is the Mill Lane Industrial Estate comprising a collection of large industrial units that extend into Glenfield along the Rothley Brook, which is experienced as part of the A46 / M1 infrastructure

Public Access and Transport Routes

3.3.11 The Site borders Sacheverell Way to its north and the Leicester Western Bypass (A46) to its east. The M1 motorway is located approximately 500m south west of the Site (refer to **Figure 7**, **Appendix B**).

3.3.12 Public footpath R51 crosses the southern edge of the Site, east-west and connects with public footpaths R116 adjacent to the A46, south of the Site and R53 to the west of the Site. The Site is also easily accessible from Ratby via the network of public footpaths to the south and west, including R37 and R38.

3.3.13 A permissive path runs north-south within land to the southwest of the Site (refer to **Figure 6**, **Appendix B**), providing pedestrian and cycle connections from Groby to Bridleway R115. Bridleway R115 is a disused railway that forms part of the Ivanhoe Trail and the National Cycle Network (Route 63) and runs from Burton-on-Trent to Wisbech. From here onwards, Bridleway R115 is known as the Ivanhoe Trail.

3.3.14 There is an area of open parkland with recreational routes running through to the south of the Mill Land Industrial Estate.

3.3.15 A bus stop providing connection to the surrounding area is located on the western junction of Laundon Way, near to where it joins Sacheverell Way.

Cultural Patterns and Historic Features

3.3.16 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site. The Groby Conservation Area however lies approximately 900m to the north of the Site, the Ratby Conservation Area around 900m

west of the Site and Glenfield Conservation Area around 650m south east of the Site (refer to **Figure 5**, **Appendix B**).

3.3.17 There are clusters of Grade II listed buildings within these Conservation Areas, including:

- A cluster of Grade II Listed Buildings in Groby, including the Old School, the Church of St Philip and James, and the Earl of Stamford Arms (Grade II*).
- A series of Grade II Listed Buildings, in Glenfield, that form part of an old railway tunnel and include the tunnel entrance and a series of tunnel ventilation shafts which would have originally connected up to the dismantled railway that runs through the Site.

3.3.18 A review of historic mapping suggests that the field pattern within the Site has been lost and fields combined into fewer, larger fields. Much of the surrounding landscape has remained mostly unchanged over the past 100 years, however much of what would historically been farmland to the north, west and south of the Site boundary was developed for housing in the post-war years with growth to both Groby, Ratby and Glenfield.

3.3.19 What is currently the Mill Lane Industrial Estate was historically the Premier Brick and Terra Cotta Works. The Ivanhoe Trail is sited on the historic railway line (West Bridge Branch) that ran west-east, from Ratby, through Glenfield and into Leicester. The railway line also branched north and the dismantled line forms the field boundary that sits just outside of the Site boundary and would have been used to transport material from Victoria Stone Works (Groby Quarry) south to the wider region.

Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

3.3.20 Although principally agricultural in its use, the visible presence of adjoining built form and roads (and associated noise and movement of vehicles) exert an urbanising influence on the Site, which almost entirely erodes any sense of tranquillity and gives the Site a peri-urban character.

3.3.21 The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) categorise the northern part of the Site as 4-8 NanoWatts/Cm2/sr level of radiance (the 4th brightest category on their nine-category scale) and the southern part of the Site falls within CPREs 8-16 NanoWatts/Cm2/Sr (the 3rd brightest category in their nine-category scale) (refer to **Figure 8**, **Appendix B**).

3.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Landscape Character

3.4.1 National Character Areas (NCAs), defined by Natural England, subdivide England based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity. NCAs share similar landscape characteristics and follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

3.4.2 The Site falls wholly within NCA 94: 'Leicestershire Vales', which is described as an open landscape with 'gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups

bedrock with an extensive cover of superficial deposits giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes' as well as a 'mixture of pasture and arable agriculture developed on neutral clay soils'. The adjacent settlement of Groby however sits mostly within NCA 73 'Charnwood', which is characterised by 'mosaic heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland...extensive open summits and exposed rugged, rocky outcrops, rising from lowland undulating farmland'. This NCA also has a 'well wooded landscape with mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland and the western part of the Charnwood NCA falls within the National Forest (refer to **Figure 9**, **Appendix B**).

3.5 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.5.1 The Site is recognised within the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (HBLCA) and the Blaby Landscape Character Assessment (BLCA) to fall mostly within Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Area A 'Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills' (HBLCA-A), but to border Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Area B 'Charnwood Fringe Settled Forest Hills' (HBLCA-B) and to encroach slightly into Blaby Landscape Character Area 'Rothley Brook Fringe' (BLCA-RBF) (refer to **Figure 9**, **Appendix B**).

3.5.2 Key characteristics of HBLCA-A are summarised below (characteristics that are particularly relevant to the Site are highlighted in bold):

- **Prominent elevated landform** - the highest land in the borough with localised steep slopes around rocky outcrops
- Distinctive pockets of igneous rock which appear as rocky outcrops. Granite quarries can appear dramatic in the landscape with cliff faces and deep pools.
- Diverse land uses which related to the varied geology. **Dominated by pasture and woodland** with quarries, pools and outcrops.
- **Woodland cover** of varying age from mature ancient woodland to new National Forest plantations.
- Small to medium scale field pattern interspersed with large areas of woodland cover.
- Large clustered villages with strong suburban influences.
- Distinctive local assets for recreation and biodiversity such as Groby Pool and Billa Barra Hill and networks of public footpaths.
- **Distant views to the urban edges of Leicester** and woodland edges of the surrounding National Forest.
- Diverse range of woodland habitats due to variable land use types.
- **Proximity to Leicester City and major transport infrastructure**.
- Long established aesthetic appeal created by its **rugged, 'upland' and wooded character**.
- Key characteristics of BLCA-RBF include the following:
- Rothley Brook meandering through the landscape from north-east to south-west.

- **Mixed use of arable and pasture agriculture** with a varied field pattern, with **equestrian uses** adjacent to the urban area and rough grassland adjacent to Rothely Brook.
- **Mature vegetation** along watercourses, **priority habitats** along the course the Brook and a woodland character although **no significant blocks of woodland.**
- **Well vegetated village fringes** and separation between settlements.
- A sense of enclosure created by mature vegetation and trees along watercourses and field boundaries with **long views and a sense of openness and expansiveness** on elevated land.

3.6 LANDSCAPE VALUE

3.6.1 Paragraph 187(a) of the NPPF advises that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other measures) *'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.'* The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (TGN 02/21) provides information and guidance to landscape professionals and others who need to make judgments about the value of a landscape (outside national landscape designations) in the context of the UK Town and Country Planning system.

3.6.2 An appraisal of the landscape value of the Site is provided at **Appendix D** of this LVIA. The appraisal determines the site to be of Low-Medium overall landscape value and not be a 'valued landscape' for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 187(a).

3.7 VISUAL AMENITY

3.7.1 The visual baseline considers the site and surrounding area where the proposed development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the proposed development, the viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of those views. The visual baseline was informed by analysis of both Digital Terrain Model (DTM)[2] and Digital Surface Model (DSM)[3] Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps and fieldwork conducted in January 2025.

3.7.2 The 'bare earth' (DTM) ZTV (refer to **Figure 10**, **Appendix B**) indicates theoretical visibility to development at the Site over a large area of the surrounding landscape, extending over 1.5 km to the northwest, south and southeast of the Site. The DSM ZTV (refer to **Figure 11**, **Appendix B**), which takes account of existing surface features such as buildings and vegetation, however demonstrates that existing landscape features would filter or screen development from much of this area and that, with the exception of a few isolated areas extending into the southwest of Glenfield and leading northwest toward Martinshaw Wood, people's visibility to development at the site would be principally contained to land within 500 m of the Site's boundary.

3.7.3 Fieldwork conducted from public vantage points then confirmed this to be the case, evidencing the Site to be principally visible within sequential views from Sacheverell Way,

[2] DTM ZTVs are based on the underlying topography only (i.e. not taking into account the screening effects of trees, hedges, woodland, buildings and other structures).
[3] DSM ZTVs take into account the screening effects of trees, hedges, woodland, buildings and other structures.

immediately north of the Site (refer to viewpoints 08, 09 and 11 in **Appendix C**) and in views from public footpath R51 which crosses the southern edge of the Site. Fieldwork determining also that the Site is identifiable in views from some sections of PROW R53 to the west, in particular near to the junction with Sacheverell Way (refer to viewpoint 02, **Appendix C**), and that it may be discernible in glimpsed views from the permissive path to the west of the Site on its northern end (refer to viewpoint 09, **Appendix C**).

3.7.4 There is little to no intervisibility between the Site and Martinshaw Wood, open space at Stanford Memorial Park or Conservation Areas within the surrounding area.

3.8 CHANGES TO LANDSCAPE BASELINE

3.8.1 Over time, subtle variations are likely to occur in the landscape baseline due to human interventions, such as farm diversification projects, intensification of uses, changing farming practices, or other unmanaged or unplanned activities.

3.8.2 Landscapes also alter naturally over time, on their own accord, without human intervention, due to natural causes. As a result of climate change, it is conceivable that certain trees located in unfavourable growing conditions may find it harder to thrive (flood or drought). Similarly, certain species of tree could be more susceptible to invasive pests and diseases, such as Ash dieback disease (hymenoscyphus fraxineus), Oak processionary moth (Thaumetopoea processionea) and Dutch Elm Disease (Ophiostoma novo-ulmi). There are several Ash trees within the study area as noted in the AA which accompanies this application. Existing dead, dying or decayed trees located within the Site are recorded within the AA and considered as part of the existing baseline condition.

3.8.3 Several woodland belts have recently been planted in the surrounding area, notably to the south and west of the site. The trees within these woodlands will mature over time and increase screening of the site from the surrounding area. They will also reduce inter-visibility between Groby, Ratby and the commercial developments to the east of the A46.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISED RECEPTORS

4.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 The Proposed Development comprises up to 180 dwellings, means of access into the Site, associated highway works, landscaping and drainage.

4.1.2 It is anticipated that delivering the Proposed Development will cause localised changes to landform and result in the removal of some existing site vegetation (as detailed in the AA which accompanies this application). It is anticipated that the Proposed Development could introduce into the Site various landscape changes or activities associated with its usage for residential housing including:

- The movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;
- Use of street lighting; and
- Landscape maintenance and land management operations and activities.

Embedded Mitigation Measures

4.1.3 The Proposed Development has been landscape-led, with measures taken to minimise landscape and visual harm whilst maximising benefits to ecology, character, wellbeing and community; and has evolved to incorporate the following inherent mitigation measures to minimise harm to landscape features and people's visual amenity, which are further detailed at **Figure 12** in **Appendix B**:

- Density and scale of the built form generally decrease from the south to the north of the scheme; taller built form is generally proposed in the lowest part of the Site.
- Structure planting, in the form of groups of tree planting and shrub/scrub, is proposed along the boundary with the A46 and the western boundary of the Site and the north east corner, to provide screening in views from the east, south and west and create a green backdrop to the proposed built form in views from the north, to maintain the visual separation between Groby and Glenfield to the south.
- Retention and protection of all existing boundary vegetation apart from that affected by access points, and additional planting in and around these areas.
- Avenues of trees are proposed throughout the scheme to break up the massing of the built form, provide visual mitigation and additional greening.

4.1.4 All landscape-based mitigation would additionally be managed and maintained to a high standard throughout the construction and operational phases, in accordance with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority through a suitably worded planning condition.

4.2 LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

4.2.1 The landscape receptors that are considered to be potentially sensitive to changes brought about by the Proposed Development comprise:

- Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings
- Landscape Elements of the Site

4.2.2 A detailed assessment of the sensitivity of these landscape receptors is provided in Section 5. In summary these receptors are both judged to have a medium susceptibility to change and be of medium overall sensitivity. The 'Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings' receptor is however judged to be of Low-Medium value, whereas the 'Landscape Elements within the Site' is judged to be of Medium value. These judgements are summarised in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Judgements of Landscape Sensitivity

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Landscape Elements within the Site	Medium	Medium	Medium
Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings	Medium	Medium	Medium

4.2.3 The landscape receptors are assessed to have an overall sensitivity of medium. This is due to the Site and local area containing some locally valued landscape features and distinctive elements. However, these are not rare or unique, and the presence of notable detractors increases the likelihood that the landscape can accommodate change. See **Section 5** of this LVIA for a further explanation of these judgements.

4.3 VISUAL RECEPTORS

4.3.1 Several of the visual receptors considered to be potentially sensitive to changes to their visual amenity are users of rights of way or visitors to areas of public open space, who are typically judged to have a high susceptibility to change and overlook a landscape of medium value containing both valued and detracting features. Notable exceptions however being users of footpath R116 and users of rights of way east of the A46, who are considered to be of slightly lessened susceptibility due to the oppressive effect that this trunk road has on users experience when moving along these routes; those experiencing views whilst moving along Sacheverell Way; and those that are residing within the neighbouring residential scheme. These judgements are summarised in **Table 2**, below.

Table 2: Judgements of Visual Sensitivity

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Users of public footpath R51, R53 and permissive path to the southeast of the Site	Medium	High	Medium-High
Users of public footpath R116, immediately to the east of the Site	Medium	Medium-High	Medium
Users of public footpaths to the east of the A46	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Medium

Users of public footpath R37, leading west from Groby Road	Medium	High	Medium-High
Users of Sacheverell Way	Medium	Medium	Medium
Visitors to the Butler's Field area of open space	Medium	High	Medium-High
Residents of Groby near to Sacheverell Way	Medium	High	Medium-High

4.3.2 As demonstrated in Table 2, the overall level of sensitivity varies depending on the activity or susceptibility of the receptor, as well as the quality and value of the available views. Views influenced by built-up areas, high-voltage pylons, and other visual detractors are generally considered less valuable than those with higher perceptual qualities (see **Section 5** for a further explanation of these judgements).

5 APPRAISAL OF EFFECTS

5.1 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

The Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings

5.1.1 The dominant characteristics of the Site and its immediate surroundings are the agricultural fields as well as the groups of trees, both new and mature, and mature hedgerows that make up the Site boundaries and field boundaries beyond, coupled with the residential edge of Groby to the north and the noise and movement of the vehicles travelling along the Leicestershire bypass (A46) to the south. Although parts of the Site can be perceived as relatively rural due to the presence of existing vegetation around the Site boundary, the presence of built form and roads (and subsequent noise and movement) has an urbanising influence on the Site and reduces tranquillity. The landscape resource of the Site and its immediate surroundings is of mixed quality with few locally valued elements (e.g. vegetation cover and PROW) alongside some detracting features (e.g. the A46 and M1). The value of this receptor is accordingly judged to be of Low-Medium value.

5.1.2 The pre-existing landscape into which the Proposed Development would be introduced is relatively well enclosed by belts of trees and mature hedgerows; is adjoined by existing residential properties on Sacheverell Way, which includes other existing development in similar use, suggesting rationale locally for this form of development. The landscape resource of the Site and its immediate surroundings is accordingly judged to be of Medium susceptibility.

5.1.3 In combination of value and susceptibility, this receptor is accordingly judged to be of **Medium** sensitivity.

5.1.4 At completion, this receptor is appraised to experience a **Medium** magnitude of change. Proposed improvements to public access would be made available for use by the public, locally enhancing the recreational value of this receptor. Direct change associated with the Proposed Development would, however, remain locally evident. Introduced planting would be at a relatively early stage of establishment, so would not therefore materially mitigate harm to existing vegetation cover.

5.1.5 15 years after completion, this receptor is appraised to experience a **Medium to Low** magnitude of change. Embedded mitigation planting would have established to partially screen and break up the massing of introduced built form, increase characteristic vegetation cover and reduce the extent over which uncharacteristic aspects of the Proposed Development may be perceived from surrounding parts of the landscape.

5.1.6 In combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the level of effect on this receptor is appraised to experience an effect of **Moderate Adverse** at completion and **Moderate to Minor Adverse** 15 years after completion.

Landscape Elements of the Site

5.1.7 The Site is in reasonable physical condition, containing few distinctive and valued landscape elements that contribute to the functionality of the local Green Infrastructure network and local biodiversity and landscape character. The Site comprises of one large arable field with mature boundary vegetation including trees and hedgerows. The presence of PROW R51 and R116 provide formal recreational and cultural value, however the permissive path running north south appears more well-used.

5.1.8 The AA found that of the twenty-six individual trees, eight groups of trees and five hedgerows. 10 trees were assessed as category A (all located outside of the site), A total of five individual trees, three groups, and three hedgerows were assessed as Category B. Of these, 1 individual tree and four groups are located within the site. Category C trees comprised eleven individual, five groups and two hedgerows. All of these are located within the site, save for trees T12 and T14. No trees within the Site are categorised as being veteran.

5.1.9 The value of the landscape elements within the Site receptor is accordingly judged to be Medium.

5.1.10 There are few environmental or technical constraints to delivering the form of development proposed across much of the Site. The overall susceptibility of the landscape elements within the Site receptor is accordingly judged to be Medium.

5.1.11 In combination of value and susceptibility, this receptor is appraised to be of **Medium** sensitivity.

5.1.12 The introduced built form and other changes introduce uncharacteristic elements into the landscape of these receptors. However, the public's accessibility and use of the Site would be increased at this stage and retained areas of vegetation (alongside new planting) can be expected to have been brought into enhanced management. At completion, this receptor is appraised to experience a **Medium** magnitude of change

5.1.13 15 years after completion, new planting would have matured to strengthen the Site's landscape value, thus reducing the effects of development. 15 years after completion this receptor is appraised to experience a **Low to Medium** magnitude of change.

5.1.14 The level of effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape elements of the Site is judged to be **Minor Adverse** at completion. This is appraised to reduce 15 years after completion to a **Minor to Moderate Beneficial** level of effect.

Table 3: Summary of Landscape Effect

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level
Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings	Medium	Medium (at completion); Low	Moderate Adverse (at completion); Moderate to Minor

		to Medium (15yrs after completion)	Adverse (15 yrs after completion)
Landscape Elements within the Site	Medium	Medium (at completion); Low to Medium (15yrs after completion)	Minor Adverse (at completion); Minor to Moderate Beneficial (15yrs after completion)

5.2 VISUAL EFFECTS

Users of public footpath R51 (VP 01), R53 (VP 02) and permissive path to the southeast of the Site (VP 03, VP 04 & VP 01)

5.2.1 These user groups are moving through an area of open countryside may be expected to have their attention or interest on their surroundings (high susceptibility). Views toward the Site experienced by these users predominantly overlook a farmed landscape with established hedgerow and tree vegetation buffers but with several notable existing detractors, including the A46, M1 motorway and existing residential development at Groby (medium value). Users of these routes are accordingly judged to be of **medium-high overall sensitivity**.

5.2.2 The Proposed Development would introduce new residential built form into the Site, which would be a recognisable, irreversible and permanent change to middle-distance views experienced by users of these routes, and which may partially obscure existing visibility to vegetation bordering the A46. Introduced built form would however be obscured by intervening vegetation and landform from most parts of these routes and, where visible, would typically be viewed in combination with similar elements in the pre-existing scene. Mitigation planting to be delivered on the northern edge of the Site may be expected also to further reduce the massing of introduced built form and further assimilate the Proposed Development into its surroundings.

5.2.3 The magnitude of change to users of these routes is appraised to be **medium** at completion, and **low-medium** 15-years after completion. The level of effect is however appraised to be **moderate** adverse at both completion and 15-years after completion. The effect at completion recognising that the form of development being introduced to the scene would be similar in scale and character to much of that existing presently within users pre-existing view, and the judgement 15-years after completion recognising the effectiveness of embedded mitigation planting maturing and the existing vegetation cover being bought into enhanced management.

Users of public footpath R116 (VP 05), immediately to the east of the Site

5.2.4 Users of this footpath pass within a hedgerow enclosed corridor but where the audible movement of vehicles using the A46 truck road has such a pronounced effect on their experience that it may be expected to reduce their attention or interest on their surroundings (medium-high susceptibility). Views toward the Site are of an 'everyday' nature, obscured by

foreground hedgerow vegetation and overlooking a farmed landscape with the existing residential edge of Groby beyond (medium value). Users of this footpath are judged to be of **medium** overall sensitivity.

5.2.5 The Proposed Development could introduce new residential built form into the Site, which would be a noticeable, irreversible and permanent change to close-distance views experienced by users of this footpath. Introduced built form would however be greatly obscured by foreground vegetation. Mitigation planting to be delivered on the northern edge of the Site may be expected also to further reduce these users' ability to see introduced built form.

5.2.6 The magnitude of change to users of this footpath is appraised to be **medium** at completion, and **low-medium** 15-years after completion. The level of effect is appraised to be **moderate adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion.

Users of public footpaths to the east of the A46 (VP 06)

5.2.1 Users of these footpaths pass within an area where the audible movement of vehicles using the A46 truck road has such a pronounced effect on their experience that it may be expected to reduce their attention or interest on their surroundings (medium-high susceptibility). Views toward the Site experienced by users of these routes, although vegetated beyond, are also dominated by detracting features associated with foreground highway infrastructure (low-medium value). Users of these routes are accordingly judged to be of medium overall sensitivity.

5.2.2 The Proposed Development could introduce residential built form into the scene, which may be noticeable beyond foreground vegetation in glimpsed, middle-distance views experienced by users of these routes and which may be further reduced following the establishment of mitigation planting delivered on the southern edge of the Site.

5.2.3 The magnitude of change to users of these routes is appraised to be **low** both at completion and 15-years after completion. The level of effect is appraised to be **moderate-minor adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion.

Users of public footpath R37, leading west from Groby Road (VP 07)

5.2.4 Users of this route are moving through an area of open countryside and may be expected to have their attention or interest on their surroundings (high susceptibility). Views toward the Site experienced by these users predominantly overlook a farmed but 'everyday' landscape with existing residential development at Groby forming a notable detractor (medium value). Users of these routes are accordingly judged to be of **medium-high** sensitivity.

5.2.5 The Proposed Development would introduce residential built form into the scene, which may be discernible in occasional, glimpsed, oblique and middle-distance views experienced by users travelling south-eastward along this footpath. The magnitude of change to users of these routes is appraised to be **low-negligible** both at completion and 15-years after completion. The level of effect is appraised to be **minor adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion.

Users of Sacheverell Way (VP 08, VP 09 & VP 11)

5.2.6 Pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular users of this route may be expected to have a partial interest in their surroundings and overlook a largely unremarkable scene, dominated by the rear fences of residential gardens and offering only a moderate level of visual amenity (medium susceptibility). Views toward the Site experienced by users of this route overlook a farmed but 'everyday' landscape with established hedgerow margins and occasional hedgerow trees in the foreground and further areas of vegetation beyond (medium value). Users of this route are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity.

5.2.7 The Proposed Development would introduce new highway junctions onto this road and residential built form which would be evident beyond the existing foreground hedgerow vegetation from much of this route. The loss of foreground vegetation to facilitate these accesses and introduction of built form into the Site would markedly change the pre-existing scene experienced by users of this route and could largely screen existing areas of vegetation to the Site's south and west. Proposed planting to restore affected sections of foreground hedgerow vegetation and reinstate and strengthen hedgerow tree cover bordering this route should however establish to mitigate and reduce the appearance of built form after 15-years.

5.2.8 The magnitude of change to users of this footpath is appraised to be **high** at completion, and **medium-high** 15-years after completion. The level of effect is appraised to be **moderate-major adverse** at completion and **moderate adverse** 15-years after completion. The level of effect 15-years after completion recognising that residential development is already a feature of the pre-existing scene experienced by users of this route.

Visitors to the Butler's Field area of open space (VP 10)

5.2.9 Visitors to this area of open space may be expected to have an attention or interest in their surroundings (high susceptibility). Views toward the Site experienced by users of this open space however overlook an 'everyday' landscape partially obscured by intervening vegetation and existing residential built form (medium value). Visitors to this area of open space are judged to be of **medium-high** overall sensitivity.

5.2.10 The Proposed Development could introduce new residential built form into the Site, which may be noticeable, beyond intervening foreground vegetation, within middle-distance views experienced by users of this area of open space.

5.2.11 The magnitude of change to users of this area of open space is appraised to be **low-medium** at both completion and 15-years after completion. The level of effect is appraised to be **moderate adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion. The level of effect 15-years after completion recognising that residential development is already a feature of the pre-existing scene experienced by users of this route.

Residents of Groby near to Sacheverell Way (VP 08, VP 09 and VP 11)

5.2.12 Residents of Groby near to Sacheverell Way are likely to have an awareness and interest in their surroundings (high susceptibility) and, where views are available, presently overlook a

predominantly farmed but 'everyday' landscape with relatively few visual detractors (medium value). These residents are accordingly judged to be of **medium-high** overall sensitivity.

5.2.13 The Proposed Development could result in the removal of some existing vegetation within the Site and introduction of new residential built form, which may be noticeable, beyond intervening foreground vegetation and built form (e.g. timber fencing, etc.), within occasional and glimpsed views experienced by those moving within this residential area; and may be prominent in private views experienced by those residing immediately opposite the Site. Proposed planting to strengthen hedgerow tree cover bordering this route should establish to locally reduce the appearance of built form after 15-years from some locations, although the effects of change from several locations are likely to remain.

5.2.14 The magnitude of change to residents of this area in publicly accessible areas is appraised to be **low-medium** at both completion and 15-years after completion, although it is recognised that effects on private views may be greater. The level of effect on residents in publicly accessible areas is appraised to be **moderate adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion.

Table 4: Summary of Visual Effect

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level
Users of public footpath R51, R53 and permissive path to the southeast of the Site	Medium-High	Medium (at completion); Low to Medium (15yrs after completion)	Moderate Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)
Users of public footpath R116, immediately to the east of the Site	Medium	Medium (at completion); Low to Medium (15yrs after completion)	Moderate Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)
Users of public footpaths to the east of the A46	Medium	Low (at completion and 15yrs after completion)	Moderate to Minor Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)
Users of public footpath R37, leading west from Groby Road	Medium-High	Low to Negligible (at completion and 15yrs after completion)	Minor Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)
Users of Sacheverell Way	Medium	High (at completion); Medium to High (15yrs after completion)	Moderate to Major Adverse (at completion); Moderate Adverse (15yrs after completion)
Visitors to the Butler's Field area of open space	Medium-High	Low to Medium (at completion and 15yrs after completion)	Moderate Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)

Residents of Groby near to Sacheverell Way	Medium-High	Low to Medium (at completion and 15yrs after completion)	Moderate Adverse (at completion) and 15yrs after completion)

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 OVERVIEW

6.1.1 This LVIA has been prepared to inform an outline application for residential development on c.10.5 hectares of agricultural farmland to the south of the town of Groby. The LVIA provides a description of the existing landscape and visual conditions of the Site and its surroundings, commentary regarding the impacts of the Proposed Development, and an appraisal of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on:

- the elements that make up the landscape;
- the specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities of the landscape;
- the character of the landscape; and
- people who will be affected by changes in views or visual amenity.

6.2 SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.2.1 The Appraisal determines the level of effect on the landscape character of the site and its surroundings at completion to be **Moderate Adverse**, primarily due to the loss of arable farmland and its replacement with a residential development, alongside the retention of key landscape features. Over time, as complementary landscape elements mature and the character changes become less perceptible within the surrounding area, the level of effect is expected to reduce to **Moderate-Minor Adverse** after 15 years.

6.2.2 This Appraisal determines that the level of effect on the landscape elements of the Site are likely to result in a **Minor Adverse** level of effect, reflecting the extensive changes taking place alongside the incorporation of new and improved landscape features. After 15 years, as habitats and landscape elements become established within the site, the level of effect is assessed to be **Minor to Moderate Beneficial**.

6.2.3 The landscape appraisal determines that the Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate Adverse** level of effect on the 'Landscape Character of the Site and Surroundings' at completion, reducing to **Minor to Moderate Adverse** 15 years after completion due to mitigation planting having established to partially screen and break up the massing of introduced built form, increase characteristic vegetation cover and reduce the extent over which uncharacteristic aspects of the Proposed Development may be perceived from surrounding parts of the landscape.

6.3 SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

6.3.1 The visual appraisal concludes that the Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate-Major Adverse** effect on 'users of Sacheverell Way at completion, reducing to **Moderate Adverse** 15-years after completion, this effect recognising that these receptors are closest to the site and that residential development is already a feature of the pre-existing scene experienced by users of this route.

6.3.2 The Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate Adverse** level of effect at completion and 15 years after completion on the following receptors:

- Users of public footpath R51, R53 and permissive path to the southeast of the Site';
- 'Users of public footpath R116, immediately to the east of the Site';
- 'Residents of Groby near to Sacheverell Way**;** 'and
- 'Users of Butler's Field area of open space'.

6.3.3 The level of effect on 'Users of public footpaths to the east of the A46'; is appraised to be **Moderate to Minor Adverse** at both completion and 15-years after completion. The visual appraisal also concludes that the effect of the Proposed Development on users of public footpath R37, leading west from Groby Road' would be **Minor Adverse** at both completion and 15 years after completion, this effect recognising the distance and presence of intervening vegetation in views experienced by these receptors.