

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land at Burbage Fields Farm, Burbage

On behalf of Redrow Homes

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1. Introduction

Terms of Reference

- 1.1. Pegasus Group has been instructed by Redrow Homes Midlands, to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) in relation to the proposed development on Land at Burbage Fields Farm, Burbage, Leicestershire.
- 1.2. The proposed development comprises 422 dwellings, including affordable, 11 self-build plots, and a care home (C2). The formal description of development being as follows:

“Hybrid planning application for (a) a full planning application for 422 dwellings, public open space and associated infrastructure and (b) an outline planning application for a residential care home and up to 11no. self-build plots.”
- 1.3. This LVIA will consider existing landscape and visual receptors in the study area, these include:
 - Physical landscape resources;
 - Landscape character; and
 - Views and visual amenity experienced by residents, recreational users (including visitors and tourists) and road users.
- 1.4. Principles and good practice for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessment are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3). The detailed methodology used is set out in **Appendix A**.

Site Overview

- 1.5. The site is ca. 26.5 hectares (ha) of agricultural land at Burbage Fields Farm, Burbage.
- 1.6. The site comprises a several agricultural field enclosures on the southern edge of the settlement. The extent of the site is defined as follows (refer to **Figure 1: Site Context**):
 - To the north, the site extends up to the alignment of Coventry Road, incorporating a narrow linear section of the site which sits between existing residential development to the west (off Bullfurlong Lane) and amenity sports fields to the east (including the Britannia Fields recreational ground and Burbage RFC). The transition between the northern and eastern boundaries sits close to the existing residential dwellings off Jubilee Way;
 - The north-eastern boundary is then defined by the mix of field boundary of the adjacent agricultural land off Workhouse Lane and, further east, is defined by Workhouse Lane itself (including the recently constructed residential development west of Lutterworth Road);

- To the south, the site is defined by the highways infrastructure of the M69 corridor, including the boundary vegetation along the route of the highway. A collection of buildings associated with Burbage Fields Farm is located within the south-western area of the site. A line of electricity cables pass over the southern extent of the site, which also contains two pylons; and
- To the west, the site is defined in part by hedgerow field boundaries of the adjacent agricultural land (which sits between the site and Rugby Road), and in part by Bullfurlong Lane and its mature hedgerow infrastructure.

- 1.7. The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing residential edge of Burbage, including the established residential edge to the north, and the more recent emerging residential edge to the east. The settlement edge is currently characterised by residential estates of mixed ages and styles (for example, off Lutterworth Road and Coventry Road). To the south, the highways infrastructure of the M69 corridor provides a physical limit to the site and other extents of the emerging settlement edge.
- 1.8. Additional information and a more detailed description on the physical components, landscape character and visual amenity of the site and study area are set out in later sections of this LVIA.

Additional Site Context

- 1.9. The site includes a parcel to the west of Lutterworth Road and immediately west of Workhouse Lane. That parcel extends between Workhouse Lane, the M69 motorway corridor, the local watercourse to the west and adjacent dwelling boundary to the north.
- 1.10. That part of the site was subject to a separate outline application for the erection of up to 80 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), open space provision and associated infrastructure, with all matters reserved except access (LPA reference 21/00502/OUT).
- 1.11. The application was originally refused by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, but subsequently allowed following an appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/W/23/3316829).
- 1.12. Although that part of the site now has an extant permission or the implementation of residential development, this LVIA addresses the proposed development subject of this application.
- 1.13. The intention here is to avoid over-complication of the assessment process in terms of 'future baseline' and particularly given that this proposed development has a consistent and inherent landscape strategy that stands on its own merits. Clearly though, in some instances, considering the extant permission would result in lesser or no impacts compared to the current baseline without development.

2. Approach and Methodology

Overview

- 2.1. The approach and methodology used for this report has been developed using best practice guidance, as set out in the following documents:
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition;
 - Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;
 - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note O6/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals; and
 - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note O2/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.
- 2.2. Use has also been made of additional sources of data and information, such as published character assessments, aerial imagery (Google Earth), and Ordnance Survey (OS) base mapping. These are referenced in the relevant sections of the baseline information.
- 2.3. Supporting plans and figures have also been produced as part of this LVIA and are included as **Figures 1 to 8**.

Level of Assessment

- 2.4. Principles and good practice for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessment are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)¹ (GLVIA3).
- 2.5. The GLVIA3 acknowledges that landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) can be carried out either as a standalone assessment or as part of a broader EIA. GLVIA3 notes that the overall principles and core steps in the process are the same but that there are specific procedures in EIA with which an LVIA that sits within an EIA must comply.
- 2.6. This assessment has been prepared as a detailed LVIA and addresses matters of individual resources, character areas and representative viewpoints. The LVIA also considers the interaction between landscape character and views in relation to physical components of the landscape. The LVIA draws on professional judgement in relation to sensitivity of receptors (both landscape and visual), the nature of impacts and consequential likely effects. This process informs judgements on a landscape mitigation strategy which will avoid, reduce, or remedy adverse impacts.

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

- 2.7. Landscape features and elements provide the physical environment for flora and fauna and the associated importance of biodiversity assets. This LVIA does not consider the value, susceptibility or importance on ecology and biodiversity, nor does it consider impacts from an ecological stance.
- 2.8. Heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas all contribute to the overall present-day landscape character, context and setting of an area. These aspects have been given consideration in the LVIA in terms of physical landscape resources (for example trees and hedgerows) and landscape character. However, this LVIA does not address the historic significance, importance or potential impacts on heritage assets and designations; these assets are assessed in the context of landscape and visual matters only.

Collating Baseline Information

- 2.9. To capture a comprehensive description of the baseline position for landscape and visual receptors, information has been collated using a process of desk study and field survey work.
- 2.10. The desk study includes reference to published landscape character studies and other published policy documents relevant to landscape and visual matters, such as OS 1:25,000 base mapping and aerial imagery.
- 2.11. Field survey work was completed during November 2022. A series of representative photographs were taken with a full-frame digital SLR camera with a 50mm fixed focal length lens, set at approximately 1.7 metres Above Ground Level (AGL). These are presented as a series of viewpoints and have been used to inform both the landscape and, separately, visual appraisal work (included as **Figure 6: Viewpoint Photographs**).

Consideration of Effects

- 2.12. Having established the relevant baseline position, the LVIA process then considers landscape receptors and visual receptors, specifically in response to the nature of the proposed development, assesses their sensitivity specifically in response to the nature of the proposed development, identifies the nature and magnitude of potential impacts, and consequently the likely scale of effect that would arise from the proposed development on the identified landscape and visual receptors.

3. Landscape and Visual Baseline

Landscape Planning Framework

- 3.1. In the context of the relevant planning framework, the following section sets out a summary of those policies relevant to landscape and visual matters. In respect of the proposals, the relevant policies will also have potential implications for the landscape mitigation strategy.

European Landscape Framework

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

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.5. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in September 2023, setting out the Government's planning policies for England and providing a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.6. The NPPF sets out three dimensions to achieving sustainable development that include economic, social and environmental considerations. It places an onus on the planning system to perform a role in relation to the environment that 'contributes to the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment...' going on to note that sustainable solutions should take account of local circumstances and reflect the character of each area. This underpins the strategic guidance set out in the NPPF in relation to landscape and visual matters.
- 3.7. In relation to landscape and visual matters, achieving well-designed places (Section 12) aims to ensure that developments are 'visually attractive', are sympathetic to local character (including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting) and to establish and maintain a strong sense of place.
- 3.8. Section 12 also makes specific reference to the use of tree planting, which it states, "make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change."
- 3.9. Section 15 of the NPPF addresses on 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' stating that policies and decisions should contribute to this by 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes' (noting that this should be commensurate with a statutory status or identified quality identified in a development plan) and also recognising the 'intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.

- 3.10. The NPPF notes the importance that designs 'evolve' in response to local issues and to the views of the community.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.11. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is a web-based resource prepared by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The PPG sets out guidance across various topics and effectively supersedes previous guidance on many aspects of planning; topics are updated as required.
- 3.12. The PPG for the 'Natural Environment' was updated in July 2019 and addresses agricultural land, green infrastructure, biodiversity, and landscape.
- 3.13. In relation to green infrastructure (GI) the PPG acknowledges how a 'range of spaces and assets' can provide 'environmental and wider benefits'. The PPG states that GI can include:
- 3.14. *"...parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies."*
- 3.15. The PPG goes on to recognise how GI can help achieve well designed spaces, and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The PPG also recognises the benefit of considering GI *'at the earliest stage of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets'*.
- 3.16. In relation to landscape, the PPG reiterates the requirements of the NPPF in terms of 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'. The PPG states that:
- 3.17. *"Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary."*
- 3.18. The PPG also notes the relevance of landscape character assessment, landscape sensitivity/capacity assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment. However, whilst recognising these different aspects of landscape analysis, the PPG does not reflect the subtle variations in these and potential overlap between their different uses and requirements.
- 3.19. This LVIA includes reference to published landscape character assessments which have been prepared at a range of scales and detail. Reference has also been made to the local landscape character by reference to the key characteristics of the site and its immediate context, including existing and enhanced green infrastructure. Therefore, this LVIA responds fully to the requirement of the PPG.

Local Planning Guidance

- 3.20. The following section sets out the local planning policy background relevant to the site.

- 3.21. The site is not subject to any designations specific to landscape (**refer to Figure 2: Planning Designations**); however, some policies are more generally relevant to landscape and visual matters.

The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted December 2009)

- 3.22. The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted December 2009) sets out the planning context for the area and forms one section of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Local Plan 2006–2026. The following table sets out policies relevant to landscape and visual matters.

Table 1: Summary of adopted Strategic policies relevant to landscape and visual matters

Policy	Summary
Policy 4: Development in Burbage	This policy states that to ensure development contributes to Burbage's character and sense of place and the village's infrastructure can accommodate new development the council will: • Protect and preserve the open landscape to the east which provides an important setting for the village and seek to enhance the landscape structure which separates the village from the M69 corridor as supported by the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment. • Address the existing deficiencies in the quality, quantity and accessibility of green space and play provision in Hinckley as detailed in the council's most up to date strategy and the Play Strategy, particularly in relation to new equipped play provision. New green space and play provision will be provided where necessary to meet the standards set out in Policy 19.
Policy 6: Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge	This policy states that uses will be encouraged to provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land to ensure that the Green Wedge remains or is enhanced as an attractive contribution to the quality of life of nearby urban areas residents.
Policy 19: Green Space and Play Provision	This policy states that 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.
Policy 20: Green Infrastructure	The implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network is a key priority of the Council. To assist delivery of the local plan, the following strategic interventions will be supported: Southern Zone

	• Burbage Common and Woods – Increase the site's size to increase the community value and biodiversity holding capacity and improve access to the site, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
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Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document (July 2016)

- 3.23. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document (DPD) (July 2016) allocates land to deliver the development requirements outlined in the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy. In addition, it also includes development management policies which apply across the borough and which will be used when determining planning applications. The site is not identified in the document, but there are some relevant policies which are set out in the following table.

Table 2: Summary of adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies relevant to landscape and visual matters

Policy	Summary
DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation	This policy sets out that in order to protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. The policy then goes on to describe the types of development considered to be sustainable, on the basis they fulfil the following additional criteria: <i>"i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and</i> <i>ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and</i> <i>iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development; with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9; and</i> <i>iv) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line</i> <i>v) If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21."</i>
DM10: Development and Design	This policy sets out that development will be permitted providing that the following requirements (relevant to landscape and visual matters) are met: • <i>"It would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting, air quality (including odour), noise, vibration and visual intrusion; be adversely</i>

	<i>affected by activities in the vicinity of the site; architectural features;</i> <i>It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and;</i> <i>It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting..."</i>
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Burbage Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

- 3.24. The Burbage Neighbourhood Plan was made in May 2021 and sets out several policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, as set out in **Table 3** as follows.

Table 3: Summary of Neighbourhood Plan Policies relevant to landscape and visual matters

Policy	Summary
Policy 2: Design and Layout	This policy sets out that: <i>"Any future residential development within the Parish of Burbage must respect its surroundings and, where appropriate, should follow the existing pattern of development and should retain existing important natural features on the site, such as trees, hedgerows and streams."</i>
Policy 9: Wildlife and Green Corridors	This policy sets out that: <i>"Development should seek to protect and enhance the network of green spaces, stepping stones and wildlife corridors including species rich hedgerows...which provide a valuable linear network allowing for the movement, as well as providing a habitat, for wildlife."</i>
Policy 10: Landscape Character	In relation to landscape character, this policy sets out that: <i>"Development which has a significant adverse impact on the viewpoint shown on the Landscape Setting and Key View Map (Figure 27, Page 66), which cannot be mitigated, will not be supported."</i> The site does not form part of the identified 'landscape setting and key view'.
Policy 11: Area of Landscape Sensitivity	Policy 11 deals with the identified 'Area of Landscape Sensitivity' and sets out a series of criteria to be met should new development be proposed within the designated area. The site does not fall within the 'Area of Landscape Sensitivity', which is located east of Lutterworth Road.

Policy 12: Important Trees	This policy sets out that: <i>"Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of a tree or trees protected with a tree preservation order (TPO) or a tree or trees of significant amenity value and with important arboricultural, landscape or ecological significance, will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where any trees are felled as part of the development, there is a presumption that they should be replaced on at least a one to one basis as part of any landscaping scheme."</i>
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Landscape Related Designations

- 3.25. The site is not subject of any landscape specific designations, however there are a number of relevant designations in the wider study area with some relevance to landscape and visual matters (refer to **Figure 2: Planning Designations**). These include:
- Ancient woodland – the closest area being Aston Firs and Burbage Wood, ca. 1.7km to the north-east;
 - Scheduled Monuments – including the remains of the motte and bailey castle at Hinckley (ca. 2.2km to the north-west of the site and within the urban centre/Conservation Area) and the deserted village of Stretton Baskerville (ca. 2.5km to the west of the site);
 - Conservation Area – the boundary of the Burbage Conservation Area is located ca. 850m to the north-east of the site;
 - Open Space Designations – several within the urban area, the closest being adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the site, at Britannia Road Recreation Ground – although only forming part of the general rights of way network, the 'Burbage Round Walk' is a promoted route, part of which crosses the site; and
 - Listed Buildings – There are several within the urban area and the Burbage Conservation Area. Additionally, the two Grade II listed dwellings (lodge buildings) are located ca. 300m south of the site at the entrance to Burbage House.
- 3.26. On site, Burbage Fields Farm is noted as a non-designated heritage asset².
- 3.27. Overall, these designations are not likely to be affected by the proposed development on the basis that they are generally physically and visually separated from the site, and sufficiently so that indirect impacts will not occur in landscape character terms, or in relation to views/vantage points.

² Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, RSK, January 2023

Physical Landscape Resources

- 3.28. The following section describes the individual components of the physical landscape in the study area. They are described to establish an understanding of the specific landscape baseline, including individual elements and more distinctive features that contribute to landscape character.

Topography

- 3.29. The site's topography is broadly sloping from ca. +125m AOD (above ordnance datum) where it connects to Coventry Road to the north, falling in a south-easterly direction towards a springline that passes across the central part of the site and continues under the M69 road corridor, where the landform lies at ca. +108m AOD.
- 3.30. The landform across the local landscape is characterised by the valley of the Soar Brook. The site is located on the northern slope, which falls gently from the settlement from ca. +130m AOD, south to the Brook at ca. +90m AOD.

Hydrology and Water Features

- 3.31. A spring passes across the central part of the site and continues under the M69 road corridor to the south.
- 3.32. In the wider landscape, small to medium field ponds are reasonably prevalent in the countryside south of the settlement edge. Further field boundary ditches and streams cross the landscape feeding the larger water bodies. The Soar Brook generally flows on a south to north-east alignment through the lower-lying ground south of the settlement.

Land Use

- 3.33. The site itself comprises several agricultural fields, of a mix of arable and pasture uses, and largely defined by mature hedgerow boundaries with occasional hedgerow trees, and some more substantial tree belts, for example along part of the eastern boundary. Burbage Fields Farm is also present, accessed via Bullfurlong Lane in the south-western area of the site.
- 3.34. There are two electricity pylons and their associated overhead cables present within the site, along its southern extent. The site is also located in an area adjacent to the settlement edge of Burbage to the north and east, which comprises predominantly residential development, and is defined by the M69 motorway corridor to the south. Britannia Park Recreation Ground is also located directly to the north-east and presents an amenity context in this localised part of the landscape. To the west, a smaller scale pattern of arable fields is present, as well as some public open space associated with development on the edge of Burbage.
- 3.35. Across the wider landscape, the settlement pattern of Burbage extends to the east of Workhouse Lane and north/north-west of the site. South-west of the motorway corridor, there are several large scale warehouse buildings and a hotel. Blocks of woodland increase across the broadly agricultural landscape to the south-east.

Vegetation Patterns

- 3.36. Across the site, vegetation cover comprises a network of generally mature and well maintained hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, as well as some more substantial tree belts, for example along part of the eastern boundary, as set out previously. To the west, a smaller scale pattern of arable fields is present and these are also defined by hedgerows, albeit with the greater number of hedgerow trees. The motorway corridor is also generally well vegetated.
- 3.37. In the wider landscape, agricultural enclosures are formed by a network of mature hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees and further south, woodland blocks/plantations increase in frequency, for example at Soar Brook Spinney west of Lutterworth Road.

Public Access

- 3.38. Part of the public right of way network, including sections of footpaths U66, U66A and U65 pass through the western extent of the site. Part of this network forms a section of the 'Burbage Round Walk', as promoted by the Burbage Neighbourhood Plan (2021).
- 3.39. In the wider landscape, the PROW network is relatively extensive, albeit more limited to the east at Mickle Hill and to the south-west of the motorway corridor (refer to **Figure 5: PROW, Viewpoints and ZTV**). The Leicestershire Round, a 102 mile circular route passes ca. 1.1km to the north-east and connects the eastern edge of Burbage to the smaller village of Sharnford further east. There is also a network of formal rights of way forming short links within the urban area.

Development and Transport Patterns

- 3.40. The site is directly adjacent to the southern edge of Burbage, and sits adjacent to developments to the east along Lutterworth Road. The village has extended over time, joining Hinckley to the north. On its southern edge, the Burbage settlement has extended along Lutterworth Road and terminates at the M69 motorway.
- 3.41. The larger town of Hinckley is directly linked to Burbage and forms the largest settlement in the local area. Industrial areas are located west of the settlement area and adjacent to the A5 corridor, a transport link connecting Burbage and Hinckley to Nuneaton and Tamworth to the north-west and Magna Park and the M6 Further south-east.

Landscape Character

- 3.42. Reference has been made to published guidance on landscape character for the area. The site is in the following landscape character types/areas (refer to **Figure 4: Landscape Character**):
- National level – 'NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales;
 - County level – 'Upper Soar' Landscape Character Area (LCA), Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy; and
 - District level – 'Burbage Common Rolling Farmlands' (LCA F), Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

National Landscape Character

- 3.43. At a national level, the site is situated within the National Character Area (NCA) 94, Leicestershire Vales³. Where relevant to the site and its landscape context, the key characteristics of NCA 94 are summarised as follows:
- Land use is characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on neutral clay soils;
 - The distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces and 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; and
 - 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.
- 3.44. Given the scale of the NCA these components are likely to be represented across the wider context of the NCA. Consequently, in the context of the scale of the NCA and relationship between the site and the adjacent settlement and infrastructure, changes at a site level will be small scale and not likely to impact upon landscape character as defined by the NCAs.

County Landscape Character

- 3.45. At the county level, the landscape character of the study area is described in detail within the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (referred to hereafter as the LWS). The site is located within the 'Upper Soar' LCA as defined by the LWS. This LCA is described as having open rolling landscape with distinct high level ridges which form elongated basins. The distinctive features are notes as:
- Elongated basin;
 - Open rolling landscape with distinct high level ridges;
 - Large villages with evidence of industrial past;

³ Natural England, National Character Area 94: Leicestershire Vales (NE532) (2014)

- Urban influences from larger settlements and Leicester;
- Mixed agriculture – arable emphasis to west, pasture to east;
- Little woodland;
- Local rock outcrops and former quarries; and
- River Soar corridor a significant feature through built up area.

3.46. Issues in the LCA are described as:

- Lack of woodland management;
- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Further urban development and increased urban influences;
- Insensitive siting of new built development; and
- Road widening.

Borough Landscape Character

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2017)

3.47. At the Borough level, landscape character is addressed by the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment⁴. The site is in an area defined by the guidance as 'LCA F – Burbage Common Rolling Farmland'. Also of relevance is the definition and characterisation of the urban area to which the site is directly adjacent, defined by the guidance as 'UCA 1 – Burbage'.

3.48. The guidance defines the key characteristics of LCA F as:

- Large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland with local variations in topography influenced by small streams;
- Burbage Common and ancient woodland is of national and local importance as an ecological and recreational resource;
- Medium to large scale rectilinear field pattern bounded by low hedgerows and post and wire fencing with smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements. Field boundaries and hedgerows generally follow contours;
- Urban fringe influences as a result of exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton situated on higher ground and recreational uses around Burbage Common;

⁴ Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment Final Report, LUC, September 2017.

- Sparse settlement within the area, comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes;
- Major transport corridors dissect the landscape and introduce noise and movement;
- Open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views to edge of settlement, often situated on the skyline, and punctuated by major infrastructure; and
- Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round, concentrated around Burbage Common and extending outside the borough into Blaby.

3.49. Although the LCA includes reference to Burbage Common as a key characteristic, this area is situated ca. 1.9km to the north of the site, on the eastern edge of Hinckley.

3.50. The guidance also highlights several 'key sensitivities and values'. Those relevant to the site and this part of the edge of Burbage include:

- Burbage Common provides natural and recreational interest, of particular value in close proximity to urban areas, as are nearby sports facilities and public rights of way;
- Woodland and mature trees provide biodiversity and visually screen nearby development. Woodland spinneys, streams and small water bodies in and around Lutterworth Road provide naturalistic and recreation interest;
- Low hedgerows and hedgerow trees surrounding fields reflect the parliamentary enclosure field pattern and form part of the overall ecological network connecting with mature woodland planting, some of which is ancient; and
- The area east and south of Burbage provides a rural setting to the historic settlement.

3.51. The guidance sets out a range of landscape strategies, which includes:

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

3.53. These considerations are taken forward as part of the analysis of constraints for the site and progression of a potential landscape strategy.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2017)

3.54. The published landscape character assessment also includes a specific Landscape Sensitivity Assessment that considers landscape sensitivity around key settlements across the borough. The site is located within Sensitivity Area O8: Burbage South and East (refer to **Figure 4: Landscape Character** and **Appendix C**). The assessment sets out the landscape sensitivity of the area in relation to several factors, including physical character, settlement form and edge, settlement setting, visual character, perceptual qualities and historic character. It provides an overall evaluation of landscape sensitivity in relation to potential residential-led development as follows:

- 3.55. *"The landscape is considered to have overall low-medium sensitivity to residential development due to the strong influences of the existing settlement edge and the M69 on the rural agricultural character. Part of the area makes a positive contribution to the setting of Burbage, notably the rural setting to the historic core (Conservation Area). Hedgerows and hedgerow trees demarcate a historic piecemeal enclosure pattern and provide visual containment. The M69 restricts intervisibility with the wider landscape to the south."*
- 3.56. Noting the reference to the Conservation Area, it should be noted that the landscape parcel extends up and around the eastern edge of Burbage (whereas the site sits to the south) and this eastern part is more closely linked to the Conservation Area (refer to **Figure 2**). The site and its local landscape context is physically and visually separated from the Conservation Area.

Local Landscape Character

- 3.57. In addition to the published guidance, this LVIA also considers the landscape character at a local level, that is the characteristics of the landscape as defined in published guidance, but considered more locally in terms of the character of the site and its immediate context or setting, particularly in relation to the settlement edge of Burbage and the transition between the urban and rural areas.
- 3.58. From the detailed evaluation undertaken for this LVIA, the site and its immediate context exhibit a number of the characteristics identified in the published landscape character assessments described above. Aspects of 'Burbage Common Rolling Farmland' LCA that are also evident concerning the site and its immediate context are in **Table 4**, below.

Table 4: Characteristics of Burbage Common Rolling Farmland relevant to the site and its immediate context

Relevant key characteristics of the Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA	Characteristics evident for the site and its immediate context
Large scale, gently rolling arable and pasture farmland with local variations in topography influenced by small streams.	Extending away from the urban edge, the site and its immediate context to the south is characterised broadly by rolling pastoral farmland, however this is truncated somewhat by the physical infrastructure of the M69 and the presence of large scale warehouse distribution buildings. Localised streams and drainage ditches are present with the undulating landform creating small scale tributaries to other streams and watercourses. Elsewhere the LCA is larger scale but here, influenced equally by the urban edge, the landscape is considered to be small to medium scale.
Burbage Common and ancient woodland is of national and local importance as an ecological and recreational resource.	The site and its immediate context are physically and visually separate from the distinct area of Burbage Common (and its associated importance to the LCA). However, some additional recreational

	resources are present in terms of the rights of way network.
Medium to large scale rectilinear field pattern bounded by low hedgerows and post and wire fencing with smaller scale pasture fields around the settlements. Field boundaries and hedgerows generally follow contours.	Field patterns of the site and its immediate context are broadly consistent with the medium to large scale rectilinear field patterns of the wider LCA, however, the central two field enclosures on site have more irregular boundaries as a result of the line of the watercourse.
Urban fringe influences because of exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton situated on higher ground and recreational uses around Burbage Common.	The site is located just beyond the southern extent of the urban edge of Burbage, and the sometimes prominent, residential built form influences local character.
Sparse settlement within the area, comprising individual buildings and scattered farm complexes.	Although the site is located within the LCA, where settlement patterns are considered sparse, the LCA does not consider the presence of the urban edge directly adjacent to the site along its north-eastern edge and to a lesser extent its northern edge. Whilst this is of less influence to the wider LCA it has a greater influence when considering the local landscape character context of the site. There are also large scale warehouse buildings present to the south of the M69.
Major transport corridors dissect the landscape and introduce noise and movement.	The M69 is present adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and has an influence both visually and aurally. Together with the prominence of the settlement edge to the north and east, and the large scale distribution warehouses to the south, these detract from the tranquillity of the local landscape character.
Open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views to edge of settlement, often situated on the skyline, and punctuated by major infrastructure.	Views are available across the site from more elevated areas south towards the wider landscape beyond the M69, including to the agricultural field patterns. However these views are also influenced by large scale warehouse development (located south of the M69) and the overhead power lines which pass through the site and local landscape in this location. At lower elevations and more generally across this piece of landscape, views are generally characterised and in some cases foreshortened by the mature field boundary network, as well as some tree cover. There remains some limited visual amenity to these views, but they are less expansive because panoramas are restricted by

	those elements described above. Check against small.
Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round, concentrated around Burbage Common and extending outside the borough into Blaby.	Part of the public right of way network, including sections of footpaths U66, U66A and U65 pass through the western extent of the site. Part of this network forms a section of the 'Burbage Round Walk', as promoted by the Burbage Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

- 3.59. Matters identified in the landscape character assessments which can influence the design of the proposed development are considered in the landscape strategy for the proposed development, as described later in this LVIA.

Visual Baseline

- 3.60. This section provides a description of the nature and extent of the existing views from, towards and between the site and the surrounding area. It also includes reference to specific locations that will potentially be subject to impacts as a result of the proposed development of the site.

Overview

- 3.61. The visual envelope is the area of landscape from which a site or proposed development will potentially be visible. It accounts for general judgements on the theoretical visibility of a site or proposed development and sets a broad context for the study area within which to address landscape and visual impacts. The extent of a visual envelope will be influenced by the physical landscape components of an area, such as hedgerows, woodlands or buildings and can also be influenced by distance from a site.
- 3.62. A computer generated ZTV has been produced for the site (refer to **Figure 5: PRoW, Viewpoints, ZTV**); this is based on initial assumptions regarding the potential for development (including building heights) and accounts for some degree of screening by existing built form and vegetation.
- 3.63. The ZTV was prepared based on an indicative development envelope and gives an overview of potential visibility to inform the site visit and field work.
- 3.64. Although the ZTV represents a 'screened' scenario, the OS data sources only tend to include substantial blocks of trees and woodland. Given that much of the existing green infrastructure around the site forms a 'layering effect' due to the lower-level hedgerows, hedgerow trees and also smaller scale woodlands/tree belts, these are not included in the ZTV. Consequently, overall screening value is underestimated and the ZTV represents a 'worst-case scenario'.
- 3.65. Based on the ZTV and informed by subsequent site survey and observations from the field work, the visual envelope is broadly defined as follows:

- From the east, whilst there are views of the site from its boundaries and from close proximity (refer to Viewpoints 1 and 2, **Figure 6**), beyond the immediate context of the site, views are restricted by the combined influence of landform, vegetation and built form (including the existing residential edge), along with the physical infrastructure of the M69 (including highways planting where present) (refer to Viewpoints 9 and 11, **Figure 6**, the latter demonstrating very limited visibility from the Leicestershire Round in this location). There is also a general lack of available publicly accessible locations where there may be potential for views across this part of the landscape (for example Mickle Hill, where although the ZTV indicates visibility, this area has no public access to obtain views);
- From the north, views of the site are screened by existing residential built form associated with the edge of Burbage. There are likely to be some private views from the existing dwellings. There are also likely to be some views towards the site from the PROW network in close proximity to the south of Coventry Road, as well as the Britannia Road Recreation Area, west of Jubilee Way (refer to Viewpoint 6, **Figure 6**);
- From the south, views to the site are generally limited by existing green infrastructure and linear tree belts associated with the M69, as well as the built form of large scale development south of the motorway corridor. However, where the landform rises into a series of local ridgelines to the south and south-east, the site is visible, for example from the local ridgeline at Smockington (refer to Viewpoints 16 and 17, **Figure 6**) albeit from here much of the site is screened by intervening large scale warehouse buildings; and from a similarly elevated position at Wigston Parva (refer to Viewpoint 13, **Figure 6**).
- From the west, views are limited to the local public right of way network on and close to the site itself, beyond this the visual envelope is limited by the B4109 and the Watling Street traffic island.

Representative viewpoints and visual receptors

- 3.66. The visual assessment references a series of viewpoints that are representative of visual receptors in the area. These illustrate views towards the site in the context of the surrounding landscape and are used to inform judgements on impacts for specific receptors.
- 3.67. Representative visual receptors include:
- Recreational receptors such as walkers using the rights of way on and in close proximity to the site;
 - Residential receptors;
 - Other recreational receptors using the wider network of public rights of way further afield; and
 - Receptors associated with the local road network.
- 3.68. These visual receptors are considered further as part of the assessment of visual effects, which includes a detailed description for each of the locations identified as receptors for



this LVIA, including judgements on overall sensitivity of visual receptors and judgements on magnitude of impact and significance of effect.

4. Development and Landscape Strategy

Overview

- 4.1. To form judgements on the capacity of any given landscape to accommodate specific types of development (without an undue degree of landscape and visual impact) it is necessary to understand the nature and characteristics of the type of development proposed.
- 4.2. This section of the LVIA considers the type of development proposed and the nature of the impacts that are likely to occur; thereafter it draws the landscape and visual baseline information together and summarises the key constraints and opportunities in the existing landscape.

Development Proposals

- 4.3. In summary, the proposed development comprises:
- comprises 422 dwellings (including affordable, 11 self-build plots, and a care home (C2));
 - Areas of public open space and attenuation areas, including a proposed play space; and
 - New landscaping including a bund and new tree planting to help mitigate impacts, in conjunction with noise attenuation measures.

Likely Causes of Impact

- 4.4. Although a landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscapes contain a range of components which will respond differently to change, subject to the type of the development that is proposed. Consequently, in order to inform the analysis of impacts, judgements should be made with reference to the specific changes which arise from the type of development being considered.
- 4.5. The following section sets out the likely causes of impacts which would occur in relation to the specific type of development proposed (i.e. residential-led development).

Causes of Temporary Impact during Construction

- 4.6. The temporary construction works which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:
- Installation of tree and hedgerow protection fencing;
 - Presence and movement of associated construction vehicles and plant;
 - Presence of construction compound, site office and welfare facilities;
 - Temporary construction lighting;

- Site clearance works (including any necessary removal of existing vegetation);
- Construction of the proposed access points at Coventry Road and Flanders Close (the latter crossing Workhouse Lane);
- Earthworks, groundworks and infrastructure/service installation (including formation of the noise mitigation bund and fencing);
- Ongoing construction and emerging built form of new residential dwellings; and
- Landscaping operations associated with the green infrastructure, public open space and private garden spaces.

Causes of Impact at Completion

4.7. The permanent components of the proposed development which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:

- The built form of residential development (including self build plots and the care home element), incorporating highways infrastructure and including lighting and the permanent presence of noise mitigation measures; and
- Mitigation integrated into the proposed development (i.e. green infrastructure and strategic landscaping), including retained trees, hedgerows, open space provision, SUDs and attenuation areas and new planting.

4.8. Together the cause of impacts at construction and operation inform the following analysis of constraints and opportunities.

Constraints and Opportunities

4.9. The following key constraints and opportunities have been identified during the landscape and visual analysis (including reference to field work and desk study of landscape character guidance).

4.10. Constraints associated with the site are summarised as follows:

- Existing vegetation internally and along the site boundaries which should be retained and enhanced wherever possible;
- The potential impact on views from receptors using the local PROW network;
- The proximity of neighbouring residential dwellings (and any associated views across the site) have the potential to be impacted.

4.11. Opportunities associated with the site are summarised as follows:

- The existing settlement edge off Lutterworth Road is located adjacent to the site, east of Workhouse Lane, the M69 corridor passes close to the south and the northern extent of the site lies adjacent to the existing settlement edge at Bullfurlong Lane. All have an influence on the character and appearance of the local landscape

context (i.e. residential development and other urbanising features are prevalent in the local landscape which provides a relevant context);

- The scale of the site is sufficient that the existing green infrastructure can be predominantly retained and provide a basis for development;
- The site benefits from some degree of physical and visual enclosure due to the nature of existing built form, road infrastructure, topography, and vegetation. Consequently, any potential development will not be prominent in the wider landscape;
- The site is within part of the landscape which is identified as 'low to medium' sensitivity (to residential development) as part of an independent published landscape sensitivity assessment; and
- Views from the PROW network outside of the site itself can be minimised with an appropriate design response providing new planting.

4.12. The analysis of these can be used to inform the design process and to avoid or minimise potential impacts.

Landscape and Visual Strategy

4.13. Matters of landscape character and visual amenity related mitigation measures to minimise impacts are an integrated part of the proposed development. Applying an overarching strategy for green infrastructure also has linked benefits in terms of other environmental matters, such as biodiversity and the consideration of sustainable drainage.

4.14. The overarching principles for the landscape strategy aim to:

- Respond to existing landscape character in the local context and the surrounding landscape;
- Retain and make best use of existing landscape elements and features where these can be retained across the site;
- Optimise protection and screening for visual amenity receptors (including the interface with the countryside to the west and south); and
- Avoid loss or damage to retained landscape elements and features, maintaining, and enhancing the existing green infrastructure framework.

4.15. Together these place a particular emphasis on green infrastructure across the site (including strategic landscape planting and open space) and the role that landscape characteristics and green infrastructure have in determining the spatial parameters and connections within the proposed development.

5. Assessment of Landscape Effects

Overview of Landscape Effects

- 5.1. Landscape sensitivity is a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements on the value related to a landscape (i.e. the receptor) with the susceptibility of the landscape to the specific type of change proposed. Receptors can include specific landscape elements or features or may be judged at a wider scale and include landscape character parcels, types or areas.
- 5.2. As advocated in the GLVIA3, professional judgement is used to balance analysis of value and susceptibility in order to determine sensitivity. Each of these aspects of the analysis will vary subject to the scale and detail of the assessment.
- 5.3. The landscape character of the study area is documented at national and regional levels. The findings of these studies represent a thorough and generally consistent analysis of landscape character and this has been supported by an analysis of the local landscape character of the site in the context of the settlement.
- 5.4. This assessment of landscape effects focuses on the areas of landscape character which are defined by the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2017). As previously noted in the baseline, this presents guidance at an appropriate scale and detail and also represents the most recent baseline position on landscape character for the area.
- 5.5. The assessment is then also applied at a more refined level to consider additional judgements based on the landscape character of 'the site and its immediate context', i.e. the local landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 5.6. In order to inform judgements on value and susceptibility the following section refers to the baseline information (Section 3) and additional consideration of the local character in relation to the site and its immediate context. These judgements are then carried through to the analysis of landscape sensitivity.

Landscape Value

- 5.7. In LVIA, landscape value is the value attached to a potentially affected landscape. It is relative in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape.
- 5.8. Landscape value is not solely indicated by the presence of formal designations and a range of factors influence landscape value.

- 5.9. The GLVIA3 sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of landscape value⁵ and these concepts have been expanded in the later LI TGN 02/21⁶.
- 5.10. Whilst these have become commonly accepted, it is important to place them in the relevant context that the GLVIA3 is guidance and that its principles have to be adopted into a formal methodology by practitioners. The criteria for determining landscape value as set out in the methodology (**Appendix A**) accord with those presented in the GLVIA3 and LI TGN 02/21.
- 5.11. Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered, even where a landscape is included in the boundaries of a formal designation.
- 5.12. This section determines the value of the defined LCA (and local landscape context) relevant to the site and study area. The considerations and professional judgements used in determining value are summarised in the following tables (with reference to GLVIA3, page 84, Box 5.1 and to LI TGN 02/21).

Table 5: Determining Landscape Value

Considerations	LCA F – Burbage Common Rolling Farmland	Site and local landscape context
Formal landscape or landscape related designations.	No statutory landscape designations apply.	No statutory landscape designations apply.
Natural and cultural heritage interests (i.e. ecological, geological or heritage matters).	Various across the LCA which extends across a broad area, including some ancient woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Burbage Wood. Occasional listed buildings are present.	Localised in terms of mature trees and hedgerows. There are no formal or apparent related interests or designations across the site or its local context.
Landscape condition of individual elements or overall structure.	Landscape components such as hedgerows tend to be of good condition and reflect historic field patterns across the LCA.	Field boundary hedgerows are generally well maintained and consistent across the site and its local context.
Landscape associations.	No specific associations, but broadly provides the rural 'setting' to the settlement.	No specific associations evident.
Distinctiveness and sense of place.	According to the published character assessment, Burbage Common provides	The site and its local context form part the wider agricultural context, but there are no

5. Box 5.1, Page 84, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (April, 2013)

6. Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

	natural and recreational interest and uncluttered views of church spires in the nearby ridge top settlements (including Burbage), provide an important sense of place.	specific distinctive features on or around the site itself.
Recreational opportunities in the landscape context.	Relatively extensive across the wider context of the LCA, including promoted recreational routes such as the Leicestershire Round, as well as a good network of other PROW connections and routes.	The local public right of way network passes through the site and forms part of the 'Round Burbage Walk'.
Perceptual aspects (in respect of scenic/visual quality).	The broad agricultural pattern has some scenic value. As set out in the published assessment, open landform and lack of tree cover allows for expansive and distant views to edge of settlement, often situated on the skyline, and punctuated by major infrastructure.	The site itself holds some scenic value given its open nature and some mature trees, however equally of influence is the M69 motorway corridor and large scale warehouse development to the south, the electricity pylons and associated cables passing through the site, and the existing settlement edge to the east and north.
Perceptual aspects (in respect of wildness and tranquillity)	The wider LCA is less settled, and areas can retain some level of tranquillity, rather than wildness. The M69 motorway corridor has an influence on tranquillity.	The site in its immediate context is neither wild nor tranquil given the proximity and influence of the settlement and the close proximity of the M69 motorway corridor.
Landscape function	An area defined generally by open agricultural field enclosures.	An area of landscape comprising part of the agricultural context to Burbage but situated directly adjacent to the settlement edge and defined to the south by the motorway corridor.

5.13. On balance the wider landscape context of the 'Burbage Common Rolling Farmland' is determined to be of **medium to high value** in landscape terms.

5.14. The local landscape character of the site and its immediate context is considered to be of **medium value** in landscape terms.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 5.15. In LVIA, landscape susceptibility is the ability of a landscape to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 5.16. Different types of development can affect landscapes in different ways and consequently landscape susceptibility is specific to the type of development proposed (i.e. residential-led).
- 5.17. This section determines the susceptibility of the landscape with the considerations and professional judgements used summarised in the following table.

Table 6: Determining Landscape Susceptibility

Considerations	LCA F – Burbage Common Rolling Farmland	Site and local landscape context
Scale of enclosure	The LCA is described as large scale and rolling with generally medium to large scale field patterns with subsequently varying degrees of enclosure.	Medium scale landscape and field pattern with some mature hedgerows and tree belts. Vegetation along the motorway corridor, existing warehouse development and the existing settlement edge to the east and north contributes to the enclosure of the site.
Nature of land use	Largely agricultural, with limited settlement patterns.	The site itself is in agricultural use, but its context comprises existing residential land use, power infrastructure in the form of electricity pylons and the M69 motorway corridor. The nearby recreation ground also has some urban fringe land uses.
Nature of existing elements and features	Hedgerows tend to be of good condition and reflect historic field patterns across the LCA.	Vegetation on site and within the local context is in broadly good condition.

- 5.18. On balance, the wider landscape context of the 'Burbage Common Rolling Farmland' is considered to be of **medium susceptibility** in landscape terms.
- 5.19. The local landscape character of the site and its immediate context is considered to be of **low to medium susceptibility** in landscape terms.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 5.20. The following conclusions on sensitivity are based on the detailed description and justification presented in the previous sections, balancing the professional judgements on value and susceptibility.

- 5.21. In drawing together judgements on landscape value and susceptibility in respect of landscape sensitivity, higher levels of landscape sensitivity will occur where landscape value and landscape susceptibility are toward the upper end of the scale.
- 5.22. Lower levels of sensitivity will occur where value and susceptibility are toward the lower end of the scale.
- 5.23. More central levels of sensitivity will occur where one component is toward the higher end of the scale whilst one is toward the lower.
- 5.24. It is important to note that there are graduations within the process which are not clear cut, and professional judgment is used to balance these and determine an overall judgement on sensitivity.

Table 7: Determining Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape character	Value	Susceptibility	Judgement on sensitivity
LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland	Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high
Site and local landscape context	Medium	Low to medium	Low to medium

- 5.25. Following a review of the types of impact on physical landscape resources, the conclusions on landscape sensitivity are then taken forward to address the impact and effect on landscape character.

Landscape Impacts

- 5.26. The following section describes the predicted changes to the physical landscape elements and features on the site that will give rise to the subsequent perceived changes in landscape character.

Impacts on Physical Landscape Resource

- 5.27. Construction impacts will include initial ground clearance, earthworks, demolition and, where necessary, clearance of existing vegetation. This process will also include the implementation of temporary measures such as site hoardings, temporary fencing and vegetation/tree protection measures. These impacts will be temporary.
- 5.28. Impacts at completion are concerned with the long term alteration in the landscape from the current undeveloped context of the site to the future scenario of the proposed development. The built form of the proposed development will be complete and will be a permanent component in the landscape.

- 5.29. In the long term, impacts will be associated with the influence of mitigation measures on landscape character. This establishes the changes to landscape character as a result of built development but with proposed mitigation measures fully established and performing their intended function. The impacts are considered to be long term and not reversible.
- 5.30. In this context, physical landscape impacts are generally considered to be limited to changes within the site, or on the immediate boundaries of the site.
- 5.31. These will include the minor changes to landform required for the creation of practical development platforms, and noise mitigation measures, and also impacts generated by the change from the agricultural land use to that of a residentially led development. However, this is balanced with the green infrastructure and open space which is embedded throughout the proposed development and along its boundaries, which will include some sense of retained openness in areas of grassland, along with provision of additional landscape planting.
- 5.32. Overall, the physical landscape impacts are considered to be direct, will be limited to the extent of the site and will form only a very small proportion of the wider LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland’.
- 5.33. These judgements are specific to the individual physical components of the landscape. The overall judgement of landscape impacts subsequently relates to how these components function together, and how they contribute to the character and appearance of the area, which is addressed in terms of the effects on landscape character.

Landscape Character Effects

- 5.34. In the context of the physical impacts considered above, the following sections set out an assessment of the likely landscape effects on the relevant LCA and on the site and its immediate context.

Landscape Effects on the ‘Burbage Common Rolling Farmland’ LCA

- 5.35. The likely landscape impacts described above will be concerned with the physical changes to the site and the loss, or potential loss, of physical elements and features. Aside from the physical changes to land use and the removal of some vegetation to facilitate access and proposed development parcels, the landscape impacts will also be concerned with the perception of these changes and the subsequent impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 5.36. There will be limited change to the underlying topography of the site, restricted to the development envelope and site access, with some areas of the site, for example along its southern, eastern and western boundaries, retained as green infrastructure. Some minor variations will also occur to create attenuation areas and noise mitigation bunds.
- 5.37. The proposed development will occupy only a discreet pocket of the wider Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA. Physically this represents a small-scale parcel of the LCA and this change would not be perceptible from much of the wider character area. Existing landscape elements will be lost on the site itself but this is limited to the local field pattern and associated boundary vegetation, which are generally extensive within the wider LCA. More distinct landscape features of the LCA include areas such as Burbage Common,

however this will not be affected and remains physically and visually separated from the site. Notwithstanding the loss of the agricultural context (and permanent change) on this edge of Burbage, the wider LCA will remain intact, with an extensive (and more rural) part of the LCA extending south beyond the M69 corridor and also around to the landscape around the eastern edge of Burbage.

- 5.38. In addition to the impacts on the site, the proposed development incorporates mitigation measures as an integral part of the masterplan. Relevant to this scale of landscape character is the landscape led approach to the overall masterplan, which aims to work within the framework of existing green infrastructure and scale of the field patterns where possible, in order to help assimilate the proposed development into the wider LCA. There will be a loss of the agricultural landscape in terms of openness and land use, but reference to the field patterns, retaining green infrastructure and provision of additional green infrastructure and open space are intended to mitigate such impacts.

Effects on the site and its immediate context

- 5.39. For the site and its immediate context, considering landscape character at a reduced scale means that the proposed development will be more apparent in the local landscape. However, balanced with this is the greater prominence of the existing settlement edge (and influence of this across the character of the site) and the transitional nature of the local landscape between the edge of Burbage, down to the physical corridor of the M69 corridor and wider countryside beyond.
- 5.40. The development envelope is set back from the existing vegetated boundaries of the site as far as possible and in that respect the scale and pattern of the landscape in relation to field patterns remains intact. However, whilst the proposed layout seeks to retain as much as possible in terms of internal hedgerows, some loss of internal hedgerows will occur and some will become more fragmented. Some tree removal will also be necessary to form access points and internal layout. The proposal does however include for extensive new landscape planting, including new hedgerows.
- 5.41. Whilst the physical changes will be limited to the site area only, the perception of change in terms of landscape character might extend to the local landscape context. This is somewhat mitigated by the proposed green infrastructure strategy for the site, including the incorporated buffers and offsets and proposed new tree and shrub. This will help limit the magnitude of impact in terms of the spatial extent but also the perception of scale.
- 5.42. Change to the character will include the extension of the settlement edge from Coventry Road to the north, down to the M69 corridor, along the southern edge of the site. The motorway corridor itself presents a robust and enduring boundary to the limit of the emerging settlement.
- 5.43. The resultant change from agricultural to residential across the site will be experienced against the backdrop of the existing settlement edge. Furthermore, the proposed development will not extend the settlement pattern further south than is currently present in the landscape as a consequence of existing development limits set along Lutterworth Road (to the east), with the motorway corridor forming a well defined edge in this location.
- 5.44. The characteristics of the baseline, which includes a strong context of residential development and amenity landscape influences (i.e. the sports pitches), forms the context

against which the impacts on the site will be set and this has an influence on the overall degree, or magnitude, of impact.

- 5.45. Additional benefits to existing landscape elements will be achieved through new planting to reflect local character as appropriate (including the use of native species). The implementation of long term management and maintenance plans will also ensure that both existing and proposed landscape components continue to establish and mature to form additional screening and filtering around and within the site. Design is also a consideration, with aspirations for high quality design underpinned by the landscape strategy for the overall site, utilising green infrastructure and open spaces to frame areas of built development.

Significance of Landscape Character Effects

- 5.46. The loss of part the agricultural field pattern in this location is largely the main cause of impact, albeit set in a location that is influenced by existing residential land and 'settlement fringe' land uses, . There is also the removal of some small areas of boundary vegetation (particularly for access) and some sections of internal hedgerows to facilitate the proposed layout and internal circulation. In respect of arboricultural losses⁷, the majority of the trees, woodlands and hedgerows affected are general Category C with some proposed for removal as Category U (and are consequently not considered the best condition); hedgerows are of limited diversity and have been intensively managed.
- 5.47. Such impacts are balanced by the response to the grain and pattern of the landscape and its scale in respect of retaining the framework of field boundaries which contributes to the pattern and scale of the landscape currently, as well as the response to the characteristics of the landscape. Where these are referenced, mitigation adopts an approach of retention and/or enhancement. The overall assessment of effects on landscape character is set out in the following table.
- 5.48. This accounts for the significance of effect at completion of the proposed development, and also a separate assessment of the proposed development after 15 years, when the mitigation proposals are likely to be fully established and performing their intended function (e.g. new landscape planting and screening).

Table 8: Assessment of Landscape Effects

Landscape character	Sensitivity	Magnitude of impact		Significance of effect
LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland	Medium to high	Completion	Low to medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 15	Low	Minor to moderate adverse
		Completion	Medium to high	Moderate to major adverse

⁷ Arboricultural Assessment, FPCR, May 2023



Site and local landscape	Low to medium	Year 15	Medium	Moderate adverse
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6. Assessment of Visual Effects

Overview of Visual Sensitivity

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

Visual Impact

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

Visual Effects

- 6.4. Detailed assessment is set out in respect of individual viewpoint locations, set out on the viewpoint photograph sheets (refer to **Figure 6: Viewpoint Photographs**).
- 6.5. The following section summarises the main visual effects which are likely to be generated by the proposed development. This includes reference to the likely scale of effect on specific visual receptors.

Table 9: Summary of Visual Effects

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Year 1		Year 15	
		Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance
1. View looking south-west from Workhouse Lane, close to properties off Jubilee Way.	High	High	Moderate to major adverse	Medium to high	Moderate adverse
2. View looking west from Workhouse Lane.	High	Very high	Moderate to major adverse	Very high	Moderate to major adverse

3. View looking south-east from public right of way, between Burbage Fields Farm and Coventry Road.	High	Very high	Major adverse	Very high	Major adverse
4. View looking north-east from public right of way, west of Burbage Fields Farm.	High	Very high	Major adverse	High	Moderate to major adverse
5. View looking east from junction between public right of way and Bullfurlong Lane.	High	Very high	Major adverse	Very high	Major adverse
6. View looking south-east from public right of way, west of sports pitches, Britannia Road Recreation Ground.	High	Very high	Major adverse	Very high	Major adverse
7. View looking east from an area of public open space near to Canberra Way.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
8. View looking east from Wolvey Road.	Medium	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
9. View looking south-west on Lychgate Lane close to Lychgate farm.	Medium	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
10. View looking south-west from public right of way close to M69 Junction 2.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
11. View looking south-west from Leicestershire Round recreational route, east of Aston Flamville.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
12. View looking north-west from Coventry	Medium	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Road, north of Wigston Parva.					
13. View looking north-west from public right of way, east of Wigston Parva.	High	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible	Negligible adverse
14. View looking north-west from public right of way, close to High Cross.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
15. View looking north-west from public right of way, west of Wibtoft.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
16. View looking north-west from Lutterworth Road (B578).	Medium	Low to medium	Minor adverse	Low	Negligible to minor adverse
17. View looking north from public right of way, close to Smockington Lane.	High	Negligible to low	Minor adverse	Negligible to low	Negligible to minor adverse
18. View looking north-west from public right of way, south of Copston Magna.	High	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
19. View looking north-east from Hinckley Road, west of Burton Hastings.	Medium	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
20. View looking north-west from Workhouse Lane, north of Burbage House.	High	Medium	Moderate adverse	Low to medium	Minor to moderate adverse

6.6. The likely visual impacts associated with the proposed development will be generally limited to a range of receptors in the immediate and local context of the site, as well as some lesser impacts from high points across the wider landscape to the south and south-east. These are broadly limited to:

- Existing residential receptors located east of the site along Workhouse Lane and Jubilee Way/Frezenberg Close, as well as some individual properties west of Workhouse Lane. There is also potential for some more limited views from properties

south of the M69 motorway corridor (also along Workhouse Lane) and from Bullfurlong Lane to the north-west of the site, albeit views from here will be limited to the rear aspect of existing curtilages. However, the enhancement of boundary vegetation and reasonable stand-offs between proposed and existing dwellings, as well as proposed dwellings and existing vegetation, will help mitigate these views to a greater or lesser extent.

- Users of the public right of way network that pass through the site and close to its boundaries, extending from the southern residential edge of Burbage and including the locally promoted 'Burbage Round Walk'. From these locations, receptors will have direct views of the proposed residential built form. For those receptors within and on the boundary of the site, there are likely to be some moderate to major and major adverse visual effects in the long term. However, from some areas (for example when approaching the site along footpath U59 from the south-west (refer to Viewpoint 4)), this will be set back behind proposed new landscape planting/bunding.
- Users of the public right of way network and road network across the wider landscape to the south and south-east, including from the local ridgeline at Smockington (refer to Viewpoints 16 and 17) from where much of the proposed development will be screened by intervening large scale warehouse buildings. There are also likely to be views from a similarly elevated position at Wigston Parva (refer to Viewpoint 13). Visual effects from these locations are, due to combinations of distance and intervening vegetation/built form, unlikely to be any greater than negligible to minor adverse in the long term.

- 6.7. Outside of these locations, opportunities for views of the proposed development are limited, as demonstrated by the ZTV (refer to **Figure 5**) and as confirmed during the site visit and field work.
- 6.8. In terms of the context for views, and the implications for judging the degree of change (or magnitude of impact), notwithstanding the high visual impact for receptors using the public right of way network as it passes through the site itself and close to its boundaries, the geographical extent of potential views to the site and proposed development is generally limited by the combination of existing built form to the north, east and west, the vegetated motorway corridor to the south and large scale development in the local area, including the large scale distribution warehouse buildings to the south.
- 6.9. In the majority of those locations where the site is visible, the existing residential edge is also visible, to a greater or lesser extent.
- 6.10. This context is demonstrated by reference to the representative viewpoints, where those assessed as having the highest significance of effect are from the higher sensitivity receptor groups of the public footpath network where these routes cross the site or pass through the landscape immediately adjacent to the site. Elsewhere, visual effects are limited, or indeed, the proposed development will be barely perceptible or not visible at all.
- 6.11. Consequently, visual effects are not considered to be significant overall.

7. Summary and Conclusions

Overview

- 7.1. Pegasus Group has been instructed by Redrow Homes Midlands, to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) in relation to the proposed residential development on land at Burbage Fields Farm, Burbage.

Site Overview

- 7.2. The site comprises ca. 26.5 hectares (ha) of agricultural land at Burbage Fields Farm, Burbage. The site is located immediately south of the existing residential edge of Burbage. The settlement edge is currently characterised by existing residential estates of mixed ages and styles (for example, off Lutterworth Road and Coventry Road) and these contain the site to the north and east. To the south, the site is delineated by the highways infrastructure of the M69 motorway.

Landscape Character Effects

- 7.3. Aside from the physical changes to land use and the removal of some vegetation to facilitate access and proposed development parcels, the landscape impacts will also be concerned with the perception of these changes and the subsequent impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 7.4. The proposed development will occupy only a discreet pocket of the wider Burbage Common Rolling Farmland LCA. Physically this represents a small-scale parcel of the wider LCA and this change would not be perceptible from much of the wider character area. More distinct landscape features of the LCA include areas such as Burbage Common, however this will not be affected and remains physically and visually separated from the site. Notwithstanding the loss of the agricultural context (and permanent change) on this edge of Burbage, the wider LCA will remain intact, with an extensive (and more rural) part of the LCA extending south beyond the M69 corridor and also around to the landscape around the eastern edge of Burbage.
- 7.5. For the site and its immediate context, considering landscape character at a reduced scale means that the proposed development will be more apparent in the local landscape. However, balanced with this is the greater prominence of the existing settlement edge and the transitional nature of the local landscape between the edge of Burbage, the M69 corridor and wider countryside beyond.
- 7.6. The development envelope is set back from the existing vegetated boundaries of the site as far as possible and in that respect the scale and pattern of the landscape in relation to field patterns remains intact. However, whilst the proposed layout seeks to retain as much as possible in terms of internal hedgerows, some loss will occur and some will become fragmented. The proposal does however include for new landscape planting, including new hedgerow, for example along the north-eastern boundary of the site.
- 7.7. Change to the character will include the extension of the settlement edge from Coventry Road to the north, to the motorway corridor in the south. This change will however be experienced against the backdrop of the existing settlement edge and the proposed

development will not extend the settlement pattern further south than is currently present in the landscape (along Lutterworth Road to the east), with the motorway corridor also forming a well defined edge in this location. The characteristics of the baseline, which includes residential development, forms the context against which the impacts on the site will be set and consequently this limits the overall degree, or magnitude, of impact.

- 7.8. Additional benefits to existing landscape elements will be achieved through new planting to reflect local character as appropriate (including the use of native species). The implementation of long term management and maintenance plans will also ensure that both existing and proposed landscape components continue to establish and mature to form additional screening and filtering around and within the site. Design is also a consideration, with aspirations for high quality design underpinned by the landscape strategy for the overall site, utilising green infrastructure and open spaces to frame areas of built development.
- 7.9. Overall, for LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland, the LVIA finds a 'low to medium' magnitude of impact in the short term, reducing to 'low' in the long term (Year 15), combined with the medium to high sensitivity of the landscape, this will result in an overall significance of effect of 'moderate' adverse reducing to 'minor to moderate' adverse.
- 7.10. For the local landscape character (i.e. the site and its immediate context), the LVIA finds a 'medium to high' magnitude of impact in the short and 'medium' long term (Year 15), combined with the low to medium sensitivity of the landscape (which is in line with the findings of the published Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for this area), this will result in an overall significance of effect of 'moderate to major' adverse reducing to 'moderate adverse' in the long term.

Visual Effects

- 7.11. The likely visual impacts associated with the proposed development will be generally limited to a range of receptors in the immediate and local context of the site, as well as some lesser impacts from high points across the wider landscape to the south and south-east. These are broadly limited to existing residential receptors located east of the site along Workhouse Lane and Jubilee Way/Frezenberg Close, as well as some individual properties west of Workhouse Lane. There is also potential for some more limited views from properties south of the M69 motorway corridor (also along Workhouse Lane) and from Bullfurlong Lane to the north-west of the site, albeit views from here will be limited to rear curtilages. However, the enhancement of boundary vegetation and reasonable stand-offs between proposed and existing dwellings, as well as proposed dwellings and existing vegetation, will help mitigate these views to a greater or lesser extent.
- 7.12. Users of the public right of way network that pass through the site and close to its boundaries will also experience impacts, where it extends from the southern residential edge of Burbage, including the locally promoted 'Burbage Round Walk'. From these locations, receptors will have direct views of the proposed residential built form. For those receptors within and on the boundary of the site, there are likely to be some moderate to major and major adverse visual effects in the long term. However, from some areas (for example when approaching the site along footpath U59 from the south-west (refer to Viewpoint 4)), this will be set back behind proposed new landscape planting/bunding.

- 7.13. In terms of the wider landscape, there will be views from users of the public right of way network and road network across the wider landscape to the south and south-east, including from the local ridgeline at Smockington (refer to Viewpoints 16 and 17) from where much of the proposed development will be screened by intervening large scale warehouse buildings. There are also likely to be views from a similarly elevated position at Wigston Parva (refer to Viewpoint 13). Visual effects from these locations are, due to combinations of distance and intervening vegetation/built form, unlikely to be any greater than negligible to minor adverse in the long term.
- 7.14. Outside of these locations, opportunities for views of the proposed development are limited, as demonstrated by the ZTV and as confirmed during the site visit and field work.
- 7.15. In terms of the context for views, and the implications for judging the degree of change (or magnitude of impact), notwithstanding the high visual impact for receptors using the public right of way network as it passes through the site itself and close to its boundaries, the geographical extent of potential views to the site and proposed development is generally limited by the combination of existing built form to the north, east and west, the vegetated motorway corridor to the south and large scale development in the local area, including the large scale distribution warehouse buildings to the south.
- 7.16. In the majority of those locations where the site is visible, the existing residential edge is also visible, to a greater or lesser extent.
- 7.17. This context is demonstrated by reference to the representative viewpoints, where those assessed as having the highest significance of effect are from the higher sensitivity receptor groups of the public footpath network as it passes through the site and immediate landscape. Elsewhere, visual effects are limited, or indeed, the proposed development will be barely perceptible/not visible.

Landscape Strategy

- 7.18. Matters of landscape character and visual amenity related mitigation measures to minimise impacts are an integrated part of the proposed development. Applying an overarching strategy for green infrastructure also has linked benefits in terms of other environmental matters, such as biodiversity and the consideration of sustainable drainage. The overarching principles for the landscape strategy aim to:
- Respond to existing landscape character in the local context and the surrounding landscape;
 - Retain and make best use of existing landscape elements and features where these can be retained across the site;
 - Optimise protection and screening for visual amenity receptors (including the interface with the countryside to the west and south); and
 - Avoid loss or damage to retained landscape elements and features, maintaining, and enhancing the existing green infrastructure framework.
- 7.19. Together these place a particular emphasis on green infrastructure across the site (including strategic landscape planting and open space) and the role that landscape

characteristics and green infrastructure have in determining the spatial parameters and connections within the proposed development.

Conclusion

- 7.20. Overall, it is considered that the Illustrative Masterplan (and Illustrative Landscape Masterplan) incorporates a mitigation strategy that forms an inherent part of the proposed development and this, notwithstanding some higher impacts at close proximity (i.e. on site and on the boundaries of the site), combined with the limited visibility and overall perception of the site from across the wider landscape, this will minimise potential adverse effects.



Appendix A: LVIA Methodology



Appendix B: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Extract: 08 – Burbage South and East



Figures

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