Land South of A507, West of Buntingford

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

On behalf of **Hallam Land Management**

Registered Office: Buckingham Court Kingsmead Business Park, London Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1JU
Office Address: 7 Soho Square, London, W1D 3Q T: +44 (0)20 7446 6888 E: London.uk@stantec.com

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: **Land South of A507, West of Buntingford**
Project Ref: **332611260**
Report Title: **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**
Doc Ref: **ISSUE**
Date: **14 June 2024**

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Edward Jordan / Daisy Parsons	Graduate Landscape Architect / Senior Landscape Planner	EJ / DP	February 2024
Reviewed by:	Matthew Chard	Landscape Director	MDC	February 2024
Approved by:	Natasha Jones	Director of Landscape Architecture	Digitally signed by Jones, Natasha Reason: I am approving this document Date: 2024.06.17 12:33:09 +01'00'	
For and on behalf of Stantec UK Limited				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
ISSUE	26/04/2024	Paras 5.2.1; 7.1.6; 7.1.8; 7.2.1; and 8.1.4, plus reduced Site area and consequent changes to assessment	DP		
ISSUE	14/06/2024	Amendments based on reduced Site area and proposals, with consequent changes to assessment	DP		

This report has been prepared by Stantec UK Limited ('Stantec') on behalf of its client to whom this report is addressed ('Hallam Land Management') in connection with the project described in this report and takes into account the Client's particular instructions and requirements. This report was prepared in accordance with the professional services appointment under which Stantec was appointed by its Client. This report is not intended for and should not be relied on by any third party (i.e. parties other than the Client). Stantec accepts no duty or responsibility (including in negligence) to any party other than the Client and disclaims all liability of any nature whatsoever to any such party in respect of this report.

Contents

1 Introduction 6
2 Site Context 7
2.1 Overview 7
2.2 Land Use and Settlement 7
2.3 Topography and Hydrology 7
2.4 Vegetation 7
2.5 Public Rights of Way and Cycle Routes 7
2.6 Scheduled Monuments 8
2.7 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings 8
2.8 Registered Parks and Gardens 9
2.9 Ancient Woodland 9
3 Landscape Policy 10
3.1 Overview 10
3.2 National Policy 10
3.3 Local Policy 13
4 Published Landscape Character Evidence 21
4.1 Overview 21
4.2 National Character Area 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland 21
4.3 East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 22
5 Site Appraisal and Visual Appraisal 26
5.1 Overview 26
5.2 Landscape Character 26
5.3 Visual Appraisal 27
5.4 Receptors Scoped Out 29
6 Design Rationale 30
6.1 Overview 30
6.2 Site Opportunities and Constraints 30
6.3 Description of the Proposed Development 30
7 Landscape and Visual Effects 32
7.1 Effects of the Proposed Development 32
7.2 Cumulative Effects 38
8 Summary and Conclusion 43
8.1 Summary 43
8.2 Conclusion 45

Figures

Figure L1: Landscape Designations Plan
Figure L2: Topography Plan
Figure L3: Landscape Character Plan
Figure L4: View Location Plan
Figure L4b: Preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan
Figure L5: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan
Figure L6 Landscape Strategy Plan

Appendices

Appendix A LVIA Methodology
Appendix B Published Landscape Character Evidence Extracts
Appendix C Landscape Effects Table
Appendix D Visual Effects Table
Appendix E Cumulative Effects Table
Appendix F Site Photographs

This page is intentionally blank

1 Introduction

1.1.1 Stantec UK Limited (Stantec) was commissioned by Hallam Land Management to conduct a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for an outline planning application for commercial development (the 'Proposed Development') on land west of Buntingford (the 'Site'), in Hertfordshire, which lies immediately south of the A507, as shown on **Figure L1: Landscape Designations Plan**.

1.1.2 This LVIA considers the effects on landscape features, character, and visual amenity, within the Site and the surrounding area. It was undertaken with regard to best practice guidance within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3), which states in Paragraph 1.1 that ***"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and amenity"***.

1.1.3 GLVIA3 also states in Paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there is a ***"need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional"***.

1.1.4 The objectives of this LVIA are to:

i. Appraise the landscape character and quality of the Site and its context and the function of the Site within the wider landscape, particularly in relation to existing landscape designations and policies;

ii. Appraise the visibility of the Site and the nature and quality of existing views towards the Site; and;

iii. Assess the likely effects upon landscape features, character and visual amenity that will arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

1.1.5 The methodology used for this assessment is set out in **Appendix A: LVIA Methodology**, which draws from the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3), prepared by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment,' An approach to Landscape Character Assessment', prepared by Natural England, the Landscape Institute TGN 02/21 'Assessing the Value of Landscapes Outside National Designations', the Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals', published Planning Practice Guidance from the Government, and professional experience.

2 Site Context

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 **Figure L1: Landscape Designations Plan** provides an overview of the location of the Site and its boundary within the district of East Hertfordshire. The Site adjoins the western edge of the town of Buntingford and lies immediately adjacent to the A10 to the east, and the A507 runs through the northern extents of the Site.

2.1.2 The study area encompasses the area of land from Hare Street, Buntingford in the east to the settlement of Cottered in the west and from Buckland in the north to Westmill in the south.

2.1.3 The majority of the study area sits within the Buntingford Community Area (BCA) and includes a collection of villages, towns and hamlets.

2.2 Land Use and Settlement

2.2.1 The study area consists predominantly of open arable fields, and a dispersed settlement pattern of villages, hamlets, and isolated dwellings and farmsteads. The town of Buntingford is the most notable suburban development, whilst smaller villages, such as Westmill and Aspenden to the south sit within the wider agricultural landscape. The A10 corridor borders the Site to the east and fragments the landscape from north to south, bypassing the west of Buntingford and providing an arterial transport route between Royston and Ware.

2.2.2 Although there is a high proportion of undeveloped land within the study area, the built form of Buntingford is a noticeable feature, with the presence of residential and commercial development along the settlement edge, such as that at Buntingford Business Park immediately to the north of the Site.

2.3 Topography and Hydrology

2.3.1 As demonstrated on **Figure L2: Topography Plan**, the undulating landscape centred on the valley of the River Rib flows through the study area from 125m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north to 67m AOD in the south-east. To either side of the river valley, the land is gently undulating, rising to 135m AOD in the north-east and to 155m AOD in the west. The Site is located on the western slopes of the valley, and sits across a localised ridge between the River Rib to the east and the Thistley Vale Brook to the west.

2.4 Vegetation

2.4.1 Vegetation cover within the study area is variable. In the locality of the Site, the landscape pattern comprises arable and pastoral fields, with field boundaries delineated by a variety of gappy and complete hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

2.4.2 In the wider context there are several small, scattered blocks and belts of woodland. These woodland features exhibit a limited degree of connectivity. To the east, the River Rib is flanked by pasture and parkland, subject to traditional grazing, alongside scrubby riparian floodplains.

2.5 Public Rights of Way and Cycle Routes

2.5.1 The Hertfordshire Chain Walk crosses the western extents of the study area in a north-south orientation, providing a recreational route of linked circular walks ranging from Crews Hill, Ilford to Ashwell and Morden. A dense and well connected network of local Public Rights of Way

(PRoW) is present within the study area, linking the Site to the neighbouring villages of Chipping, Throcking and Aspenden.

2.5.2 PRoW of particular relevance to this assessment include:

- PRoW Cottered 46, which runs north-west/south-east and meets the A507 70m to the west of the Site;
- PRoW Cottered 40, which runs east/west across the landscape 210m to the north of the Site;
- PRoW Aspenden 10, which runs north-west/south-east 550m to the west of the Site;
- PRoW Aspenden 1, which runs north-east/south-west 360m to the south-east of the Site; and
- PRoW Buntingford 29, which runs north-east/south-west 350m to the south-east of the Site.

2.6 Scheduled Monuments

2.6.1 Of closest proximity to the Site is The Island scheduled monument, located 2km to the south-west. Of additional note are the site of St Giles' Church and medieval village north-east of Wakeley Farm and Moor Hall north-east of Moor Green, situated 2.3km and 3.2km to the south-west respectively.

2.7 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

2.7.1 The Buntingford Conservation Area is located 600m to the east of the Site. However, the intervening development within the western fringe of Buntingford and the A10 transport corridor and infrastructure physically and visually separate the Site from the conservation area. An additional conservation area encompasses the village of Aspenden and its setting 530m to the south of the Site.

2.7.2 Listed buildings are present throughout the study area, including:

- Barn at How Green Farm, Grade II, 90m to the north-east of the Site;
- Former farmhouse with attached stables and outhouse, Grade II, 80m to the north-east of the Site;
- White Cottage and Buttermilk Hall Farm, Grade II, 530m to the west of the Site;
- 66 Baldock Road, Grade II, 380m to the east of the Site;
- Church of St Mary, Grade I, 1km to the south of the Site; and
- Aspenden Hall, Grade II, 620m to the south of the Site.

2.7.3 Given the distance of the conservation areas and listed buildings from the Site, and the intervening topography, built form and vegetation that further serve to separate them from the Site both physically and visually, the Site is not considered to form part of the setting of any of these heritage features.

2.8 Registered Parks and Gardens

2.8.1 The Garden House is the nearest registered park and garden, situated 3.1km to the west of the Site. The designation comprises an area of 75 square kilometres, located on the western edge of the village of Cottered, and is physically and visually separated from the Site by the village and intervening landform and vegetation.

2.9 Ancient Woodland

2.9.1 A series of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland blocks are scattered across the study area, although none within 1km of the Site. The nearest is Boldero's wood, 1.7km to the north-west of the Site.

3 Landscape Policy

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This section sets out policies relevant to the study area and the nature of the Proposed Development.

3.2 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework[1]

3.2.1 The NPPF, first published in March 2012, was most recently revised in December 2023. The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as ***"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".*** Development proposals must also be in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF.

3.2.2 The NPPF states that ***"the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"***, with Paragraph 8 going on to state that to achieve this the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.

3.2.3 The environmental objective is described as: ***"to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".***

3.2.4 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should: ***"encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside; [and] recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production…"***

3.2.5 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land by taking account of:

> ***"(d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens)…; and***
>
> ***(e) the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places."***

3.2.6 Paragraphs 131-141 focus on achieving well-designed places and promote good design of the built environment. This approach is enshrined in Paragraph 135, which states:

[1] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

(a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

(b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

(c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

(e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

3.2.7 Paragraph 139 states:

"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

(a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes; and/or

(b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."

3.2.8 Section 15 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, with Paragraph 180 setting out that planning policies and decisions should look to achieve this by ***"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"*** and ***"recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services".***

3.2.9 Section 16 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment, with Paragraph 200 setting out that ***"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."***

3.2.10 Paragraph 203 states:

> ***"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:***
>
> ***(a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;***
>
> ***(b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and***
>
> ***(c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."***

Planning Practice Guidance[2]

3.2.11 To support the policies of the NPPF, the Government has produced the live online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021) covering a number of topics.

3.2.12 Under the topic of Design: process and tools and sub-heading of Planning for well-designed places (Paragraph: 001, October 2019) the PPG states that ***"development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes"***. This section of the PPG also introduces the National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021) which sets out the 10 characteristics of good design, including:

- ***"Context (enhances the surroundings);***
- ***Identity (attractive and distinctive);***
- ***Built form (a coherent pattern of development);***
- ***Movement (accessible and easy to move around);***
- ***Nature (enhanced and optimised);***
- ***Public Spaces (safe, social and inclusive);***
- ***Uses (mixed and integrated);***

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance

- ***Homes and Buildings (functional, healthy and sustainable);***
- ***Resources (efficient and resilient); and***
- ***Lifespan (made to last)".***

3.2.13 Under the topic of Natural Environment, the sub-heading of Green Infrastructure, Paragraph 005 (July 2019) focuses on the natural capital that green infrastructure can add to communities including, ***"…enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes…"***. This approach to achieving biodiverse communities is enshrined in Paragraph 006, which states:

"Green infrastructure can help in…:

- ***Achieving well-designed places…;***
- ***Promoting healthy and safe communities…;***
- ***Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change…; [and]***
- ***Conserving and enhancing the natural environment".***

3.2.14 Under the topic of Natural Environment, sub-heading Landscape, Paragraph 037 (July 2019) supports the use of LVIA to ***"demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape"***. The PPG also makes reference to Natural England's guidance (Natural England, 2014) on undertaking landscape character assessment ***"to complement Natural England's National Character Area Profiles".***

3.3 Local Policy

3.3.1 The Site lies within the administrative boundary of East Hertfordshire District Council. Current local policy relevant to the Site and proposed development comprises the East Hertfordshire District Plan, adopted October 2018, as well as the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031.

East Hertfordshire District Plan[3]

3.3.2 The East Hertfordshire District Plan sets out the planning framework for the district through a development strategy, development management policies and delivery and monitoring policies. The District Plan is a long-term document that should be read alongside policies set out in the NPPF. Policies and objectives of relevance to the Site and landscape and visual matters are set out below:

3.3.3 Chapter 17 Design and Landscape identifies a series of objectives that should be understood by applicants to inform the design of new development. These include:

"1) Respect, improve and enhance the existing surrounding environment;

2) Respond to existing patterns of development and the local context;

[3] https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/east-herts-district-plan-2018

3) Be attractive in appearance but receptive to original design and innovation in construction techniques, design and technologies;

4) Be usable, in terms of accessibility, legibility and be well-connected;

5) Be adaptable and flexible to the needs of the occupiers now and in the future;

6) Be socially inclusive, catering for the current and changing needs of the district's population;

7) Discourage crime and anti-social behaviour;

8) Encourage good health and well-being;

9) Incorporate measures to mitigate and adapt against the effects of climate change;

10) Incorporate water management and sustainable urban drainage, planting and landscaping into the overall design, including through the creation of adequate private and public amenity space and green infrastructure;

11) Incorporate the good practice recommendations of British Standard 5837 (2012): Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction; and

12) Incorporate appropriate Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments in the consideration of location and design of new development."

3.3.4 Policy DES2 Landscape Character states:

"I. Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the district's landscape. For major applications, or applications where there is a potential adverse impact on landscape character, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and/or Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment should be provided to ensure that impacts, mitigation and enhancement opportunities are appropriately addressed.

II. Appropriate mitigation measures will be taken into account when considering the effect of development on landscape character/landscaping.

III. Where relevant, development proposals will have regard to the District Council's currently adopted Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document."

3.3.5 Policy DES3 Landscaping states:

"I. Development proposals must demonstrate how they will retain, protect and enhance existing landscape features which are of amenity and/or biodiversity value, in order to ensure that there is no net loss of such features.

II. Where losses are unavoidable and justified by other material considerations, compensatory planting or habitat creation will be sought either within or outside the development site. Replacement planting schemes should comprise mature, native species appropriate to the local conditions and landscape character, supported by a monitoring and replacement programme."

3.3.6 Policy DES4 Design of Development states:

"I. All development proposals, including extensions to existing buildings, must be of a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness. Proposals will be expected to:

(a) Make the best possible use of the available land by respecting or improving upon the character of the site and the surrounding area, in terms of its scale, height, massing (volume, shape), orientation, siting, layout, density, building materials (colour, texture), landscaping, environmental assets, and design features, having due regard to the design opportunities and constraints of a site;

(c) Avoid significant detrimental impacts on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties and land, and ensure that their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, privacy or overshadowing;"

3.3.7 Chapter 20 Natural Environment enshrines the importance of the natural environment as one of the district's greatest resources and highlights nature conservation as an integral part of the planning system.

3.3.8 Policy NE3 Species and Habitats states:

"I. Development should always seek to enhance biodiversity and to create opportunities for wildlife. Proposals must demonstrate how the development improves the biodiversity value of the site and surrounding environment. Evidence will be required in the form of up-to-date ecological surveys undertaken by a competent ecologist prior to the submission of an application. The Biodiversity

value of a site pre and post development will be determined by applying a locally approved Biodiversity Metric where appropriate. Submitted information must be consistent with BS420202013. Where insufficient data is provided, permission will be refused.

II. Proposals should detail how physical features will be maintained in the long term.

III. Development which would result in the loss or significant damage to trees, hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted. The Council will seek their reinforcement by additional planting of native species where appropriate. Protective buffers of complementary habitat will be expected to adjoin these features, sufficient to protect against root damage and improvement of their long term condition. A minimum buffer zone of 10m (or greater if required) is considered appropriate.

IV. Proposals will be expected to protect and enhance locally important biodiversity sites and other notable ecological features of conservation value.

V. Proposals should avoid impacting on Species and Habitats of Principle Importance as published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (or as subsequently amended).

VIII. Integrated bird and bat boxes will be expected in all development bordering public green space and beneficial habitat."

3.3.9 Policy NE4 Green Infrastructure states:

II. Development proposals should:

"(a) Avoid the loss, fragmentation or functionality of the green infrastructure network, including within the built environment, such as access to urban waterways;

(b) Maximise opportunities for improvement to the green infrastructure network in accordance with the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan, its Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Living Landscape Schemes, locally identified Nature Improvement Areas and any future relevant plans and programmes as appropriate;

(c) Maximise opportunities for urban greening such as through appropriate landscaping schemes and the planting of street trees;

(d) Consider the integration of green infrastructure into proposals as an alternative or to complement 'grey' infrastructure.

(e) Demonstrate how lighting will not adversely impact on green infrastructure that functions as nocturnal wildlife movement and foraging corridors, in line with Policy EQ3 Light Pollution."

3.3.10 Policy CC1 Climate Change Adaptation states:

"All new development should:

(b) Integrate green infrastructure from the beginning of the design process to contribute to urban greening, including the public realm. Elements that can contribute to this include appropriate tree planting, green roofs and walls, and soft landscaping."

Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031[4]

3.3.11 The Buntingford Community Area (BCA) Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 covers an area of six parishes, within which the Site is located, and sets out a vision for the area that reflects the views of the local community, aiming to build on current and future planned activity. The document now forms part of the East Hertfordshire Development Plan for the area since it was approved at referendum in March 2017. Policies of relevance to the Site in landscape and visual terms are set out below:

3.3.12 The Neighbourhood Plan outlines the environment and sustainability of rural/urban settings as a significant issue for local residents, and sets out three objectives:

"To protect and conserve the countryside and landscape in the BCA.

To improve and conserve habitat and biodiversity in wildlife areas within the BCA.

To conserve and expand all categories of open space in the BCA."

3.3.13 Policy ES1 states that ***"Development proposals should be appropriate to and maintain the Rib Valley setting of the BCA",*** with specific consideration to development on the fringes of Buntingford which extends on to higher ground.

3.3.14 Policy ES4 states:

"Development proposals that result in any loss of existing public green spaces across all types within the BCA will be supported only where replacement green spaces which are

[4] https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning-activity-east-herts/buntingford-community-area

suitably located and equal or superior (in terms of size and quality) are made available."

3.3.15 Policy ES7 states:

"Development will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity in line with NPPF requirements. Development must demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity in an ecological report consistent with BS 42020."

3.3.16 Policy ES8 states:

"Proposals to extend, improve or create links between existing wildlife areas, open countryside, the built environment and other areas of natural green space within the BCA will be welcomed and encouraged. Integrated features for wildlife (e.g. ponds, hedgerows, bird/bat boxes) will be expected within the built environment in appropriate places."

3.3.17 Policy HD2 states:

"All new housing developments should be sensitive to the landscape and be of a height that does not impact adversely on views from the surrounding countryside. All development proposals should demonstrate how they conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the BCA landscape. Where appropriate, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be provided to ensure that impacts, mitigation and enhancement opportunities are appropriately addressed."

3.3.18 Policy HD4 states:

"New housing design should respect the rural/semi-rural character of the Buntingford Community Area and its immediate context having appropriate regard to the standards set out in Appendix 4 – Design Code."

3.3.19 Policy T3 states:

"Existing rights of way will be protected from development that adversely impacts on accessibility within and between settlements within the BCA."

3.3.20 Policy T4 states:

"Proposals for new development will be required to take advantage of opportunities to make appropriate connections to existing footpaths, urban alleyways, cycle paths, rights of way and bridleways in the BCA to improve connectivity between and within settlements."

Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan[5]

3.3.21 The Green Infrastructure Plan for East Hertfordshire, published in 2011, provides an overview of existing green infrastructure assets within the District and considers opportunities for enhancement and creation of green infrastructure. It provides advice on taking green infrastructure proposals forward through spatial planning and practical delivery.

3.3.22 The Plan sets out the green infrastructure vision for East Hertfordshire, including the following aims:

"To conserve and enhance:

- ***The varied landscapes of the District – farmland, ancient woodland, wooded chalk valleys, settled chalk valleys, heathlands and commons and intricate network of river valleys…;***
- ***The quiet rural landscape character and distinctive agricultural landscape, while also linking areas of broadleaf woodland to provide increased landscape connectivity and resilience in the face of climate change, balancing this with large scale open landscape character;***

To improve and create:

- ***Accessibility and connections to and along the river valleys…;***
- ***Links for a variety of users – walkers, cyclists and riders…;***
- ***Enhanced links to greenspace, particularly in the larger and higher density settlements such as Hertford and Ware, and Bishop's Stortford and outlying suburbs, and Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth, as well as opportunities for urban greening for community benefit and value, such as orchards;***

To recognise and value:

- ***The importance of links between landscape and nature and ensuring that this is the first layer of consideration in the development process…;***
- ***GI for people – the importance of provision for low key and informal recreation to enhance the value of existing green infrastructure, and creating/promoting an improved series of links between settlements, commons and the wider countryside;***
- ***The importance of the green infrastructure network for health and quality of life, seeking to promote awareness and appreciation of the network;***

[5] https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Green_infrastructure_plan_joined.pdf

- ***The need for an appropriate balance between community, access, recreation and biodiversity interests…;***
- ***The need for joined up working with key partners, landowners, the parish councils and local 'green groups' to deliver sustainable proposals;***
- ***The educational potential of GI - the need to raise awareness of and promote linked agendas such as local food including recognition of the importance of historic orchards throughout the District."***

3.3.23 The Plan identifies five action zones for the wider green infrastructure network. The Site is located within the Wetland Habitat Zone. The aims for this zone are:

> ***"Restoring and enhancing the quality of the river valley network (chalk and clay rivers) and associated wetland habitats which form part of Wetlands BAP. Aim to create landscape links to adjacent authorities (e.g. Welwyn, Essex and north London) and to sites such as Broxbourne Woods and the Lee Valley. The zone and component projects can also contribute to delivery of Natural England's Thames and Tributaries Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA) and are complementary to the aims and objectives of the Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan."***

4 Published Landscape Character Evidence

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF. The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation, in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management. The various landscape areas are shown on **Figure L3: Landscape Character Plan**, and extracts are provided in **Appendix B: Published Landscape Character Evidence Extracts**.

4.2 National Character Area 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland[6]

4.2.1 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles. These NCA profiles include an outline of the key characteristics that define broad landscape character areas. The Site and surrounding study area sit within NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland.

4.2.2 The key characteristics of NCA 86 are set out below:

- ***"An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts…***
- ***South-east-flowing streams and rivers drain the clay plateau…***
- ***Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.***
- ***The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with a wooded appearance…Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving…***
- ***There is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements…***
- ***Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows…***
- ***A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area's archetypal lowland English countryside."***

4.2.3 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) include the following:

[6] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5095677797335040

"SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets and benefit carbon storage and water quality, as well as the over-riding sense of place.

SEO 2: Protect and enhance the area's ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows, through the management of existing woods and the planting of new woods, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to benefit landscape character, habitat connectivity and a range of ecosystem services, including timber provision, the regulation of soil erosion and the strengthening of the sense of place and history.

SEO 3: Enhance the slow-flowing, winding rivers and their pastoral valley flood plains that provide linkages through the landscape, including redundant sand and gravel extraction sites, for their ecological, historical and recreational importance. This will support the operation of natural processes and their contribution to biodiversity, geodiversity, soil quality, water availability, regulating water flow and the character of the area.

SEO 4: Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with its much-visited 'Constable Country' and improve opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the distinctive assemblage of historic landscapes outside the AONB. Ensure that access and recreational resources are managed to be compatible with the tranquillity of the area and the special qualities of protected landscapes, while providing a valuable health, education and access resource."

4.3 East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment[7]

4.3.1 The East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2007 and identifies the distinct landscapes within East Hertfordshire, providing a structured evaluation and a landscape strategy and guidance for each character area. The Site falls within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau, and is adjacent to LCA 142: High Rib Valley, as illustrated on **Figure L3: Landscape Character Plan**.

4.3.2 LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau is described as:

"principally an open arable landscape with extensive views over a gently undulating plateau. The area retains a historic ambiance through the winding lanes, however many of the features have been eroded or disappeared completely including a deserted medieval village. Settlement comprises

[7] https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Landscape_Character_Assessment_SPD.pdf

isolated farms and the occasional cottage. There are few features of note within the area with the most prominent landmarks being outside the area."

4.3.3 The key characteristics of LCA 141 that are pertinent to the Site are:

- ***"open arable plateau with some very large field units***
- ***minimal settlement, restricted to individual farmhouses;***
- ***remote and isolated feel;***
- ***minimal woodland cover;***
- ***degraded landscape pattern with few hedgerows and associated trees;***
- ***organic winding lanes with few direct connections across the plateau, (except for A507);***
- ***water towers, LV electricity cables and aerial masts locally prominent features due to open landscape; [and]***
- ***open views across plateau and to valley of the Rib"***

4.3.4 The assessment describes the condition of LCA 141 as 'poor' and its strength of character as 'moderate', and the strategy and guidelines for managing change are to 'improve and restore'.

4.3.5 The Strategy and Guidelines for Change for LCA 141 include:

- ***"promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards;***
- ***promote the creation of new small to medium scale native broadleaved woods throughout the area to reduce the scale of the open arable areas, using ancient hedge and field boundaries to locate the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion;***
- ***promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds;***
- ***promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production as important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats. Buffers also to target rights of way where possible;***
- ***promote selected hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and/or rights of way where possible;***
- ***ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that hard landscape and 'Garden' details are be screened from view where possible and native***

species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter;

- ***promote a strategy for reducing the visual impact of development on the upper slopes of Buntingford…;***
- ***maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees".***

4.3.6 LCA 142: High Rib Valley is described as:

> ***"The last section of the River Rib that retains a distinctive valley form and associated land uses. Further north and out of the area the river climbs onto the high plateau and has more the character of a local stream. The area is effectively divided into two sub areas by Buntingford which initially developed along the Ermine Street corridor, but in the 20th century has spread up the valley sides. The Rib is marked by a combination of pasture and riparian trees, however arable fields are found both close to the valley bottom and on the slopes. The villages of Aspenden and Westmill are historically coherent and contain a number of fine traditional buildings and groupings. There are areas of parkland supporting traditional grazing e.g. Corney Bury. The A10 corridor is a strong feature of the area and the traffic is locally intrusive as are some of the built features within Buntingford."***

4.3.7 The key characteristics of LCA 142 that are pertinent to the Site are:

- ***"Relatively narrow valley feature;***
- ***Mixed land use including arable and pasture;***
- ***Small to medium scale landscape in contrast to open arable areas to the adjacent plateaux;***
- ***Historic villages to valley edge of Westmill and Aspenden…;***
- ***Sub-divided by Buntingford;***
- ***Willow and poplar tree lined watercourse;***
- ***Urban influence of Buntingford is locally intrusive;***
- ***A10 corridor and associated traffic; [and]***
- ***Limited rights of way".***

4.3.8 The assessment describes the condition and strength of character of LCA 142 as 'moderate', and the strategy and guidelines for managing change are to 'improve and conserve'.

4.3.9 The Strategy and Guidelines for Change for LCA 142 include:

- ***"ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity in parklands and village environments of Westmill and Aspenden;***
- ***ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens;***
- ***...encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland with historically accurate specimen tree planting...;***
- ***protect the remaining river valley habitats of nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain woodland and grazing marsh;***
- ***resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats;***
- ***promote a strategy for reducing the visual impact of development on the upper slopes of Buntingford...;***
- ***promote the enhancement of the River Rib and its tributaries by the creation of wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds and scrapes;***
- ***promote the management of existing riparian trees including pollarding. Promote additional tree planting of native water loving species, willow, alder and poplar to emphasize the line of the watercourse;***
- ***promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats...;***
- ***maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees;***
- ***develop a strategy for the planting and management of the A10 corridor through the area that respects the historic setting but minimizes the visual context in keeping with local character; [and]***
- ***encourage the development of an improved network of rights of way both along and across the valley giving enhanced recreational opportunities for residents."***

5 Site Appraisal and Visual Appraisal

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Photographs 1 to 17 set out in **Appendix F: Site Photographs** illustrate the character of the Site and its constituent elements, as well as the visual context of the Site. The locations of these photographs are identified on **Figure L4: Viewpoint Location Plan**. The photographs were taken in February 2024 and demonstrate the worst case scenario, i.e., when the majority of deciduous vegetation was not in leaf. Cloud cover was sparse and visibility was good.

5.2 Landscape Character

5.2.1 The Site comprises 13.28 hectares (ha) of arable land to the west of the A10 at Buntingford and to the east of the Thistley Vale Brook. It includes a section of the A507 to the north and north-west of this arable land, as well as a linear section of the adjacent field immediately to the north.

5.2.2 Power lines cross the north-western corner of the Site in a north-east/south-west direction. There is no vegetation internal to the Site, and the brook corridor to the west of the Site lacks structural vegetation. The Site is bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and a dense woodland block ('The Thicket') is present immediately to the south.

5.2.3 The Site is bounded to the north by agricultural land beyond the A507, and by the A10 along the eastern boundary, both of which serve the neighbouring town of Buntingford. Within the Site's immediate context to the north, the degraded hedgerow pattern allows unfiltered views across the undulating rural landscape toward Cottered, comprising arable fields, pasture and scattered woodland.

5.2.4 The Site is on undulating topography, rising from 115m AOD in the north-western corner to 125m AOD in the centre of the southern boundary, and descending gradually to 115m AOD on the eastern boundary. Immediately to the north of the Site, the landform follows broadly the same pattern, and then rises gently in the north-west toward Cottered, with the wider rural context in the west sitting largely above the Site.

5.2.5 The Site exhibits a character typical of LCA 141 Cherry Green Arable Plateau, set within an area adjacent to the settlement edge. The surrounding landscape to the west is agricultural and exhibits the "open arable, large scale fields" and "limited woodland cover" characteristic of the LCA. Other characteristics, however, such as a "remote and isolated feel" and "open views to the valley of the Rib" are not strongly reflected in the Site, which is subject to a degree of enclosure from the east resulting from the structural boundary vegetation. Some characteristics of LCA 142 High Rib Valley are apparent within the Site, including the "small to medium scale landscape in contrast to open arable areas to the adjacent plateaux".

5.2.6 There is a strong degree of openness and continuity to the north, while the linear treelines of the A10 and A507 provide a perceptual enclosure to the east and north-east respectively. Hedgerows along the north-eastern boundary of the Site combined with mature hedgerow and trees along the opposite verge of the A507 provide a degree of separation from the development of Buntingford Business Park.

5.2.7 On the whole, the Site does not exhibit a particularly high landscape quality or condition, as although typical character is represented and it has a moderate level of intactness, the condition of individual elements is highly variable.

5.2.8 Most of the Site does not itself exhibit a particularly high scenic quality, albeit there are medium to long distance panoramic views available across the wider landscape.

5.2.9 The rarity of the Site is low, as it does not contain elements or features that are rare within the wider landscape.

5.2.10 The Site is representative of the wider agricultural landscape, but does not contain characteristics, features or elements that are considered particularly important examples.

5.2.11 There are no notable features of wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical or cultural interest present within the Site, and therefore the Site is not of particular conservation interest.

5.2.12 There is no evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity, as it is not publicly accessible, albeit it forms part of views experienced from PRoW within its context.

5.2.13 The perceptual aspects of the Site do not lend it a particular value, as it does not exhibit any wildness, being an intensively managed agricultural landscape. Whilst there is some limited sense of tranquillity within the Site, particularly toward the south-western extents away from the audible intrusion of traffic on the A10 and A507, this is not a notable feature of the Site.

5.2.14 The Site does not have any known associations with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

5.2.15 On the basis of the Site appraisal, a number of landscape feature receptors and landscape character receptors have been identified as receptors for the assessment of effects arising from the Proposed Development. These are set out in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Landscape Receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity
LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau	High
LCA 142: High Rib Valley	High
The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings	Medium
Native hedgerow	Medium
Canopy trees	Medium
Waterbodies	Medium

5.2.16 The value, susceptibility, and resultant sensitivity of these receptors to the Proposed Development are set out with commentary in **Appendix C: Landscape Effects Table**.

5.3 Visual Appraisal

5.3.1 A visual appraisal was undertaken to determine the relationship of the Site with its surroundings and the approximate extent of its visibility within the wider landscape as experienced from publicly accessible viewpoints (roads, footways, PRoW and open spaces).

5.3.2 The visibility of the Site is predominantly influenced by landform and the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the surrounding landscape. Baseline studies of these features enabled the identification of the potential visibility of the Site from the surrounding area to be tested through fieldwork.

5.3.3 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared to assist in the selection of viewpoints and inform the assessment of likely visual effects, and is shown on **Figure L4b: Preliminary Zone**

of Theoretical Visibility Plan. The ZTV models the effect of large blocks of vegetation, built form and landform on the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. It should be noted that the ZTV does not take into account the screening effect of smaller areas of vegetation including hedgerows and is therefore only an indication of potential visibility. The findings of the ZTV were tested by field surveys in order to assess the visual effects of the Proposed Development in accordance with GLVIA3, and it was found that the visibility was lower than that represented on the ZTV due to vegetation not accounted for in the ZTV modelling.

5.3.4 Open views of parts of the Site are available from PRoW Cottered 40 as it crosses the elevated land to the north of the Site. However, due to the undulating pattern of the topography, there are no locations from which the entirety of the Site is visible.

5.3.5 Surrounding built development and road infrastructure, together with the wooded vegetation associated with the A10 and A507, provide a degree of enclosure to the east and north-east. Whilst the Site is adjacent to the western edge of Buntingford, it is nevertheless subject to a degree of visual separation from the settlement due to the presence of the A10 and the structural vegetation along its verges. However, the gently rising topography of the arable landscape to the north and west in conjunction with the sparse woodland and hedgerow cover results in a strong visual relationship between the western extents of the Site and the immediate landscape context to the north, and to a lesser extent to the west.

5.3.6 The area of woodland, The Thicket, immediately to the south of the Site combines with the field boundary vegetation to provide physical and visual enclosure, limiting its visual relationship with its context to the south and west.

5.3.7 Transient open views into the Site from the north are available to users of the A507 where there is gappy boundary vegetation, and open views across the Site are available from the north and from the wider landscape to the west. Glimpsed to partial views are available from the PRoW network to the west of the Site, as well as from elevated land within the wider landscape context, although fragmented vegetation has a filtering effect. Where views are available, the upper parts of existing built form within the more elevated areas of Buntingford form a component of some views.

5.3.8 On the basis of the visual appraisal, a series of representative visual receptors have been identified, against which the effects of the Proposed Development on visual amenity have been assessed. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and is proportionate to the Proposed Development, as any visual receptors considered unlikely to experience visual effects have been scoped out based on Site assessment and professional expertise. The visual receptors that are included within the scope of this assessment are set out in **Table 5.2** below.

Table 5.2: Visual Receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity
Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site	Medium
Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site	Low
Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site	Medium
Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site	Medium
Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site	Medium
Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site	Low

5.3.9 The value, susceptibility, and resultant sensitivity of these receptors to the Proposed Development are set out with commentary in **Appendix D: Visual Effects Table**.

5.4 Receptors Scoped Out

5.4.1 Receptors that are considered unlikely to have the potential to experience important effects are scoped out of the assessment. These receptors are set out in **Table 5.3** below.

Table 5.3: Receptors Scoped Out

Receptor	Reason for Scoping Out
NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland	The NCA is of a very large scale relative to the Site, and as such it is likely to be subject to very little change comparatively.
LCAs more than 0.5km from the Site	The Site is of a small to very small scale relative to the LCAs within the study area that are more than 0.5km away, and they are likely to be subject to very little change comparatively, which will be indirect.
Pedestrians on PRoW more than 1km from the Site	No views of the Site were identified from footpaths more than 1km away, other than from those on elevated land more than 1km from the Site, which are addressed as a separate receptor. Whilst some long distance views may be available from footpaths in other parts of the Site's context, these are likely to be glimpsed at most and viewers are anticipated to experience little to no change.
Users of secondary roads	Whilst these road users are likely to have a medium sensitivity, any views of the Site will be at a distance from which receptors are likely to experience little to no change.
Users of principal roads more than 0.5km from the Site	These road users are likely to have a low sensitivity and experience little to no change.
Residents of dwellings more than 1km from the Site	No likely views of the Site were identified from dwellings more than 1km away, other than from those on elevated land more than 1km from the Site, which are addressed as a separate receptor. Whilst some long distance views may be available from dwellings in other parts of the Site's context, these are likely to be glimpsed at most and viewers are anticipated to experience little to no change.

6 Design Rationale

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 The baseline landscape and visual appraisal of the Site has identified a number of opportunities and constraints, as shown on **Figure L5: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan**. These have allowed landscape and visual design considerations to be incorporated into the Proposed Development and underpin the rationale of the scheme layout.

6.2 Site Opportunities and Constraints

6.2.1 Opportunities for development within the Site include:

- The Site is not covered by any national landscape designations or policies such as National Landscapes or National Parks;
- The Site is not covered by the planning policy designation of Green Belt;
- The Site is not covered by any national landscape designations or policies such as Green Belt, AONB or National Parks;
- The Site itself is not crossed by any PRoW and is not otherwise publicly accessible, except insofar as the A507 forms lies within the Site boundary;
- Development of the Site offers the opportunity for improving access to the wider countryside through the creation of meaningful publicly accessible green space within the western extents of the Site;
- The established vegetation in the vicinity of the Site provides both visual and physical containment in some directions, as well as contributing to existing green infrastructure. Development of the Site offers the opportunity to reinforce this green infrastructure and strengthen its connections through the Site.

6.2.2 Constraints to development within the Site include:

- Existing trees and vegetation are present on the boundaries of the Site;
- The Site exhibits undulating topography representative of the wider landscape pattern;
- There is a strong visual relationship between the western extents of the Site and the landscape context to the north; and
- Glimpsed to open views into the Site are available from nearby PRoW, highways, residences and workplaces.

6.2.3 Following the appraisal of the existing landscape and visual context, and in considering the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints, it is considered that the Site provides the opportunity to sensitively accommodate the Proposed Development, reflecting the distribution of existing commercial built form in the vicinity, and delivering green infrastructure that will relate strongly to the wider landscape context.

6.3 Description of the Proposed Development

6.3.1 The Proposed Development includes:

- Employment land to support new and existing businesses. (4.71ha, 27,420sqm/295,145sqft of employment floorspace in a mix of employment uses (Use Class B2, B8, E(c) and E(g));
- Creation of a new public Buntingford Park, with wildlife enhancements, potential for sports pitches and a wider network of public open space throughout the Site; and
- A new access road and the creation of a landscape gateway at its junction with the A507.

6.3.2 The application is in Outline at this stage and the landscaping proposals will be set out in detail at the Reserved Matters stage. However, as set out in the DAS and demonstrated on **Figure HLM082:001: Illustrative Masterplan**, a series of key landscape design principles will guide the detailed design proposals:

- Create a strong green infrastructure that responds to the existing landscape character and topography;
- Extend existing woodland cover within the Site using native species, enhancing biodiversity value of trees and vegetation;
- Locate development in more enclosed parts of the Site and respect the open character of the wider rural landscape;
- Improve the quality and character of the Site and surrounding landscape through good design;
- Accentuate the environmental and amenity value of the Site;
- Ensure sympathetic scale and massing of built form in consideration of the landscape and townscape setting, with the height and location of proposed buildings being in scale with the surrounding built form and vegetation;
- Consider the scale and massing of built form in views from PRoW to the north of the Site, setting development back from the western extents of the Site and relating building heights to the existing commercial built form within Buntingford Business Park; and
- Use unobtrusive building materials and employ colour grading adopting environmental colour assessment principles (Landscape Institute TIN 04/2018) to minimise the visual effect of taller parts of facades.

7 Landscape and Visual Effects

7.1 Effects of the Proposed Development

7.1.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken to determine the landscape and visual effects of the proposed commercial built form set within a landscape strategy for the Site.

Mitigation

7.1.2 Primary, or embedded, mitigation is defined in GLVIA3 as those measures that are ***"developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design"***. GLVIA3 also states that primary mitigation measures ***"should ideally be included in the project description/specification"*** as opposed to secondary, or further, mitigation measures, which are defined as ***"those that are not built into the final development proposals and are considered in relation to the assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the final development proposals and are considered in relation to the assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the scheme as the means of addressing the significant adverse effects identified"***.

7.1.3 The assessment of effects during construction and at Year 1 of operation takes into account primary mitigation during both these phases. On the other hand, the assessment of residual effects relates to effects to which receptors are subjected once secondary mitigation is taken into account. Residual construction effects are those to which receptors are subjected once secondary mitigation for the construction phase is taken into account, whereas the assessment of the residual operational effects (i.e., at Year 15 of operation) takes into account secondary mitigation such as the appearance of planting once established.

7.1.4 The effects during construction and at Year 1 are assessed on the basis of a worst case scenario.

7.1.5 The principal activities that will have an effect upon landscape character, landscape features and visual amenity during the construction phase include:

- The loss of open fields and alterations to the existing appearance of the Site;
- The introduction of new temporary elements, including hoarding, material stockpiles, welfare facilities, plant and machinery and construction site lighting;
- Groundworks, topsoil striping and excavation;
- Removal of a very small proportion of the existing vegetation on the Site boundary;
- The noise and movement of plant and machinery within the Site and the surrounding landscape, including crane activities and construction traffic on local roads; and
- The building and emergence of new built forms, roads, open spaces, fences and earthworks.

7.1.6 The construction phase is anticipated to take approximately one year, with completion of the Proposed Development expected in 2027.

7.1.7 At Year 1, the worst case scenario includes the following assumptions:

- Only primary mitigation will be implemented;
- Views will be experienced in winter, when they are more open due to the reduced screening effect of deciduous vegetation after leaf-fall;
- The Proposed Development will be as demonstrated on Figure HLM082/016: Framework Plan, including both the developable area and the strategic open space;
- The developable area shown on the Framework Plan will be built out to its fullest extents; and
- Structural planting shown on the Framework Plan will be implemented at the end of the construction phase, and thus will not have begun to establish and will have very little mitigating effect.

7.1.8 The assessment of residual effects during construction is based on the following secondary mitigation measures. These measures are generally considered to be construction industry standard and would be implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which could be secured by condition.

- Hours of work on the Site would be agreed through conditions and/or Reserved Matters, in order to limit the extent to which construction activities will affect receptors on a daily or weekly basis;
- The lighting of construction compounds and machinery would be controlled to minimise upward and outward light pollution through lantern design, direction and baffling and, in addition, ensuring that only the minimum area is lit for the minimum period, particularly in the central areas of the Site;
- All unloading of construction materials and equipment would be provided within the Site boundary, limiting adverse effects on character and views due to activities outside of the Site;
- Noise, dirt and dust levels would be kept to a minimum and local roads would be cleaned regularly where dirt is spread by construction traffic, limiting adverse effects on local character due to the perception of construction activities;
- Litter within and around the Site will be removed and the Site will be kept free from litter throughout construction activities;
- Solid hoardings will be used to enclose the Site where construction activities are in proximity to visual receptors, to screen construction activities at ground level;
- The movement of stockpiles will be restricted, to minimise vehicle tracking across the Site and perception of instability in the townscape;
- Compounds and stockpiles will be located in the least visible locations with the Site, including for rendering of facades to aid in integrating their form within views; and
- All retained vegetation on Site and within its immediate setting will be protected during construction by fencing, installed before the commencement of construction activity of any phase of the Development and in compliance with BS5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations’.

7.1.9 The residual effects resulting from the Proposed Development (at Year 15 of operation) are based on the above information in addition to the following, which include the following secondary mitigation measures:

- The design strategy set out within the Design and Access Statement;
- Figure HLM082:001: Illustrative Masterplan, which demonstrates the potential appearance of the layout of built form and the proposed planting after 15 Years, albeit this is shown indicatively;
- The establishment and growth of the structural planting proposals, anticipated to be an average of 1m growth every three years; and
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the existing and proposed landscape features.

7.1.10 These secondary mitigation measures are expected to be secured via condition.

7.1.11 The growth and enhanced management of new and existing planting is considered to have the potential to lead to beneficial effects on some receptors, and less significant adverse effects on others, through filtering and softening of the appearance of new and existing built form and integrating it into its local context, establishment of new aesthetically pleasing landscape features, creation of shade, shelter and definition within the adjacent streetscape and enhanced habitat value. The assessment of residual visual effects assumes a best case scenario experienced in summer, with the anticipation that views of the existing and proposed built form will be more screened and filtered by vegetation in leaf.

7.1.12 To secure the long-term establishment and maintenance of the landscape features proposed, the Proposed Development will be subject to an ongoing positive management regime. This can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition or obligation, as necessary.

7.1.13 Full explanatory commentary on the magnitude of change and significance of effects for the receptors is set out in **Appendix C: Landscape Effects Table** and **Appendix D: Visual Effects Table**. A summary of the effects identified is set out below.

Effects During Construction

7.1.14 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.15 The remaining five landscape receptors are likely to be subject to effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor Adverse effect;
- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Native hedgerow – Minor Adverse effect;
- Canopy trees – Minor Adverse effect; and
- Waterbodies – Minor Adverse effect.

7.1.16 One visual receptor is likely to be subject to effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.17 The remaining eight visual receptors are likely to be subject to effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect.

Effects During Operation – Year 1

7.1.18 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.19 The remaining five landscape receptors are likely to be subject to effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor Adverse effect;
- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Native hedgerow – Minor Adverse effect;
- Canopy trees – Minor Adverse effect; and
- Waterbodies – Minor Beneficial effect.

7.1.20 Four visual receptors are likely to be subject to effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Moderate Adverse effect;

- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Major Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.21 The remaining five visual receptors are likely to be subject to effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Minor Adverse effect; and
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Minor Adverse effect.

Residual Effects During Construction

7.1.22 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to residual effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.23 The remaining five landscape receptors are likely to be subject to residual effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor Adverse effect;
- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Native hedgerow – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Canopy trees – Negligible Adverse effect; and
- Waterbodies – Negligible Adverse effect.

7.1.24 One visual receptor is likely to be subject to residual effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.25 The remaining eight visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;

- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect.

Residual Effects During Operation – Year 15

7.1.26 Two landscape receptors are likely to be subject to residual effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- Canopy trees – Moderate Beneficial effect; and
- Waterbodies – Moderate Beneficial effect.

7.1.27 The remaining four landscape receptors are likely to be subject to residual effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Neutral effect;
- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Neutral effect;
- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Minor Adverse effect; and
- Native hedgerow – Negligible Beneficial effect.

7.1.28 One visual receptor is likely to be subject to residual effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect.

7.1.29 The remaining eight visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;

- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect.

7.2 Cumulative Effects

7.2.1 This section assesses the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development in combination with the landscape and visual effects of the scheme proposed for the area opposite the Site to the north of the A507 (the 'Cumulative Scheme'). The Cumulative Scheme is covered by a separate application with a standalone LVIA.

7.2.2 The receptors that have been identified as having the potential for important cumulative landscape and visual effects as a result of the combination of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme are set out in **Table 7.1** below.

Table 7.1: Cumulative Receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity
LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau	High
LCA 142: High Rib Valley	High
The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings	Medium
Pedestrians on footpaths immediately adjacent to the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on footpaths within 0.5km of the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on footpaths 0.5km to 1km from the Site	Medium
Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site	Medium
Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site	Low
Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site	Medium
Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site	Medium
Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site	Medium
Workers at workplaces within 500m of the Site	Low

7.2.3 Only those receptors considered likely to experience important cumulative effects are included in this assessment. Receptors that are considered unlikely to experience important effects have been scoped out.

7.2.4 For the purposes of this assessment, cumulative effects on landscape features (i.e. native hedgerow, canopy trees and waterbodies) are considered holistically within the cumulative assessment as they are the constituent elements of the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings, as well as of the wider LCA. As such, consideration of them as individual receptors has been scoped out of the cumulative assessment.

7.2.5 In the assessment of cumulative construction effects, it has been assumed that the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme will be carried out concurrently, such that these effects will be experienced by receptors at the same time.

7.2.6 Full explanatory commentary on the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects is set out in **Appendix E: Cumulative Effects Table**. A summary of the effects identified is set out below.

Cumulative Effects During Construction

7.2.7 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.8 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.9 The one remaining landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect.

7.2.10 Three visual receptors are likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Moderate Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate to Major Adverse effect;

7.2.11 Two visual receptors are likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.12 The remaining four visual receptors are likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect; and

- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect.

Cumulative Effects During Operation – Year 1

7.2.13 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.14 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.15 The one remaining landscape receptor is likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect.

7.2.16 Four visual receptors are likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Major Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Major Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Major Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.17 The remaining five visual receptors are likely to be subject to cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect; and
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

Residual Cumulative Effects During Construction

7.2.18 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.19 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.20 The one remaining landscape receptor is likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Negligible Adverse effect.

7.2.21 One visual receptor is likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.22 Four visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Minor Adverse effect;
- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.23 The remaining four visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect; and
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect.

Residual Cumulative Effects During Operation – Year 15

7.2.24 One landscape receptor is likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.25 Two landscape receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau – Negligible Beneficial effect; and
- LCA 142: High Rib Valley – Neutral effect.

7.2.26 Three visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be important (i.e., major or moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site – Moderate Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate Adverse effect; and
- Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site – Moderate to Major Adverse effect.

7.2.27 Two visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are considered to be on the threshold of important (i.e., minor to moderate effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect; and
- Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site – Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.

7.2.28 The remaining four visual receptors are likely to be subject to residual cumulative effects that are not considered to be important (i.e., minor, negligible or neutral effects) as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme:

- Pedestrians on PRoW 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Pedestrians on PRoW on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect;
- Residents of dwellings 0.5km to 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect; and
- Residents of dwellings on elevated land more than 1km from the Site – Negligible to Minor Adverse effect.

8 Summary and Conclusion

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 An assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3.

8.1.2 The Site adjoins the western edge of the town of Buntingford and lies immediately adjacent to the A10 to the east. The A507 runs through the northern extents of the Site. The Buntingford Business Park adjoins the Site's north-eastern corner. To the west, the hedgerow pattern allows filtered views across the undulating rural landscape toward Cottered, comprising arable fields, pasture and scattered woodland.

8.1.3 Review and analysis of national and district level published landscape character assessments has been carried out. They describe an undulating plateau that forms an open arable landscape, dissected by numerous river valleys within which the landscape is small to medium scale.

8.1.4 The Site comprises 13.28ha of arable land on gently sloping topography. The boundaries of the Site are formed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and vegetated road verges. The Site is broadly representative of the published landscape character. It is predominantly agricultural in character, although it is influenced by the audible intrusion of traffic on the A10 and A507. It has a visual relationship with both the adjacent settlement edge and the wider agricultural landscape.

8.1.5 A visual appraisal has been undertaken that demonstrates that the Site is part of a landscape that varies from intimate and enclosed to open with long distance panoramic views. The undulating topography of the Site and its context at times curtails views and at others provides elevated vantage points. As such, the most open views of the Site are available from near distance viewpoints, although partial long distance views are available from elevated land to the north, east and south.

8.1.6 A series of measures have been embedded in the design of the Proposed Development from the outset, with the aim of reducing adverse effects resulting from its introduction and to enhance the landscape where practicable.

8.1.7 The Proposed Development will occupy an area of undeveloped land immediately adjacent to an existing settlement. The proposals will result in commercial built form being introduced across one third of the area of the Site, although there will also be an increase in the recreational opportunity within the Site. The changes to the perceptual aspects of the Site will be appreciable from a number of locations within its vicinity.

8.1.8 The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates the potential layout and appearance of the proposed built form and landscape strategy. The Proposed Development will directly relate to the existing settlement and will deliver a landscape strategy that reflects and responds to the landscape objectives and associated actions set out within the relevant landscape character and sensitivity assessments.

8.1.9 The majority of the native hedgerow will be retained and protected, with a small proportion being removed to provide access. The canopy tree vegetation around the periphery of the Site will be retained, where it provides varying levels of enclosure, with the proposals including a high level of reinforcement of both the hedgerow and canopy trees, which would improve the ecological functionality of the Site and wider area.

8.1.10 The proposed landscape treatment within the western extents of the Site with improved green infrastructure will improve the connectivity of existing landscape features, increase the accessibility of the landscape and strengthen the amenity value of the Site. The delivery of these landscape features within the Site will help to improve its contribution to the local sense of place.

8.1.11 The Proposed Development will not cause any wholesale changes to the character of the wider landscape context but will extend commercial built form into the Site. The new built form will be at an appropriate location and of an appropriate scale to be successfully assimilated into its context, with limited effects on the wider landscape.

8.1.12 Views of the Proposed Development will be experienced primarily by users of PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site, as well as by receptors within 0.5km of the Site, including users of PRoW, residents of nearby dwellings, and users of primary roads, who will have near to medium distance views. There will be some medium to long distance views of the Proposed Development, particularly from elevated land to the north, east and south.

8.1.13 Where the introduced built form of the Proposed Development appears, it will be filtered by retained and proposed intervening vegetation and will not appear out of character, reflecting components and characteristics of existing views from within the existing settlement or toward it. As the potential landscape strategy for the Proposed Development matures, this will further soften and integrate it within its context. The landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development will be partially mitigated by the delivery of the enhancements to the landscape within the western extents of the Site.

8.1.14 An assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development during construction and at Year 1 of implementation has been undertaken. The residual construction and implementation (at Year 15) effects have also been assessed.

8.1.15 During construction, one landscape receptor and one visual receptor will be subject to important adverse effects. The remaining five landscape receptors and eight visual receptors will be subject to adverse effects that are not considered to be important.

8.1.16 At Year 1, one landscape receptor will be subject to important adverse effects, whereas four visual receptors will be subject to important adverse effects. The remaining five landscape receptors and five visual receptors will be subject to effects that are not considered to be important. One landscape receptor will be subject to beneficial effects that are not considered to be important.

8.1.17 The secondary mitigation implemented during the construction phase will have some positive effects, reducing the level of the significance of the effect for three landscape receptors and two visual receptors.

8.1.18 The secondary mitigation implemented during the operational phase will be more impactful. The operational effects for all six landscape receptors will be improved by the secondary mitigation. One landscape receptor that will be subject to important adverse effects at Year 1 will be subject to residual adverse effects that are not considered important at Year 15. Furthermore, two landscape receptors will be subject to residual beneficial effects that are important.

8.1.19 The level of the significance of the adverse operational effects for all but one visual receptor will be reduced by the secondary mitigation. Three visual receptors that were subject to important adverse effects at Year 1 will be subject to residual adverse effects that are not considered important at Year 15.

8.1.20 As assessment of the likely cumulative effects of the Proposed Development and the Cumulative Scheme to the south of the Site has been undertaken.

8.1.21 During construction, one landscape receptor and three visual receptors will be subject to important adverse cumulative effects. One landscape receptor and two visual receptors will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important. The one remaining landscape receptor and four remaining visual receptors will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are not considered to be important.

8.1.22 At Year 1, one landscape receptor will be subject to important adverse cumulative effects, whereas four visual receptors will be subject to important adverse cumulative effects. One landscape receptor and the remaining five visual receptors will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important. One landscape receptor will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are not considered to be important.

8.1.23 Whilst the secondary mitigation implemented during the construction phase will have some positive effects, it will not reduce the level of the significance of the cumulative effects for any landscape receptors. It will reduce the level of the significance of the cumulative effects for two visual receptors.

8.1.24 The secondary mitigation implemented during the operational phase will be more impactful. The adverse operational cumulative effects for all three landscape receptors will be improved by the secondary mitigation. One landscape receptor that will be subject to important adverse cumulative effects at Year 1 will be subject to residual adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important at Year 15. One landscape receptor that will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important at Year 1 will be subject to residual beneficial cumulative effects that are not considered important at Year 15.

8.1.25 The level of the significance of the adverse operational cumulative effects for all but one visual receptor will be reduced by the secondary mitigation. One visual receptor that will be subject to important adverse cumulative effects at Year 1 will be subject to residual adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important at Year 15. Four visual receptors that will be subject to adverse cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important at Year 1 will be subject to residual adverse cumulative effects that are not considered important at Year 15.

8.2 Conclusion

8.2.1 While the Proposed Development will result in some important adverse landscape and visual effects, the majority of these are related to effects at Year 1 of the operational phase, before secondary mitigation measures are factored in.

8.2.2 The level of the significance of the adverse effects typically diminishes as the landscape proposals begin to become established, with no landscape receptors subject to important adverse residual effects at Year 15, and two subject to important beneficial residual effects at Year 15. Only one visual receptor will be subject to important adverse residual effects at Year 15.

8.2.3 While the Proposed Development in combination with the Cumulative Scheme will result in some important adverse landscape and visual cumulative effects, the majority of these are related to effects at Year 1 of the operational phase, before secondary mitigation measures are factored in.

8.2.4 The level of the significance of the adverse cumulative effects typically diminishes as the landscape proposals begin to become established, with no landscape receptors subject to important adverse residual cumulative effects at Year 15. Only three visual receptors will be

subject to important adverse residual cumulative effects at Year 15. Of the remaining landscape and visual receptors, a third will be subject to cumulative effects that are on the threshold of important, and two thirds will be subject to cumulative effects that are not considered to be important.

8.2.5 The Proposed Development will provide a greater level of pedestrian permeability through the landscape, create new areas for recreation, and substantially increase the level of vegetation on the Site. It will be softened and integrated within the landscape through the establishment of new tree planting and habitat, reinforcing sense of place and local identity.

8.2.6 On the basis of the above, and the findings of this assessment, it is considered that the Site has the capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue harm on the landscape character and visual amenity of the Site and the wider area. It is further considered that the Proposed Development will lead to tangible long term benefits on the landscape features of the Site and the character and general amenity of the local area.

Appendix A LVIA Methodology

A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA 3), 2013, notes in Chapter 1 that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) relates to:

> ***"...the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity."***

A.1.2 The methodology employed in carrying out the LVIA has been drawn from guidelines set out in GLVIA 3 and Natural England landscape character guidance. The guidelines are not intended as a prescriptive set of rules, and the approach has been adapted to the specific project.

A.1.3 LVIAs are undertaken by professionals who are also typically involved in the design of the landscape and the preparation of subsequent management proposals. This can allow the assessment to proceed as an integral part of the overall scheme design. Judgements are based on training and experience and supported by clear evidence and reasoned argument.

A.1.4 The purpose of LVIAs is to identify the potential for and assess the likely effects of change resulting from development. Landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. A distinction is made between:

- landscape – landscape character and the elements and features that contribute to it (landscape receptors); and
- visual – people who experience views within the landscape (visual receptors).

A.1.5 An LVIA is typically accompanied by illustrative material, including baseline mapping and photographs of the Site itself and from the wider context.

A.1.6 There are typically four key stages to LVIA, as follows:

- Baseline Studies;
- Design;
- Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects; and
- Cumulative Assessment (should this be required).

Baseline Studies

A.1.7 The purpose of baseline studies is to record the existing landscape features, characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced and potential visual receptors. The following are typically undertaken as part of the baseline studies:

- Identification of the extents of the study area. This is based on professional judgement and may vary depending on the type of development proposed and the landscape context.

- A desktop study of patterns and scale of landform, land use and built development, relevant current planning policy (including landscape designations) and landscape character publications. Further localised character assessments may also be undertaken to supplement published assessments.

- Where such additional assessments are undertaken, these are based on principles set out in published guidance, including the Natural England 2014 publication: An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Factors typically considered may include the following, as relevant:

    - Landform and hydrology;
    - Land use and settlement;
    - Pattern/texture/line;
    - Scale;
    - Historical development/time depth;
    - Activity/cultural association;
    - Spatial structure and built form;
    - Infrastructure;
    - Movement and connectivity;
    - Green Infrastructure;
    - Enclosure/views; and
    - Tranquillity.

- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling to assist in identifying potential viewpoints, should this be deemed necessary, dependent on professional judgement of the visual envelope of the Site/Proposed Development.

- Identification of potential representative viewpoints within the study area.

- Site/context Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) visit.

A.1.8 Where relevant, the future baseline of the Site and its context is also considered, in order to account for ongoing change in the landscape, for example developments that are under construction and which will have altered the landscape context to the Site by the time the Proposed Development would be likely to be initiated.

Design and Mitigation

A.1.9 LVIAs are undertaken by professionals who are also often involved in the design of the landscape, site design, and the preparation of subsequent management proposals. The design and assessment stages are iterative, with stages overlapping in part.

A.1.10 Mitigation measures are embedded within the design of the Proposed Development (for an outline application this comprises the development parameters) as a result of the desk-based study and LVA field work. These measures, such as the building layout, massing and height; and arrangement of open spaces and new structural planting, are termed 'Primary Mitigation'. Effective Primary Mitigation strategies avoid or reduce adverse effects by ensuring the key

principles of the design of the development, as noted above, are sympathetic with the existing baseline.

A.1.11 Additional recommended measures to reduce adverse effects are termed 'Secondary Mitigation.' These may be illustrated in material accompanying the proposal, including a Design and Access Statement.

A.1.12 Typical Secondary Mitigation strategies can include:

- Additional design detail including building materials or landscape design approaches, including indicative species;
- A Landscape and Biodiversity Management Strategy to secure ongoing enhancement of landscape features;
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan to minimise effects arising during the construction process, typically including tree protection; and
- A programme of appropriate monitoring, agreed with the regulatory authority, so that compliance and effectiveness can be readily monitored and evaluated.

A.1.13 The contribution made by areas of planting introduced as part of the Proposed Development is also considered in terms of the effects at year 1 and the residual effects (allowing for growth of planting over time), and the height of this planting for assessment purposes is assumed to be as follows (based on an average growth rate of 1m in 3 years – the specific rate of growth varies according to species, conditions and management):

- Planting at Year 1: typically 0.7-4.5 metres; and
- Planting at Year 15: typically 5.5-9.5 metres.

A.1.14 In addition, measures may be taken to offset or compensate for adverse effects, if these are not already built into the design proposals. Typical compensation measures are the replacement of felled trees with new trees or off-site provision of public amenity or access where this may be lost within the Site.

Enhancement

A.1.15 Whilst distinct from mitigation of adverse effects, enhancement may be achieved through the Proposed Development (e.g. the creation of a new landscape or public amenity/access; enhancement in character or view; or improved management of existing landscape features secured through the Proposed Development). The beneficial changes resulting from these measures are incorporated into assessment of landscape and visual effects.

A.2 Assessment of Landscape Effects

A.2.1 GLVIA 3 Paragraph 5.1 states that:

> ***"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource."***

A.2.2 The significance of landscape effects is derived from a combination of assessments of the **sensitivity** of the landscape receptor and the **magnitude** of change experienced as a result of the Proposed Development.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

A.2.3 The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is a combination of the **value** of the landscape receptor and the **susceptibility** (in other words 'vulnerability') of the landscape receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement.

Landscape Value

A.2.4 The assessment of value is based on a combination of the importance of landscape-related planning designations and the following attributes:

- Landscape quality (condition): the measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical landscape character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- Scenic quality: the extent that the landscape receptor appeals to the visual senses;
- Perceptual aspects: the extent that the landscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. remoteness or tranquillity);
- Rarity: the presence of unusual elements or features;
- Representativeness: the presence of particularly characteristic features;
- Recreation: the extent that recreational activities contribute to the landscape receptor; and
- Association: the extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the landscape receptor.

A.2.5 Landscapes, including their character and features, may be designated for their landscape and visual qualities at a range of levels (national, county and local level).

A.2.6 The overall value for each landscape receptor is categorised as either High, Medium or Low.

Table A.2.1: Landscape Value

Level	Criteria
High	Landscape area of distinctive components and characteristics that may also be nationally designated for scenic beauty. A landscape feature that makes a strong positive contribution to landscape character e.g. a mature tree or woodland.
Medium	Landscape area of common components and characteristics that may be designated at county or borough level for its landscape and visual qualities. A landscape feature that makes some positive contribution to landscape character.
Low	Landscape area/feature of inconsequential components and characteristics, undesignated and with little or no wider recognition of value, although potentially of importance to the local community.

Landscape Susceptibility

A.2.7 The susceptibility of the landscape is a measure of its vulnerability to the type of development proposed, without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Landscape character/features of low susceptibility would have a high capacity to accommodate change, and landscape character/features of high susceptibility would have a low capacity to accommodate

change. The following criteria are taken into consideration in the assessment of the susceptibility of landscape character, although not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given landscape / type of development proposed:

- Landform;
- Pattern/Complexity;
- Composition;
- Landcover;
- Relationship of a given landscape area to existing settlements or developments; and
- Potential for appropriate mitigation within the context of existing character and guidelines.

A.2.8 With regard to landscape features, susceptibility relates to the potential for loss/retention of the relevant features in relation to the type of development proposed (for example trees within a Site are potentially highly susceptible to construction of an industrial shed, where they might not be to construction of residential units, as the latter provides more scope to mitigate by design); and the ease with which such elements may be replaced, where appropriate.

A.2.9 Susceptibility of landscape character/ features is categorised as High, Medium or Low, as set out in Table A.2.2.

Table A.2.2: Landscape Susceptibility

Susceptibility	**Criteria**
High	The receptor is likely to have little scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences upon its overall integrity.
Medium	The receptor is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences upon its overall integrity.
Low	The receptor is likely to be able to accommodate the type of development proposed with little or no consequences upon its overall integrity.

A.2.10 Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of landscape sensitivity is reached, defined as High, Medium or Low. Typically a high value and high susceptibility receptor would result in a receptor of high sensitivity; and a low value and low susceptibility receptor would result in a receptor of low sensitivity.

Landscape Magnitude of Change

A.2.11 The landscape magnitude of change is informed by judgements about the precise nature of the change brought about by the Proposed Development both in terms of the existing landscape character and landscape elements / features and the addition of new landscape elements / features, and its duration and reversibility, as set out in Table A.2.3.

Table A.2.3: Landscape Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
Large	Pronounced change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect an extensive area. The change may be long-term or may be irreversible.

Magnitude	Criteria
Medium	Partial change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a relatively extensive area. The change may be medium-term or may be irreversible.
Small	Limited change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a relatively limited area. The change may be short-term or reversible.
Very Small	Very slight change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a limited area. The alteration may be short-term or reversible.
None	No change to the existing landscape receptor.

A.3 Assessment of Visual Effects

A.3.1 GLVIA 3 Paragraph 6.1 states that:

> ***"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity."***

A.3.2 The significance of visual effects is derived from a combination of assessments of the **sensitivity** of the visual receptor and the **magnitude** of change experienced as a result of the Proposed Development.

Viewpoint Selection

A.3.3 In order to assess the effects on visual receptors, a selection of publicly accessible viewpoints is made. This could include representative viewpoints (e.g. representing views of users of a particular footpath) and specific viewpoints (e.g. a key view from a specific visitor attraction).

A.3.4 Views may be categorised as either near distance, medium distance or long distance with the relevant distances dependent on the size and nature of the development, based on professional judgement.

A.3.5 The type of view is typically described as transient (i.e. experienced when moving) or fixed (i.e. from a static location). It is also described in terms of the degree of screening or openness (e.g. open or uninterrupted; filtered (including where partially screened) by vegetation or other structures; or curtailed by intervening land form, built form or vegetation) and the angle of view (e.g. frontal or oblique).

A.3.6 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is often prepared to assist in the selection of viewpoints and inform the assessment of likely visual effects. The ZTV models the effect of large blocks of vegetation, built form and landform on the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. It should be noted that the ZTV does not take into account the screening effect of smaller areas of vegetation including hedgerows and is therefore only an indication of potential visibility. The findings of the ZTV are then tested by field surveys in order to assess the visual effects of the Proposed Development in accordance with GLVIA3.

A.3.7 For this assessment, the ZTV was undertaken as follows:

- The ZTV was run on a Digital Surface Model (DSM) using National LIDAR Programme data, 1m resolution grid, 2019;
- The ZTV was created using ESRI ArcGIS Pro version 3.0.2 Spatial Analyst tool;

- The ZTV illustrates the area of theoretical visibility of the proposed buildings within the Site, created from 19 points at 50m equal intervals across the developable area;
- Proposed building heights were set to 12.5m, and observer height was set to 1.6m; and
- The viewshed was clipped to a 5km study area.

A.3.8 The ZTV analysis remains only a tool in the visual appraisal of the project. Its accuracy is limited to the digital information upon which it has been based and the algorithm used for its calculations.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

A.3.9 The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the **value** of the view and the **susceptibility** of the visual receptor, the latter being primarily based on consideration of the extent to which a visual receptor is focused on appreciation of the landscape. Professional judgement is used to determine these factors, based on considerations set out in Table A.3.1 and Table A.3.2.

Value of Views

Table A.3.1: Value of Views

Value	Criteria
High	View of/from a location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations.
Medium	View of/from a location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations.
Low	View of/from a location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

Table A.3.2: Susceptibility of Visual Receptor

Susceptibility	**Criteria**
High	• People at their place of residence; • People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), whose attention is likely to be focused on the landscape; and • People travelling along recognised scenic routes or where their appreciation of the view contributes to the amenity experience of their journey.
Medium	• People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation, where their appreciation of their surroundings is incidental to their enjoyment; and • People travelling on secondary roads or country lanes, rail or other transport routes.
Low	• People travelling on major roads; and • People at their place of work.

A.3.10 The sensitivity of a visual receptor results from the combination of value and susceptibility and is rated as high, medium or low. Typically a high value and high susceptibility receptor would result in a receptor of high sensitivity; and a low value and low susceptibility receptor would result in a receptor of low sensitivity.

Visual Magnitude of Change

A.3.11 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude of visual effect is typically described with reference to:

- The scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition. Factors contributing to this include:
    - The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
    - The distance of the viewer from the Proposed Development; and
    - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- Whether or not the view is experienced in fixed or transient views and, in the latter, whether it is intermittent/glimpsed or continuous; and
- The duration of the change, whether temporary or permanent.

A.3.12 The criteria for the magnitude of visual effects are set out in Table A.3.3.

Table A.3.3: Visual Magnitude of Change

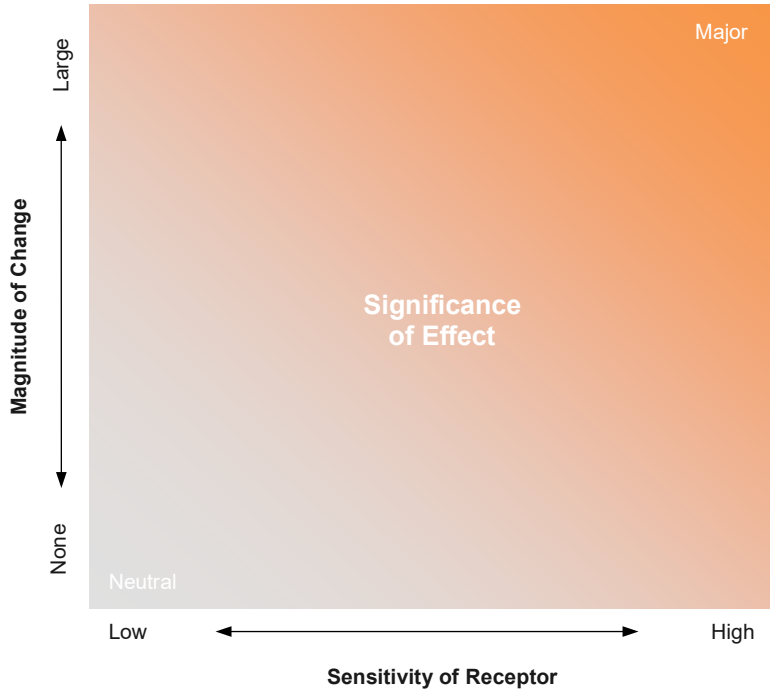
Magnitude	Criteria
Large	The proposals will cause a pronounced change to the existing view, resulting in the loss or addition of features that will substantially alter the composition of the view. The change may be long-term or may be irreversible.
Medium	The proposals will cause a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the composition of the view. The change may be medium-term or may be irreversible.
Small	The proposals will cause a limited change in the view, which would not materially alter the composition of the view. The change may be short-term or reversible.
Very Small	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change in the view. The change may be short-term or reversible.
None	No change discernible in the view.

A.4 Significance of Effects

A.4.1 In order to draw conclusions about the significance of landscape or visual effects, the combination of the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of change are considered for the Proposed Development at Year 1 of the operational phase (once the Proposed Development has been completed); and, depending on the assessment, also at a point where planting associated with the Proposed Development will be establishing e.g. Year 15. In certain circumstances, it may also be appropriate to consider effects at construction and on decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

A.4.2 The significance of effects is rated on a scale of Neutral to Major. The assessment of significance of effects is subject to professional judgement but in broad terms, where a receptor of High sensitivity experiences a Large magnitude of change as a result of the Proposed Development, the significance of effect is likely to be Major. Conversely, where a receptor of Low sensitivity experiences a Very Small magnitude of change as a result of the Proposed Development, the significance of effect is likely to be Negligible.

Figure A.4.1: Significance of Effects



A.4.3 Where it is considered that there is potential for both beneficial and adverse changes, these magnitudes of change are noted and the balance of these considerations used to inform conclusions on significance of effect.

A.4.4 The assessment of residual effects refers to the likely effects of the Proposed Development that will remain once Secondary Mitigation measures are applied and also considers the growth of planting introduced within the Proposed Development (including where this is part of Primary or Secondary Mitigation).

A.4.5 For schemes subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, as governed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU), an assessment of whether or not the effect is considered 'significant' is required. This is relative to each scheme but, in general, effects of Major or Moderate (adverse/beneficial) significance are deemed 'significant'.

A.4.6 For schemes not subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, the term used is ‘important’ effects, rather than ‘significant’ effects.

Table A.4.1: Significance of Landscape Effects – Criteria

Significance of Landscape Effect	Criteria
Major Beneficial	Alterations that would be substantially characteristic and result in a pronounced improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced as part of the Proposed Development.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be partially restored or reintroduced.

Significance of Landscape Effect	Criteria
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a limited improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be restored to a limited degree.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Neutral	Neither beneficial nor adverse effects on the existing landscape resource.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a limited deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be lost to a limited degree.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be partially lost.
Major Adverse	Alterations that would be substantially uncharacteristic and result in a pronounced deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.

Table A.4.2: Significance of Visual Effects – Criteria

Significance of Visual Effect	Criteria
Major Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	Neither beneficial nor adverse effects on the existing view.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.

Appendix B Published Landscape Character Evidence Extracts

Appendix C Landscape Effects Table

Appendix D Visual Effects Table

Appendix E Cumulative Effects Table

Appendix F Site Photographs