Addendum LVIA Report: Land South of A507, Buntingford

May 2025

Prepared for:
Hallam Land

Project Number:
332611260

Revision	Description	Author	Date	Quality Check / Approved
ISSUE	Addendum LVIA Report	Natasha Jones Daisy Parsons	29/05/2025	Jones, Natasha Digitally signed by Jones, Natasha Date: 2025.05.29 12:16:37 +01'00'

The conclusions in this Report are Stantec's professional opinion, as of the time of the Report, and concerning the scope described in the Report. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the scope of work was conducted and do not take into account any subsequent changes. The Report relates solely to the specific project for which Stantec was retained and the stated purpose for which the Report was prepared. The Report is not to be used or relied on for any variation or extension of the project, or for any other project or purpose, and any unauthorized use or reliance is at the recipient's own risk.

Stantec has assumed all information received from Client (the "Client") and third parties in the preparation of the Report to be correct. While Stantec has exercised a customary level of judgment or due diligence in the use of such information, Stantec assumes no responsibility for the consequences of any error or omission contained therein.

This Report is intended solely for use by the Client in accordance with Stantec's contract with the Client. While the Report may be provided by the Client to applicable authorities having jurisdiction and to other third parties in connection with the project, Stantec disclaims any legal duty based upon warranty, reliance or any other theory to any third party, and will not be liable to such third party for any damages or losses of any kind that may result.

Contents

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background and Scope 1
2 East Herts District Council Landscape Consultant's Comments on LVIA and Review of Masterplan 2
2.1 Points of Agreement 2
2.2 Request for Additional Visual Assessment 2
2.3 Responses to Review of Masterplan 3
3 Changes to the Proposed Development 6
3.1 Summary of Changes to the Proposed Development 6
3.2 List of Amended and New Plans Relevant to the LVIA 6
3.3 Amended or New Landscape and Visual Effects 7
4 Additional LVIA Visual Assessment 10
4.1 Methodology Applied to the Additional Visual Assessment 10
4.2 Additional View Locations / Receptors: Baseline 10
4.3 Additional View Locations / Receptors: Visual Effects 12
5 Summary and Conclusions 18
5.1 Summary and Conclusions 18

Tables

Table 1: Requested Additional View Locations for Visual Assessment 2
Table 2: Comments from Review of Masterplan and Responses 3

Appendices

Appendix A Updated Figures
Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Scope

1.1.1 Stantec UK Limited (Stantec) prepared a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which was submitted with the planning application for 3/24/1255/OUT - Land South of A507, West of A10 Buntingford; hereafter referred to as the 'Application LVIA'.

1.1.2 Megan Cowell, Landscape Consultant at Place Services, Essex County Council, provided consultation comments on 14/10/2024 on the Application LVIA, on behalf of East Herts District Council. Other consultations with East Herts District Council officers also took place since the application was submitted, and a Design Review Panel (DRP) workshop was held in October 2024.

1.1.3 At the time of preparing this report, email correspondence with Megan Cowell, as East Herts District Council's Landscape Consultant (EHDCLC) had taken place, to confirm the approach and locations of additional views to be assessed in this LVIA Addendum for application 3/24/1255/OUT.

1.1.4 As a result of consultations with East Herts District Council Officers, and the DRP workshop, the Proposed Development scheme has been amended, and new information and clarifications have been provided.

1.1.5 This Addendum LVIA Report has been prepared to provide clarification of the LVIA visual assessment approach; to consider the amended scheme and identify new or amended landscape and visual effects on the previously assessed Application LVIA receptors; and to provide additional visual assessment for visual receptors at the requested additional view locations. It also sets out our responses to the EHDCLC's review of the scheme masterplan.

2 East Herts District Council Landscape Consultant's Comments on LVIA and Review of Masterplan

2.1 Points of Agreement

2.1.1 It is noted that in the summary of the EHDCLC's comments, which supports the application subject to recommendations and / or conditions, it is stated by the EHDCLC, "*Overall, we do not disagree with the judgements made within the submitted LVIA, and where our judgements may differ these are not deemed substantial.*"

2.1.2 We agree with the following points made in the EHDCLC's comments:

- Agreement of judgements made within the LVIA regarding landscape character impacts (page 3 of comments letter).
- Whilst the EHDCLC would prefer each visual receptor to be judged separately, there is agreement that the visual assessment of receptor groups has considered the worst-case scenario and judges the worst effect upon a visual receptor in the receptor group.
- The proposed open space is appropriate for the western edge of the Site, in relation to elevation and distance from the existing urban edge (see bullet 2 of the EHDCLC review of the submitted masterplan, page 4 of the comments letter).

2.2 Request for Additional Visual Assessment

2.2.1 Additional assessment of effects on views for visual receptors was requested for 3no. view locations by the EHDCLC. The precise locations were agreed through email exchanges on 13th November and 19th November 2024, and are described in Table 1 and Figure L4 Rev A.

Table 1: Requested Additional View Locations for Visual Assessment

Additional LVIA Assessment	Location
Additional LVIA Assessment A	View from Woolpack Veterinary Surgery car park looking across the A10 to the site. Baseline photograph provided in Appendix B
Additional LVIA Assessment B	Buntingford Business Park.
Additional LVIA Assessment C	A507 Baldock Road, above the hedgerow

2.3 Responses to Review of Masterplan

2.3.1 A summary of the EHDCLC's comments on review of the masterplan, and our responses to those comments, are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Comments from Review of Masterplan and Responses

Comment	Response
"*Owed to the location of the development site on the edge of Buntingford, and on the upper slopes of the River Rib, this site is at risk of being visually intrusive on the landscape if not designed sensitively*."	The proposed heights of buildings are set out on the Building Heights Plan and these have been considered in the Addendum LVIA. The proposed heights for development have responded to the undulating and elevated landform. Proposed development is proposed to be 12.5m maximum height, nearest to the A10 road corridor and Buntingford Business Park. An area of lower height buildings at maximum 10m height, is proposed to the A507 Baldock Road frontage. The new built edge being nearer to the road corridor seeks to assist with the reduction of road speed, however the heights have been proposed as a maximum of 10m in this location recognizing the introduction of new built form on this road corridor. Figure L6 Landscape Mitigation Strategy (Rev C) shows design principles of areas of woodland copse planting to the south of the proposed development area and on the highest part of the Site's landform, to provide a green, planted edge to the development. Open space is proposed on the west facing slopes, west of the proposed woodland copse areas.
"*The proposed open space is located on the western edge which is more suitable, considering its elevated position and distance from the urban edge*."	
The proposed woodland planting is acknowledged providing visual screening to the proposed built form. "*We advise this area of strategic landscaping is planted in advance of the adjacent area of built development*."	
Request for further details of elevations required, and a note that no information has been provided strategy for the anticipated heights of the proposed employment buildings. Comment that height and scale of the proposed buildings is an important consideration due to the undulating and elevated landform.	
"*Mitigation planting should be provided within the scheme to reduce the visual effects from the A507 which is one of the more sensitive receptors*."	Mitigation planting as strategic planting is indicated on **Figure L6 Landscape Strategy Plan (Rev C)**.
Inclusion of small woodlands as characteristic of the surrounding landscape character areas, "*This will also contribute to reducing the visual effects of the scheme, which will currently be very visible in the surrounding landscape*."	Figure L6 Landscape Strategy Plan (Rev C) includes woodland copse planting areas as acknowledged in earlier comments by EHDCLC. These areas are included as "proposed structural planting" areas in the **Land Use Components Plan (HLM082/019)**
"*Highly sensitive visual receptors are identified within the LVIA and from the west and therefore the establishment of a good GI network is important to help reducing the visual impact from this edge*."	

Comment	Response
"*The large areas of car parking should be broken up by soft landscaping. We advise that trees, shrubs and SuDS are proposed within the car parks between parking spaces.*"	The submission is an Outline Application. The Illustrative Masterplan indicates how tree planting and other vegetation could be introduced into the urban spaces. Details of additional landscaped areas, tree planting and other proposed vegetation within the scheme would be provided at the detailed design or reserved matters stage.
"*Permeable surfaces should also be proposed across the scheme.*"	
"*The SuDS basin is appropriately located on the eastern edge of the site, on the lower elevation ground and also to reduce the visual impact of development for users of the A10 as they enter Buntingford. We agree with this location and advise that the ground contouring, planting and inlet and outlet design to be carefully considered to maximise biodiversity and amenity value. A standard approach of precast concrete and galvanised handrail for inlets/outlets should be avoided and a range of vegetation types such as wildflowers and other nectar rich plants, grasses of various heights, drought tolerant species as well as marginal aquatics and wet grassland should be used.*"	
"*A predominance of one species or variety should be avoided in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats to the urban forest and to increase species diversity. Preference should be given to native trees and shrubs, though the use of naturalised trees and shrubs, which are not necessarily native but are the correct tree for site conditions and would add landscape and arboricultural value could be used where appropriate and justified.*"	
"*Trees and vegetation will be essential to help provide cooler spaces across the development through shading. The leaves and branches of trees and plants can reduce the amount of solar radiation that penetrates through tree canopies, although the amount of sunlight transmitted varies depending on species. As such, careful consideration of tree species projects height and canopy spread, tree and plant requirements, the types of leaves, berries and flowers it produces and its siting will all be important factors in determining designing cool spaces. Generally speaking, we would advise that preference is given to native planting, though there may be situations where non-native species may provide similar climate benefits (where appropriate). We would recommend that trees are planted at regular intervals along both sides of proposed roadways and footpaths to provide valuable form shading.*"	
"*There is also an opportunity for a larger proportion of the south-eastern boundaries to be retained as woodland creation and / or woodland belt and green buffer to form a stronger edge to the residential care properties.*"	This comment is not relevant to the Application proposals, and we suggest it has been included in the EHDCLC comments in error.

Comment	Response
Submission documents list: • Arboricultural Survey • Landscape Strategy / GI Strategy (This document should set the overarching principles proposed as part of the scheme. This should include detail on mitigation measures (highlighted in the LVIA), retained landscape features, landscape enhancements and demonstrate how new green infrastructure links to existing GI/habitat corridors) • Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan / LEMP • Hard Landscaping • SUDS Strategy • Planting Strategy • Ecological Enhancements • Sustainability Principles • Environmental Colour Assessment	**Figure 6 Landscape Mitigation Strategy Plan (Rev C)** shows the overarching green infrastructure and landscape principles of the scheme, including mitigation measures, retained landscape features, and strategic landscape / green infrastructure principles, and showing how the proposed green infrastructure links to existing green infrastructure and corridors. An Environmental Colour Assessment is appropriate for development within a designated landscape or its setting. We do not consider it is necessary to provide an Environmental Colour Assessment for this Outline Application. All other requested submission documents would be provided in due course at detailed design / reserved matters stage.

3 Changes to the Proposed Development

3.1 Summary of Changes to the Proposed Development

3.1.1 Since submission of the planning application 3/24/1255/OUT, consultations with East Herts District Council officers, and a Design Review Panel, have taken place. As a result of those consultations, the scheme design has been amended, as summarised below:

- Clarification of proposed building heights has been provided, as shown on the Building Heights Plan (HLM082/038).
- Development area extended to create a new built form edge to the A507 Baldock Road. Proposed building height adjacent to the road is to be 10m maximum height, to reduce the Proposed Development's visual effects when travelling along the road, but acknowledging that new built form seen adjacent to the road will assist with speed reduction for road users. 12.5m maximum height is proposed for the remainder of the development area. Figure L4B ZTV Plan has been updated to reflect the proposed heights shown on the Building Heights Plan.
- Adjustments to the visibility splays and highways design at the access road junction with the A507 Baldock Road. This results in the need to remove existing roadside vegetation to facilitate the visibility splays. The proposed replacement landscape planting of hedgerow and trees is proposed within the Site area, to recreate the vegetation boundaries to the road.
- Additional hedgerow and tree planting proposed to the Site's boundary with the A10 and A10 / A507 Baldock Road roundabout junction.

3.2 List of Amended and New Plans Relevant to the LVIA

3.2.1 The amended plans include:

- Land Use Component Plan HLM082/19 Rev G
- Illustrative Masterplan HLMHLM082/30 Rev H
- Figure L4 Rev D – View Location Plan , supporting plan to the LVIA
- Figure L4B – Rev C - ZTV Plan, supporting plan to the LVIA
- Figure L6 – Rev C - Landscape Mitigation Strategy Plan, supporting plan to the LVIA

3.2.2 New photographs, plans and documents, provided in response to the outcomes of the consultations and EHDCLC comments, include:

- Addendum baseline photographs representing visual receptors' baseline views for the addendum view locations A to C, in Appendix B
- Building Heights Plan HLM082/038 (16.01.2025)

3.2.3 The amended plans and the new photographs, plans and documents have been reviewed and inform the findings and discussion contained in this LVIA Addendum.

3.3 Amended or New Landscape and Visual Effects

3.3.1 The amendments to the proposed scheme, result in new or amended landscape and visual effects for the previously identified receptors in the Application LVIA, as described below.

3.3.2 **Landscape Effects: LCA 141: Cherry Green Arable Plateau and LCA 142: High Rib Valley** – These LCAs are affected directly and/or indirectly by the Proposed Development. However, the extent of the Proposed Development directly or indirectly affects only a very small to small proportion of the extent of each LCA. As such, whilst each of the scheme amendments summarised in Section 3.1 above will either directly or indirectly affect these receptors, the amendments, taken either individually or as a whole, will not alter judgements of the magnitude of change or the significance of the effect for these LCAs, as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.3 **Landscape Effects: The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings** – The magnitudes of change that were previously assessed in the Application LVIA will not be altered as a result of the amended scheme which is summarised in Section 3.1 above. Whilst the proposed building heights and development area have been clarified/adjusted, it is the removal of the existing roadside vegetation to accommodate the visibility splays that will have the greatest effect on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings. However, these adverse effects will be partially mitigated by Year 1 of operation by the proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting and the additional proposed planting along the Site's boundary with the A10 and A10/A507 roundabout. At Year 15 the replacement and additional proposed planting will have become established and be maturing, and on balance the landscape effects of the changes will be neutral. Furthermore, the effects caused by the amended aspects of the Proposed Development will be a very small proportion of those assessed effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the amended scheme will not alter the previously assessed level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect upon the character of the Site and its immediate surroundings, which remain as previously set out in the Application LVIA.

3.3.4 **Landscape Effects: Native Hedgerow and Canopy Trees** – The necessary adjustments to the required visibility splays and highways design at the access road junction with the A507 Baldock Road will result in a greater amount of hedgerow loss and canopy tree loss than that which was previously assessed in the Application LVIA. However, additional tree and hedgerow mitigation planting is proposed to the new roadside edge of the A50 Baldock Road, and additionally to the Site's boundary with the A10 and A10/ A507 Baldock Road junction at the roundabout. The new total loss of hedgerow and canopy trees, as a proportion of the total existing hedgerow and canopy trees within the Site will not be great enough to alter the previously judged level of magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect on the landscape receptor of native hedgerow and canopy trees. The landscape effects upon native hedgerows and canopy trees therefore remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.5 **Landscape Effects: Waterbodies** – There have been no changes to the proposals for the attenuation basins in the eastern extents of the Site, and as such there will be no change to the level of magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect on the waterbodies previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.6 **Visual Effects: Pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site** – These receptors are limited to those on PRoW Cottered 46, the south-easternmost extents of which meet the A507 at approximately 75m from the Site boundary. The additional hedgerow and tree planting along the Site's boundary with the A10 and A10/A507 roundabout will not be seen in views experienced by these receptors. The other changes to the Proposed Development, summarised in Section 3.1 above, will be visible in views experienced by these receptors. The removal of the existing roadside vegetation to accommodate the visibility splays will create the greatest change to these views. The adverse effects of this will be partially mitigated by Year 1 of operation by the proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting. At Year 15, the replacement planting will have become established and be maturing, and on balance the effects of the changes will be close to neutral. Furthermore, the effects caused by the amended aspects of the Proposed Development will be a very small proportion of those assessed effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development. As such, the amended scheme will not impact the level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for pedestrians on PRoW immediately adjacent to the Site, and the visual effects remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.7 **Visual Effects: Pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site** – These receptors will have views of some of the scheme amendments that are summarised in Section 3.1 above. The additional hedgerow and tree planting along the Site's boundary with the A10 and A10/A507 roundabout will not be seen in views experienced by these receptors. The effects caused by the amended aspects of the Proposed Development will be very small as a proportion of the effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development. As such, the amended scheme is considered to not alter the previously assessed level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for pedestrians on PRoW within 0.5km of the Site, and therefore the visual effects for this receptor group remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.8 **Visual Effects: Users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site** – Both the A10 and the A507 run immediately adjacent to the Site. Of the amendments summarised in Section 3.1 above, the introduction of the additional proposed planting along the eastern Site boundary will cause the most appreciable difference in assessed views for users of the A10. This planting will improve upon the proposals assessed in the Application LVIA as it will further filter views toward the Proposed Development. Users of the A507 will experience the greatest change in views because of the scheme amendments, as the removal of the roadside vegetation will open up views of the construction activities. The replacement trees and hedgerows will not have fully established or started to mature by Year 1 of operation, and as such views into the Site from the A507 will remain predominantly open at Year 1, although they will be slightly filtered by the additional proposed vegetation. At Year 15, the additional proposed vegetation will have become established and be maturing, filtering and partially screening views of the Proposed Development. However, the different visual effects on people's views from principal roads within 0.5km of the Site, because of the amended scheme, will be very small as a proportion of the effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development and will not result in greater or lesser visual effects. As such, the amended scheme will not alter the previously assessed level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site, and so the visual effects remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.9 **Visual Effects: Residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site** – Residents on Longmead within Buntingford on the east side of the A10 will have views from which some of the scheme amendments will be appreciable. This will primarily be limited to the proposed additional tree and hedgerow planting along the eastern Site boundary, which will further filter views toward the Proposed Development. This will therefore improve upon the proposals assessed in the Application LVIA. Residents of How Green Farm will not have views of the additional proposed planting along the eastern boundary, although the other scheme amendments summarised in Section 3.1 above will form part of some views experienced by these receptors. This includes the clarification/adjustment of the building heights, although the most appreciable scheme amendments will be the removal of the roadside vegetation to accommodate the visibility splays. The adverse effects of this will be partially mitigated by Year 1 of operation by the proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting. At Year 15 the replacement planting will have become established and be maturing, and on balance the effects of the changes will be neutral, since the existing roadside vegetation does not affect views into the Site given the angle from which it is seen by these receptors. Overall, the effects caused by the amended scheme will be very small as a proportion of the effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development. As such, the amended scheme would not alter previously judged level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site, and therefore the visual effects for this group of visual receptors remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.10 **Visual Effects: Workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site** – Whilst the scheme amendments will be visible to workers at How Green Farm, the impact of these changes will be as described above for residents at How Green Farm. The worst-case scenario resulting from the scheme amendments will be the effect on views experienced by workers at Buntingford Business Park. The removal of the roadside vegetation will open up views of the construction activities. The replacement trees and hedgerows will not have established or have started maturing by Year 1 of operation, and as such views into the Site from the entrance to Buntingford Business Park will remain predominantly open at Year 1, although they will be slightly filtered by the additional proposed vegetation. At Year 15, the additional proposed vegetation will have become established and would have matured, filtering and partially screening views of the Proposed Development. However, the different visual effects on workers' views from both Buntingford Business Park and How Green Farm, because of the amended scheme, will be very small as a proportion of the effects of the unchanged aspects of the Proposed Development and will not result in greater or lesser visual effects. As such, the amended scheme will not alter the previously assessed level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for these receptors, and so the visual effects remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

3.3.11 It is considered that the remaining landscape and visual receptors that were assessed in the Application LVIA will experience the landscape and visual effects that were previously described and identified in that assessment.

4 Additional LVIA Visual Assessment

4.1 Methodology Applied to the Additional Visual Assessment

4.1.1 The methodology applied to the additional visual assessment is the same as that used for the Application LVIA, which was set out in full in the **Application LVIA, Appendix A: LVIA Methodology**. The methodology 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, as well as other best practice guidance.

4.2 Additional View Locations / Receptors: Baseline

4.2.1 Additional baseline photographs are provided at **Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos**.

A: View from Woolpack Veterinary Surgery car park, looking across the A10 to the Site

4.2.2 Whilst a representative baseline photograph from this location was not provided within the Application LVIA, views experienced from the western edge of Buntingford as a whole were considered as part of the visual appraisal of the baseline conditions in the Application LVIA. Paragraph 5.3.5 of the Application LVIA stated that *"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."*

4.2.3 Additional Photograph A (VL A in **Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos**) illustrates a typical baseline view from the Woolpack Veterinary Surgery car park, looking across the A10, from 25m to the east of the Site. The photograph demonstrates that views of the Site from this car park and adjacent businesses are near distance and open, being filtered and framed by occasional hedgerow trees along the western highway verge. The hedgerow between the A10 and the Site is partially denuded, and its remnants, along with herbaceous vegetation, provide limited filtering of views toward the Site. From this location, the Site is partially seen through and over the remnant boundary vegetation, and in the context of the vegetation along the A10 corridor, the A10 itself, and associated highway infrastructure including the roundabout, signage, bollards and lighting columns in the foreground. The Site itself forms the filtered horizon, and the woodland canopy of The Thicket immediately to the south of the Site is present in the background. Views are enclosed to the north of the Site by the canopies of tree belts along the A10 and A507 corridors. The topography of the Site rises away from viewers in this location, such that the western extents of the Site are not visible beyond the crest of the landform.

4.2.4 Visual receptors in this location fall into several categories, including workers at workplaces immediately to the east of the Site and customers of businesses immediately to the east of the Site. The photograph also demonstrates views similar to those that are experienced by residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site, as well as by users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site.

4.2.5 **Workers at workplaces immediately to the east of the Site** – Views are experienced from the Woolpack Veterinary Surgery and its car park, and the Esso filling station. These locations are not designated for landscape or scenic beauty, and the views have no cultural associations. As such, the value of the views is **low**. Receptors are people at their place of work. They are therefore engaged in an activity and at a location where their visual setting is of minimal importance and little or no attention is focussed on the landscape. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings is unrelated to their activity. As such, their susceptibility is **low**. The combination of the low value and low susceptibility of workers at workplaces immediately to the east of the Site results in a **low** sensitivity.

4.2.6 **Customers of businesses immediately to the east of the Site** – Views are experienced from the Woolpack Veterinary Surgery and its car park, and the Esso filling station. These locations are not designated for landscape or scenic beauty, and the views have no cultural associations. As such, the value of the views is **low**. Receptors are people accessing business premises, and they are engaged in activities and at locations where their visual setting is not of particular importance, and little attention is focussed on the landscape. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings bears little relation to their activity. As such, on balance their susceptibility is **low**. The combination of the low value and low susceptibility of customers of businesses immediately to the east of the Site results in a **low** sensitivity.

4.2.7 **Residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site** – Views are experienced from dwellings on Longmead. Views are from a location that is not designated and with no cultural associations. As such, their value is **low**. Receptors are people at their place of residence. Whilst their attention is likely to be only partially focussed on the landscape, they are at a location where their visual setting is likely to be important. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings makes an important contribution to the amenity experience of their homes. As such, their susceptibility is on balance **high**. The combination of the low value and high susceptibility of residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site results in a **medium** sensitivity.

4.2.8 **Users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site** – Views are experienced from the A10. Views are from a location that is not designated and with no cultural associations. As such, their value is **low**. Receptors are people using a principal road, and are therefore likely to be engaged in an activity and at a location where their visual setting of the least importance and their attention is least focussed on the landscape. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings is of the least relevance to their journey. As such, their susceptibility is **low**. The combination of the low value and low susceptibility of users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site results in a **low** sensitivity.

B: Buntingford Business Park

4.2.9 Whilst a representative baseline photograph from this location was not provided within the Application LVIA, views experienced from within Buntingford Business Park were considered as part of the visual appraisal of the baseline conditions in the Application LVIA. Paragraph 5.3.5 of the Application LVIA stated that *"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."* Paragraph 5.3.7 of the Application LVIA stated that *"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."*

4.2.10 Additional Photograph B (VL B in **Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos**) illustrates a typical view from the entrance to Buntingford Business Park. It is taken from a location within the northernmost extents of the Site. The photograph demonstrates that views of the Site from the entrance to the business park are near distance and range from glimpsed to partial, being heavily filtered and screened where there is existing hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the A507 highway verge, but with a field access opening allowing unobstructed partial views into the field parcel immediately opposite the view location. From this view location, the field parcel is seen in the context of the highway verge vegetation, the A507, and associated highway lighting columns in the foreground. The Site itself forms the horizon and the woodland canopy of The Thicket immediately to the south of the Site is present in the background. The eastern extents of the Site are entirely screened by the vegetation along the highway verge to the east of the business park entrance. The topography of the Site rises away from viewers in this location, such that the south-western extents of the Site are not visible beyond the crest of the landform.

4.2.11 Visual receptors at this location are workers at Buntingford Business Park. The photograph also demonstrates views experienced by users of the A507 within the Site.

4.2.12 **Workers at Buntingford Business Park** – Views are experienced from the entrance to Buntingford Business Park. This location is not designated for landscape or scenic beauty, and the views have no cultural associations. As such, the value of the views is **low**. Receptors are people at their place of work. They are therefore engaged in an activity and at a location where their visual setting is of minimal importance and little or no attention is focussed on the landscape. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings is unrelated to their activity. As such, their susceptibility is **low**. The combination of the low value and low susceptibility of workers at Buntingford Business Park results in a **low** sensitivity.

4.2.13 **Users of the A507 within the Site** – Views are experienced from the A507, an A class road which is a primary route and major road. Views are from a location that is not designated and with no cultural associations. As such, their value is **low**. Receptors are people using a principal road, and are therefore likely to be engaged in an activity and at a location where their visual setting of the least importance and their attention is least focussed on the landscape. For these receptors, their appreciation of their surroundings is of the least relevance to their journey. As such, their susceptibility is **low**. The combination of the low value and low susceptibility of users of the A507 within the Site results in a **low** sensitivity.

C: A507 Baldock Road above the hedgerow

4.2.14 Additional Photograph C (VL C in **Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos**) illustrates a typical view from the A507, taken from within the northern extents of the Site. The precise location for this view location for additional visual assessment, was agreed with the EHDCLC through email on 19/11/2024. The photograph demonstrates that views into the Site's field parcel from this stretch of the A507 are near distance and open where the hedgerow along the highway verge is partially denuded. From this view location, the Site is seen in the context of the highway verge vegetation and the A507 in the foreground, and the overhead power lines that cross the north-western extents of the Site. The Site itself forms the horizon and the woodland canopy of The Thicket immediately to the south of the Site is present in the background. The north-eastern and north-western extents of the Site are partially filtered by the vegetation along the highway verge, and the lower-lying eastern edge of the Site is partially screened by the landform, which falls away from the centre of the Site. The topography of the Site rises to the south-west away from viewers in this location, such that the south-western extents of the Site are not visible beyond the crest of the landform.

4.2.15 Visual receptors in this location are users of the A507 within the Site. Their value, susceptibility and sensitivity are all low, for reasons as set out in paragraph 4.2.13 above.

4.3 Additional View Locations / Receptors: Visual Effects

A: View from Woolpack Veterinary Surgery car park, looking across the A10 to the Site

4.3.1 Visual receptors immediately to the east of the Site will have near distance, open views of the construction activity during the construction phase and of the eastern extents of the Proposed Development at Year 1 of operation. The construction period will be short term, limiting the magnitude of change. Secondary mitigation measures during the construction phase, such as the use of solid hoardings and the considered siting of compounds and stockpiles, will be implemented, although these will not alter the magnitude of change to these views. The additional planting proposed along the eastern Site boundary will filter views at Year 1 to a limited extent. Views into the Site, which is currently agricultural, will become views of commercial built form. At Year 15 the proposed planting along the eastern Site boundary will have become established and be maturing, which will heavily filter and partially screen views of the Proposed Development. This will reduce the magnitude of change although there will still be change due to the shortening of views, which are currently open. At each phase, the changes will be seen in the context of the vegetation along the A10 corridor, the A10 itself, and associated highway infrastructure including the roundabout, signage, bollards and lighting columns in the foreground. The woodland canopy of The Thicket immediately to the south of the Site will remain partially visible in the background.

4.3.2 The view will change from an open view of sloping agricultural land, to a view of the eastern extents of the proposed commercial built form with the proposed water attenuation feature and new tree and hedgerow planting in the foreground. Over time the appearance of the new commercial built form will be softened and partially screened by the maturing trees and hedgerow proposed on the eastern Site boundary.

Workers at workplaces immediately to the east of the Site – low sensitivity

4.3.3 Visual effects on workers within 0.5km of the Site were assessed as part of the visual assessment set out in the Application LVIA. Workers at workplaces immediately to the east of the Site fall within this category, but were not referred to explicitly. As such, effects on these workers are set out as a separate receptor group here.

- Construction phase effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **large** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect.

Customers of businesses immediately to the east of the Site – low sensitivity

4.3.4 Visual effects on customers of businesses immediately to the east of the Site were not assessed in the Application LVIA either as a standalone receptor group or as part of a wider receptor group. As such, effects on these receptors are set out here.

- Construction phase effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **large** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect.

Residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site – medium sensitivity

4.3.5 Visual effects on residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site (i.e., on Longmead) were assessed as part of the visual assessment set out in the Application LVIA, within the group of receptors comprising 'residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site'. This was set out within the commentary on value for this receptor group in Application LVIA Appendix D: Visual Effects Table, which stated that "V*iews are experienced from How Green Farm and dwellings on Longmead*." Whilst these receptors were assessed as a group, the magnitude of change and the significance of the effect related to the worst-case scenario, i.e., those individual receptors within the group that would experience the greatest magnitude of change or greatest/most adverse significance of effect. The commentary on magnitude of change for the construction phase, Year 1 and Year 15 stated that *"in the worst case scenario the [construction/Proposed Development] will be experienced by receptors in dwellings on Longmead to the east of the Site."*

4.3.6 Visual effects on residents of dwellings within 0.5km of the Site (including residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site) were assessed within the Application LVIA as follows:

- Construction phase effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **large** magnitude of change and **major adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **large** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect.

4.3.7 The above judgements are considered to apply also to residents of dwellings immediately to the east of the Site when assessed as a single receptor represented by photograph VL A, rather than as part of a wider a receptor group. However, the scheme amendments will introduce additional new planting along the eastern boundary. At Year 15, this will have become established and will heavily filter and partially screen views of the Proposed Development. This will reduce the magnitude of change although there will still be change due to the shortening views that are currently open.

4.3.8 As such, at Year 15, views from dwellings within 0.5km of the Site (including from dwellings immediately to the east of the Site) will be subject to a **small** magnitude of change, and residents will experience a **negligible adverse** significance of effect.

Users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site – low sensitivity

4.3.9 Visual effects on users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site were assessed as part of the visual assessment set out in the Application LVIA, within the group of receptors comprising 'users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site'. This was set out within the commentary on value for this receptor group in Application LVIA Appendix D: Visual Effects Table, which stated that "*Views are experienced from the A10 and A507*." Whilst these receptors were assessed as a group, the magnitude of change and the significance of the effect related to the worst-case scenario, i.e., those individual receptors within the group that would experience the greatest magnitude of change or greatest/most adverse significance of effect. The commentary on magnitude of change for the construction phase, Year 1 and Year 15 stated that *"Views will predominantly be funnelled along the route by roadside vegetation, although in some places, particularly where the A10 passes alongside the north-eastern Site boundary, the adjacent hedgerows are denuded, allowing oblique but open views of the [construction/Proposed Development]."*

4.3.10 Visual effects on users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site (including users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site) were assessed within the Application LVIA as follows:

- Construction phase effects – **small** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **small** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect.

4.3.11 The above judgements are considered to apply also to users of the A10 immediately to the east of the Site when assessed as a single receptor represented by photograph VL A, rather than as part of a wider receptor group. However, the scheme amendments will introduce additional new planting along the eastern boundary. At Year 15, this will have become established and will heavily filter and partially screen views of the Proposed Development. This will reduce the magnitude of change although there will still be change due to the shortening views that are currently open.

4.3.12 As such, at Year 15, views from principal roads within 0.5km of the Site (including from the A10 immediately to the east of the Site) will be subject to a **small** magnitude of change, and road users will experience a **negligible adverse** significance of effect.

B: Buntingford Business Park

4.3.13 The existing trees and hedgerows along the A507 highway verge will be removed, opening up views into the field parcel. Visual receptors immediately to the north of the field parcel will have near distance, open views of the construction activity during the construction phase and of the northern, central and eastern extents of the Proposed Development at Year 1 of operation. The construction period will be short term, limiting the magnitude of change. Secondary mitigation measures during the construction phase, such as the use of solid hoardings and the considered siting of compounds and stockpiles, will be implemented, although these will not alter the magnitude of change to these views. The replacement tree and hedgerow planting proposed within the northern extents of the Site will filter views at Year 1 to a limited extent. Views into the Site, which is currently agricultural, will become views of commercial built form. At Year 15 the proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting within the northern extents of the Site will have become established and will filter and soften views of the Proposed Development. This will reduce the magnitude of change as it will reintroduce some of the removed elements, albeit in an altered layout, and this will partially mitigate the significance of the adverse effects. At each phase, the changes will be seen in the context of the loss of the highway verge vegetation, and the presence of the A507 and associated highway lighting columns in the foreground. The woodland canopy of The Thicket immediately to the south of the Site will be glimpsed in the background if it remains visible at all.

4.3.14 The view will change from an open view of sloping agricultural land, to a view of the northern, central and eastern extents of the proposed commercial built form with the proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting in the foreground and the proposed public park to the west. Over time the appearance of the new commercial built form will be filtered and softened by the maturing trees and hedgerow proposed within the northern extents of the Site.

Workers at Buntingford Business Park – low sensitivity

4.3.15 Visual effects on workers at Buntingford Business Park were assessed as part of the visual assessment set out in the Application LVIA, within the group of receptors comprising 'workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site'. This was set out within the commentary on value for this receptor group in Application LVIA Appendix D: Visual Effects Table, which stated that "*Views are experienced from How Green Farm and Buntingford Business Park*." Whilst these receptors were assessed as a group, the magnitude of change and the significance of the effect related to the worst-case scenario, i.e., those individual receptors within the group that would experience the greatest magnitude of change or greatest/most adverse significance of effect. The commentary on magnitude of change for the construction phase, Year 1 and Year 15 stated that *"in the worst case scenario the [construction/Proposed Development] will be experienced by workers at Buntingford Business Park to the north of the Site."*

4.3.16 Visual effects on workers at workplaces within 0.5km of the Site (including workers at Buntingford Business Park) were assessed within the Application LVIA as follows:

- Construction phase effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **large** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect.

4.3.17 The above judgements are considered to apply also to workers at Buntingford Business Park when assessed as a single receptor represented by photograph VL B, rather than as part of a wider receptor group. The amended scheme will not alter the previously assessed level of the magnitude of change or the level of the significance of the effect for this receptor, and so the visual effects remain as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

Users of the A507 within the Site – low sensitivity

4.3.18 Visual effects on users of the A507 within the Site were assessed as part of the visual assessment set out in the Application LVIA, within the group of receptors comprising 'users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site'. This was set out within the commentary on value for this receptor group in Application LVIA Appendix D: Visual Effects Table, which stated that "*Views are experienced from the A10 and A507*." Whilst these receptors were assessed as a group, the magnitude of change and the significance of the effect related to the worst-case scenario, i.e., those individual receptors within the group that would experience the greatest magnitude of change or greatest/most adverse significance of effect. The commentary on magnitude of change for the construction phase, Year 1 and Year 15 stated that *"Denuded hedgerow along the northern boundary similarly allows oblique but open views of the [construction/Proposed Development] for receptors on the A507, who will also have near distance, open views of [the construction of] the new junction of the access road with the A507."*

4.3.19 Visual effects on users of principal roads within 0.5km of the Site (including users of the A507 within the Site) were assessed within the Application LVIA as follows:

- Construction phase effects – **small** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **small** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **minor adverse** significance of effect.

4.3.20 The scheme amendments will result in the removal of the verge vegetation along the highway, which will open up views into the field parcel during construction and at Year 1 of operation. The proposed replacement tree and hedgerow planting within the northern extents of the Site will have become established by Year 15, and will soften and filter views experienced by these receptors. These changes will result in visual effects on users of the A507 within the Site as follows:

- Construction phase effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect;
- Construction phase residual effects – **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect;
- Operational phase effects (Year 1) – **large** magnitude of change and **major adverse** significance of effect; and
- Operational phase residual effects (Year 15) – **medium** magnitude of change and **moderate adverse** significance of effect.

C: A507 Baldock Road above the hedgerow

4.3.21 Visual receptors in this location are users of the A507 within the Site. The magnitude of change to the views and significance of effect on these receptors would be as those set out in paragraph 4.3.20 in relation to Additional Photograph B above.

5 Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

5.1.1 We agree with the following points made in the EHDCLC's comments:

- Agreement of judgements made within the LVIA regarding landscape character impacts (page 3 of comments letter).
- Whilst the EHDCLC would prefer each visual receptor to be judged separately, there is agreement that the visual assessment of receptor groups has considered the worst-case scenario and judges the worst effect upon a visual receptor in the receptor group.
- The proposed open space is appropriate for the western edge of the Site, in relation to elevation and distance from the existing urban edge (see bullet 2 of the EHDCLC review of the submitted masterplan, page 4 of the comments letter).

5.1.2 The scheme design changes that were made since the original application was made, have been considered in this LVIA Addendum. It is considered, however, that the amended scheme does not alter the previous judgements of magnitudes of change of landscape and visual effects, and therefore the landscape and visual effects which are likely to occur because of the Proposed Development, remain at the levels as previously assessed in the Application LVIA.

5.1.3 Additional LVIA assessment has been undertaken as requested by the EHDCLC and as set out in Chapter 4 of this report. It is considered that the additional LVIA assessment does not alter the previous conclusions set out in the Application LVIA.

Appendix A Updated Figures

Appendix B Addendum Baseline Photos